

Total Quality Management at Private Boarding High School in Yogyakarta

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Submitted: 17-05-2025

Accepted: 10-06-2025

Published: 07-08-2025

Abstract

Sekolah Menengah Atas (SMA) Muhammadiyah Boarding School (MBS) Sleman is one of the 9 educational institutions that receive diploma equivalence (*Muadalah*) from Al-Azhar University Cairo. That case made SMA MBS Sleman have unique characteristics and distinct advantages over other boarding-based schools in the Yogyakarta. This study aimed to investigate in depth the characteristics of a total quality management at SMA MBS Sleman. This research employed a qualitative approach, utilizing a case study type. The data collection technique used interviews, observations, and documentation. Data analysis used the interactive model by Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. The results of this study indicated that the characteristics of total quality management at SMA MBS were demonstrated by (1) customer focus: excellent relationships with customers, customer needs surveys, the implementation of an integrated curriculum, and adequate facilities and infrastructure; (2) total involvement: the formation of small teams in program implementation and the involvement of stakeholders in policy formulation; (3) measurement: the presence of a quality assurance team at the *pesantren* level, reporting by teachers and educational staff regarding their respective duties and responsibilities, and regular leadership meetings; (4) commitment: the commitment to quality has been established since the beginning of its establishment, training programs for teachers and staff, the school consistently strived to provide quality facilities and services for the school community; and (5) continuous improvement: improvements in the planning, and improvements in implementation. The above-stated result suggests that SMA MBS Sleman possesses all the characteristics of total quality management.

Keywords: total quality management, private boarding school, educational management

INTRODUCTION

The quality of education is intimately linked to effective education management. Because effective education management will promote the successful, efficient, and optimal achievement of the established vision, mission, and goals (Mubarak et al., 2023). The quality of education in Indonesia itself is still a topic of debate and ongoing effort. A survey from the Program for International Student Assessment (PISA), one of the international studies evaluating the quality of the education system by measuring learning outcomes, found that in 2022 Indonesia's PISA results were still rated 10th and below in comparison to other nations (PISA, 2023). Similarly, Indonesia's Human Development Index (HDI) score in 2022 per the United Nations Development Program (UNDP) remains below the worldwide average of 0.739, placing Indonesia 112th among 193 countries studied (Ahdiyati, 2024).

Based on the PISA and HDI results, Indonesia's standing is still too far from other nations, particularly in the quality of its human resources. This suggests that Indonesia's educational quality is still inadequate. Starting with the quality of teachers, teaching quality, service quality, even to the quality of graduates, the issues with the quality of education in Indonesia remain quite complicated (Hasan et al., 2022).

The idea of total quality management is one of the well-known ideas that can be used to grow and enhance the quality of an institution (Yahiaoui et al., 2022). Originally used for manufacturing processes (Chaher & Lakhal, 2024), TQM has now been extensively developed in many sectors as a general management tool including healthcare (Musolin et al., 2022), industrial companies and even education (Aboalghanam et al., 2024). This idea aims to foster a culture of excellence that motivates every employee to meet consumer needs (Luthra et al., 2021). According to Deming, total quality management is a customer-driven process and goal to always enhance goods and services (Luthra et al., 2021). This implies that total quality management is a notion always seeking excellence at all levels.

One of the institutions helping to produce quality education is educational institutions including Islamic educational institutions with a boarding system (Annas et al., 2022). Boarding-based schools are considered able to produce students who are both knowledgeable and religious since they not only stress education but also instill religious values and moral formation (Anwar, 2023).

Though boarding schools have benefits, one cannot deny that their educational quality is not ideal and still has to be assessed. Solechan et al., (2024) found that one of the challenges in producing quality in boarding-based schools is lack of resources, whether financial, or infrastructure. Iswahyudi, (2020), in his study on the boarding school program at MAN 1 Gunungkidul, he claimed that insufficient facilities and infrastructure, including constrained dorms, contribute to the poor quality of schools with boarding systems.

Anwar (2023) study on the application of the boarding school system at MAN 2 Serang to enhance the quality of education revealed that, the curriculum in the boarding school and those in teaching and learning activities (KBM) with a full day school system at school has not run optimally. The full day school system consumes much of students' time, leaving little time for activities in the boarding environment. This indicates the curriculum is still oriented toward KBM activities under full day school. These issues will definitely affect the calibre of current education.

Research about total quality management in the private boarding-based school has done by many researcher such as the research conducted by Khasanah et al. (2023) found

that high schools can provide quality services by using Juran's quality trilogy approach, namely quality planning, quality control, and quality improvement. However, this research has limitations because it was conducted during Covid-19 so that data collection was less comprehensive. In addition, research by Arribath et al. (2021) also examined total quality management in boarding schools but focused more on tahfidz programs. The research has not represented total quality management as a whole in boarding-based schools. Faradila (2024), in her study about using TQM to promote a quality culture in boarding high schools in North Aceh, discovered that applying TQM includes planned activities, especially religious ones, along with regular meetings and help from stakeholders. However, this study does not have a specific quality standard for religious culture. This research differs from previous studies.

Aqhza et al. (2023) have studied about the implementation of total quality management in developing learners' competence at MA Al Mawaddah Warahmah Kolaka. The study aimed to understand total quality management implementation planning, to analyse the results of total quality management implementation, and to develop student competence at MA Al Mawaddah Warahmah Kolaka. That research only limited focus on specific student demographics and their needs. Then, the research have done by Cahyono et al. (2023) about the implementation of total quality management in tahfidzul quran aimed to analyse quality management planning, implementation, monitoring and follow-up in programmes. That research only focuses on the tahfidz programme, so the research conducted has not been comprehensive on the quality of education in boarding schools.

Several previous studies have examined the implementation of total quality management (TQM) in boarding school. However, most of the study only focus on the school program and limited to the specific student demographics. To date, there has been very limited research exploring the comprehensive of total quality management in boarding schools. The absence of studies that specifically highlight the characteristic of total quality management in the school that has been implemented, that was an important gap for further research.

Therefore, this research specifically aimed to examine the characteristics of total quality management that operate within a boarding context. This study is therefore anticipated to benefit both theoretically and practically, such as this study is meant to serve as a model for boarding-based high schools that will grow and enhance their quality; it can also be used as an in-depth study tool connected to total quality management of education in the discipline of education management. The research question of this study was how the characteristic of total quality management at private boarding high school.

METHOD

This was a qualitative study of the case study type. This research was chosen because it examines difficulties through instances within a limited environment (Baden & Major, 2013). The study was conducted at SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School in Sleman. This study included document analysis, interviews, and observations for data collection. This study involved interviews with participants including the principal, *musyrifah*, teachers, staff, and students from SMA MBS Sleman. A semi-structured interview methodology was employed. In this study, the researcher serves as the instrument. This study's data validity assessment considers credibility, dependability, and confirmability (Sugiyono, 2022). The integrity of this study's data was assessed by data triangulation i.e., triangulation of sources and triangulation of techniques. Data

analysis utilizes an interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014) i.e., data collection, data display, data condensation, and conclusions: drawing/verifying. The data collection period extended from January 9th, 2025, to April 29th, 2025.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

Customer Focus

The researcher obtained the following data based on interviews, observations, and documentation.

Student said:

“It is evident that both students and teachers foster close relationships, particularly when subject teachers are amicable and engage with students outside of the classroom.”

In addition to the relationship that was built between teachers and students, there was also an intense relationship between the school and parents either through WhatsApp Group or Zoom Meeting to facilitate daily communication.

Student stated:

“So, there is a lot of communication on WhatsApp or Zoom, chatting about how the children are.”

Principal Stated:

“There is a special WhatsApp group for homeroom teachers themselves, and homeroom teachers themselves. So, if the homeroom teacher is a school, for example class X Mipa 1 for example. Well later in the dormitory there can be class X, class IX, class VIII”

The school’s relationship, between the leaders with teachers and other staff were also well established. Teacher stated:

“In MBS, although structurally there is its own structure, but there are no limitations, in the sense that teachers are free to give their aspirations.”

Musyrifah explained:

“For Musyrifah herself, we usually refer her to the head of the office or the head of the kema’hadan first or above that there is a deputy leader.”

In addition, the school in customer focus also opens up criticism and suggestions as widely as possible. Prinsiple said:

“To find out the needs of the students, we open criticism, suggestions and input from the guardians of the students. So, what is criticised or input, we will look at it again, and if it is possible, we will consider it, maybe we won’t implement it immediately but maybe at another time.”

There was also a questionnaire given to students to find out how students respond to the learning they receive. Curriculum staff said:

“In our curriculum there is a questionnaire for students, so later from the questionnaire we can find out the results related to how the teacher teaches child.”

It was also evident in the document that there was a questionnaire for learning. Besides that, customer focus also described by the integrated curriculum.

Staf Curriculum explained:

“It is said that the tagline is the balance between the official curriculum and the boarding school curriculum. What is said to be a balance, in MBS we have 57 JP in one week, 57 JP. In other schools, it is not up to 57 JP. The 57 JP is divided into two, which are balanced 29 and 28.”

The customer focus at SMA MBS was also reflected in the adequate facilities and infrastructure. The results of the interview were in accordance with the results of the researcher’s observations, that the facilities and infrastructure were quite complete in supporting learning. It could be said that the school always provided the best facilities to students and employees to support the implementation of education to the fullest.

Total Involvement

Based on interviews, observations and documentation, the data obtained regarding total involvement at SMA MBS Sleman were as follows:

Teacher said:

“The additional duties are structural. Yes, for example there is student affairs, curriculum, BIMBEL team, counselling, and so on. Well, that’s when it comes day-to-day operations. Curriculum makes the schedule, student affairs organises student affairs.”

Apart from the results of interviews, the results of observations also show the involvement of teachers and education personnel in the pesantren milad committee so that activities could run smoothly.

Total involvement was also reflected in the co-operation carried out by leaders, teachers and other staff in disseminating the school’s vision and mission. The results of the interview were then reinforced by the results of observations that in the morning roll call activity, the teacher in charge of the advisor also conveyed the values in the vision and mission. In addition, total involvement was also reflected in the progress reporting done by each section to Deputy of Leader 1, as well as the sections under Deputy of Leader 2.

Curriculum staff stated:

“In the curriculum, it is usually based on the results of the daily picket recap, then later we usually give the recap report every month to the leadership to the principal and to the vice principal 1.”

Teacher said:

“Every section head, back again, there is a section head, there is a kabag. Every month is required to submit a report. What do I report every month? One, teacher attendance. Second, indiscipline, absenteeism and so on if any. Thirdly, we will have attendance using the application. Whether he fills it in or not, we collect the data. To whom? To those three elements Deputy Principal 1, and Deputy Principal 3 of HRD.”

Total involvement was also reflected in the activities of work meetings or in terms of providing recommendations on a policy. Teacher said:

“In every meeting, we are also given ample opportunities to provide suggestions, input, and evaluation of the years”

This means that teachers and other education personnel were given space to submit evaluations and suggestions, but in terms of determining policies, they remain in the territory of the leadership.

Measurement

Based on interviews with informants, it was found that there was a Pesantren Advisory Board (BPP) which was in charge of the overall quality assurance of education.

The principal stated:

“Actually, for quality assurance in MBS, the outline is from the BPP, so we translate it into that small team.”

Measurement of the quality of teachers and education personnel has been carried out since the beginning, this was in accordance with the results of an interview with the principal that:

“We recruit through Deputy Director 3, so in the recruitment process there is a strict process.”

Apart from the rigorous recruitment of teachers, teaching and learning activities were also subject to quality measurement. For example, there was a questionnaire given to students to evaluate subject teachers. Curriculum Staff said:

“So, in our curriculum there is a questionnaire for students about how the teacher teaches this child, what is the child’s response. So, for each class, we take several samples per class, then the child is asked to assess the teacher through google form and then provide criticism and suggestions for the teacher.”

The document study results also contained a learning questionnaire. In addition, measurement of teacher performance was also done through standards set by the school. Curriculum Staff stated:

“It exists, there are standards such as teacher discipline, there are forms of assessment. So here we have teacher and employee report cards. So, in addition to report cards for children, we also have report cards for teachers, both monthly, if monthly is more like attendance, if the semester is from HRD, then from the curriculum there is also an assessment. So, it’s like HRD and Curriculum combined into one.”

Quality measurement becomes systematic because there was a clear pattern of coordination and instruction. So, Deputy of Leaders 1 to 5 have their own Section Heads and Section Heads, and all of them are responsible according to the existing coordination channels. This was in accordance with the document study on the organizational structure of the Modern Islamic Boarding School Muhammadiyah Boarding School Yogyakarta.

Commitment

The commitment to provide quality education has become the spirit of development of SMAS MBS, this was in accordance with the results of documentation illustrated in the history of the establishment of the Modern Muhammadiyah Boarding School Yogyakarta. Deputy of Leader 1 also said that:

“The vision was made by the founders and the team in the year 2008. That’s because there is a background, this is because there is unrest about muhammadiyah schools that have no quality, especially those based on modern pesantren. It was because of this factor that finally initiated or inspired the birth of the vision.”

Commitment to the quality of human resources, especially teachers and staff, in strengthening and improving the value and competence of teachers was carried out in routine study forums, training, upgrading, and internal MGMP (Musyawarah Guru Mata Pelajaran) activities. This was according to the principal’s statement that:

“Then this Thursday afternoon there is a study from which we reinforce our vision and mission to teachers and employees. For the children, there is an assembly every morning.”

Curriculum Staff stated:

“So, every Thursday afternoon we have a joint study forum called JIKAMSI (Kajian Kamis Siang) that is more about internalising the values of the boarding school and also character, to strengthen internally the teachers and staff, so that in the process here, it is about sincerity, struggle, and patience, that’s it.”

Based on the statement from the Curriculum Staff, it could be said that the school always maintains the quality of teaching and learning activities, which also illustrates the commitment to the quality of learning and teaching.

The school’s commitment to quality was also shown through various extracurricular activities, the provision of tutoring, and the provision of further study institutions. The principal also revealed that the school provides various extracurricular activities to accommodate the interests and talents of students. In addition, there was Hasbuna Business Centre, an independent economy owned by the pesantren. Hasbuna Business Centre has 16 business units. The 16 business units are inside and outside the school environment. Commitment to quality was also evident from the awarding of students, teacher, and staff of their achievement. This showed the school’s commitment in supporting teachers, education personnel and students to continue to give their best for the school.

Continuous Improvement

The following was an interview with the Deputy Leader who stated that continuous improvement activities are carried out with a clear strategic plan and developments are always carried out.

The principal stated:

“There are still innovations that we implement related to improving our quality. We realize that every school or institution wants to be the best. With our innovations, including learning innovations.”

Based on the data presented, it could be said that continuous improvement was made by innovating both academic and non-academic programs. In addition, there were also evaluations and reports that were carried out regularly to ensure the quality of education remains good.

The Deputy of Leader 1 said:

“The evaluation and monitoring are usually from program activities. In one year, we have a program of activities, work plans and so on. From there it is usually monitored, how many per cent has it been, and things that are crucial, sensitive, in terms of aspects of child development are usually daily if the others are usually only quarterly or not crucial, but if the crucial ones such as teacher order, child achievement, it can be daily.”

Based on the data collected, it could be concluded that continuous improvement was carried out by innovating both in academic and non-academic matters, as well as conducting regular evaluations and monitoring from the teachers and staff.

Table 1. The Characteristic of Total Quality Management in SMA MBS Sleman

No.	Aspects	Results
1.	Customer Focus	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Positive relationship between the school and the customers. b. The school was receptive to criticism and ideas. c. There was an integrated curriculum. d. The facilities and infrastructure at SMA MBS Sleman sufficiently facilitate teaching, learning, and boarding activities.
2.	Total Involvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school engaged all members by establishing small teams or committees to facilitate the achievement of school work programs. b. Educators and educational staff were encouraged to engage in discussions and provide recommendations for the development of school policies. c. All members were also evident in their participation in promoting the school’s vision and mission.
3.	Measurement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. SMA MBS Sleman possesses a quality assurance team; nevertheless, this team was comprised of members from the pesantren. b. The teachers and staff submitted reports concerning the tasks and obligations of each domain, which constituted an analytical process conducted by the school.
4.	Commitment	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The school has been dedicated to excellence from its establishment. b. The provision of training for teachers and educational staff. c. Prizes were conferred to both teachers and students for their accomplishments. d. The school consistently offers facilities and services for the school community.
5.	Continuous Improvement	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. Formation of strategic plans and the implementation of programs in both schools and dorms. b. Enhancements were perpetually enacted during the deployment process via assessment and oversight.

Discussion

Based on the results that have been stated, the following was a discussion of the characteristics of total quality management at SMA MBS Sleman.

Customer Focus

The research indicated a positive relationship between the school and its clients, which fostered an environment where consumers felt at ease to express their ambitions or criticisms to the school. This aligns with the perspective of Taylor, West, and Smith (2006) as cited in Fadhli (2017) which posits that fostering consumer comfort was a key indication of great educational institutions. Furthermore, institutions that regard teachers and other educational staff as clients were advancing towards fulfilling the needs of every individual inside the business. Goetsch & Davis (2014) assert that colleagues or workers should also be considered internal consumers. The result also in line with the study completed by Putri et al. (2024) that the internal customer include the teachers and staff, so they must also be ensured that their needs were met.

A quality school was inherently linked to continual critique and suggestions, which serve as a foundation for continuous improvement in its standards. The research revealed that the school was receptive to criticism and ideas, as evidenced by the implementation of learning surveys and the provision for direct complaints to homeroom teachers or dormitory supervisors. This aligns with the perspective of Goetsch & Davis (2014) that a survey of consumer preferences was consistently employed for quality enhancement. The result showed that the school was constantly striving to fulfil customer needs.

Furthermore, the findings indicate that the execution of both the official curriculum and the school-specific curriculum creates a balanced education system that addresses the requirements for general and religious instruction. This was implemented by the school to ensure comprehensive and equitable education for students. This aligns with Sallis (2002) assertion that quality in education was defined by a balanced and pertinent curriculum. The research findings and theoretical framework indicate that the school exemplifies the traits of total quality management, namely prioritizing customer attention.

Total Involvement

Total involvement encompasses the complete engagement of all school members in the school quality enhancement initiative. The research revealed that the school community at SMA MBS Sleman consistently participates in the execution of the quality program at the institution. This aligns with Sallis (2011) assertion that a management must have confidence in their people and delegate appropriately. Rahmadani & Soddiq (2023) stated that there were two types of engagement, i.e., internal engagement (teacher, staff, and student) and external engagement (educational institution both domestic and overseas). The case of SMA MBS Sleman, it represented good internal engagement.

The results indicated that the school engages all members by establishing small teams or committees to facilitate the achievement of school work programs. The comprehensive engagement of all members was also evident in their participation in promoting the school's vision and purpose.

Additionally, comprehensive engagement was also evident in policy development. Educators and educational staff are encouraged to engage in discussions and provide recommendations for the development of school policies. This aligns with

Spanbauer's assertion in Sallis (2011) that educators and personnel must participate in problem-solving activities.

The research findings and theoretical framework indicate that the school exhibits the traits of a total quality management, namely total engagement. The engagement of educators and educational staff in the formulation and execution of school quality programs was evident.

Measurement

Measurement represents an initiative undertaken by educational institutions to assess quality outcomes. Paters, as cited in Sallis (2011), asserts that the assessment of quality was fundamental and must start from the outset, involving all parties. The research indicated that monitoring and assessment were consistently implemented in schools. The results indicate that SMA MBS Sleman possesses a quality assurance team; nevertheless, this team was comprised of members from the Pesantren. SMA MBS, namely the BPP (*Badan Pembina Pesantren*). Crosby, as cited in Goetsch and Davis (2014), asserts that a crucial stage in attaining quality was the establishment of a cross-departmental quality team.

Arcaro (2006) indicates that measuring involves assessing the outcomes of quality attainment via analysis and the results of quality accomplishment. The results indicated that instructors and educational workers submitted reports concerning the tasks and obligations of each domain, which constituted an analytical process conducted by the school.

The research findings and theoretical framework indicate that the school exemplifies a characteristic of a complete quality school, specifically measurement. Measurement was conducted by monitoring and evaluation activities, either through reports or periodic meetings.

Commitment

Total quality management comprises a sequence of procedures rather than a definitive result. Consequently, any institution implementing a total quality management system must be dedicated to fostering a culture of quality inside the school. The research findings indicate that the school has been dedicated to excellence from its establishment. The objective of founding SMA MBS Sleman was to serve as a venue for cultivating Muhammadiyah cadres equipped with enough knowledge in both general and shari'a sciences. This aligns with Sallis (2002) assertion that managerial commitment must be converted into action.

Additionally, the findings indicate that the school's dedication to excellence was reflected in the provision of training for teachers and educational staff. This aligns with Deming's perspective in Sabrina (2022) that pursuing quality necessitates the proactive implementation of training, educational programs, and self-development initiatives for all individuals. The implementation of training could help teachers and staff in improving their competence, this was in accordance with the results of research from Rosana et al. (2025), the quality of an educational institution depends on the quality and professionalism of teachers.

The results also indicate that prizes are conferred to both teachers and students for their accomplishments. According to Goetsch & Davis (2014), a hallmark of an organization that effectively enhances its quality was the existence of a rewards and promotions system predicated on contributions to quality improvement. According to Arcaro (2006), commitment in educational institutions may be characterized by the

provision of resources that enable members to effectuate change and enhance the quality of the school. This aligns with the study completed, indicating that the school consistently offers facilities and services for the school community. Butar et al. (2024) said that the good facilities and infrastructure could improve the quality of learning in the school.

The research findings and theoretical framework indicate that the school exhibits the traits of a total quality management, namely dedication. The history of school development demonstrates an initial aspiration to establish a quality educational institution, followed by comprehensive training for all educators and educational staff, indicating a dedication to service. This commitment was further evidenced by the provision of facilities and resources that enhance the teaching and learning experience.

Continuous Improvement

Continuous improvement was essential for establishing high-quality educational institutions. The research indicates that continuous improvement was evidenced by the development or innovation activities undertaken by schools throughout both the planning and implementation phases. This demonstrates the institution's commitment to continuous improvement. At SMA MBS Sleman, development was executed via the formation of strategic plans and the implementation of programs in both schools and dorms.

Furthermore, enhancements are perpetually enacted during the deployment process via assessment and oversight. Deming in Sabrina (2022) asserted that for an institution to effectuate superior change, it must perpetually enhance all processes of planning, production, and service. This has been executed by SMA MBS Sleman.

The research findings indicate that the institution remains receptive to critique and recommendations. The school regards criticism and ideas as evaluative resources for ongoing development. Research findings and theoretical frameworks suggest that the school consistently implements continual improvements, signifying the existence of complete quality school attributes at SMA MBS Sleman.

CONCLUSION

The characteristics of a total quality management at SMA Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sleman align with Arcaro's perspective, encompassing customer focus, total involvement, commitment, measurement, and continuous improvement. Each characteristic was manifested through various activities and programs implemented by the school, including: (1) customer focus, which entails fostering strong relationships with customers, conducting surveys to assess customer needs, executing an integrated curriculum, and providing sufficient facilities and infrastructure; (2) total involvement, which encompasses the establishment of small teams and/or committees for program execution, as well as the participation of teachers and educational staff in policy development; (3) measurement, which involves the existence of a quality assurance team at the pesantren level, reporting by teachers and educational staff regarding their respective duties and responsibilities, and regular leadership meetings; (4) Commitment signifies that a dedication to quality has been ingrained since the institution's inception, encompassing training programs for educators and staff, recognition for exemplary school members, and a persistent endeavor to furnish superior facilities and services for the school community; (5) Continuous improvement entails enhancements in the planning process, including strategic initiatives, advancements in execution through monitoring and evaluation, and an unwavering receptiveness to critique and recommendations. Among the five characteristics, there was one characteristic that stands out, namely

commitment to quality. Based on the results of the research found that the commitment to quality has been built since the establishment of the school, not only that in the process, the school continues to make improvements in service standards and fulfil the needs of teachers and staff competency improvement. In addition, there was also an integrated organizational structure among all units under *Pondok Pesantren Modern Muhammadiyah Boarding School Sleman Yogyakarta*. Therefore, that was one of the strengths possessed by SMA MBS Sleman in shaping and improving the quality of education. The suggestions derived from the study findings and conversations indicate that the school should prioritize uniformity in assessment and ongoing enhancement. This may be achieved by meticulously documenting the whole improvement process to serve as a reference for long-term policy formulation, while instituting regular reviews using quantifiable indications.

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