



Pedagogical Transformation through Internal Quality Assurance: A Multi-Case Study of Organizational Mechanisms in Schools

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ABSTRACT

Penjaminan mutu telah menjadi strategi penting dalam meningkatkan kualitas pendidikan di berbagai sistem pendidikan. Namun, sebagian besar penelitian sebelumnya lebih menekankan penjaminan mutu sebagai mekanisme tata kelola dan akuntabilitas pendidikan, sementara perannya dalam memengaruhi praktik pedagogi di sekolah masih relatif kurang mendapat perhatian. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengeksplorasi bagaimana mekanisme penjaminan mutu memengaruhi transformasi praktik pedagogi guru di sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi multi kasus pada tiga sekolah menengah di Kabupaten Wajo, Provinsi Sulawesi Selatan, Indonesia. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara dengan 18 partisipan, observasi pembelajaran, dan analisis dokumen sekolah, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan analisis tematik dan perbandingan lintas kasus. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa penjaminan mutu internal tidak hanya berfungsi sebagai mekanisme pengendalian mutu administratif, tetapi juga sebagai mekanisme organisasi yang mendorong perubahan praktik pedagogi guru. Empat mekanisme utama yang teridentifikasi meliputi 1) pembentukan budaya mutu sekolah, 2) peran kepemimpinan sekolah dalam menerjemahkan penjaminan mutu ke dalam praktik pembelajaran, 3) penggunaan data evaluasi mutu sebagai dasar refleksi pembelajaran, 4. serta kolaborasi profesional antarguru. Penelitian ini memperluas literatur penjaminan mutu dengan menunjukkan bahwa penjaminan mutu dapat berfungsi sebagai mekanisme organisasi yang memediasi transformasi praktik pedagogi. Temuan penelitian juga memberikan implikasi praktis bagi manajemen sekolah dalam memperkuat kepemimpinan pembelajaran, penggunaan data evaluasi mutu, dan kolaborasi profesional guru untuk meningkatkan kualitas pembelajaran.

Quality assurance has become an important strategy for improving educational quality across education systems. However, previous studies have primarily emphasized quality assurance as a mechanism for educational governance and accountability, while its role in shaping pedagogical practices in schools has received relatively limited attention. This study aims to explore how quality assurance mechanisms influence the transformation of teachers' pedagogical practices in schools. A qualitative approach employing a multi-case study design was conducted in three secondary schools in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. Data were collected through interviews with 18 participants, classroom observations, and document analysis, and were analyzed using thematic analysis and cross-case comparison. The findings reveal that internal quality assurance functions not only as an administrative quality control mechanism but also as an organizational mechanism that promotes changes in teachers' pedagogical practices. Four key mechanisms were identified: 1) the development of a school quality culture, 2) the role of school leadership in translating quality assurance into instructional practices, 3) the use of quality

evaluation data to support reflective teaching, and 4) professional collaboration among teachers. This study extends the quality assurance literature by demonstrating that quality assurance can function as an organizational mechanism that mediates pedagogical transformation. The findings also offer practical implications for school management in strengthening instructional leadership, the use of quality evaluation data, and teacher professional collaboration to enhance teaching and learning quality.



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INTRODUCTION

Improving educational quality has become a strategic priority across education systems worldwide, including in Indonesia. In this context, the Indonesian government has established quality assurance systems as instruments to ensure the provision of education that meets established quality standards. Regulation of the Minister of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology No. 53 of 2023 stipulates that educational quality assurance is implemented through the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) and the External Quality Assurance System (EQAS). IQAS refers to a quality assurance system implemented by educational institutions and their supporting units to ensure the delivery of quality education that meets or exceeds the National Education Standards. The implementation of IQAS is supported by various factors, including stakeholder participation, human resource capacity development, and the integration of digital technologies, which collectively contribute to strengthening school leadership, professional collaboration, and sustainable quality management practices. Furthermore, these mechanisms indicate that IQAS functions not only as a quality control system but also as a potential driver of organizational dynamics and instructional practices within schools. (Afiralda et al., 2025).

At the global level, quality assurance and school monitoring have become important instruments for educational institutions in achieving institutional goals and promoting continuous improvement (Mok et al., 2003). These developments indicate that quality assurance is a dynamic and multidimensional concept within educational systems, requiring comprehensive strategies that integrate both internal and external dimensions of quality enhancement. Consequently, quality assurance should not be viewed merely as a compliance mechanism but as a strategic process that supports sustainable educational improvement and organizational development.

The implementation of IQAS in various educational settings, including secondary education in Indonesia, has been associated with significant improvements in teaching and learning quality, enhanced stakeholder engagement, and greater integration of digital technologies into educational practices (Afiralda et al., 2025). Effective school quality control mechanisms, encompassing standard setting, monitoring, evaluation, and continuous improvement, have been shown to enhance student engagement and academic achievement (Barus et al., 2024). At the same time, achieving educational quality requires quality assurance frameworks that extend beyond internal institutional processes to address the expectations and satisfaction of external stakeholders, reflecting

the evolving nature of educational reform (Cheng, 2003; Mok et al., 2003). Within this perspective, the development of a quality culture that actively involves all members of the school community is essential for sustaining continuous improvement in teaching and learning practices. Such a culture not only strengthens organizational commitment to quality but also contributes to the broader goal of enhancing educational outcomes.

Consistent with these developments, research on quality assurance in education has demonstrated a wide range of scholarly interests, encompassing the implementation of quality assurance systems in schools, the governance of quality assurance policies, program accreditation, and professional standards in teacher education. At the school level, quality assurance is commonly conceptualized as a quality management mechanism aimed at enhancing institutional performance and fostering a culture of quality within educational organizations (Rahminawati & Supriyadi, 2023). At the policy level, studies have examined how quality assurance systems are developed through national policy frameworks to ensure educational standards and institutional accountability (Miovský et al., 2023). Within higher education and teacher education contexts, quality assurance has frequently been investigated through the lenses of program accreditation, stakeholder engagement, and curriculum alignment with professional teaching standards (Attree, 2025; Getenet, 2025). International comparative studies further suggest that quality assurance governance is strongly influenced by national policy structures and varying models of educational governance across countries (Sato & Abbiss, 2026). Moreover, recent studies have begun to connect quality assurance with broader notions of teaching and learning quality and perceptions of educational quality, including the concept of lateral quality in educational practice and sociological perspectives on the construction of educational quality (Ayling & Wallace, 2025; Smålander & Andersson, 2025).

Nevertheless, the existing body of research has primarily focused on policy, governance, program accreditation, and perceptions of educational quality. Relatively limited attention has been paid to the relationship between the implementation of quality assurance at the school level and changes in teachers' pedagogical practices. In other words, the literature tends to conceptualize quality assurance as a policy instrument or an institutional accountability mechanism rather than as an organizational mechanism that directly influences pedagogical transformation in classroom practice.

Building on this body of literature, the present study focuses on an area that remains insufficiently explored empirically, namely how quality assurance mechanisms at the school level are translated into changes in teachers' pedagogical practices and how organizational dynamics within schools shape this process. Consequently, further empirical investigation is needed to understand how internal quality assurance functions as an organizational mechanism that supports pedagogical transformation in school settings.

To address this gap, this study offers a novel perspective by examining the IQAS as a mechanism that has the potential to promote pedagogical transformation in schools, rather than viewing it merely as an administrative system or a quality evaluation instrument. Specifically, the study aims to explore how IQAS-related organizational mechanisms influence changes in teachers' instructional practices through a multi-case study conducted in several schools implementing internal quality assurance systems. By adopting this approach, the study seeks to contribute both conceptually and empirically to a deeper understanding of the role of quality assurance in enhancing teaching and learning quality, while enriching the literature on the relationship between educational quality management and pedagogical transformation in schools.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a multi-case study design to explore how the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) influences the transformation of teachers' pedagogical practices at the school level. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to gain an in-depth understanding of the social processes, organizational dynamics, and interpretations of educational actors involved in the implementation of IQAS within school settings. The implementation of IQAS in educational organizations represents a complex and context-dependent phenomenon that involves interactions among multiple stakeholders, thereby

requiring a research approach capable of capturing the meanings, experiences, and practices that emerge within organizational contexts (Creswell & Poth, 2018).

A multi-case study design was selected because it enables the investigation of the same phenomenon across different organizational contexts, providing a more comprehensive understanding of variations in IQAS implementation and their implications for teaching and learning practices. This approach facilitates cross-case comparisons that help identify recurring patterns and contextual differences in the implementation of IQAS across schools (Yin, 2018). Furthermore, a multi-case study design supports analytical generalization through cross-case analysis, thereby contributing to the development of broader theoretical insights into the relationship between IQAS and pedagogical transformation.

The selection of participating schools was conducted through purposive sampling, whereby cases were intentionally chosen based on criteria relevant to the research objectives (Patton, 2015). The selected schools had systematically implemented IQAS and demonstrated active engagement in instructional improvement initiatives. By including schools with different characteristics of IQAS implementation, this study sought to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how IQAS-related organizational mechanisms operate across diverse school contexts and influence pedagogical practices.

Table 1. Profile of the Case Schools and Characteristics of IQAS Implementation

Kasus	Lokasi	Karakteristik Implementasi SPMI
School A	Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia	IQAS integrated into school management and teaching and learning evaluation processes
School B	Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia	IQAS implemented through academic supervision and reflective teaching practices
School C	Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia	IQAS focused on internal quality evaluation and teachers' professional development

The study involved 18 participants drawn from the three selected case schools. Participants were purposively selected based on their direct involvement in the implementation of the IQAS and teaching and learning activities within their respective schools. The participants included principals, vice principals, IQAS coordinators, and teachers who were actively engaged in instructional practices and quality assurance processes. In qualitative research, selecting participants based on their experiences and involvement in the phenomenon under investigation is essential for generating an in-depth understanding of the research context (Creswell & Poth, 2018). By involving multiple organizational actors, this study was able to capture diverse perspectives on the implementation of IQAS and explore how its organizational mechanisms were translated into pedagogical practices within schools.

Table 2. Participant Characteristics

Kategori Partisipan	Jumlah	Peran
Principals	3	School quality policy decision-makers
Vice Principals	3	Coordinators of IQAS implementation
IQAS Coordinators	3	Managers of the Internal Quality Assurance System
Teachers	9	Implementers of teaching and learning practices

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observations, and document analysis to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of the IQAS in three secondary schools. Semi-structured interviews were conducted with all research participants to explore their experiences and perspectives regarding the implementation of IQAS and its influence on teaching and learning practices. Each interview lasted between 45 and 60 minutes and was audio-recorded with participants' informed consent. The use of semi-structured interviews enabled the

researcher to explore participants' experiences in depth while maintaining a focus on issues relevant to the research objectives. In addition to interviews, observations were conducted during classroom supervision activities, quality evaluation meetings, and teacher professional learning community sessions. These observations provided direct insights into the organizational dynamics of IQAS implementation and its relationship with instructional practices within school settings.

Document analysis was also undertaken to examine materials related to IQAS implementation, including school quality assurance policies, quality evaluation reports, school development plans, and classroom supervision documents. Examining these documents enabled the researcher to understand how IQAS policies were formally articulated and enacted within school organizations. The use of multiple data sources facilitated data triangulation, thereby strengthening the credibility and richness of the findings.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify patterns of meaning and recurring themes within the qualitative dataset. The analysis followed several iterative stages, including data familiarization, initial coding, theme development, and cross-case analysis.

During the first stage, interview transcripts, observation notes, and documentary evidence were reviewed repeatedly to gain a comprehensive understanding of the research context. This process was followed by open coding, in which meaningful units of data relevant to the research focus were identified and labeled. Codes sharing similar meanings were subsequently grouped through axial coding to generate broader categories and themes that represented the organizational mechanisms underlying IQAS implementation and pedagogical transformation. Following within-case analysis, cross-case analysis was conducted to compare findings across the three schools. This process enabled the identification of both common patterns and contextual variations in the implementation of IQAS across different organizational settings. Cross-case comparison is particularly important in multi-case study research because it facilitates analytical generalization through systematic examination of similarities and differences across cases (Yin, 2018).

Several strategies were employed to enhance the trustworthiness of the study. Data triangulation was conducted by comparing evidence obtained from interviews, observations, and document analysis. In addition, member checking was undertaken by inviting participants to review and confirm the researcher's preliminary interpretations of the data.

An audit trail was maintained throughout the study by systematically documenting data collection and analytical procedures to ensure transparency and methodological rigor. Researcher reflexivity was also practiced to minimize potential bias in data interpretation and to enhance the credibility of the findings. Ethical considerations were addressed by informing participants about the purpose of the study and obtaining their voluntary consent prior to participation. Participant confidentiality and anonymity were maintained throughout the research process and in the reporting of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Overview of the Research Findings

This study aimed to explore how the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) influences the transformation of teachers' pedagogical practices in schools. Data analysis was conducted using interviews with 18 participants, including principals, vice principals, IQAS coordinators, and teachers from three secondary schools in Wajo Regency, South Sulawesi Province, Indonesia. In addition to interviews, data were gathered through observations of teaching and learning activities, academic supervision sessions, quality evaluation meetings, and the analysis of various school documents related to IQAS implementation.

Thematic analysis was conducted through open coding, axial coding, and cross-case thematic synthesis. The analysis generated a range of codes reflecting participants' experiences, practices, and perceptions regarding the implementation of IQAS within their schools. These codes were subsequently organized into conceptual categories that demonstrated meaningful relationships and relatively consistent patterns across the three cases. Through cross-case analysis, these categories

were synthesized into four overarching themes that explain the mechanisms through which IQAS influences changes in teachers' pedagogical practices.

The four themes identified were: (1) institutionalizing quality culture in schools, which illustrates how quality-related values, norms, and practices are embedded within teaching and learning activities; (2) school leadership and the translation of IQAS into pedagogical practices, which highlights the role of school leaders in connecting quality assurance processes with instructional improvement; (3) the use of quality evaluation data for reflective teaching, which explains how quality-related data are utilized to inform pedagogical decision-making; and (4) professional collaboration in pedagogical improvement, which demonstrates how teacher interaction and collective learning strengthen efforts to improve instructional practices.

Cross-case analysis revealed that although the three schools differed in their organizational characteristics, relatively consistent patterns emerged in the implementation of IQAS. The findings suggest that changes in pedagogical practices do not occur directly as a result of the existence of a quality assurance system. Rather, such changes are mediated by a series of organizational mechanisms that develop within the school environment. In this context, quality culture, school leadership, the use of quality evaluation data, and professional collaboration function as organizational mechanisms that connect IQAS implementation with the transformation of teachers' pedagogical practices.

Based on these findings, the study develops a conceptual model that positions IQAS as a catalyst for the development of organizational mechanisms that promote professional reflection, collective learning, and sustained changes in pedagogical practices. This model represents the study's primary contribution in explaining the relationship between internal quality assurance and pedagogical transformation within secondary school contexts.

Table 3. Theme Development Process in Qualitative Data Analysis

Initial Codes	Categories	Themes
Reflection on student learning outcomes	Reflective teaching	Institutionalizing quality culture in schools
Learning evaluation	Reflective culture	Institutionalizing quality culture in schools
Dialogic supervision	Instructional leadership	School leadership and the translation of IQAS into pedagogical practices
Teacher mentoring	Professional development	School leadership and the translation of IQAS into pedagogical practices
Analysis of student learning outcomes	Use of quality data	Using quality evaluation data for reflective teaching
Program evaluation	Data-informed decision-making	Using quality evaluation data for reflective teaching
Teacher discussions	Collective learning	Professional collaboration in pedagogical improvement
Professional learning communities	Collaborative professional development	Professional collaboration in pedagogical improvement

Thematic analysis not only generated four overarching themes but also revealed the conceptual relationships among them. The findings indicate that the IQAS functions as a catalyst for the development of organizational mechanisms that promote changes in teachers' instructional practices. Institutionalizing quality culture, school leadership, the use of quality evaluation data, and professional collaboration do not operate independently; rather, they form an integrated organizational system that supports teachers' professional reflection and learning. Through these interconnected processes, the implementation of IQAS contributes to the development of more reflective, collaborative, and quality-oriented pedagogical practices. The relationships among these

components were subsequently synthesized into a conceptual model of the study's findings, as presented in Figure 1.

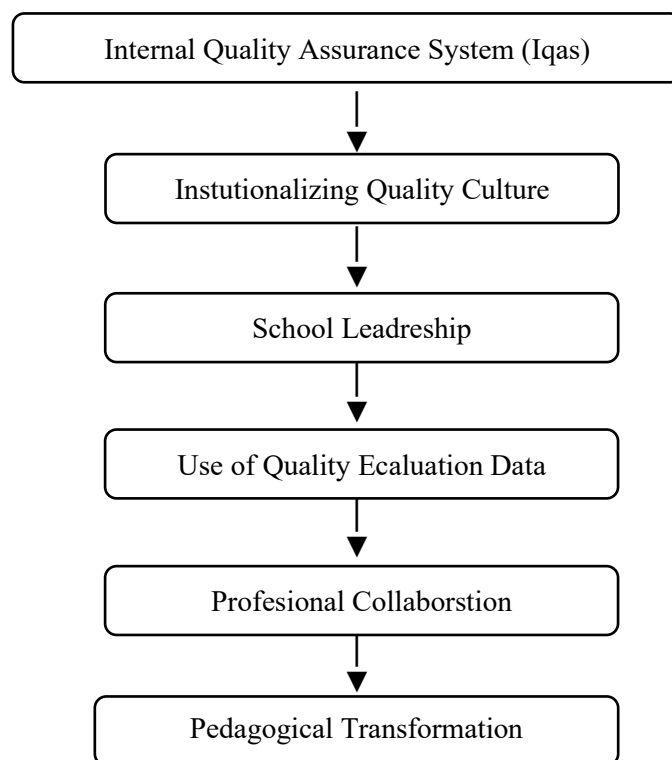


Figure 1. Conceptual Model of the Research Findings

The conceptual model presented in Figure 1 illustrates that pedagogical transformation within the context of IQAS implementation emerges from the interaction of multiple organizational mechanisms operating within schools. The four themes identified in this study do not function independently; rather, they are interconnected and collectively shape teachers' professional reflection and learning processes. Although the model provides an overarching representation of these relationships, each theme exhibits distinct characteristics and dynamics across the cases examined. The following sections provide a more detailed account of the findings associated with each of the identified themes.

1. Institutionalizing Quality Culture in Schools

The findings indicate that the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) contributed to the development of a quality culture that encouraged teachers to become more reflective in their instructional practices. Across the three participating schools, IQAS was no longer perceived merely as an administrative requirement but rather as a collective effort to improve the quality of teaching and learning. Participants consistently described how quality assurance processes had gradually become embedded in everyday school practices, influencing how teachers evaluated and improved their instructional approaches.

A principal explained how this shift emerged following the more systematic implementation of IQAS:

"Previously, teachers were mainly concerned with completing the curriculum content. However, after the quality assurance system was implemented, teachers became more accustomed to evaluating their teaching processes. They no longer asked only whether the material had been covered, but also whether students had genuinely understood what was being taught."

(Principal, School A)

Observations of learning evaluation meetings further revealed that teachers actively discussed student learning outcomes and shared strategies to improve instructional effectiveness. These discussions frequently centered on reflecting upon the teaching methods employed and examining students' responses during classroom activities. Rather than focusing solely on administrative compliance, teachers engaged in critical reflection regarding the effectiveness of their pedagogical practices.

During one of these meetings, a teacher reflected on this process:

"Sometimes we feel that the methods we use are already effective, but after reviewing student evaluation results, we realize that many students still struggle to understand certain concepts. This encourages us to discuss the issue with other teachers and search for more effective approaches."

(Teacher, School A)

Document analysis provided additional evidence supporting these findings. Internal quality evaluation reports, meeting minutes, and school improvement plans indicated that instructional reflection had become a routine component of school activities. These documents showed that schools regularly conducted learning evaluations and formulated improvement plans involving teachers from different subject areas. Collectively, these findings suggest that IQAS functions not only as a quality control mechanism but also as an organizational process that fosters a reflective quality culture and encourages continuous improvement in instructional practices.

2. School Leadership and the Translation of IQAS into Pedagogical Practices

The findings revealed that school leadership played a critical role in translating the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) into meaningful pedagogical practices. Across the three schools, principals were not only responsible for overseeing quality assurance procedures but also acted as instructional leaders who connected quality assurance processes with teachers' professional learning and classroom improvement efforts. As a result, IQAS was implemented not merely as an evaluation mechanism but as a vehicle for supporting continuous instructional development.

A teacher described how the principal encouraged teachers to use classroom supervision outcomes as opportunities for professional reflection:

"After classroom supervision, the principal usually does not simply provide an assessment. Instead, we are invited to discuss what aspects of our teaching can be improved. These discussions make us more willing to try new teaching methods."

(Teacher, School B)

Observations of supervision activities further demonstrated that principals adopted a dialogic approach to supervision. Rather than focusing on compliance or fault-finding, supervision sessions emphasized collaborative reflection on instructional practices and student learning outcomes. Principals frequently engaged teachers in conversations about teaching effectiveness and encouraged them to identify strategies for improving classroom instruction.

During one supervision session, a principal explained:

"Supervision is not intended to find teachers' mistakes. It is meant to help teachers reflect on how teaching can be made more effective for students."

(Principal, School B)

Document analysis also supported these findings. Records of supervision reports, professional development plans, and quality improvement programs indicated that school leaders consistently linked quality assurance activities with teacher development initiatives. These documents showed that supervision results were regularly used to identify professional learning needs and to design capacity-building programs for teachers.

Taken together, these findings suggest that school leadership functions as a key organizational mechanism through which IQAS is translated into pedagogical improvement. By fostering reflective dialogue, providing professional support, and connecting quality assurance processes with instructional development, school leaders play a crucial role in ensuring that IQAS contributes to meaningful changes in teachers' pedagogical practices.

3. Using Quality Evaluation Data for Reflective Teaching

The third theme emerging from the analysis concerns the use of quality evaluation data as a foundation for reflective teaching. Across the participating schools, quality evaluation data were systematically utilized to identify areas of instruction requiring improvement and to support evidence-informed decision-making processes. The findings indicate that data generated through quality assurance activities played an important role in guiding instructional improvement efforts and professional development initiatives.

An IQAS coordinator explained how evaluation data were used in school decision-making processes, particularly through data-informed planning activities:

"We collect data from various sources, including classroom supervision, student learning outcomes, and program evaluations. These data are then discussed with teachers to identify areas that need improvement."

(IQAS Coordinator, School C)

Observations of quality evaluation meetings further revealed that evaluation data were frequently used as the basis for discussions regarding instructional improvement strategies. During one meeting, teachers and school management teams collaboratively examined student achievement data to identify topics and concepts that students continued to find challenging. These discussions enabled teachers to reflect on their instructional approaches and consider alternative strategies for enhancing student understanding.

Document analysis provided additional evidence regarding the role of quality evaluation data in school improvement processes. School quality evaluation reports indicated that evaluation findings were not used solely for administrative purposes but also informed the design of teacher development programs. For example, evaluation results in one school revealed that students experienced difficulties in understanding specific science concepts. In response, the school organized professional development workshops aimed at helping teachers implement more inquiry-based and experiential instructional approaches.

A teacher who participated in the training described the impact of this initiative:

"After the training, we began experimenting with more interactive learning approaches, such as Project-Based Learning (PjBL), Problem-Based Learning (PBL), and Discovery Learning. As a result, students became more actively engaged and were able to understand concepts that they had previously found difficult."

(Teacher, School C)

Taken together, these findings suggest that the systematic use of quality evaluation data encourages teachers to develop more reflective and evidence-informed instructional practices. Rather than serving merely as an accountability mechanism, quality evaluation data function as a learning resource that supports pedagogical improvement, professional reflection, and continuous instructional development.

4. Professional Collaboration in Pedagogical Improvement

The final theme emerging from the analysis concerns the increasing role of professional collaboration among teachers in improving the quality of teaching and learning. The implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) encouraged schools to create collaborative spaces where teachers could share experiences, discuss instructional challenges, and collectively improve their pedagogical practices. Across the three cases, professional collaboration was identified as an important mechanism through which quality assurance processes were translated into instructional improvement.

A teacher described how professional discussions had become an integral component of IQAS implementation within the school:

"After classroom supervision, we usually hold small discussions to reflect on our teaching experiences. Through these discussions, we often gain new ideas about how to make learning more engaging for students."

(Teacher, School A)

Observations of teacher professional learning community activities further revealed that professional discussions extended beyond the evaluation of teaching practices to include the exploration of innovative instructional approaches. During one session, several teachers shared their experiences in implementing project-based learning strategies, which they believed had enhanced student engagement and participation in classroom activities. These collaborative interactions created opportunities for teachers to learn from one another and to adapt successful instructional practices to their own classrooms.

During one of these discussions, a teacher explained:

“When we share our teaching experiences, we realize that each teacher has a different way of explaining concepts. Through these exchanges, we learn from one another.”

(Teacher, School B)

Document analysis also indicated that schools regularly organized pedagogical discussions, internal workshops, and professional learning community activities aimed at strengthening teachers’ professional competencies. These documents demonstrated that collaborative learning had become an established component of school improvement efforts and was closely linked to the implementation of IQAS. Teachers were encouraged not only to evaluate their instructional practices but also to collectively develop and refine more effective pedagogical approaches.

Taken together, these findings suggest that professional collaboration functions as a critical organizational mechanism that supports pedagogical improvement. By facilitating knowledge sharing, collective reflection, and collaborative problem-solving, professional collaboration enables teachers to continuously enhance their instructional practices while strengthening the implementation of IQAS as a driver of ongoing educational improvement.

Discussion

1. Institutionalizing Quality Culture in Schools

The findings of this study indicate that quality assurance plays a crucial role in fostering a quality culture that encourages teachers to continuously reflect upon and improve their instructional practices. Quality assurance systems, such as the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS), support the development of a culture of continuous improvement through the involvement of multiple school stakeholders in processes of planning, implementation, evaluation, control, and quality enhancement (Rambe et al., 2025; Ranisa et al., 2025). The findings further reveal that quality culture is not manifested merely through compliance with established standards but through the development of reflective habits that encourage teachers to critically examine both teaching processes and learning outcomes. This finding is consistent with the view that an effective quality culture fosters organizational environments that support innovation, professional competence development, and the continuous improvement of teaching and learning quality (Mustabsyirah et al., 2025).

Cross-case analysis revealed that the three schools cultivated quality culture through different organizational mechanisms. School A emphasized collective reflection through learning evaluation meetings, whereas Schools B and C embedded reflective practices within classroom supervision and periodic quality evaluation processes. Despite these contextual variations, all three schools demonstrated a common pattern in which evaluation activities were used as opportunities to critically examine instructional effectiveness and identify potential areas for improvement. These findings suggest that quality culture does not emerge simply from the existence of quality assurance documents or formal procedures. Rather, it develops through social interactions and professional dialogue that enable teachers to become more aware of teaching quality and their responsibility for continuous improvement.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings position quality culture as a reflective organizational mechanism that connects quality assurance systems with changes in pedagogical practices. In this context, pedagogical transformation does not begin with immediate changes in instructional methods but with changes in how teachers perceive, evaluate, and interpret the quality of teaching and learning. This finding extends the quality assurance literature by highlighting the role of quality culture as an intermediary mechanism through which organizational quality processes influence pedagogical improvement. Consequently, quality culture can be understood as an organizational foundation that facilitates professional learning, reflective practice, and sustained

pedagogical development within schools. School Leadership and the Translation of IQAS into Pedagogical Practices

The findings of this study demonstrate that school leadership plays a central role in translating quality assurance systems into teachers' pedagogical practices. The implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) does not automatically lead to improvements in teaching and learning; rather, it requires the active involvement of school leaders in connecting quality evaluation processes with teachers' professional development. This finding is consistent with previous studies showing that effective school leadership contributes to the development of a quality culture and the enhancement of teacher competence (Rambe et al., 2025; Ranisa et al., 2025). More specifically, transformational leadership enables school leaders to promote organizational change and instructional innovation by supporting teacher reflection and professional learning (Anastasiadou & Anastasiadis, 2019).

Cross-case analysis revealed that school leadership emerged as a consistent factor across all three schools, although it was enacted through different organizational practices. In School B, the principal functioned primarily as a facilitator of reflective practice through dialogic and developmental supervision. In School A, leadership was manifested through the systematic organization of learning evaluation processes, while in School C the principal played a more prominent role in integrating quality evaluation findings into teacher development programs. Despite these contextual differences, all cases demonstrated that the active engagement of school leaders was a prerequisite for the effective implementation of IQAS. These findings suggest that leadership effectiveness lies not in adopting a single leadership model but in the capacity of school leaders to align quality assurance processes with instructional improvement initiatives.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings position school leadership as a mediating organizational mechanism linking quality assurance systems with pedagogical transformation. The role of school leaders extends beyond administrative management and compliance monitoring to encompass organizational learning functions that enable teachers to translate quality evaluation findings into instructional improvement actions. This finding contributes to the growing body of literature emphasizing the importance of instructional and transformational leadership in school improvement by demonstrating how leadership mediates the relationship between quality assurance and pedagogical change. Consequently, the effectiveness of IQAS is strongly influenced by the ability of school leaders to activate processes of professional reflection, organizational learning, and pedagogical innovation within the school environment.

2. Using Quality Evaluation Data for Reflective Teaching

The findings of this study indicate that the use of quality evaluation data plays a crucial role in encouraging teachers to develop more reflective and evidence-informed instructional practices. Data derived from classroom supervision, student learning outcomes, and program evaluations were utilized to identify areas requiring improvement and to design strategies for enhancing teaching and learning processes. This finding supports previous research suggesting that the systematic use of data enables teachers to make more informed instructional decisions and improve the effectiveness of classroom practices (Magdalena et al., 2023). Furthermore, the integration of data and empirical evidence facilitates the development of innovative instructional approaches that are more responsive to students' learning needs (Rybska et al., 2023).

Cross-case analysis revealed variations in the extent to which quality evaluation data were utilized across the three schools. School C demonstrated the most systematic use of data, employing quality evaluation findings as the basis for teacher professional development planning and instructional improvement initiatives. In contrast, Schools A and B primarily used quality-related data as a resource for reflection and professional discussion within teacher forums. Despite these differences, all three schools exhibited a common tendency to use quality evaluation data not merely for administrative reporting purposes but as a tool for improving teaching and learning processes. This pattern suggests that the educational value of quality assurance data lies not only in their capacity to measure performance but also in their ability to stimulate reflective inquiry and collaborative problem-solving among educators.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings position quality evaluation data as a form of organizational knowledge that supports evidence-informed learning within schools. Rather than functioning solely as instruments for quality measurement and accountability, data become resources through which teachers and school leaders develop shared understandings of instructional challenges and identify strategies for improvement. This finding extends the literature on quality assurance and data-informed decision-making by demonstrating how quality-related information can mediate the relationship between organizational evaluation processes and pedagogical change. Consequently, the effective use of quality evaluation data strengthens schools' capacity to engage in systematic, continuous, and sustainable pedagogical improvement.

3. Professional Collaboration in Pedagogical Improvement

The findings of this study indicate that professional collaboration among teachers represents a key organizational mechanism that strengthens the implementation of quality assurance and promotes pedagogical transformation. Through professional discussions, learning communities, and various professional development activities, teachers are provided with opportunities to share experiences, reflect on instructional practices, and develop more effective teaching strategies. This finding is consistent with previous studies demonstrating that professional learning communities and teacher collaboration contribute to the enhancement of pedagogical competence and instructional innovation (Aparicio-Molina & Sepúlveda-López, 2018; Aulia & Mustari, 2024). Furthermore, collaboration constitutes an essential component of quality assurance systems because it enables collective evaluation and continuous improvement of teaching and learning practices (Tutko, 2023).

Cross-case analysis revealed considerable variation in the forms of collaboration developed across the three schools. School A primarily emphasized reflective discussions following learning evaluation activities, whereas Schools B and C established more structured teacher learning communities and professional development programs. Despite these differences in implementation, all three schools demonstrated a common pattern in which collaboration served as a mechanism for constructing shared knowledge and developing collective responses to instructional challenges. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of professional collaboration lies not in its specific organizational form but in its capacity to facilitate meaningful interaction, knowledge exchange, and collective problem-solving among teachers.

From a conceptual perspective, the findings position professional collaboration as a collective learning mechanism that enables teachers to develop pedagogical capacity through shared experiences and mutual learning. Pedagogical transformation emerges not solely from individual reflection but also from social interaction and knowledge exchange occurring within the organizational context of schools. This finding extends the literature on quality assurance and professional learning by demonstrating that collaborative processes function as a critical pathway through which quality assurance initiatives influence instructional improvement. Consequently, professional collaboration represents one of the principal mechanisms linking the implementation of the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) with sustained improvements in teaching quality and pedagogical practice.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the Internal Quality Assurance System (IQAS) functions not only as an administrative quality control mechanism but also as an organizational mechanism that promotes the transformation of teachers' pedagogical practices in schools. Drawing on a multi-case study of three secondary schools in Wajo Regency, Indonesia, the study identified four key mechanisms that mediate this relationship: the institutionalization of quality culture, school leadership, the use of quality evaluation data for reflective teaching, and professional collaboration among teachers. The findings suggest that pedagogical transformation does not occur directly as a consequence of quality assurance implementation; rather, it emerges through organizational processes that foster professional reflection, collective learning, and the continuous development of instructional practices.

From a theoretical perspective, this study extends the literature on educational quality assurance by conceptualizing IQAS as an organizational mechanism that links quality assurance processes with pedagogical transformation. This perspective enriches existing scholarship, which has largely examined quality assurance as a governance and accountability instrument, by highlighting its role in shaping professional learning and instructional improvement. From a practical perspective, the findings provide important implications for school leaders, quality assurance teams, and policymakers seeking to strengthen the impact of IQAS on teaching and learning quality. Specifically, effective implementation requires the integration of quality culture, instructional leadership, quality evaluation data, and professional collaboration within school improvement processes. Given that this study was conducted in three secondary schools within a single regional context, future research could expand the range of cases, include different educational levels, or employ mixed-methods and longitudinal designs to develop a more comprehensive understanding of how quality assurance contributes to pedagogical transformation across diverse educational settings.

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