

Development of an Islamic Values-Based Quality Assurance Model for Strengthening Quality Culture in Pesantren: A Bibliometric and Conceptual Approach

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ABSTRACT

Strengthening a culture of quality remains a major challenge in the management of Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) amid increasing demands for accountability, competitiveness, and compliance with educational quality standards. Existing quality assurance models have generally adopted conventional approaches and have not fully integrated Islamic values as the foundation of institutional governance. This study aims to develop an Islamic values-based quality assurance model for strengthening the quality culture in pesantren through a literature review supported by bibliometric analysis. This study employed a qualitative literature review design combined with bibliometric analysis. A total of 236 publications were initially identified from the Scopus database, of which 203 journal articles met the screening criteria and were analyzed using VOSviewer version 1.6.20 to map publication trends, author collaboration, keyword co-occurrence, and emerging research themes related to quality assurance, quality culture, Islamic values, and pesantren. The findings reveal that research on quality assurance and quality culture has grown substantially over the past decade. However, studies integrating Islamic values into quality assurance models for pesantren remain limited and fragmented. Based on these findings, this study proposes a conceptual quality assurance model that integrates the principles of amanah, ihsan, itqan, shura, istiqamah, and continuous quality improvement throughout the quality assurance cycle. The proposed model contributes theoretically by extending the quality assurance discourse through the integration of Islamic values and offers a contextual framework for strengthening sustainable quality culture in Islamic boarding schools. The model is expected to serve as a strategic reference for pesantren administrators, policymakers, and future researchers in developing quality assurance systems that are value-based, sustainable, and globally competitive.

1. INTRODUCTION

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) are educational institutions characterized by their integration of religious education, character building, and leadership development grounded in Islamic values. The increasingly competitive educational landscape compels these institutions to strengthen their governance through quality assurance systems capable of ensuring accountability, sustainability, and enhanced service quality (Lathifah et al., 2025). However, implementing quality assurance remains challenging, as institutions must reconcile the demands of modern quality

standards with the Islamic values that define their core identity. This makes pesantren institutions with unique characteristics in integrating tradition, spiritual values, and institutional innovation (Jallow, 2023). This assertion is further supported by findings that pesantren continue to maintain their primary function as centers of Islamic education while simultaneously adapting to developments in modern education (Awaliyah et al., 2026). Study of (Aimah & Nasih, 2023) by documents or procedures but also by the organizational culture that is embodied in daily activities (Marlina, Awaliyah, Oktri, et al., 2026). The success of a quality assurance system is determined not merely by the existence of standards, procedures, or evaluation mechanisms, but also by the establishment of a quality culture embodied in the collective commitment of the entire pesantren community (Nadiastuti et al., 2024).

A quality culture serves as a vital foundation for continuous quality improvement, as it encourages every organizational element to internalize values, responsibilities, and a commitment to ongoing enhancement. Consequently, strengthening this quality culture is a strategic priority in developing pesantren governance that is adaptive while simultaneously preserving its Islamic identity. The results of this mapping indicate that academic attention to quality assurance in Islamic boarding schools is increasing, but studies that specifically develop quality assurance models based on Islamic values remain very limited (Marlina, 2024). Previous research has focused primarily on mapping research trends, implementing quality assurance systems, modernizing Islamic boarding schools, and integrating Islamic boarding schools into the national education system (Laili et al., 2026). Research on quality assurance in Islamic educational institutions continues to evolve, including through bibliometric approaches that map publication trends, scholarly collaboration, and the development of research themes. Nevertheless, the majority of studies still focus on the implementation of quality assurance systems, the modernization of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools), leadership, or the mapping of research trends. Studies that specifically integrate Islamic values as a conceptual foundation for developing quality assurance models aimed at strengthening the culture of quality within pesantren remain very limited (Saefulmilah et al., 2026). This study is significant because it proposes the development of a quality assurance model based on Islamic values, formulated through a synthesis of literature review findings and bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer (Li & Rohayati, 2023). The resulting model is expected to strengthen the culture of quality in Islamic boarding schools in a more contextually appropriate manner, preserve Islamic identity, and make a conceptual contribution to the development of quality assurance systems for Islamic education in Indonesia. Given these circumstances there is a significant research gap. Previous studies have tended to address quality assurance, quality culture, leadership, and Islamic values in isolation, failing to produce a conceptual model that integrates all these aspects within the framework of pesantren quality assurance. This study addresses that gap by combining bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer with a conceptual review to develop an Islamic Values-Based Quality Assurance Model. This model integrates the values of amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (excellence/benevolence), itqan (precision/mastery), syura (consultation), and istiqamah (steadfastness) into the entire quality assurance cycle. The model is expected not only to strengthen the fulfillment of institutional quality standards but also to foster a quality culture rooted in Islamic values, which serve as the defining characteristic of the pesantren.

2. METHODS

Research Design

This study employs a qualitative approach using a literature review design combined with bibliometric analysis. This approach was chosen because the study aims to develop a conceptual model of quality assurance based on Islamic values through a synthesis of published scientific knowledge. Library research allows the researcher to systematically identify, evaluate, and integrate

various concepts, theories, and research findings regarding quality assurance, quality culture, Islamic values, and Islamic boarding schools (Lan & Shizhu, 2025). The bibliometric approach serves to map the development of scientific knowledge, the relationships between research topics, and to identify research gaps that form the basis for the development of the conceptual model (Haruna et al., 2025). The data sources were scientific articles indexed in Scopus and Google Scholar. The literature search was conducted using the keywords “quality assurance,” “quality culture,” “Islamic values,” “Islamic boarding school,” and “pesantren,” along with Boolean operators (AND and OR). Priority was given to internationally and nationally reputable articles published between 2015 and 2026 to ensure the literature reflects the latest developments in the field.

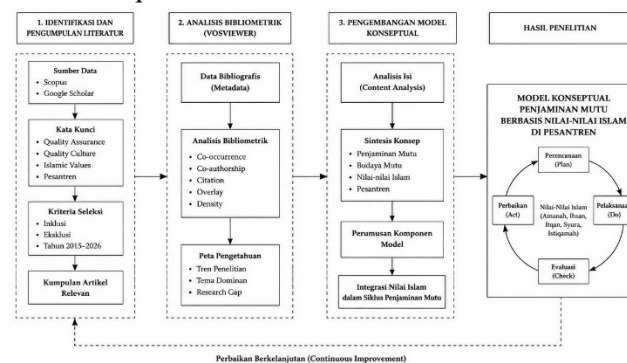


Figure 1. Research Conceptual

Bibliometric Analysis

Bibliometric analysis was conducted using VOSviewer software, version 1.6.20, to visualize the intellectual structure of research on quality assurance in Islamic boarding schools. This technique is widely used in scientific mapping studies because it can identify relationships between keywords (co-occurrence), author collaborations (co-authorship), citation networks, and the evolution of research themes based on publication year (overlay visualization) (Busro et al., 2021). Article metadata was obtained using the Publish or Perish application before being imported into VOSviewer. The analysis results were visualized in the form of network visualizations, overlay visualizations, and density visualizations to illustrate research clusters, dominant themes, and opportunities for further research (Ding & Yang, 2022).

Development of a Conceptual Model

The model was developed through a process of conceptual synthesis based on the results of bibliometric analysis and an in-depth literature review. This stage employed the content analysis technique as described by (Hakim et al., 2021), which involves identifying key themes, grouping related concepts, and then organizing the relationships among the components into a comprehensive conceptual framework. The resulting model integrates modern quality assurance principles with Islamic values such as amanah, ihsan, itqan, shura, istiqamah, and continuous quality improvement as the foundation for fostering a culture of quality in Islamic boarding schools (Andini et al., 2024). The conceptual validity of the model is strengthened through a process of theoretical triangulation by comparing various findings from previous research, ensuring that the resulting model has a strong academic foundation and is relevant to the institutional characteristics of Islamic boarding schools.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

RESULTS

A literature search was conducted in the Scopus database using a combination of the keywords “quality assurance,” “quality culture,” “Islamic values,” and “pesantren.” The search yielded 236 documents related to the research topic. The screening stage was carried out by considering the relevance of the title, abstract, keywords, document type, and publication year range, resulting in 203

articles that met the criteria for further analysis. All metadata was then exported in ris format and processed using VOSviewer software version 1.6.20 to generate a bibliometric map. The range of publications indicates that research on quality assurance in Islamic education has developed quite rapidly over the past decade. The increase in the number of publications occurred primarily after 2020, in line with growing attention to educational governance, organizational quality culture, institutional transformation, and the integration of Islamic values into educational management systems. These conditions indicate that quality assurance is no longer understood as an administrative tool but rather as an institutional strategy for building the competitiveness and sustainability of Islamic educational institutions. The dataset used is considered representative of the development of research on quality assurance in Islamic educational institutions. The relatively large number of articles allows for the analysis of relationships among keywords, the identification of dominant themes, the mapping of scholarly collaborations, and the identification of research gaps that form the basis for the development of an Islamic-values-based quality assurance model in this study.

Table 1. Characteristics of the Bibliometric Dataset

Component	Result
Database	Scopus
Search tool	Publish or Perish
Analysis tool	VOSviewer 1.6.20
Publication range	2015–2026
Initial Search Results	236 articles
Articles After Screening	203 articles
Document Type	Journal articles
Language	English
Metadata Format	RIS
Analysis Focus	Co-occurrence, Overlay, Density, Co-authorship

The literature selection process yielded 203 articles that met the research criteria. This dataset is considered sufficient to illustrate the knowledge structure regarding quality assurance based on Islamic values while also providing an empirical basis for bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer. The relatively large number of publications also enhances the reliability of keyword network mapping and the identification of trends in research topics.

Network Visualization Analysis

The results of the network visualization analysis show that the relationships between keywords in research on educational quality assurance form several interconnected clusters. Each cluster represents a research theme that emerges based on the frequency of occurrence and the strength of links between concepts. The larger the node size, the higher the frequency of a keyword's appearance in scientific publications, while the connecting lines indicate the degree of interconnection between topics within the research network. The visualization shows that the keyword "quality assurance" occupies the most central position in the bibliometric network. This position demonstrates that quality assurance serves as the primary theme connecting various other concepts, such as "quality culture," "higher education," "education management," "quality management," "Islamic education," and "continuous quality improvement." The dominance of this keyword indicates that most research remains focused on strengthening quality assurance systems as a mechanism for improving institutional quality. This focus has evolved alongside growing attention to accountable, effective, and sustainable governance of educational organizations. A fairly strong relationship was also observed between quality assurance and quality culture. This indicates that the implementation of quality assurance systems is not only aimed at meeting formal standards but is beginning to shift

toward fostering an organizational culture that supports continuous quality improvement. Quality culture is understood as a set of values, beliefs, commitments, and behaviors shared by all members of an educational institution in maintaining the quality of educational services. Nevertheless, the visualization results show that discussions regarding quality culture are still more frequently examined in the context of universities and public schools compared to Islamic educational institutions, particularly Islamic boarding schools (*pesantren*).

Network analysis also indicates that the keywords “Islamic values,” “Islamic education,” and “*pesantren*” have relatively smaller node sizes compared to other major themes. The relationships between these three keywords and “quality assurance” or “quality culture” have not yet formed a strong network. These findings indicate that research on the integration of Islamic values into quality assurance systems is still developing to a limited extent. Most studies focus more on managerial aspects, leadership, accreditation, or the implementation of quality standards, while the dimension of values as the foundation of quality culture has not received proportional attention. The existence of several interconnected clusters demonstrates that the study of educational quality assurance is multidisciplinary. The themes of leadership, institutional governance, organizational culture, educational innovation, and digital transformation develop in parallel with discussions regarding quality assurance systems. These relationships indicate that the quality of education is influenced not only by evaluation mechanisms but also by leadership, organizational culture, and an institution’s ability to adapt to changes in the educational environment. A key finding from the network visualization analysis is the limited interconnection between the concepts of Islamic values, quality culture, and *pesantren* within the global research network. These three concepts have not yet taken center stage in the discourse, thereby opening up research opportunities to develop a quality assurance model that integrates Islamic values as the foundation for fostering a culture of quality. This situation also demonstrates that this study not only fills a gap in research on *pesantren* but also broadens the perspective on quality assurance through a more contextual approach tailored to the characteristics of Islamic educational institutions.

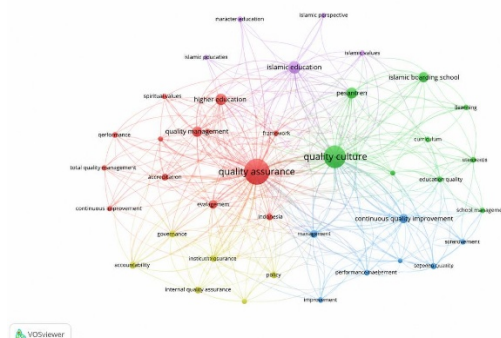


Figure 2. Network Visualization of Research on Quality Assurance Based on Islamic Values Using VOSviewer

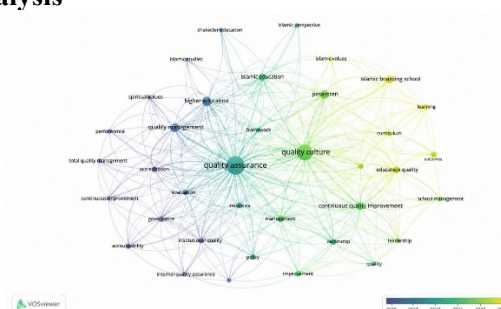


Figure 3. Overlay Visualization of Research on Quality Assurance Based on Islamic Values Using VOSviewer

The results of the overlay visualization analysis show a shift in the focus of research on quality assurance in educational institutions during the 2015–2026 period. The colors in the visualization represent the average publication year for each keyword. Blue indicates topics that emerged in the early period, while green through yellow represent more recent themes. The 2015–2018 period was dominated by research on quality assurance, quality management, higher education, accreditation, and continuous improvement. Studies during this period were more oriented toward the implementation of quality assurance systems, the development of quality standards, and institutional evaluation as efforts to enhance the effectiveness of educational organizations. The 2019–2022 period shows a shift in focus toward the concepts of quality culture, education quality, leadership, school management, and continuous quality improvement. The focus of research began to shift from administrative aspects toward the formation of an organizational culture that supports continuous quality improvement. This shift demonstrates that the success of quality assurance is increasingly influenced by leadership, governance, and the involvement of all stakeholders. The 2023–2026 period saw the emergence of relatively new themes, including Islamic values, Islamic education, Islamic boarding schools, and pesantren. Although these themes did not appear as frequently as the main themes, this development indicates growing attention to the integration of Islamic values into the educational quality assurance system. This trend suggests that the quality assurance approach is beginning to focus not only on meeting institutional standards but also on strengthening the identity and character of Islamic educational institutions. The results of the overlay visualization show that research on the integration of quality assurance, quality culture, and Islamic values is still in its developmental phase. The relationships among these three concepts have not yet been firmly established, leaving ample room to develop a more context-specific quality assurance model tailored to the characteristics of pesantren. These findings serve as the foundation for the development of a conceptual model of quality assurance based on Islamic values in this study.

Density Visualization Analysis

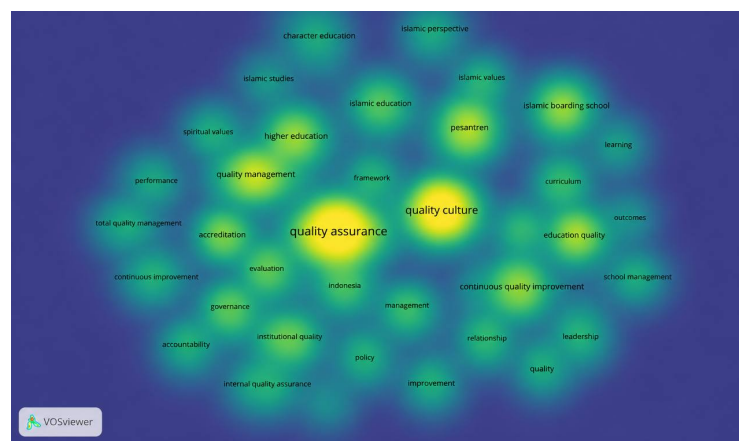


Figure 4. Density Visualization of Research on Quality Assurance Based on Islamic Values Using VOSviewer

The results of the density visualization analysis show the density of research based on the frequency of occurrence of each keyword. The yellow areas indicate the most frequently researched topics, while the green to blue areas represent topics that are still relatively rarely discussed in scientific publications. The visualization indicates that quality assurance, quality culture, higher education, and quality management are the themes with the highest density levels. This dominance suggests that research on quality assurance remains focused on strengthening quality management systems, implementing standards, and improving the overall quality of educational institutions. Lower density is observed for the keywords “Islamic values,” “Islamic boarding school,” and

“pesantren.” The relationship between these three themes and either “quality culture” or “quality assurance” has not yet shown strong intensity. This finding indicates that the integration of Islamic values into the development of a quality culture in pesantren remains an under-explored area of research. The results of the density visualization also confirm the findings from the network analysis and overlay visualization. Previous research has largely focused on quality assurance from the perspective of educational management, whereas the development of models that integrate Islamic values as the foundation of a culture of quality remains relatively limited. This situation indicates an opportunity for research to formulate a more context-specific quality assurance model tailored to the characteristics of Islamic boarding schools.

Development of an Islamic Values-Based Quality Assurance Model

Analyses using network, overlay, and density visualizations reveal a research gap regarding the integration of Islamic values into pesantren (Islamic boarding school) quality assurance systems. Addressing this gap, this study proposes a conceptual model for quality assurance based on Islamic values, derived as a synthesis of bibliometric analysis and a literature review. The model developed here is not intended as an empirically validated model but rather as a conceptual framework that can serve as a foundation for future research and implementation across various pesantren contexts.

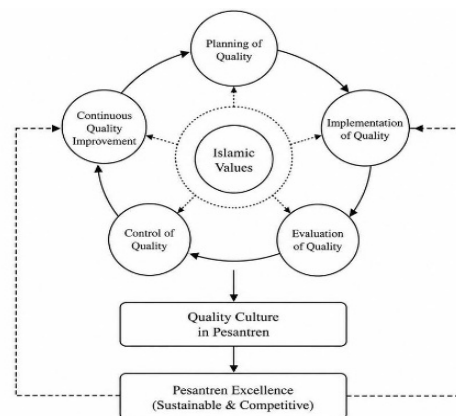


Figure 5. Conceptual Model of Islamic Values-Based Quality Assurance to Strengthen the Quality Culture of Islamic Boarding Schools

The proposed conceptual model is not intended to replace existing quality assurance principles rather, it offers an integrative framework that internalizes the values of amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (excellence/benevolence), itqan (precision/mastery), syura (consultation), and istiqamah (steadfastness) into every stage of the quality assurance cycle. Thus, the model provides a conceptual alternative that can serve as a basis for developing a quality assurance system that is more contextual to pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). The conceptual model developed in this study is the product of a theoretical synthesis based on patterns of relationships between themes, derived from bibliometric analysis and a systematic literature review. Consequently, the relationships between the model is components remain conceptual in nature and have not yet been tested through implementation in pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) or validated by experts. Nevertheless, this model provides a robust theoretical foundation for future research on quality assurance systems based on Islamic values. Conceptually, the implementation of the proposed model is expected to foster a culture of quality within pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) by strengthening organizational commitment, educator professionalism, institutional accountability, stakeholder satisfaction, and a culture of continuous improvement. However, these relationships require empirical validation across various types of pesantren to comprehensively evaluate the model is implementability and effectiveness. Compared to conventional quality assurance models, the model proposed in this study

offers a conceptual perspective that positions Islamic values as the fundamental basis at every stage of quality assurance. This approach is expected to strengthen the integration between quality governance and the institutional identity of pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). However, this conceptual merit still requires empirical validation to demonstrate its effectiveness in the practice of pesantren management. The findings of this study contribute to the development of a conceptual framework for an Islamic-value-based quality assurance system for pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). The resulting model can serve as a theoretical foundation for policy formulation and further research. Given that this model has not yet undergone empirical validation, future research should include implementation trials, expert validation, and testing across various pesantren characteristics to enhance the model's validity and generalizability.

DISCUSSION

The results of the bibliometric analysis show that quality assurance and quality culture are the dominant themes in research developments over the past decade. These findings indicate that improving the quality of education is still largely understood through the lens of systems, standards, and organizational governance. These results are consistent with the findings of (Lathifah et al., 2025), who stated that research on quality assurance in Islamic education has seen significant development but remains dominated by studies on the implementation of quality assurance systems and has not yet been directed toward the development of conceptual models suited to the characteristics of Islamic educational institutions (Novita et al., 2026). This situation demonstrates that strengthening a culture of quality requires an approach that is not only oriented toward meeting standards but is also capable of fostering sustainable organizational commitment. The findings of the overlay visualization reveal a shift in research focus from the implementation of quality assurance systems toward the development of a quality culture (Fiqri et al., 2025). This shift indicates that the success of quality assurance is no longer determined solely by the existence of quality documents but is influenced by an organizational culture that develops through leadership, the participation of all members of the institution, and a process of continuous improvement. These results reinforce the research by (Aimah & Nasih, 2023), which explains that a quality culture in Islamic boarding schools is formed through the leadership of religious leaders (kiai), institutional commitment, and the involvement of all stakeholders in implementing the quality assurance system. Ultimately, a quality culture becomes a determining factor in the sustainability of quality system implementation within Islamic boarding schools (Mugirotn et al., 2022). Density visualization analysis shows that the interrelationship between Islamic values, quality assurance, and pesantren remains relatively low compared to other themes. This indicates that Islamic values have not yet been widely adopted as the primary framework for developing quality assurance systems (Ayep et al., 2023). Most studies still treat Islamic values as a supplementary element in leadership or learning practices. This finding aligns with the results of a study by (Ary & Sanjaya, 2020) which emphasizes that Islamic educational leadership should be built upon spiritual values, ethics, responsibility, and the public good. This perspective reinforces the need to develop quality assurance in Islamic educational institutions through an approach that fully integrates managerial aspects with Islamic values (Agustin et al., 2025).

The conceptual model developed in this study offers a new perspective by positioning the values of amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (excellence/sincerity), itqan (precision/thoroughness), syura (consultation), and istiqamah (steadfastness) as the primary foundation for the entire quality assurance cycle (Haryanah et al., 2024). However, the model's implementation may face various challenges depending on the specific characteristics of each pesantren (Islamic boarding school). Modern pesantren which already possess formal organizational structures, quality assurance units, and adequate human resources are likely better prepared to adopt this model (Marlina, Hendriawan,

Irnawati, et al., 2026). Conversely, salaf pesantren or those with limited resources require a more gradual adaptation process, particularly regarding system development, human resource capacity building, and the cultivation of a sustainable quality culture (Nuraeni et al., 2026). Therefore, the model cannot be implemented uniformly instead, it must be tailored to the institutional context, organizational capacity, and prevailing culture of each pesantren. Beyond institutional characteristics, the successful implementation of the model is also influenced by the leadership commitment of the kiai (Islamic boarding school leader) or head of the pesantren, the involvement of all stakeholders, human resource readiness, and support for a continuous evaluation system (Azhari, 2020). Integrating Islamic values into quality assurance cannot be achieved merely through documents or administrative procedures it requires a process of internalization that is consistently embedded within the organizational culture. Another challenge lies in the varying levels of infrastructure readiness, managerial capabilities, and information technology utilization across different pesantren, necessitating an implementation strategy that is flexible and context specific (Mugirotin et al., 2022). The proposed model is best viewed as a conceptual framework adaptable to the specific conditions of each institution, rather than as a universal approach. The primary contribution of this study lies in the development of an Islamic-value-based quality assurance conceptual framework, formulated through a synthesis of bibliometric analysis and a conceptual review. The proposed model broadens the perspective on quality assurance system development by integrating managerial dimensions with Islamic values to serve as the cultural foundation for quality within pesantren (Islamic boarding schools). However, the model's effectiveness across various types of pesantren remains to be proven through empirical validation; thus, further research is required involving salaf (traditional), khalaf (reformist), and modern pesantren, each possessing distinct organizational characteristics and resource profiles. This approach aims to yield a quality assurance model that is not only conceptually robust but also practical to implement, adaptable, and relevant to the diversity of pesantren in Indonesia.

4. CONCLUSION

This study presents a conceptual model for quality assurance based on Islamic values, developed through a synthesis of literature and a bibliometric analysis using VOSviewer. The analysis reveals that while research on quality assurance and quality culture continues to evolve, the integration of Islamic values into quality assurance systems for pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) remains relatively limited. Addressing this gap, the study proposes a conceptual framework that integrates the values of amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (excellence/benevolence), itqan (precision/mastery), syura (consultation), and istiqamah (steadfastness) throughout the quality assurance cycle, serving as a foundation for cultivating a quality culture aligned with the unique characteristics of pesantren. The resulting model contributes conceptually to the field of Islamic educational quality assurance by offering a more contextual and value-based approach. However, as the model remains conceptual and lacks empirical validation across diverse types of pesantren, future research should undertake implementation testing, expert validation, and empirical evaluations in institutions with varying organizational characteristics and resources. Such studies are necessary to assess the model's implementability, effectiveness, and generalizability. Ultimately, these findings are expected to strengthen the development of pesantren quality assurance systems that are adaptive, sustainable, and firmly grounded in Islamic values.

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