

## School Service Management Policy in Improving Parents' Understanding of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) Fund Utilization

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**Abstract:** This study examines school service management policies in improving parents' understanding regarding the utilization of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) funds at MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon. The research aims to analyze the implementation of school management services, identify parents' understanding of educational assistance utilization, and explore supporting and inhibiting factors affecting policy implementation. This study employed a qualitative case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and documentation involving the principal, teachers, administrative staff, and parents of PIP recipients. Data validity was ensured through source, technique, and time triangulation, while analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña involving data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that school management services were implemented through socialization programs, administrative assistance, transparent communication, and monitoring of educational fund utilization. These strategies significantly contributed to improving parents' understanding regarding the proper use of PIP funds for educational purposes. However, parents' understanding remained influenced by educational background, economic conditions, access to information, and educational awareness. The study further indicates that integrating Islamic values such as amanah, honesty, responsibility, and justice strengthened educational service effectiveness and community trust. Therefore, effective school service management is essential for ensuring the successful implementation of educational assistance policies and strengthening parental participation in supporting children's education.

**Keywords:** school service management, Program Indonesia Pintar, parents' understanding, educational policy, Islamic education

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini mengkaji kebijakan manajemen pelayanan sekolah dalam meningkatkan pemahaman orang tua terhadap penggunaan dana Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) di MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon. Penelitian bertujuan menganalisis implementasi pelayanan sekolah, mengidentifikasi tingkat pemahaman orang tua terhadap pemanfaatan bantuan pendidikan, serta menemukan faktor pendukung dan penghambat pelaksanaan kebijakan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan jenis studi kasus. Data diperoleh melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi partisipatif, dan dokumentasi yang melibatkan kepala madrasah, guru, tenaga administrasi, dan orang tua penerima PIP. Keabsahan data dilakukan melalui triangulasi sumber, teknik, dan waktu, sedangkan analisis data menggunakan model interaktif Miles, Huberman, dan Saldaña melalui reduksi data,

*penyajian data, dan penarikan kesimpulan. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa manajemen pelayanan sekolah dilaksanakan melalui sosialisasi program, pendampingan administrasi, komunikasi yang transparan, serta monitoring penggunaan dana bantuan pendidikan. Strategi tersebut berkontribusi terhadap peningkatan pemahaman orang tua mengenai penggunaan dana PIP sesuai kebutuhan pendidikan anak. Namun demikian, tingkat pemahaman orang tua masih dipengaruhi oleh latar belakang pendidikan, kondisi ekonomi, akses informasi, dan kesadaran pendidikan masyarakat. Penelitian ini juga menemukan bahwa integrasi nilai-nilai Islam seperti amanah, kejujuran, tanggung jawab, dan keadilan memperkuat efektivitas pelayanan pendidikan dan meningkatkan kepercayaan masyarakat terhadap sekolah. Oleh karena itu, manajemen pelayanan sekolah yang efektif menjadi faktor penting dalam keberhasilan implementasi kebijakan bantuan pendidikan dan peningkatan partisipasi orang tua dalam mendukung pendidikan anak.*

*Kata Kunci: manajemen pelayanan sekolah, Program Indonesia Pintar, pemahaman orang tua, kebijakan pendidikan, pendidikan Islam*

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## **Introduction**

Education is universally recognized as a fundamental human right and an essential instrument for national development (Hasan, 2024). The advancement of a nation is strongly influenced by the quality of its educational system because education contributes not only to intellectual growth but also to social mobility, economic productivity, and the formation of moral and cultural values within society. In the Indonesian context, the government has continuously attempted to improve educational access and equity through various public policies aimed at reducing educational disparities among different social groups (Ainiyah et al., 2025). Nevertheless, economic inequality remains one of the major obstacles preventing children from disadvantaged families from obtaining proper educational opportunities. Many students from low-income households experience difficulties in fulfilling educational needs such as school uniforms, books, transportation costs, learning materials, and other academic necessities. These conditions often lead to low educational participation, decreased learning motivation, and even school dropouts, particularly among vulnerable social groups (Alfikri et al., 2025).

As part of its commitment to ensuring equal educational opportunities, the Indonesian government introduced the Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) as a strategic educational assistance policy (Ghina et al., 2024). PIP is a financial assistance program intended to support students from poor and vulnerable families in continuing their education without being hindered by economic limitations (Fatiroh et al., 2025). The program aims to reduce the number of school dropouts, improve educational participation, and support the implementation of compulsory education in Indonesia. According to the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and

Technology, PIP functions not only as financial support but also as a policy instrument to strengthen social justice in education by ensuring that economically disadvantaged students receive equal access to educational services (Roudoh et al., 2024). From the perspective of public policy, PIP represents a form of affirmative educational policy designed to address structural inequality and promote educational inclusiveness within Indonesian society.

Although the Program Indonesia Pintar has been widely implemented across Indonesia, various empirical studies indicate that the effectiveness of the program is still confronted by numerous implementation challenges (Roudoh et al., 2024). Previous studies have shown that the success of educational assistance programs is not solely determined by the availability of financial aid, but also by the quality of policy implementation, communication, and institutional management at the school level. In many cases, parents of students receiving PIP assistance still possess limited understanding regarding the objectives, mechanisms, and appropriate utilization of the educational funds (Hamdi et al., 2020). Some parents perceive the assistance merely as general social aid that can be freely used for household consumption rather than specifically allocated for educational purposes. Consequently, the educational assistance provided by the government often fails to generate optimal impacts on students' educational development because the funds are partially diverted to non-educational needs such as household expenses, debt payments, and daily consumption.

This phenomenon reflects the existence of a significant gap between policy formulation and policy implementation. From the perspective of public policy analysis, implementation effectiveness is influenced by several critical factors, including communication, institutional resources, bureaucratic structure, and the commitment of policy implementers (Dunn, 2018; Edwards III, 1980). In the context of PIP implementation, ineffective communication between schools and parents frequently contributes to misunderstandings regarding the utilization of educational assistance funds. In many schools, socialization activities concerning PIP are still limited to administrative procedures during fund disbursement without continuous educational guidance for parents. Furthermore, communication methods tend to remain formalistic and bureaucratic, making them difficult to understand for parents with low educational backgrounds. As a result, educational assistance policies are often unable to achieve their intended objectives effectively.

In this regard, schools play a strategic role as intermediary institutions connecting government educational policies with the community. Schools are not merely administrative distributors of educational aid but also educational service institutions responsible for building public understanding regarding the proper use of educational assistance programs. School management services, therefore, become a crucial element in determining the effectiveness of educational policy

implementation. Effective school management services involve transparent communication, administrative assistance, continuous supervision, participatory engagement, and responsive educational services aimed at empowering parents and students. According to public service management theory, the quality of institutional services significantly affects public trust, participation, and policy effectiveness (Osborne & Gaebler, 2010). Consequently, schools are expected to develop educational services that are communicative, transparent, participatory, and socially responsive to the needs of the community.

The issue becomes increasingly important within the context of Islamic educational institutions such as madrasahs. Islamic educational institutions are not only responsible for academic achievement but are also expected to cultivate moral, ethical, and spiritual values within society. In Islamic educational perspectives, educational assistance funds should be regarded as an amanah (trust) that must be utilized responsibly and ethically for the benefit of students' educational development. Islamic values such as honesty, accountability, justice, and social responsibility are essential principles in the management and utilization of educational assistance programs. The Qur'an emphasizes the importance of responsible financial management and educational commitment, while Islamic teachings encourage the pursuit of knowledge as both a moral obligation and a social responsibility. Therefore, the implementation of educational assistance policies within Islamic educational institutions should integrate administrative effectiveness with ethical and spiritual values.

MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon, as one of the Islamic junior secondary schools under the Ministry of Religious Affairs, represents an important context for examining the implementation of educational assistance policies and school management services. The school has a relatively large number of PIP recipients and actively participates in the administration and distribution of educational assistance funds. However, preliminary observations indicate that various challenges still emerge regarding parents' understanding of PIP utilization. Many parents continue to experience difficulties in understanding the objectives and regulations governing the use of educational assistance funds. In addition, socioeconomic limitations among families frequently influence decision-making processes related to educational expenditure. These realities make MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon an important setting for analyzing how school management services contribute to improving parental understanding regarding the use of educational assistance funds.

Several previous studies have discussed the implementation of Program Indonesia Pintar in different educational settings. However, most studies primarily focus on administrative effectiveness, fund distribution mechanisms, or policy evaluation without comprehensively examining the relationship between school management services and parents' understanding of educational assistance

utilization. Furthermore, limited studies have integrated perspectives from public policy, educational service management, organizational communication, and Islamic educational values simultaneously in analyzing PIP implementation within Islamic educational institutions. This condition indicates the existence of a research gap that requires further academic investigation. Therefore, this study seeks to contribute theoretically and empirically by developing an integrative analysis of school management services in improving parents' understanding of PIP utilization within the context of Islamic educational institutions.

This study is significant for several reasons. First, it contributes theoretically to the development of educational management and public policy studies by integrating perspectives of policy implementation, educational service management, community participation, and Islamic educational ethics. Second, it provides empirical insights into the relationship between school services and parental understanding within the implementation of educational assistance programs. Third, the study offers practical recommendations for schools and policymakers to improve the effectiveness of educational assistance programs through more participatory, transparent, and communicative service management systems. Finally, the study highlights the importance of integrating ethical and religious values into educational policy implementation to ensure that educational assistance programs not only achieve administrative effectiveness but also strengthen social responsibility and educational awareness within society.

Based on these considerations, this study focuses on analyzing school management service policies in improving parents' understanding of the utilization of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) funds at MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon. The study specifically explores how school management services are implemented, how parents understand the objectives and utilization of PIP funds, and what supporting and inhibiting factors influence the effectiveness of educational service policies in the implementation of the Program Indonesia Pintar.

## **Methods**

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore the implementation of school management service policies in improving parents' understanding of the utilization of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) funds at MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon (Yin, 2018). A qualitative approach was selected because the study aimed to understand deeply the social realities, communication patterns, educational services, and policy implementation processes occurring within the natural setting of the school environment (Creswell, 2010). According to John W. Creswell, qualitative research enables researchers to investigate complex social phenomena by interpreting participants' experiences, perceptions, and interactions within specific contexts. The case study design was considered appropriate because the research focused intensively on a single educational institution as a bounded

system in order to obtain a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of PIP-related educational services and parental responses toward the program.

The research was conducted at MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon, a state Islamic junior high school under the Ministry of Religious Affairs that actively implements the Program Indonesia Pintar for students from economically disadvantaged families. The participants of the study consisted of the school principal, vice principal, PIP administrative officers, homeroom teachers, and parents of students receiving PIP assistance. These participants were selected purposively based on their direct involvement in the implementation and management of the educational assistance program. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and documentation studies (Sugiyono, 2017). Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain detailed information regarding school management policies, communication strategies, parental understanding, and challenges in implementing the program. Participatory observation was employed to observe directly the process of PIP socialization, administrative services, fund disbursement assistance, and interactions between school personnel and parents. Documentation studies involved the analysis of official school documents, government regulations, PIP technical guidelines, meeting reports, recipient lists, and school administrative records related to the implementation of the program. To ensure data credibility, the study applied source triangulation, technique triangulation, and time triangulation by comparing information obtained from different participants, methods, and periods of data collection.

Data analysis in this study followed the interactive model proposed by (Miles et al., 2019), which consists of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, categorizing, and organizing relevant data related to school management services and parents' understanding of PIP utilization. The organized data were then presented in descriptive narrative forms to facilitate interpretation and thematic analysis. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous verification processes by comparing findings from interviews, observations, and documentation to ensure consistency and validity. The trustworthiness of the data was strengthened through prolonged engagement in the research setting, member checking with participants, audit trails, and reflective field notes maintained throughout the research process. This methodological approach enabled the study to generate comprehensive and credible findings regarding the role of school management services in supporting the effective implementation of educational assistance policies within the context of Islamic education.

## **Results And Discussion**

### **Results**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of school management service policies at MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon plays a significant role in improving parents' understanding regarding the utilization of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) funds. The results reveal that school management services are implemented through several interconnected activities, including policy socialization, administrative assistance, transparent communication, monitoring of fund utilization, and educational guidance for parents. These service practices not only function administratively but also operate as educational and social empowerment mechanisms that influence parental awareness and attitudes toward educational assistance programs.

One of the most important findings concerns the implementation of PIP socialization activities conducted by the school. Based on interviews with the principal and PIP administrative officers, the school regularly organizes meetings with parents to explain the objectives, procedures, and appropriate utilization of PIP funds. The principal explained that the school attempts to ensure that parents understand that the assistance is specifically intended for educational purposes rather than general household expenditures. During the interview, the principal stated:

*"We continuously remind parents that PIP funds are educational assistance intended to support students' learning needs such as uniforms, books, transportation, and school equipment. We try to ensure that parents understand the educational purpose of the program, not merely the financial assistance aspect."*

This statement indicates that the school perceives socialization not only as an administrative requirement but also as an educational process aimed at shaping parents' awareness regarding educational responsibility. Observational findings also showed that socialization activities were generally conducted during parent meetings, report card distributions, and special PIP coordination sessions. Teachers and administrative staff actively explained technical procedures using simple language to accommodate parents with limited educational backgrounds. Documentation obtained from the school included attendance lists, socialization schedules, information leaflets, and written guidelines distributed to parents during PIP meetings.

The study further found that administrative assistance constitutes an important dimension of school management services. Many parents of PIP recipients come from economically disadvantaged backgrounds and possess limited understanding of bureaucratic procedures. Consequently, the school provides intensive assistance in document preparation, data verification, bank account

registration, and fund disbursement procedures. A PIP administrative officer explained:

*"Most parents are unfamiliar with administrative requirements, especially older parents or those with limited educational experience. Therefore, we assist them step by step, from preparing identity documents to guiding them during the disbursement process."*

This finding was reinforced through observations during the administrative service process. Teachers and staff were observed helping parents complete forms, explaining missing documents, and providing direct guidance regarding banking procedures. Some parents were also accompanied by school representatives during fund withdrawal processes at designated banks. These practices demonstrate that the school adopts a service-oriented and humanistic approach in implementing educational assistance policies.

Another significant finding relates to the implementation of transparency and communication practices. The school attempts to maintain openness regarding the list of recipients, funding procedures, and technical regulations of PIP implementation. Information is disseminated through school meetings, class communication groups, printed announcements, and direct communication between teachers and parents. According to one homeroom teacher:

*"Transparent communication is important because misunderstandings often occur when parents only receive incomplete information from external sources. We always try to explain directly and clearly."*

Observational data showed that WhatsApp groups managed by homeroom teachers became one of the most effective communication media between the school and parents. Through these digital platforms, the school distributed information concerning schedules, administrative requirements, and reminders regarding the appropriate utilization of educational funds. Parents acknowledged that such communication mechanisms helped them better understand school policies and reduced confusion regarding administrative procedures.

Despite these efforts, the findings indicate that parents' understanding regarding PIP utilization remains varied. Some parents demonstrated adequate understanding of the educational objectives of the program and used the funds appropriately for school-related expenses. One parent explained:

*"I use the PIP funds to buy my child's school uniforms, books, and transportation costs because I know the assistance is intended for education."*

However, other parents admitted that economic pressures often forced them to allocate part of the funds for household necessities. Another parent stated:

*"Sometimes we have urgent household needs. When there is no money for food or debts, part of the PIP funds is used temporarily for those needs."*

This finding illustrates the complex socioeconomic realities experienced by low-income families. The improper utilization of educational assistance funds cannot simply be interpreted as parental negligence but must also be understood within the broader context of economic vulnerability and survival strategies among disadvantaged households. Observational findings supported these interview results. Several families of PIP recipients were found to live under economically difficult conditions, including irregular employment, unstable income, and limited access to educational resources.

The study also identified several factors influencing parents' understanding regarding the utilization of PIP funds. First, educational background significantly affected parents' ability to comprehend administrative procedures and policy objectives. Parents with higher educational attainment generally demonstrated better understanding of PIP regulations and educational priorities. In contrast, parents with limited formal education often struggled to interpret written information and bureaucratic instructions. Second, socioeconomic conditions strongly influenced parental decision-making regarding fund utilization. Families experiencing severe financial difficulties were more likely to prioritize immediate household needs over long-term educational expenditures. Third, access to information and communication affected parental understanding. Parents who actively participated in school meetings and communication groups possessed better knowledge regarding program implementation compared to those who rarely attended school activities due to work obligations.

Another important finding concerns the role of teachers and school personnel as social educators beyond their formal academic responsibilities. Teachers not only provided administrative guidance but also attempted to build parents' educational awareness through persuasive and empathetic communication. One teacher stated:

*"We try not to blame parents when the funds are not fully used for education. Instead, we explain patiently why education is important for their children's future."*

This humanistic communication approach contributed positively to building trust between the school and the community. Observations revealed that parents generally felt respected and supported by school personnel, which encouraged more open communication regarding their economic difficulties and educational concerns.

The findings additionally reveal that Islamic values were integrated into school management services and educational communication. The concepts of amanah (trust), responsibility, honesty, and justice were frequently emphasized during socialization activities. Teachers often reminded parents that educational assistance represented a moral responsibility that should be utilized appropriately for students' educational development. One teacher explained:

*"We always remind parents that this assistance is an amanah from the government and must be used responsibly for the benefit of their children's education."*

This integration of Islamic ethical values strengthened the moral dimension of educational service management within the madrasah context. Parents generally responded positively to religiously grounded communication because it aligned with their social and cultural values.

Nevertheless, the study also identified several challenges in the implementation of school management services related to PIP. Limited parental participation in socialization meetings remained a major obstacle because many parents worked as laborers, small traders, or informal workers with limited time availability. Furthermore, some parents continued to perceive PIP primarily as general financial assistance rather than educational support. In addition, the school faced limitations in conducting continuous monitoring of fund utilization due to limited institutional resources and the large number of program recipients.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the effectiveness of educational assistance policies is closely associated with the quality of school management services, communication practices, parental educational awareness, and socioeconomic conditions within the community. The implementation of participatory, transparent, and humanistic educational services significantly contributes to improving parents' understanding regarding the appropriate utilization of educational assistance funds within the context of Islamic educational institutions.

## **Discussion**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of school management service policies at MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon has a significant influence on improving parents' understanding regarding the utilization of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) funds. The study reveals that educational assistance policies cannot be understood merely as administrative mechanisms for distributing financial aid, but rather as multidimensional social processes involving communication, educational empowerment, institutional trust, moral responsibility, and social participation. In this regard, the role of schools extends beyond administrative implementation and functions as a transformative institution that mediates public policy and community educational awareness. This finding strengthens the argument proposed by Sandfort & Moulton, (2014) that the success of public policy implementation is not solely determined by policy formulation, but also by the quality of communication, institutional interpretation, and interaction between implementers and beneficiaries. Within the context of PIP implementation, the school acts as the central intermediary institution responsible for translating government policy into understandable and socially acceptable educational practices.

The implementation of socialization activities conducted by the school reflects the importance of communication in educational policy implementation (Brint et al., 2001). The findings indicate that parents who actively participated in school socialization programs possessed better understanding regarding the objectives and utilization of PIP funds. This supports the policy implementation model proposed by Reynolds et al., (2020), who emphasized communication as one of the primary determinants of policy effectiveness. Effective communication ensures that policy objectives, procedures, and expectations are transmitted clearly from policymakers to target groups. In this study, the school attempted to simplify administrative information using direct communication, participatory meetings, and digital communication platforms such as WhatsApp groups. Such communication strategies reduced information gaps and enabled parents with limited educational backgrounds to better comprehend policy regulations. The findings also confirm previous research indicating that educational assistance programs frequently encounter implementation problems due to weak communication mechanisms and limited public understanding of policy objectives (Hudson et al., 2019; Sandfort & Moulton, 2014b).

However, the study also demonstrates that communication alone is insufficient to guarantee the effective utilization of educational assistance funds. Socioeconomic realities significantly shape parents' decision-making processes regarding fund allocation. Many parents of PIP recipients belong to economically vulnerable groups characterized by unstable employment, irregular income, and limited financial security. In such circumstances, educational assistance funds are often perceived not only as educational support but also as emergency economic resources necessary for household survival. This finding aligns with Urie Bronfenbrenner's ecological systems theory, which emphasizes that individual behavior is influenced by interconnected social, economic, and environmental systems. Parents' decisions regarding PIP utilization cannot be separated from broader socioeconomic pressures that affect family priorities and survival strategies (Goodson et al., 2001). Therefore, improper use of educational assistance funds should not simply be interpreted as parental irresponsibility but rather as a reflection of structural economic vulnerability experienced by marginalized families.

This condition further illustrates the complexity of implementing educational policies within low-income communities. Public policy implementation frequently encounters discrepancies between policy intentions and practical realities because target groups operate under social and economic constraints that policymakers may not fully anticipate (McConnell & 't Hart, 2019). The findings support the argument that educational inequality is deeply connected to economic inequality. Educational assistance programs such as PIP indeed reduce financial burdens, but they cannot fully eliminate structural poverty that continues to shape household decision-

making patterns. Consequently, educational policy implementation requires not only administrative effectiveness but also broader social empowerment strategies that address the underlying socioeconomic conditions of beneficiaries.

The findings additionally highlight the importance of school management services in strengthening parental educational awareness. Administrative assistance provided by teachers and school staff significantly contributed to reducing bureaucratic difficulties experienced by parents. This finding supports public service management theories proposed by David Osborne and Ted Gaebler, which emphasize that public institutions should prioritize citizen-oriented services characterized by responsiveness, accessibility, transparency, and empowerment. The school's administrative support transformed the implementation of PIP from a purely bureaucratic process into a more inclusive and participatory educational service. Parents who initially experienced confusion regarding administrative procedures gradually developed greater confidence and understanding due to the supportive and empathetic assistance provided by school personnel.

Moreover, the study reveals that teachers function not only as educational professionals but also as social educators and community mediators. Teachers actively encouraged parents to prioritize educational needs while simultaneously acknowledging the economic difficulties experienced by families. This humanistic approach proved effective in building trust and strengthening relationships between schools and communities. The findings reinforce the concept of schools as social institutions embedded within community structures rather than isolated educational organizations. Effective educational management therefore requires emotional intelligence, social sensitivity, and cultural understanding in addition to technical administrative competence. Schools that maintain empathetic and respectful communication with parents are more likely to foster positive parental engagement and educational commitment.

Another important dimension emerging from this study concerns the integration of Islamic values into educational service management. As an Islamic educational institution, MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon incorporated religious and moral principles into communication regarding educational assistance policies. The concepts of amanah (trust), honesty, responsibility, and justice were consistently emphasized during socialization activities and interactions with parents. This integration of Islamic ethical values strengthened the moral legitimacy of school management services and increased parental acceptance of educational guidance. From the perspective of Islamic educational philosophy, educational assistance funds are not merely economic resources but moral trusts that must be managed responsibly for the benefit of children's educational development. The findings therefore suggest that integrating religious values into educational policy

implementation can strengthen ethical awareness and social responsibility within communities.

The integration of Islamic values also reflects the broader role of madrasahs in Indonesian society. Islamic educational institutions are expected not only to transmit academic knowledge but also to cultivate moral character and spiritual consciousness among students and communities. In this context, the implementation of PIP becomes part of a larger educational mission involving social ethics and communal responsibility (Ninghardjanti et al., 2023). The findings indicate that religiously grounded communication was particularly effective because it resonated with parents' cultural and spiritual values. This suggests that educational policy implementation within religious educational settings should consider local cultural and moral frameworks in order to improve community engagement and policy acceptance.

Despite these positive findings, the study identified several challenges limiting the effectiveness of school management services. One major challenge concerns limited parental participation in socialization activities. Many parents work in informal sectors characterized by long working hours and unstable schedules, preventing them from attending school meetings regularly (Zuhri et al., 2026). This condition limits parents' access to information and weakens communication between schools and families. The findings suggest that schools need to develop more flexible and accessible communication strategies capable of accommodating the realities of low-income communities. Digital communication platforms have partially addressed this issue; however, unequal access to technology and varying levels of digital literacy remain important limitations.

Another challenge relates to the school's limited capacity to monitor the actual utilization of PIP funds. Although schools attempt to provide guidance and supervision, continuous monitoring remains difficult due to limited institutional resources and the large number of recipients (Saputri et al., 2025). This finding illustrates the limitations of school-based policy implementation when institutional responsibilities exceed available administrative capacities. Educational assistance programs therefore require stronger collaboration among schools, government institutions, and community organizations to ensure more effective monitoring and support mechanisms.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the development of educational management and public policy literature by demonstrating the interconnectedness of communication, service management, socioeconomic conditions, and moral values in educational policy implementation. The study proposes that educational assistance programs should be analyzed not merely through administrative or financial perspectives but through integrated social, cultural, and ethical frameworks (Supardi et al., 2024). School management services

function not only as technical administrative systems but also as mechanisms for social empowerment and educational transformation. This perspective broadens the understanding of educational service management by emphasizing its relational, participatory, and moral dimensions.

Furthermore, the findings provide empirical support for the integration of public policy theory, organizational communication, participatory management, and Islamic educational ethics in analyzing educational assistance implementation. Previous studies frequently focused on isolated dimensions such as policy effectiveness, administrative transparency, or educational funding. In contrast, this study demonstrates that the effectiveness of educational assistance programs depends upon multidimensional interactions involving institutional practices, family socioeconomic conditions, community trust, communication quality, and ethical values. Such an integrative approach offers a more comprehensive understanding of educational policy implementation within developing and religiously oriented educational contexts.

Practically, the findings imply that schools should strengthen participatory communication strategies, provide continuous educational assistance for parents, and utilize more accessible information systems to improve policy understanding among communities. Schools should also collaborate more intensively with local governments and social institutions to address the socioeconomic challenges faced by vulnerable families. Educational assistance programs need to be accompanied by broader social empowerment initiatives capable of reducing economic pressures that frequently undermine educational priorities within low-income households.

Overall, this study demonstrates that the success of Program Indonesia Pintar implementation is strongly influenced by the quality of school management services, effective communication, parental educational awareness, socioeconomic realities, and the integration of moral values within educational institutions. Educational policy implementation is therefore not simply a technical administrative activity but a complex social process requiring institutional sensitivity, participatory engagement, ethical commitment, and continuous educational empowerment.

### **Conclusion**

This study concludes that the implementation of school management service policies at MTsN 1 Kota Cirebon has contributed significantly to improving parents' understanding regarding the utilization of Program Indonesia Pintar (PIP) funds. The findings indicate that effective school services, including socialization programs, administrative assistance, transparent information delivery, and continuous communication, play an important role in strengthening parents' awareness of the objectives and proper use of educational assistance funds. The school does not merely function as an administrative executor of government policy,

but also as a social and educational institution that bridges communication between the government and the community. Through humanistic and participatory approaches, the school has succeeded in creating a more supportive environment for parents in understanding the importance of educational funding for their children's academic continuity.

The study also reveals that parents' understanding of PIP utilization remains influenced by several interconnected factors, particularly educational background, socioeconomic conditions, access to information, and educational awareness. Parents from economically vulnerable families frequently experience difficulties in prioritizing educational expenditures because of urgent household needs, causing some PIP funds to be used for non-educational purposes. These findings demonstrate that the implementation of educational assistance policies cannot be separated from broader social and economic realities faced by low-income communities. In this regard, effective communication, continuous guidance, and responsive school management become essential elements in ensuring that educational assistance programs achieve their intended objectives. The findings further confirm that schools with transparent, communicative, and empathetic management systems are more capable of building public trust and increasing parental participation in educational programs.

This study additionally contributes both theoretically and practically to the development of educational management and public policy studies by integrating perspectives of public service management, communication, socioeconomic realities, and Islamic educational values. The incorporation of values such as amanah (trust), honesty, responsibility, and justice strengthens the ethical dimension of educational policy implementation and enhances community engagement within the madrasah environment. Practically, the study recommends that schools intensify communication strategies, expand digital information systems, strengthen administrative assistance, and conduct sustainable monitoring regarding the use of PIP funds. Nevertheless, this study remains limited to a single institutional context and qualitative analysis within a restricted period of time. Therefore, future studies are recommended to conduct broader comparative research across different educational institutions and explore the long-term impacts of educational assistance policies on educational quality, student achievement, and community welfare.

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