

Excellent Service Management in Islamic Boarding Schools: A SERVQUAL Analysis of Educational Service Quality

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Abstract: This study aims to analyze the implementation of excellent service management at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School in Indramayu, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and explore strategies to improve the quality of educational services in Islamic educational institutions. This research employed a qualitative field research approach with a descriptive analytical design. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, documentation, and literature review. The main informant of this study was the pesantren operator responsible for administrative services and student data management. Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, including data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while data triangulation was applied to ensure the credibility of the findings. The results show that the implementation of service management in the pesantren reflects the five dimensions of the SERVQUAL model: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions are manifested in the availability of adequate facilities, structured educational programs, responsive communication with parents, transparent financial management, and personal guidance for students. The study also identifies several challenges related to limited digital infrastructure, variations in human resource competencies, and financial constraints. These findings indicate that improving service quality plays an important role in strengthening institutional credibility and increasing public trust in Islamic educational institutions.

Keywords: excellent service, service quality, Islamic boarding school management, SERVQUAL, Islamic education.

Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis implementasi manajemen pelayanan prima di Pondok Pesantren Modern Al Mu'minien Indramayu, mengidentifikasi faktor pendukung dan penghambat, serta mengeksplorasi strategi peningkatan kualitas layanan pendidikan pada lembaga pendidikan Islam. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis penelitian lapangan dan desain deskriptif analitis. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara semi-terstruktur, dokumentasi, dan studi literatur. Informan utama penelitian adalah operator pesantren yang bertanggung jawab dalam pengelolaan layanan administrasi dan data santri. Analisis data menggunakan model Miles dan Huberman yang meliputi reduksi data, penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan, serta menggunakan triangulasi data untuk menjamin keabsahan temuan penelitian. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa implementasi manajemen layanan di pesantren mencerminkan lima dimensi SERVQUAL yaitu tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, dan empathy. Dimensi tersebut tercermin dalam penyediaan

fasilitas yang memadai, program pendidikan yang terstruktur, komunikasi yang responsif dengan orang tua, transparansi pengelolaan keuangan, serta pembinaan personal kepada santri. Penelitian ini juga menemukan adanya tantangan berupa keterbatasan infrastruktur digital, variasi kompetensi sumber daya manusia, dan keterbatasan finansial. Temuan ini menunjukkan bahwa peningkatan kualitas layanan berperan penting dalam memperkuat kredibilitas lembaga dan meningkatkan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap lembaga pendidikan Islam.

Kata kunci: pelayanan prima, kualitas layanan, manajemen pesantren, SERVQUAL, pendidikan Islam.

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Introduction

Islamic boarding schools (pesantren) represent one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia and play a significant role in shaping generations who possess religious knowledge, noble character, and social responsibility (Hasan, 2021; Hasan et al., 2024). Historically, pesantren function not only as centers for Islamic learning but also as institutions that cultivate discipline, independence, and leadership among students. In the modern era, however, pesantren face increasingly complex challenges due to educational competition, technological developments, and the growing expectations of society regarding the quality of educational services (Asifudin, 2016; Muchyiddin et al., 2024; Nur Subiantoro, 2022).

The improvement of service quality has become an important issue in the management of educational institutions. Educational institutions are expected not only to deliver academic learning but also to provide effective administrative services, responsive communication, and supportive learning environments (Arif et al., 2025; Ayumi & Nasution, 2025). Institutions that fail to meet these expectations may gradually lose public trust and competitiveness. Therefore, improving service quality is considered an important strategy for strengthening institutional credibility and sustainability (Anindya Savira, Ujang Sumarwan, 2024; Rahmawati et al., 2023; Sallis, 2021).

From an Islamic perspective, the concept of management and service is closely related to the values of responsibility, trustworthiness, and excellence in work. The Qur'an emphasizes that Allah manages the affairs of the universe in an orderly and systematic manner, as stated in Surah As-Sajdah verse 5, which explains that Allah regulates affairs from the heavens to the earth. This verse implies that management in Islam must be carried out with order, responsibility, and careful planning (Wijaya, 2017).

يُدَبِّرُ الْأَمْرَ مِنَ السَّمَاءِ إِلَى الْأَرْضِ ثُمَّ يَعْرُجُ إِلَيْهِ فِي يَوْمٍ كَانَ مِقْدَارُهُ ٥٠٠ أَلْفَ سَنَةٍ بِمِثْقَالِ ذَرَّةٍ

In addition, the Qur'an also highlights the importance of performing good deeds sincerely. In Surah An-Nahl verse 97, Allah states that those who perform righteous deeds while having faith will be granted a good life and the best reward. In the context of educational management, providing quality services to students can be interpreted as a form of righteous action that contributes to the well-being of individuals and society.

مَنْ عَمِلَ صَالِحًا مِّنْ ذَكَرٍ أَوْ أُنْثَىٰ وَهُوَ مُؤْمِنٌ فَلَنُحْيِيَنَّهٗ حَيٰوةً طَيِّبَةً وَلَنَجْزِيَنَّهُمْ أَجْرَهُمْ بِأَحْسَنِ مَا كَانُوا يَعْمَلُونَ

Furthermore, Islam encourages balance between worldly responsibilities and spiritual values. As mentioned in Surah Al-Qashash verse 77, Muslims are encouraged to seek the reward of the hereafter without neglecting their share in worldly life while doing good to others. This principle suggests that educational institutions should manage their organizations professionally while maintaining Islamic ethical values in providing services.

وَابْتَغِ فِيمَا آتَاكَ اللَّهُ الدَّارَ الْآخِرَةَ وَلَا تَنْسَ نَصِيبَكَ مِنَ الدُّنْيَا وَأَحْسِنْ كَمَا أَحْسَنَ اللَّهُ إِلَيْكَ وَلَا تَبْغِ الْفُسَادَ فِي الْأَرْضِ إِنَّ اللَّهَ لَا يُحِبُّ الْمُفْسِدِينَ

In the field of service management, Parasuraman et al. introduced the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model, which identifies five important dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Tangibles refer to physical facilities and infrastructure that support services. Reliability reflects the institution's ability to deliver promised services consistently. Responsiveness relates to the willingness of staff to help and respond quickly to students' needs. Assurance refers to the competence and credibility of educators and staff, while empathy reflects attention and care toward the individual needs of students.

Several studies have highlighted the importance of service quality in educational institutions. explains that the implementation of excellent service principles can improve the quality of educational services in pesantren. Similarly, found that service innovation and transparency in educational management contribute significantly to strengthening public trust in Islamic educational institutions (Anisa, 2020; Nurhayati, 2021).

However, empirical studies that specifically analyze the implementation of excellent service management in pesantren are still relatively limited. Many studies focus on curriculum development or general educational management, while research examining how service quality dimensions are implemented in daily pesantren management remains scarce. This research gap indicates the need for further studies that explore the practical implementation of service excellence in Islamic educational institutions.

Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School in Indramayu is one of the pesantren that actively strives to improve service quality through various educational programs and managerial innovations. The pesantren offers several superior programs such as Arabic and English language mastery, public speaking

training (khitobah), leadership development, and character-based extracurricular activities. In addition, the institution emphasizes transparent financial management and active communication with parents through digital media.

Nevertheless, the pesantren still faces several challenges related to digital infrastructure, human resource competence, and increasing community expectations regarding educational services. Therefore, examining the implementation of excellent service management in this pesantren becomes important to understand how Islamic educational institutions can maintain service quality while adapting to contemporary educational demands. Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the implementation of excellent service management at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School in Indramayu, identify supporting and inhibiting factors, and explore strategies to improve service quality in Islamic educational institutions (Hasanah, S., & Sadi'ah, 2022).

Method

This study employed a qualitative field research approach with a descriptive analytical design to explore the implementation of excellent service management at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School in Indramayu. A qualitative approach was chosen because it enables the researcher to understand the implementation of service management practices in their natural context and to explore the perspectives of institutional actors involved in the management process.

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, documentation, and literature review. The main informant in this study was the pesantren operator, Mrs. Inayatul Mumtazah, S.K.M., who is responsible for managing administrative services and student data. The interview was conducted in August 2025 to obtain information related to service management practices, student enrollment trends, administrative services, and institutional strategies to improve service quality. Documentation such as student admission records, institutional policies, and educational programs was also analyzed to support the research findings.

Data analysis followed the qualitative analysis model proposed by Miles and Huberman, which includes data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by selecting relevant information from interviews and documents, while data display was used to organize the findings systematically. To ensure the credibility of the findings, data triangulation was applied by comparing interview results with institutional documents and relevant literature (Kristina, 2024; Nasution, 2023; Sugiono, 2017).

Result and Discussion

Results

Overview of Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School

Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School in Indramayu was established on March 22, 2002 under the leadership of KH. Sahli Mahmud El Farenduany. The pesantren was founded with the aim of developing Islamic education that integrates religious values with modern educational management. As a boarding school

institution, Al Mu'minien emphasizes the development of students' intellectual, spiritual, and social abilities through structured academic and non-academic programs.

The pesantren implements a boarding system in which students live in dormitories and participate in daily educational activities that combine religious learning, formal education, and character development. This educational model allows the institution to supervise and guide students more intensively in both academic and moral aspects. Based on administrative records obtained from the pesantren operator, the number of new students has increased in recent years. In 2023 the number of new students reached 59, in 2024 it increased to 76 students, and in 2025 it reached 81 students. This increase indicates growing public interest in the educational programs offered by the pesantren (Ningsih & Hasibuan, 2025).

According to the pesantren operator, the increase in student enrollment is influenced by several factors, including the development of superior programs, transparent financial management, and improved communication with parents. These aspects are considered important in strengthening the institution's credibility and public trust (Nurhayati, 2021; Wibowo, 2020).

Implementation of Student Service Management

The pesantren implements several forms of student service management aimed at supporting the educational process. One of the main services provided is administrative service through the student service office. This office handles various administrative needs such as student correspondence, academic information, and institutional announcements. Administrative services are designed to be accessible and responsive so that students can obtain information quickly. According to the pesantren operator, efficient administrative services help students and parents understand institutional policies and academic regulations more clearly.

In addition to administrative services, the pesantren also provides dormitory services that support students' daily living needs. Each dormitory room is equipped with basic facilities such as beds, wardrobes, and adequate ventilation. The management also conducts regular supervision to maintain cleanliness and order within the dormitory environment.

Another important aspect of service management is communication with parents. The pesantren utilizes digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups to provide updates regarding student activities, academic programs, and institutional announcements. This communication system allows parents to remain informed about their children's development while studying at the pesantren (Anisa, 2020; Laia, O., & all, 2022).

Transparency of Educational Costs

Financial transparency is one of the management principles applied at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School. The institution provides clear information regarding the breakdown of educational costs for new students. Based on the administrative data for 2025, the total initial admission fee for new students

is Rp 5,080,000. This cost includes registration fees, operational contributions, meal fees, educational materials, locker rental, building fees, and school uniforms.

Providing detailed information about educational costs helps parents understand the financial requirements involved in the admission process. According to the pesantren operator, financial transparency contributes significantly to building trust between the institution and parents.

Challenges in Service Implementation

Although the pesantren has implemented various service management practices, several challenges remain in the implementation process. One of the main challenges is the limited digital infrastructure used in administrative and data management systems. Many administrative processes are still carried out manually, which can reduce efficiency.

Another challenge relates to the varying competencies of human resources in utilizing technology and modern management systems. Some staff members are still adapting to the use of digital administrative tools. Financial limitations also affect the development of facilities and infrastructure. However, the pesantren continues to conduct routine evaluations and improvements to enhance the quality of services provided to students.

Discussion

Implementation of Service Quality in Islamic Educational Institutions

The findings of this study indicate that Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School has implemented several service management practices that aim to improve the quality of educational services. These practices include administrative services, dormitory management, communication with parents, and the development of superior educational programs (Philip Kotler dan G. Armstrong, 2014; Syahrial, 2025).

In educational institutions, service quality is an important factor that influences stakeholder satisfaction and institutional reputation. Educational institutions that provide effective services tend to gain stronger support from the community and attract more students (Mumun Munawaroh, 2022). The increase in student enrollment at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School over the past three years indicates that improvements in service management have contributed to strengthening the institution's public image. This finding supports previous research, which states that service quality has a significant influence on the competitiveness and sustainability of educational institutions (Azizah & Usman, 2023).

The implementation of service management at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School can be analyzed using the Service Quality (SERVQUAL) model proposed by Parasuraman et al. This model identifies five main dimensions of service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These five dimensions are widely used to evaluate service performance in various sectors,

including educational institutions. In the context of Islamic educational institutions, the SERVQUAL model provides a useful framework for understanding how service quality contributes to improving student satisfaction and strengthening public trust (Arifin, 2025; Fandy Tjiptono, 2019).

The tangible dimension is reflected in the availability of physical facilities such as dormitories, classrooms, and administrative service offices. Adequate physical facilities are important in creating a conducive learning environment that supports both academic and non-academic activities. In the case of Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School, the availability of dormitory facilities, learning spaces, and supporting infrastructure helps students carry out their daily activities comfortably. A well-maintained physical environment also reflects the institution's commitment to providing quality educational services.

The reliability dimension can be observed in the implementation of structured educational programs such as Arabic and English language training as well as khitobah activities. These programs demonstrate the institution's ability to consistently deliver educational services as promised to students and parents. Reliability in educational services means that the institution is capable of maintaining the continuity and effectiveness of its programs over time. The presence of structured learning activities and regular program implementation indicates that the pesantren has established a systematic educational management process.

The responsiveness dimension is reflected in the pesantren's communication system with parents through digital platforms such as WhatsApp groups and other communication channels. Responsive communication allows parents to receive updates regarding student activities, institutional policies, and academic programs. Quick responses to inquiries or concerns from parents and students help strengthen the relationship between the institution and its stakeholders. In educational institutions, responsiveness is essential because it reflects the institution's willingness to provide assistance and address the needs of students and parents in a timely manner (Ibnu et al., 2024).

The assurance dimension is demonstrated through transparent financial management and clear information regarding educational costs. Transparency in financial matters plays an important role in building trust between the institution and parents. By providing detailed information about educational expenses, the pesantren ensures that parents clearly understand the financial commitments required during the admission process. Assurance is also reflected in the competence and professionalism of teachers and administrative staff who are responsible for managing educational activities and student services.

Meanwhile, the empathy dimension is reflected in counseling services, spiritual guidance, and the personal attention given by teachers and administrators to students. In Islamic boarding schools, empathy is often manifested through a familial approach in guiding students. Teachers and administrators not only focus on academic development but also pay attention to the emotional and spiritual

needs of students. This humanistic approach helps create a supportive learning environment where students feel valued, guided, and motivated to develop their potential. Overall, the implementation of these five dimensions indicates that Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School has attempted to integrate service quality principles into its educational management practices. The combination of adequate facilities, structured programs, responsive communication, transparent management, and personal attention to students contributes to improving the overall quality of services provided by the institution.

The findings of this study provide several important implications for the management of Islamic educational institutions, particularly pesantren. First, the implementation of excellent service management demonstrates that improving service quality can strengthen public trust and increase student enrollment. Educational institutions that prioritize service quality are more likely to attract community support and maintain institutional sustainability. Second, the integration of modern management principles with Islamic values is essential for the development of pesantren in the contemporary era. While pesantren maintain their traditional role as centers of Islamic learning, they also need to adopt professional management practices to remain competitive within the broader educational system. Third, the use of digital communication platforms in interacting with parents reflects the growing importance of technology in educational management. Digital communication not only improves the efficiency of information dissemination but also helps strengthen relationships between institutions and stakeholders.

Therefore, pesantren leaders are encouraged to develop strategic policies that emphasize service quality improvement, digital transformation, and human resource development. These efforts will help Islamic educational institutions adapt to modern educational challenges while maintaining their Islamic identity and values.

Excellent Service and Public Trust

The implementation of excellent service management plays a significant role in strengthening public trust in Islamic educational institutions. Public trust is one of the most important factors influencing the sustainability and development of pesantren, as these institutions largely depend on community participation and support. In the context of Islamic educational institutions, trust is not only related to the quality of academic programs but also to the credibility, transparency, and integrity of institutional management (Teofilus, 2025).

The findings of this study indicate that several service management practices implemented at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School contribute to building a positive institutional image. These practices include transparent financial management, structured educational programs, and open communication between the pesantren and parents. Transparency in financial matters allows parents to clearly understand the allocation of educational costs, which in turn helps reduce

uncertainty and strengthen parents' confidence in the institution. In addition, the use of digital communication platforms enables the pesantren to maintain continuous interaction with parents, ensuring that they remain informed about student activities and institutional policies.

From the perspective of educational management, trust can be considered a form of social capital that supports institutional development. Educational institutions that successfully maintain trust from the community tend to experience increased student enrollment and stronger stakeholder support. In the case of Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School, the increase in the number of students over the past few years reflects the positive perception of the community toward the quality of services provided by the institution. This indicates that service management practices implemented by the pesantren have contributed to enhancing its institutional reputation.

Furthermore, the concept of excellent service in Islamic educational institutions is closely related to Islamic ethical values such as honesty (*amanah*), responsibility (*mas'uliyah*), and sincerity (*ikhlas*). These values encourage educational leaders and staff to provide services that not only meet professional standards but also reflect moral and spiritual commitments. In this regard, excellent service is not merely a managerial strategy but also a manifestation of Islamic values in educational practice.

These findings are consistent with previous studies that highlight the importance of service quality in building institutional credibility and stakeholder satisfaction. Research conducted by Nurhayati (2021) emphasizes that the implementation of excellent service management in pesantren environments can significantly enhance institutional reputation and public trust. Similarly, Anisa (2020) explains that transparency in educational management and effective communication with stakeholders are essential components in strengthening community confidence in Islamic educational institutions.

Therefore, the implementation of excellent service management at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School demonstrates that improving service quality can positively influence community perceptions and increase public trust in the institution. By maintaining transparent management practices, strengthening communication with stakeholders, and continuously improving service quality, pesantren can sustain their relevance and competitiveness within the broader educational landscape.

Challenges and Future Development

Despite the positive developments in service management practices, several challenges remain in the implementation of excellent service at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School. These challenges reflect the dynamic nature of educational management in Islamic boarding schools, particularly in responding to technological changes, organizational development, and increasing expectations from stakeholders (Dwiningrum, 2020).

One of the primary challenges identified in this study is the limited use of digital technology in administrative and information management systems. In many cases, several administrative processes are still conducted manually, which may reduce efficiency in data management and service delivery. In the contemporary educational landscape, digital transformation has become an essential element in improving institutional effectiveness. Educational institutions are increasingly required to adopt technology-based management systems in order to enhance transparency, efficiency, and accessibility of services for students and parents (Qur'aini & Firdaus, 2024; Wibowo, 2020).

The limited integration of digital infrastructure in pesantren management may also influence the speed and accuracy of information dissemination. Digital systems such as integrated student information systems, online administrative platforms, and digital communication tools can significantly improve service quality and administrative efficiency. Therefore, strengthening digital infrastructure is an important step toward developing a more modern and adaptive service management system in Islamic educational institutions.

Another challenge relates to the variation in human resource competencies, particularly in utilizing digital technology and modern management practices. The success of service management implementation is closely related to the capacity and professionalism of educators and administrative staff. In the context of educational management, human resources represent a strategic asset that determines the effectiveness of institutional policies and programs.

Continuous professional development through training, workshops, and capacity-building programs is therefore necessary to enhance the competencies of educators and administrative staff. By improving digital literacy and management skills, institutional personnel will be better prepared to implement innovative service strategies and respond to emerging educational challenges.

In addition, financial limitations may also affect the development of facilities, infrastructure, and technological systems required to support excellent service implementation. Many Islamic boarding schools operate within limited financial resources, which may constrain their ability to invest in technological development and institutional capacity building. Consequently, strategic planning and effective resource management are essential to ensure sustainable institutional development.

Despite these challenges, Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School demonstrates strong potential for further improvement in service management practices. Through continuous evaluation, strategic planning, and collaboration with stakeholders, the pesantren can gradually strengthen its service management system. Efforts to integrate digital technology, enhance human resource capacity, and maintain transparent management practices will contribute significantly to improving institutional performance.

In the long term, strengthening digital infrastructure and developing competent human resources will enable the pesantren to adapt to the changing

educational environment while maintaining its distinctive Islamic educational values. By combining modern management approaches with Islamic ethical principles, pesantren institutions can continue to provide high-quality educational services that meet the expectations of the community and support sustainable institutional development.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of excellent service management at Al Mu'minien Modern Islamic Boarding School in Indramayu plays an important role in improving the quality of educational services and strengthening institutional credibility. The findings indicate that the pesantren has implemented various service management practices, including administrative services, structured educational programs, dormitory management, transparent financial policies, and effective communication with parents. These practices reflect the main dimensions of the SERVQUAL model: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy – which collectively support the improvement of educational service quality and strengthen public trust in the institution.

This study contributes to the development of research on Islamic educational management by providing empirical evidence on how the SERVQUAL framework can be applied in the context of pesantren management. The findings demonstrate that the integration of professional service management with Islamic values such as amanah (trustworthiness), responsibility, and sincerity can strengthen institutional reputation and increase stakeholder satisfaction. Therefore, this research provides practical insights for pesantren leaders and educational managers in developing service-oriented management strategies that combine modern management approaches with Islamic ethical principles.

However, this study has several limitations. The research was conducted in a single pesantren institution with a limited number of informants, which may limit the generalization of the findings to other Islamic educational institutions. In addition, the study mainly relied on qualitative data obtained from interviews and institutional documentation. Future research is therefore recommended to involve multiple pesantren institutions, apply mixed-method approaches, and examine the impact of digital transformation and human resource development on service quality in Islamic educational institutions.

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