

Stakeholder Resistance to the Qiro'ati Curriculum Reform: A Change Management Perspective in Quranic Education

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Abstract

Curriculum innovation in Islamic educational institutions often faces significant challenges when the leadership's strategic vision does not align with stakeholder expectations. This study investigates the development of stakeholder opposition during the Pra PTPT Qiro'ati curriculum transition from six to five volumes at TPQ Madin Al Hidayah and its impact on the execution of curriculum reform. This innovation was developed by the institution's leadership to expedite Quran literacy so that students could focus on the tahfidz program at the golden age of 10–12 years. But this policy caused anxiety among student guardians and led to students transferring to other institutions. Data were collected using a qualitative case study approach through in-depth interviews with 11 informants: one institutional leader, four teachers, and six parents, complemented by classroom observations and document analysis. The results of the research prove that the resistance comes from the failures of the unfreezing stage of change management, where the institution does not communicate the urgency of change effectively. The study also found that institutional leaders were concerned with long-term memorization readiness, and parents evaluated the quality of the curriculum primarily based on observable indicators of reading fluency and mastery of Qur'anic literacy. The difference in educational priorities created the gap in expectations, and this discrepancy caused decreasing trust in stakeholders and more student transfers. The study contributes to the literature on Islamic educational management by showing the importance of stakeholder involvement, internal communication, and trust formation in curriculum reform in Qur'anic educational institutions. Practical implications suggest the necessity of quality transparency and parental involvement in the curriculum transition process to ensure the sustainability of the institution.

Keywords: Change Management; Stakeholder Resistance; Curriculum Innovation; Quranic Education; Student Retention; Institutional Sustainability

Abstrak

Inovasi kurikulum di lembaga pendidikan Islam sering kali menghadapi tantangan besar saat visi strategis pimpinan tidak selaras dengan ekspektasi pemangku kepentingan. Studi ini meneliti perkembangan penentangan pemangku kepentingan selama transisi kurikulum Pra PTPT

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Qiro'ati dari enam menjadi lima jilid di TPQ Madin Al Hidayah dan dampaknya terhadap pelaksanaan reformasi kurikulum. Inovasi ini dikembangkan oleh pimpinan lembaga untuk mempercepat literasi Al-Quran sehingga siswa dapat fokus pada program tahfidz pada usia emas 10-12 tahun. Namun, kebijakan ini menimbulkan kekhawatiran di kalangan wali murid dan menyebabkan siswa pindah ke lembaga lain. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif melalui wawancara mendalam dengan 11 informan: satu pimpinan lembaga, empat guru, dan enam orang tua, dilengkapi dengan observasi kelas dan analisis dokumen. Hasil penelitian membuktikan bahwa resistensi berasal dari kegagalan tahap pencairan manajemen perubahan, di mana lembaga tidak mengkomunikasikan urgensi perubahan secara efektif. Studi ini juga menemukan bahwa pimpinan lembaga prihatin dengan kesiapan hafalan jangka panjang, dan orang tua menilai kualitas kurikulum terutama berdasarkan indikator yang dapat diamati berupa kelancaran membaca dan penguasaan literasi Al-Quran. Perbedaan prioritas pendidikan menciptakan kesenjangan harapan, dan perbedaan ini menyebabkan menurunnya kepercayaan pada pemangku kepentingan dan meningkatnya jumlah siswa yang pindah sekolah. Studi ini berkontribusi pada literatur tentang manajemen pendidikan Islam dengan menunjukkan pentingnya keterlibatan pemangku kepentingan, komunikasi internal, dan pembentukan kepercayaan dalam reformasi kurikulum di lembaga pendidikan Al-Qur'an. Implikasi praktis menunjukkan perlunya transparansi kualitas dan keterlibatan orang tua dalam proses transisi kurikulum untuk memastikan keberlanjutan lembaga tersebut.

Kata kunci : Manajemen Perubahan; Resistensi Pemangku Kepentingan; Inovasi Kurikulum; Pendidikan Al-quran; Retensi Siswa; Keberlanjutan Institusional

I. Introduction

The challenge for Quranic educational institutions at present is to balance the traditions of teaching with the need to innovate the curriculum. But often it is not the pedagogical design itself that is complex, but rather the misalignment between institutional strategic goals and stakeholder expectations. All curriculum change is from a strategic management perspective about increasing added value for students (Boselie & Heijden, 2024; Zighan & EL-Qasem, 2020). However, the transition from conventional to accelerated methods generally causes managerial disruption in the absence of a solid communication plan developed for stakeholders, especially the parents (Leslie et al., 2025).

The institution's long-term vision fails to align with parents' pragmatic expectations, leading to potential issues. Institutional leaders often have the long-term vision of producing a generation of established Quran memorizers (tahfidz) by the golden age of 10-12. The vision is considered a progressive innovation that will accelerate the transition from basic literacy to memorization. However, for parents, this speeding up of material is often considered to neglect the quality of reading comprehension, which is the main foundation (Shofiyyah et al., 2023). This difference in perception has led to resistance from stakeholders. The results of the initial findings indicated that the implementation of the Pra Pendidikan Terpadu Pasca Taman Pendidikan Al-Qur'an (Pra PTPT) Qiro'ati program resulted in widespread unrest, and some parents moved their children to other institutions. This student attrition phenomenon is an indicator of change management failure (Alanoglu et al., 2022; Idogawa et al., 2023). Parents felt that

the old 6-volume method was more likely to ensure that children read well. The 5-volume method was too demanding without a strong process.

Previous literature has explored various facets of educational innovation, yet empirical evidence on stakeholder resistance, particularly regarding religious curriculum transitions, remains sparse. First, research by Iskandar & Buhaimi (2025) shows that parental involvement is a determining factor in the successful execution of a new curriculum. Without a shared understanding, innovation will be viewed as a burden for students. Second, the study by Shofiyyah et al. (2023) also shows that the effectiveness of Qur'anic learning with the Qiro'ati method is very dependent on managerial standardization but is often hampered by the psychological readiness of the school environment. Furthermore, a third study by Barrio (2022) demonstrated that school management focused on long-term goals (e.g., memorizing the Quran by age 10-12) often does not align with the short-term needs of parents who focus on immediate evidence of their children's cognitive abilities. Although these studies have examined parental involvement, effectiveness of learning, and educational management, little attention has been paid to the emergence and development of stakeholder resistance in the context of curriculum acceleration initiatives in Qur'anic educational institutions. Moreover, prior research has not explored how mismatches between institutional goals and parental expectations specifically affect responses to the transition from a six-volume to a five-volume Qur'anic literacy curriculum. This gap points to the need for a more specific investigation into change management processes in Qur'anic educational institutions.

In this regard, the leadership of the institution argued that the reduction of the number of volumes (from 6 to 5) was a curriculum efficiency measure to prepare children for early memorization of the Quran. The idea was that when the students reached the age of 10–12, they would no longer worry about technical reading but would have entered the intensive memorization period. This innovation was theoretically beneficial for developing future memorizers of the Quran, but in practice, it raised doubts about the quality of basic reading (Farohi et al., 2024; Syafrinal, 2025).

Parental anxiety that led them to change their educational institutions shows that the quality of service in educational management is assessed not only by the final result but also by the convenience of the process (Chen et al., 2022). If parents prefer the previous method, it may be due to a status quo bias, where the current practice is perceived as more reliable because it has been tried and tested over time. If such concerns are not adequately addressed through effective stakeholder engagement and communication strategies, they may influence stakeholder trust and institutional sustainability (Hofman et al., 2022).

While there is an increasing body of literature on innovation in the curriculum, parental involvement in schools, and change management in education, little research

has been conducted on stakeholder resistance to curriculum change in Qur'anic schools, especially in the transition from the six-volume to the five-volume Pra PTPT Qiro'ati approach. Stakeholder resistance formation, negotiation, and manifestation, particularly during the implementation of accelerated Quranic learning programs, remain largely unknown. In addition, empirical evidence on the extent to which expectation gaps between institutional leadership and parents influence stakeholder trust, acceptance of innovation, and outcomes of curriculum implementation is still lacking. To fill this gap, this study attempts to answer the following research questions: How do parents react to the change from the six-volume to the five-volume Pra PTPT Qiro'ati method? What change management factors cause stakeholder resistance? And what is the effect of the expectation gap between institutional leadership and parents on the implementation of curriculum reform?

The study is informed by a number of complementary theoretical perspectives. These include Lewin's (1947) change management model, Mitchell et al.'s (1997) Stakeholder Salience Theory, Berry's (1995) Internal Marketing Theory, and the Total Quality Management perspective. Lewin's model is used to analyze the communication and implementation of the curriculum transition; Stakeholder Salience Theory helps explain the role of parents as influential stakeholders in the change process; Internal Marketing Theory provides a framework for the role of teachers in communicating institutional policies; and the Total Quality Management perspective aids in the interpretation of stakeholder perceptions of educational quality. Collectively, these frameworks offer a holistic lens to understand the emergence of stakeholder resistance in curriculum reform in the Qur'anic educational institutions.

Based on these questions, this study aims to analyze the forms of stakeholder resistance associated with the curriculum transition, identify the change management factors underlying such resistance, and examine the influence of expectation gaps on the implementation of curriculum innovation in Qur'anic educational institutions. This study contributes to the growing literature on Islamic educational management by providing empirical evidence on the influence of stakeholder expectations on the responses to curriculum reform, especially on the five-volume Pra PTPT Qiro'ati curriculum at TPQ Madin Al Hidayah. The study also sheds light on the relationship between change management practices, stakeholder trust, and the implementation of educational innovation in Qur'anic educational institutions.

II. Research Method

This research uses a qualitative approach with an intrinsic case study design to explore the phenomenon of stakeholder resistance to curriculum change in a Qur'anic educational institution (Hilliger et al., 2024; Qusairi, 2024). The choice of qualitative methods is based on the need to deeply understand human perspectives, the meaning

behind actions, and the social dynamics that occur between the institution's leaders and the students' guardians. By focusing on a single educational entity undergoing a method transition, this research can capture the emotional and managerial complexities that cannot be explained solely through statistical figures.

The research was conducted at TPQ Madin Al Hidayah, a Qur'anic educational institution that has implemented the Pra PTPT Qiro'ati curriculum transition from six volumes to five volumes since 2022 and continues to apply the program at the time of this study. The institution operates as a community-based Islamic educational organization providing Qur'anic literacy and religious instruction for children at the elementary level. The selection of this site was based on its direct experience in implementing curriculum reform and encountering stakeholder responses related to the policy. Providing these institutional characteristics enables readers to assess the transferability of the findings to similar Qur'anic educational settings. Informants were determined using a purposive sampling technique to ensure that the data obtained came from parties directly involved in the policy conflict (Dasopang et al., 2023; Pahwa et al., 2023). A total of eleven informants participated in this study, consisting of one institutional leader responsible for curriculum policy, four teachers directly involved in implementing the five-volume method, and six parents, including parents who continued supporting the program and those who expressed objections to the curriculum transition. Key informants consisted of the institution's leadership as strategic policymakers, teachers as technical implementers of the curriculum, and a group of parents of students who expressed objections or transferred their children to other institutions in protest of the new policy.

The main data collection technique was in-depth, semi-structured interviews (Kircher & Zipp, 2022; Wong et al., 2023). The interview process was created to explore the leadership's long-term vision for memorization goals for students ages 10 to 12 and to address parents' concerns about their children's basic reading skills. The researcher acted as the key instrument. A persuasive approach was used so that informants could provide honest answers without pressure from the hierarchical structure in the educational institution. Fieldwork was undertaken between January and April 2025. This time frame was selected because it allowed the researcher to explore the perceptions of stakeholders after a few years of implementing the Pra-PTPT policy, during which the effects of the curriculum transition were still actively felt by teachers, institutional leaders, and parents.

Besides the interviews, the researchers also conducted participatory observations of the classroom learning process using the five-volume method (Beyessa, 2023; Hermanowicz, 2024). The observations aimed to see how teachers and students interacted and if there were any technical difficulties that made it challenging for students

to learn to read. The observational data provided context and support for the interview findings about stakeholder perspectives on the quality of learning, curriculum implementation in the classroom, and student learning progress during the transition. These observational data triangulated and corroborated the claims of students' guardians about their students' inability to recite the Quran after the introduction of the curriculum innovation.

Documentation was also used to strengthen the validity of the research data (Hubert et al., 2025; Morgan, 2022). Researchers gathered attendance records, student transfer data from the past year, and the Pra PTPT curriculum document, which was at the center of the debate. By reviewing internal statistics on student departures, the researchers were able to map the scale of the impact of this change management policy on the institution's operational stability. These documents provided context about stakeholders' responses to curriculum reform and helped triangulate interview and observation data. The quantitative statement on the increase in student turnover reported in the findings section was obtained from institutional administrative records. The figure was calculated by comparing the number of students who dropped out of the institution in the semester before the implementation period, which was taken as the baseline, with the number in the subsequent observation period. This statistic is presented descriptively to provide context for stakeholder responses and is not intended for statistical generalization.

In this study, the data validity was ensured through the use of source and technical triangulation methods (Morgan, 2024; Papavasileiou & Dimou, 2024). Triangulation was done by comparing statements of leaders, classroom realities, and parents' perceptions to find common ground or gaps that could be the root of the problem. The researcher also conducted member checking by verifying the interview results with the informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretations aligned with the original intent of the informants.

Data analysis was conducted inductively following an interactive analysis model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Bingham, 2023; Nicmanis, 2024). Consistent with the intrinsic case study design, thematic coding was employed to identify patterns and meanings within the data. The analysis proceeded through three iterative stages: initial coding to identify recurring statements and significant experiences, category development to group related concepts into broader themes, and thematic interpretation to construct explanations regarding stakeholder resistance, expectation gaps, and curriculum implementation challenges. The themes generated through this process informed the presentation of findings, including the comparative summaries presented in Tables 1 and 2. The researchers identified key themes emerging from the interviews, such as communication failure, quality uncertainty, and conflicting educational orientations. These themes were subsequently interpreted through the analytical lenses of Lewin's change management model,

stakeholder salience theory, internal marketing theory, and the total quality management perspective to explain the dynamics of curriculum reform in the studied institution.

III. Result and Discussion

A. Research Findings

1. The Innovation Paradox: Strategi Vision vs Pragmatic Expectations

Research findings indicate a fundamental disconnect between the strategic vision of institutional leaders and the pragmatic expectations of student guardians. Institutional leaders view the transition from the 6-volume method to the 5-volume method (pre-PTPT) as a managerial necessity to achieve curriculum efficiency. The main goal of this policy is to make the technical foundation for reading shorter so that students have more spare time to start the tahfidz phase at the right age, which is between 10 and 12 years old. The leaders believe that delays in the basic literacy phase will hinder the achievement of memorization targets in early adolescence. Interview data from institutional leaders consistently emphasized the expectation that earlier completion of reading stages would provide additional time for students to develop memorization competencies.

In an interview, the Head of the Institution (Informant 1) emphasized:

"We are not compromising on quality. This innovation is our response to contemporary needs. We aim for students to go beyond just reading skills." If they are still struggling with basic volumes when they are 10 years old, then the golden momentum for memorization will be lost. Our target is clear: by the age of 12, students must have a strong memorization of savings concepts. "This 5-volume method serves as the direct pathway to achieving that target."

This statement reflects a future-oriented educational strategy in which curriculum efficiency is viewed as a mechanism for accelerating students' transition from foundational literacy to advanced memorization competencies. The interview data indicate that institutional leaders consistently framed the curriculum transition as a long-term educational investment intended to increase students' readiness for the tahfidz stage. However, the interview data also suggest that the rationale underlying this policy was not uniformly understood by other stakeholder groups, creating conditions for divergent interpretations of educational quality.

However, interview and observation data revealed that some parents perceived the curriculum transition differently from institutional leaders. Parents generally viewed Qur'anic literacy as a foundational competency that should be firmly established before students progressed to memorization activities. Several parents expressed concerns that accelerated progression through learning materials might affect reading fluency and tajwid accuracy.

Interview data from parents revealed concerns about the pace of learning under the five-volume method. Some parents contended that accelerated progress through the learning materials did not consistently yield proportional enhancements in reading

fluency and tajwid accuracy. This perception contributed to differences in evaluations of educational quality between institutional leaders and parents.

Table 1. Comparison of Stakeholder Perceptions Regarding the Six-Volume and Five-Volume Methods

Aspect	Six-Volume Method	Five-Volume Method
Learning Pace	Gradual	Accelerated
Parent Perception	More thorough	Faster but less certain
Reading Fluency	Perceived as stronger	Perceived as variable
Tahfidz Preparation	Longer preparation period	Earlier transition to memorization
Stakeholder Acceptance	Generally accepted	Mixed responses

Table 1 was developed through thematic analysis of interview data obtained from six parent informants, four teachers, and one institutional leader. The categories presented reflect recurring themes identified during the coding process and were further corroborated through classroom observations and institutional documents related to the implementation of the five-volume Pra-PTPT curriculum.

2. Stakeholder Anxiety and The Phenomenon of Psychological Resistance

The resistance emerging among students' guardians is not simply a rejection of innovations new, but rather a form of psychological anxiety resulting from the loss of the quality standards they believe in. In change management theory, this phenomenon is referred to as a perceived loss of quality. Interview and observation data indicate that concerns were primarily directed toward the maintenance of reading competence rather than opposition to curriculum innovation itself. This anxiety is further exacerbated by the discovery that many students, administratively ranked at a higher level, are still unable to read the Quran fluently according to community standards.

One of the guardians (Informant 2) who transferred his child stated:

"I believe the quality of my child's Quranic studies has diminished since transitioning to this 5-volume system." His progress in reading the Al Qur'an has indeed increased rapidly, but when asked to read the Quran at home, my child still stutters. I prefer the old method (6 volumes) because the process is more thorough. I only need my child to memorize quickly if he can read it correctly. Ultimately, I chose to transfer to another madrasah that still uses the old system to provide a strong foundation."

The quotation reveals that stakeholder concerns focus not on opposing innovation, but on the uncertainty surrounding the preservation of expected learning outcomes. The data suggest that parents evaluate educational quality primarily through observable indicators such as reading fluency and tajweed accuracy. Consequently, accelerated progression through learning stages is not automatically interpreted as educational improvement when evidence of competency mastery remains unclear.

The results provide an answer to the first research question by suggesting that parents' responses to the curriculum change were largely motivated by concerns about the maintenance of fundamental reading skills, rather than a blanket rejection of educational innovation. The findings also indicate that stakeholder dissatisfaction occurred when expectations about learning outcomes differ from observed experiences. The interview data suggest that parents often spoke about reading quality, which contributed to the wider circulation of uncertainty about the curriculum transition.

The findings of the interview show that dissatisfaction occurred when stakeholders saw a gap between the expected and actual learning outcomes. Some parents also reported talking to other parents about these concerns, indicating that stakeholders' perceptions were influenced not only by individual experiences but also by interactions within the wider parent community.

The analysis of the interviews indicates that differing definitions of educational success contribute to the tension. Institutional leaders have an interest in future memorization outcomes; parents are more concerned with quality as measured by present and observable performance indicators. This divergence adds to an expectation gap that informs stakeholder resistance.

3. Communication Management and The Crisis of Trust

Research data indicate that some parents felt they had not received sufficient information regarding the objectives, implementation procedures, and expected outcomes of the curriculum transition. Institutional leaders tend to make top-down decisions without involving parents in a thorough socialization process regarding the urgency of the curriculum reform. Consequently, differing interpretations of the policy emerged among stakeholder groups.

A teacher (Informant 3) provided his perspective on the pressures in the classroom:

"We're in a difficult position. On the one hand, the leadership is demanding that we quickly complete these five volumes so the children can enter the tahfidz program. On the other hand, we see the children overwhelmed because the material is too big a leap. Parents keep asking why their children aren't fluent even though they're already at the higher levels. We feel this innovation is a beneficial vision, but it lacks thorough implementation and communication with parents."

The teacher's statement highlights the role of frontline implementers as intermediaries between policy formulation and stakeholder acceptance. Interview data indicate that teachers frequently occupied a mediating position between institutional expectations and parental concerns. Several teachers reported challenges in explaining the objectives of the curriculum transition while simultaneously addressing questions regarding student readiness and learning outcomes.

Across interviews, teachers reported challenges in simultaneously fulfilling institutional expectations for curriculum implementation and responding to parental concerns regarding student readiness. These findings suggest that teachers occupied a mediating position between policy implementation and stakeholder acceptance.

Taken together, the interview findings suggest that communication challenges occurred not only between institutional leaders and parents but also within the implementation process itself. These challenges influenced how the curriculum reform was understood and interpreted by different stakeholder groups.

4. Impact on Institutional Sustainability and Branding

The real impact of this policy is the migration of students to competing institutions that still use the 6-volume method. Document analysis and interview data suggest that student transfers became one of the observable responses to the curriculum transition. Several parents reported choosing alternative institutions because they perceived the previous learning model to be more consistent with their educational expectations.

Document analysis of institutional enrollment records indicated that the number of student transfers during the first semester following implementation of the five-volume curriculum was approximately 25% higher than during the preceding semester. As described in the methodology section, this figure was derived from a comparison of institutional transfer records and is presented solely as contextual evidence supporting qualitative findings rather than as a basis for statistical inference. The increase is therefore reported descriptively to illustrate the institutional context in which stakeholder resistance occurred.

The leadership again defended this phenomenon:

"Perhaps the phenomenon is natural selection. We want guardians who share our vision. It's true that some have moved on, but we're confident that those who remain will see the results when their children are 10-12 years old. They'll be grateful that they've finished reading early and can focus on memorizing."

This statement may be interpreted as reflecting a strong commitment to maintaining the institution's strategic vision despite stakeholder criticism. At the same time, the interview data suggest the presence of differing assumptions regarding the relative importance of stakeholder alignment and organizational mission consistency. These findings address the second research question by indicating that communication processes, stakeholder involvement, and differing perceptions of educational quality were among the principal factors contributing to stakeholder resistance during the curriculum transition.

Results from interviews, observations, and document analysis converge to show that the resistance among stakeholders was due to the different meanings of quality in

education, poor communication of the purpose of curriculum reform, and fears regarding the maintenance of basic reading skills.

Collectively, the results suggest that stakeholder groups had different interpretations of curriculum innovation. Institutional leaders pointed to long-term educational outcomes, teachers identified implementation challenges, and parents generally focused on observable indicators of reading competence. These different perspectives contributed to building stakeholder resistance during the curriculum transition process. The findings also speak to the third research question, demonstrating that expectation gaps between institutional leadership and parents had a significant association with stakeholder acceptance of curriculum reform.

5. Summary Findings

The findings suggest that the way in which the curriculum innovation was communicated, implemented, and evaluated, rather than the content of the innovation itself, influenced the acceptance by stakeholders. In all groups, informants voiced concern about the quality of reading, the readiness to memorize, and the processes of communication. The themes identified above demonstrate the centrality of expectation alignment in shaping the responses of stakeholders to the reform of the curriculum of the Qur'anic schools.

Table 2. Summary of Key Findings by Informant Group

Informant Group	Main Concern	Main Expectation
Institutional Leader	Delayed tahfidz readiness	Earlier memorization achievement
Teachers	Classroom implementation challenges	Balanced curriculum expectations
Parents	Reading quality and fluency	Strong literacy foundation

Table 2 summarizes the themes that emerged from the coding and categorizing of the interview transcripts. The themes are dominant patterns across informant groups, verified through source triangulation of interviews, observations, and institutional documentation. The Table comparative summary reveals that the different stakeholder groups viewed the curriculum transition from different perspectives. Institutional leaders stressed the importance of memorization for the future, while parents worried more about current indicators of reading proficiency, and teachers discussed the challenges of implementation. These differing priorities created the expectation gap identified in the findings.

B. Discussion

The phenomenon of resistance from parents to the transition of the Pra PTPT Qiro'ati method from six to five volumes is an illustration of the challenges associated with managing curriculum change in faith-based educational organizations (Prisco et al., 2025;

Rahman & Mustapha, 2025). Theoretically, the leadership of the institution has a strategic-forward mindset, making decisions based on future projections, especially the readiness of students to memorize the Qur'an at the age of 10–12. However, diverging stakeholder expectations have met this policy, as parents generally prioritize short-term evidence of reading proficiency. Findings indicate that the discrepancy between the long-term educational goals of the leadership and the short-term expectations of the parents caused stakeholder resistance and decisions to transfer students to other institutions. This finding is in line with Barrio (2022), who found that educational innovations with long-term effects often face resistance when stakeholders value immediate and demonstrable learning results.

Findings analyzed using Lewin's (1947) theory of change management suggest that challenges occurred mainly in the unfreezing stage of the change process. This phase should include efforts to build stakeholder readiness and understanding for the rationale for curriculum reform. Despite some stakeholders' uncertainty about the intended benefits, the leadership implemented the curriculum transition. For example, parents' interview data showed that they were worried that reducing the number of volumes from six to five could weaken students' reading fluency and mastery of Tajwid. Such concerns indicate that the stakeholders had not yet fully accepted the reasoning behind the curriculum reform process, which Lewin (1947) calls incomplete unfreezing. Thus, some parents saw the change as a threat to the current levels of proficiency in Qur'anic reading, rather than as an educational improvement.

Interventions implemented by leaders under the guise of innovation for long-term memorization often ignore the psychological contract between the institution and parents (Knapp et al., 2024; Xueyun et al., 2023). Parents enroll their children with the basic expectation that their children will be able to read the Al-Qur'an fluently. When the method is shortened to five volumes, and the results are deemed less fluent than the six-volume method, parents feel the institution has breached its service promise. This interpretation is reflected in parents' interview statements expressing concerns that children were progressing more quickly through the curriculum without sufficient evidence of reading mastery. The findings indicate that perceived inconsistencies between stakeholder expectations and observed learning outcomes may contribute to declining trust in the institution.

Mitchell et al.'s (1997) Stakeholder Salience Theory may explain why this widespread anxiety exists. Parents are stakeholders with power (the ability to transfer children) and legitimacy (the right to demand quality). The findings suggest that the first phase of the curriculum transition process did not adequately consider parental concerns. The interview data support this interpretation, with several parents expressing that they were not well informed of the goals and expected outcomes of the five-volume curriculum. The subsequent movement of students to other institutions is a

demonstration of the exercise of stakeholder power in response to perceived dissatisfaction. The leadership's limited response to initial concerns may have contributed to the growing dissatisfaction of stakeholders, turning initially concerned (expectant) stakeholders into dominant and vocal opponents of the policy.

Regarding the target age of 10-12, the leadership was pedagogically correct in that acceleration was needed to allow children more time to memorize. The challenge managerially appears to lie in aligning the communication of long-term educational goals with stakeholders' immediate expectations. They attempted to sell the future benefits of accelerated tahfidz preparation, but parents wanted to see evidence now that their children could read. Andreasen (1997) and Kotler et al. (2022), in their theory of marketing educational services, state that tangible outcomes, such as reading and fluency, which are currently falling, are hard to accept if intangible outcomes, such as future memorization ability, are not met. This study's findings lend support to this argument as parents consistently judged the curriculum reform on the basis of observable reading performance rather than projected memorization outcomes. This finding also corroborates Barrio (2022), who reported that parents are inclined to value short-term evidence of learning achievement over long-term educational forecasts.

Furthermore, the phenomenon of students changing educational institutions indicates low switching costs. Parents perceive the quality of the 5-volume method as lacking a competitive advantage over older methods or competing institutions. Document analysis and interview findings indicate that some parents responded to dissatisfaction by transferring their children to other Qur'anic educational institutions. Rather than merely reflecting dissatisfaction with the curriculum structure itself, these decisions appear to represent stakeholder responses to perceived uncertainty regarding learning outcomes. This finding supports Mitchell et al.'s (1997) argument that stakeholders possessing both legitimacy and decision-making power can significantly influence organizational processes when their concerns are not adequately addressed.

From a Total Quality Management (TQM) perspective, the customer, not the producer, defines quality (Helmold, 2023; Talha, 2004). If parents feel that the children are not yet able to recite the Al-Quran well, then by definition, the TQM program may still fall short of stakeholders' expectations for educational quality. Leaders must provide solid evidence of competency achievement to support curriculum innovation. Positive innovation in educational management is innovation that can increase efficiency without reducing the effectiveness of achieving basic competencies (Ibarra-Cisneros et al., 2023). This finding is consistent with Chen et al. (2022), who found that observable learning outcomes have a significant effect on stakeholder perceptions of service quality. In the current study, the parental concerns were not primarily about opposition to innovation per se, but rather about doubts concerning competency attainment.

The communication gap in this study can also be explained by the communication gap theory in the service quality model. There is a wide gap in the perception of management on the expectations of parents and the quality specifications that they set (Özispa, 2025). Leadership thought that parents would be happy with fast progression to the tahfidz stage, but parents valued a thorough, if slow, approach. These findings suggest a mismatch between managerial assumptions and stakeholder expectations, which may have contributed to the resistance to the curriculum reform. This result builds on the work done by Shofiyyah et al. (2023), which stressed the importance of managerial preparedness for Qur'anic learning programs. The present study proposes that managerial readiness should also involve the effective communication and managing expectations of stakeholders in the course of curriculum reform.

The next intervention solution is to strengthen the role of middle management (teachers and method coordinators). Teachers are the ones who interact most frequently with parents. However, findings indicate that even teachers are skeptical about this new method. According to internal marketing theory (Berry, 1995) management must first secure buy-in and understanding from internal stakeholders (teachers) before communicating an idea to external customers (parents). Several teachers reported difficulty in explaining the rationale for the curriculum change to parents, suggesting that alignment within the organization was not yet complete. This finding is consistent with Berry's (1995) argument that successful external communication is contingent on prior internal acceptance of organizational change. Similar findings complement Iskandar and Buhaimi (2025), who found stakeholder involvement as a prerequisite for successful curriculum implementation. Limited alignment among teachers in the present case seems to have reduced the effectiveness of communication with parents during the transition process.

In relation to the organizational learning theory of Argyris & Schön (1997), the results underline the importance of ongoing assessment and adjustment during the process of curriculum reform. The increase in student transfers recorded in institutional files and the constant concerns expressed by parents can be viewed as feedback signals that organizations can use to revisit implementation strategies. An evidence-based approach to organizational learning might facilitate the reconciliation of the institutional goals of innovation with stakeholder expectations. This finding extends the work of Argyris and Schön (1997) by showing how organizational learning processes work in the context of Qur'anic educational institutions undergoing curriculum change. The findings suggest that the resistance of stakeholders should not be viewed as an impediment to innovation but as a source of organizational feedback that can guide future curriculum development efforts.

This research also confirms that in Qur'anic education management, the spiritual dimension cannot be separated from the professional managerial dimension. Leaders

must understand that for parents, reciting the Al-Qur'an is an act of worship. When they feel the quality of their children's worship is threatened by curriculum experiments, their response may become highly emotional and value-driven. Interview data indicate that parental concerns were often framed not only in terms of educational effectiveness but also in terms of religious responsibility and the obligation to ensure correct Qur'anic reading. Therefore, the management approach used must not be solely technocratic but must also address the sociological and religious aspects of the local community.

Overall, the discussion demonstrates that stakeholder resistance toward the five-volume Pra PTPT Qiro'ati curriculum was shaped by the interaction of change management processes, stakeholder expectations, perceptions of educational quality, and communication practices. The findings suggest that curriculum reform in Qur'anic educational institutions is influenced not only by pedagogical considerations but also by the institution's ability to establish trust, communicate objectives, and maintain alignment between long-term educational goals and stakeholder expectations.

IV. Conclusion

This study found that the differences in interpreting educational quality among institutional leaders, teachers, and parents influenced the stakeholder resistance to the transition from the six-volume to the five-volume Pra PTPT Qiro'ati curriculum at TPQ Madin Al Hidayah. Institutional leaders focused on long-term goals of students' tahfidz readiness at ages 10–12, while parents focused on the curriculum based on observable measures of Qur'anic reading fluency and mastery of foundational competencies. The results suggest that the resistance was not an issue of the innovation itself but rather of concerns for maintaining the quality of learning and of insufficient communication about the reasons for and expected consequences of the curriculum reform. Thus, the curriculum transition created an expectation gap that impacted the stakeholders' trust and acceptance of the innovation.

The results add to the literature on Islamic educational management by demonstrating that curriculum reform in Qur'anic educational institutions is not only driven by pedagogical considerations but also by change management processes, stakeholder salience, internal communication, and perceptions of educational quality. The analysis of this study from the perspective of Lewin's change management model, stakeholder salience theory, internal marketing theory, and the total quality management perspective highlights the importance of aligning institutional objectives with stakeholder expectations in the process of educational innovation. Practical implications of the findings include that curriculum reform should be accompanied by transparent communication, meaningful stakeholder engagement, continuous evaluation of learning outcomes, and stronger internal alignment among educational personnel to enhance stakeholder confidence in the change process.

This research focuses solely on case studies conducted at TPQ Madin Al Hidayah. Therefore, we should interpret the research results within the context of the institution under study. Furthermore, this study only examines the perceptions of the stakeholders during the process of the curriculum transition and does not investigate the long-term learning outcomes of the students who have experienced the five-volume program. Future research may include comparative case studies across more than one Qur'anic educational institution or employ a longitudinal design to explore the long-term impact of accelerated Qur'anic literacy programs on reading proficiency as well as tahfidz achievement. Such studies would contribute to expanding our understanding of curriculum innovation and stakeholder management in Islamic education settings.

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