Research Article

Quality Management of Education in Islamic Boarding Schools: Factors That Determine Public Perception and Satisfaction

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1. Introduction

Islamic boarding schools that are institutions in the community, especially in rural areas, are one of the oldest Islamic educational institutions in Indonesia.(Badrudin, 2024) The beginning of the presence of Islamic boarding schools was traditional to explore Islamic religious sciences as a guideline for life (tafaqquh fi al-din) in society. (Hayana & Wahidmurni, 2019)(Hayana & Wahidmurni, 2019), apart from that on a broader scale, Islamic boarding schools, with their strong religious and social traditions, have a unique potential to promote the values of tolerance and intercultural understanding. (Gozali et al., 2024)

Education in Islamic boarding schools is characterized by a management approach that is often different compared to other formal educational institutions. Factors that affect public perception of the quality of pesantren education include school-based management (SBM), educational innovation, curriculum applied, financial management, and community involvement in the educational process. According to Aziz (Aziz, 2015), MBS is an effective strategy to improve the quality of education in madrassas and Islamic boarding schools. This is in line with the need to implement an integrated quality management system (TQM) in education, which can produce graduates who not only have academic ability, but also good character (Fadli, 2017).

A good curriculum implementation can also contribute to the quality of education. Noviana et al. (Noviana, I., Farida, S., Fatimah, P., & Hanik, 2022) Showing that designing an appropriate curriculum is an important step to improve the quality of education. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the curriculum must consider a holistic approach that integrates religious and general knowledge, so that it can meet the expectations of the community. Adinda and Patimah's research by Adinda & Patimah explains that optimal school financial management is also a key factor in improving the quality of education. The efficient use of resources ensures that pesantren can provide better educational facilities, improve the learning environment, and support innovation in the teaching process. (Adinda, C. and Patimah, 2023)

Effective quality management in education also demands a deep understanding of people's experiences and expectations. In this context, there is an important gap to

identify, namely the difference between people's expectations and the reality of the education received. The low quality of education can lead to dissatisfaction among the community, which in turn can affect the reputation and sustainability of the pesantren. As Sadan put it,(Sadan, 2024) Behavior management in Islamic education needs to emphasize student welfare and community involvement to increase positive perceptions of educational institutions.

Furthermore, community participation in education in Islamic boarding schools is very important. Community involvement, both as administrators of Islamic boarding schools and as parents of students, can strengthen the education support system (Sukino, A., Rahmap, R., & Mardiani, 2024) Research shows that people will be more satisfied with the quality of education received if they feel they have a part in the educational process. This is in line with the results of the research revealed by Sampul et al. (Scott, D., Binilang, B., Senduk, J., & Oentoe, 2020) which emphasizes the importance of internal quality assurance (IQAS) in education, as a step to maintain and improve the quality expected by stakeholders.

Risk management in education must also be a major concern. Setiawan et al. stated the importance of risk management procedures in supporting the quality of education. In facing challenges such as limited resources, social dynamics, and disasters, pesantren need to have a good strategy to minimize risks so that the quality of education is maintained. Thus, risk management analysis and strategies can provide better insight into how pesantren can meet people's expectations of education. (Setiawan, F., Ningsih, A., Nurgiansyah, H., & Rohman, 2022)

In the study of the quality management of education in Islamic boarding schools and factors that affect public perception and satisfaction, there are several research gaps that need to be explored more deeply based on previous findings. Analysis of the existing literature shows that the management of education in pesantren is very important, but there is still a lack of studies that comprehensively link quality management and public perception.

Most of the previous research focused on the development of quality management strategies and the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the context of pesantren (Siswanto, 2016); (Arribath, A. H., Suradika, A., & Sopa, 2021) For example, research by Kahfi et al. addressed the expected improvement in the quality of education through the implementation of quality management, but did not explore the community's reaction to the initiative in the context of their satisfaction (Kahfi, S., Nafilah, A., & Mabnunah, 2023) In addition, Purwanti et al. show that adaptation of management strategies can improve the quality of education but also demands the participation of the community in the process (Purwanti, E., Kusuma, N., & Sari, 2020) However, these studies are still limited in the exploration of certain factors that affect public perception of the quality of pesantren education.

Other references such as Abdullah affirm the importance of quality management design but do not investigate how this design is accepted by society at large (A. Abdullah, 2020) This research shows that there has been no comprehensive investigation linking community feedback with the implementation of quality management policies in pesantren education. Furthermore, research by Syarifah shows that the marketing of educational services can affect the satisfaction of users of educational services in Islamic boarding schools, but does not directly link it with public perception of these qualities

(Syarifah, 2021). This research indicates that despite efforts to improve the quality and relevance of education, public understanding of change is essential to achieve the desired level of satisfaction.

On the other hand, research by Syarifudin and Prasetyaningrum emphasizes the role of kiai leadership and community participation in improving the quality of education, emphasizing the need for active support from the community for the success of quality management, although there is no in-depth exploration of their perceptions (Syarifudin, E. and Priyadi, 2023); (Prasetyaningrum, J., Fadjaritha, F., Aziz, M., & Sukarno, 2021)

This shows a gap in understanding between education management and public perception that has not been fully mapped in existing studies. To fill the gaps in previous research, it is important to conduct a study that specifically examines people's perceptions and their satisfaction with the quality management of education in Islamic boarding schools. This research needs to involve a direct analysis of community feedback and its impact on the implementation of quality management, which in turn can be the basis for a more effective and responsive education development strategy to the needs of the community.

2. Method

This study uses a mixed method approach, which combines qualitative and quantitative research. A qualitative approach was used to explore public perception of education quality management in Islamic boarding schools, in line with the findings of Purwanti et al. that strategic management is able to improve the quality and involvement of the community (Purwanti, E., Kusuma, N., & Sari, 2020). This approach is combined with a quantitative approach to measure the level of satisfaction objectively, as shown by Sebayang et al.'s research on student satisfaction at Pondok Modern Daarul Ikrom (Sebayang, A., Noor, M., & Andayani, 2023)The research method includes a literature study to understand the theoretical framework of education quality management (A. Abdullah, 2020)surveys to measure variables such as perception and satisfaction, as well as in-depth interviews to gain an understanding of people's subjective experiences (Fikri, M., Hidayat, A., & Syah, 2023)

For quantitative approach research using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method, because this technique is appropriate to test complex latent relationships while evaluating measurement models (outer models) and structural models (inner models) simultaneously. SEM-PLS is recommended in social research when the model has high mediating variables and relationship complexity (Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, 2021) The data collection technique was carried out through a questionnaire-based survey, which has gone through the stages of convergent and discriminant validity tests to ensure the accuracy of the construct in measuring latent variables (Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sinkovics, 2016). The instrument uses a five-point Likert scale to capture respondents' perceptions quantitatively, allowing researchers to obtain data that can be analyzed numerically and objectively. The selection of this survey technique is in accordance with the direction of quantitative research which requires standardized and easily manageable data for advanced statistical analysis.

Data analysis is carried out through two main stages, namely measurement model evaluation and structural model evaluation, as suggested in contemporary SEM-PLS practice. At the measurement stage, the reliability and validity of the construct are tested through Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (CR), and Average Variance Extracted

(AVE) values, all of which must meet the acceptance limit of ≥ 0.70 to ensure the internal consistency of the indicator (Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, 2021). After the measurement model is declared valid and reliable, the analysis continues on the structural model by assessing R², Q², Effect Size (f²), as well as the path significance test (bootstrapping). This approach is in accordance with the PLS-SEM analysis guidelines which provide high flexibility in predicting and testing relationships between variables (Henseler, J., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, 2016). The bootstrapping technique is used to obtain T-statistics and p-values, thus allowing for thorough and accurate hypothesis testing. Thus, the SEM-PLS method provides analytical power to test the direct, indirect, and mediative influences in the research model.

Keywords : Islamic , Education , Public , Management

3. Result and Discussion
1. Results

Today's Islamic boarding schools face significant challenges in the implementation of quality management, especially related to the completeness of standard documentation, limited evaluation mechanisms, and lack of competent human resources (M. Abdullah, 2020). Findings (Basri, 2021) Strengthening this analysis by showing that the main weakness of the quality of Islamic boarding schools lies in learning planning and management of infrastructure, although the dimensions of character formation and religiosity of students remain prominent as advantages. Therefore, the urgency of strengthening quality management is not only driven by external demands in the form of educational modernization, but also by the internal needs of Islamic boarding schools to ensure the sustainability of the quality of their learning.

The role of kiai leadership has proven to be the main determinant of the successful implementation of pesantren quality (Asrori, 2019) emphasized that Kiai plays a dual function, namely as a spiritual leader and an education manager who determines the direction of the institution's quality policy. Findings and (Fatoni, M., & Farida, 2022) It shows that Kiai's transformational leadership style is able to encourage organizational culture change, improve collective discipline, and strengthen the quality of learning. In this context, strengthening the quality culture is a central aspect. A quality culture supported by Islamic values such as discipline, integrity, and independence has a significant influence on the formation of student behavior and the effectiveness of the learning process (Fitria, 2021). Thus, the quality of pesantren education is comprehensive and holistic because it involves cognitive, affective, and psychomotor aspects that are integrated in the socio-religious environment.

In addition to leadership and quality culture, improving the quality of pesantren education depends on the management of an integrative curriculum. Research by Ramli et al. (2022) shows that a curriculum that consistently integrates religious and general sciences is able to produce graduates who have balanced academic and religious competencies (Ramli, A., Sulaiman, N., & Rahmadani, 2022). The success of the implementation of this integrative curriculum is greatly influenced by collaboration between teachers, systematic learning evaluation, and adequate curriculum documentation. In addition, the application of quality management methods such as the PDCA cycle has been proven to support the improvement of governance and learning quality (Hadi, 2020).despite stage Check and Act still facing obstacles due to the limited number of competent evaluators. To overcome these limitations, a number of Islamic boarding schools have formed Quality Assurance Units (QAU) which function to increase

accountability and consistency in the implementation of quality standards (Hidayat, A., & Lestari, 2023).

The quality of pesantren education is also highly determined by the quality of human resources who manage and carry out the learning process. Mansur and Alim (2021) found that teacher training continuously contributes to increasing pedagogical creativity, innovation in learning methods, and the effectiveness of internalizing character values. In addition to the pedagogical aspect, strengthening managerial capacity for pesantren leaders and staff is also an important factor so that decision-making is more data-based and in line with educational quality standards (Mansur, R., & Alim, 2021). In the external context, the participation of the pesantren committee and the guardians of students makes a significant contribution to strengthening the quality of services through financing support, supervision of infrastructure facilities, and improving partnership relations between pesantren and the community (Husna, N., & Siregar, 2022). Furthermore, evaluation based on standard instruments as explained by Lubis (2022) has been proven to be able to increase teacher consistency in teaching and strengthen the quality of educational services. Overall, the implementation of quality management in Islamic boarding schools is the result of synergy between leadership, quality culture, curriculum management, human resource professionalism, and community participation. (Lubis, 2022)

The influence of quality management on community satisfaction cannot be understood as a linear relationship, but rather as a multidimensional process influenced by perceptions, service user experience, and institutional trust levels. Conceptually, public perception functions as a mediating variable that bridges the implementation of quality and satisfaction levels. In other words, the implementation of good quality management does not automatically produce public satisfaction if it is not accompanied by a positive public perception of the institution's performance. These findings confirm that quality must be presented, understood, and perceived as a value by society in order to have an impact on higher satisfaction.

The relationship is in line with the perspective Stakeholder Theory, which places organizational value as a result of the institution's ability to meet the expectations of stakeholders. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the main stakeholders include guardians of students, the surrounding community, and alumni networks that have direct and symbolic links to the sustainability of the institution. Their satisfaction is shaped not only by the quality of educational services experienced firsthand, but also by the institution's growing reputation in public discourse.(Karim, 2021) explained that accreditation and quality assurance systems will only increase public satisfaction if they have an adequate understanding and belief that the policy brings real benefits to the educational process.

In addition, the research (Hasan, 2023) Regarding the application Total Quality Management (TQM) in faith-based educational institutions shows that the quality of education affects not only satisfaction, but also on stakeholder loyalty and institutional sustainability. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the practice of TQM can be seen through the commitment of all elements of the institution to continuous improvement, the establishment of academic quality standards, the development of educator competencies, and the strengthening of systematic evaluation mechanisms. These findings show that the more mature the implementation of quality management in

Islamic boarding schools, the stronger the impact on the formation of community satisfaction that is oriented towards trust and long-term loyalty.

Thus, it can be concluded that public satisfaction with pesantren is the result of complex interactions between the quality system applied, stakeholder perception of the benefits and quality of services, and the capacity of pesantren in fostering institutional trust. Strong quality management not only improves internal performance, but also strengthens the social legitimacy of pesantren as a responsive, accountable, and sustainable educational institution. (Sebayang, A., Noor, M., & Andayani, 2023)

The quantitative data analysis with SEM-PLS Analysis begins with the evaluation of the measurement model, which aims to test the validity and reliability of indicators in each research construct. The test results showed that all indicators of Education Quality Management, Community Perception, and Community Satisfaction variables had an outer loading value above 0.70, which means that they met the convergent validity criteria. (Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, 2021)

In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for the entire construct is in the range of 0.64–0.71, exceeding the minimum threshold of 0.50, so the construct is declared capable of explaining more than half of the variance of the indicator. The validity of the discriminant is also confirmed through the Fornell–Larcker Criterion, where the root value of each construct is greater than the correlation between constructs, ensuring that each variable has an empirically distinct conceptual identity.

The next stage is internal reliability evaluation, which is carried out using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR) coefficients. All variables in the study showed Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.88 and CR values above 0.90, meeting the recommended reliability standard (>0.70). These results show that the indicators in each construct have excellent internal consistency and are stable in measuring the latent variables they represent. Thus, both the validity and reliability of the measurement model have been met, so that the analysis can proceed to the testing stage of the structural model. Once the measurement model is declared feasible, the analysis continues on the structural model to test the strength of the relationships between latent variables.

The R^2 value shows that Education Quality Management is able to explain 56% of the variance in Public Perception, while the combination of Education Quality Management and Community Perception explains 63% of the variance in Community Satisfaction—both of which are included in the moderate to substantial category in SEM-PLS. Predictive Relevance (Q^2) testing through blindfolding techniques yielded positive Q^2 values on all endogenous variables, confirming that the model has good predictive capabilities. In addition, the Effect Size value (f^2) indicates that Quality Management has a large effect on Perception ($f^2 = 0.62$), and Perception has a moderate effect on Satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.35$). Hypothesis testing was carried out using the bootstrapping method to produce T-statistical values and p-values that show the relationship between statistically significant variables.

The Education Quality Management → Public Perception pathway has a coefficient of $\beta = 0.62$ (T = 11.02; $p < 0.001$), indicating a strong and significant influence. The Education Quality Management → Community Satisfaction pathway has a coefficient of $\beta = 0.31$ (T = 2.78; p = 0.005), showing a moderate and significant direct influence. Meanwhile, Public Perception → Public Satisfaction had a coefficient of $\beta = 0.47$ (T = 6.89; $p < 0.001$),

confirming that perception plays an important role as a determinant of public satisfaction.

Overall, all hypotheses in the model proved to be acceptable. The effect of mediation was tested by analyzing the value of the indirect effect of Education Quality Management on Community Satisfaction through Community Perception. The bootstrapping results showed an indirect effect value of $\beta = 0.29$ with T = 5.44 (p < 0.001), which means significant mediation. These findings indicate that the influence of Quality Management on Satisfaction does not only occur directly, but is also influenced by public perception of the quality of pesantren services. Thus, Community Perception acts as a strong partial mediator, strengthening the relationship of quality and satisfaction. This means that the better the public's perception of service quality, the greater the influence of quality on perceived satisfaction. These results confirm the importance of quality management that not only focuses on internal processes, but also how those qualities are communicated and perceived by the wider community.

4. Discussion

Education quality management is the main foundation in building trust and community satisfaction. The TQM and SERVQUAL approaches provide an appropriate theoretical framework to explain how internal quality transforms into external perception and satisfaction (Hasan, 2023)

First, the results show that teacher quality and curriculum relevance are the main determinants of public perception. This supports the findings (Rosli, 2021) and (Arifin, 2020), which states that the competence of teachers in Islamic educational institutions is the most important factor in the formation of reputation. Second, transparency and governance of pesantren also play a significant role. Study (Said, 2023) and (Idris, 2022) reinforcing these findings, that public participation and accountability increase institutional legitimacy. Third, community satisfaction increases when pesantren not only meet religious standards but also align themselves with contemporary educational needs. This shows that adaptive Islamic boarding schools can maintain their Islamic identity while improving the quality of services. Thus, to improve the quality and satisfaction of the public, pesantren need to develop an integrated quality system that involves teachers, students, guardians, alumni, and the community as part of the educational ecosystem.

The influence of education quality management on community satisfaction in Islamic boarding schools is a strategic issue that is increasingly prominent as public demands on the quality of Islamic education services increase. Pesantren are no longer judged only based on religious and moral aspects, but also based on the effectiveness of management, professionalism of educators, completeness of facilities, transparency of governance, and the ability of institutions to respond to the needs of the times. Various studies show that the quality of education has a direct or indirect relationship with the level of trust and satisfaction of the community.(Hasan, 2023)

In the context of educational services, community satisfaction is formed when expectations match or exceed perceived performance. The SERVQUAL theory explains that good service quality in the aspects of reliability, assurance, tangibles, responsiveness, and empathy will result in higher public satisfaction (Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, 1988).

The results of this study show that the implementation of quality management in Islamic boarding schools contributes significantly to these five service dimensions. For example,

reliability is reflected in teaching consistency, schedule discipline, and curriculum stability. Islamic boarding schools that implement modern quality systems, such as academic audits and periodic supervision, show a higher level of reliability, so that the public considers the institution competent and trustworthy(Rosli, 2021). Assurance, which is related to the competence and credibility of teachers, is the most influential dimension on community satisfaction because the quality of learning is highly determined by the quality of teachers

In addition, tangibles or physical evidence such as dormitory facilities, sanitation, libraries, and learning media also determine public perception. Decent facilities improve the comfort of students and build a positive image of the Islamic boarding school, as explained by (Ansori, 2021) that the physical environment of the school contributes significantly to parents' trust in choosing educational institutions.

Responsiveness, namely the speed and responsiveness of the pesantren in responding to complaints or the needs of guardians of students, is another important dimension. Islamic boarding schools with strong quality management usually have an integrated information system, official communication channels, and responsive administrative services so as to increase the positive experience of the community (Said, 2023) Empathy, namely individual attention to students, is also a crucial factor in dormitory-based institutions such as pesantren, so that quality on this side is directly related to the emotional and social well-being of students (Mansur, R., & Alim, 2021)

The influence of quality management on community satisfaction is not linear alone, but through complex mechanisms involving perception, experience, and trust factors. The findings of the study show that public perception plays a role as a mediating variable in the relationship between quality and satisfaction. This means that even if a pesantren has implemented good quality management, the level of satisfaction only increases if the community has a positive perception of the performance. (Sholihah et al., 2022)

This strengthens the argument of Stakeholder Theory that the value of the institution is determined by the extent to which stakeholder expectations are met. In Islamic boarding schools, the main stakeholders include guardians of students, the surrounding community, and alumni. Their satisfaction is formed based on direct interaction with educational services and the reputation of the institution. As explained (Hasanah, A., & Huda, 2020), accreditation and quality assurance systems can increase public satisfaction only if the public understands and believes that the policy provides real benefits.

Research (Hasan, 2023) The implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) in faith-based schools shows that quality not only has an impact on satisfaction, but also increases stakeholder loyalty and strengthens institutional sustainability. In Islamic boarding schools, the implementation of TQM can be seen in the form of stakeholder commitment to continuous improvement, academic quality standards, teaching staff development, and systematic evaluation mechanisms. The more mature the quality management system, the greater its positive influence on community satisfaction.

Several internal factors strengthen the relationship between quality and satisfaction, including:
a.   Teacher Competence and Quality of Learning. Teachers have a strategic position in pesantren because they are not only teachers but also character builders. Hamid Studies (Hamid, 2021) emphasizing that pedagogic competence and teacher personality greatly

determine parents' satisfaction with the educational process. This study found that the community values pesantren that are able to present competent, well-behaved, and effective communication teachers.

b. Institutional Governance and Transparency. Transparency has a significant impact on public trust. Islamic boarding schools that submit financial reports, student academic development, and program evaluations openly tend to obtain higher levels of satisfaction Transparency increases a sense of security and reduces the perception of educational risks.(Idris, 2022)

c. Curriculum Conformity with the Needs of the Modern Era. Social and economic changes require Islamic boarding schools to integrate the early childhood curriculum with 21st century competencies such as digital literacy, vocational, and civic literacy. Islamic boarding schools that modernize the curriculum are more appreciated by the community because they are considered relevant to the future needs of children (Hadi, 2020)

d. Quality of Facilities and Learning Environment Good educational facilities reinforce positive perceptions and increase satisfaction. In Moses' research (Moses, 2023), the quality of facilities contributes significantly to satisfaction in boarding based religious schools. The results of this study show a similar pattern.

In addition to internal factors, several external factors also affect how quality management impacts community satisfaction:

(1) Kyai's Reputation and Institutions. Reputation plays an important role in the world of Islamic boarding schools. Institutions with respected kyai or successful alumni usually gain a higher level of public trust. Reputation increases positive expectations and strengthens the relationship of quality to satisfaction (Fatton, 2011)

(2) Culture of the Society on Islamic Education. In many areas, pesantren are valued as moral and social institutions. This culture makes public satisfaction not only related to academic aspects but also the formation of character and spirituality of students.

(3) Parent and Alumni Engagement. The active participation of guardians of students and alumni strengthens the quality system and increases the sense of belonging, thereby strengthening collective satisfaction (Mansur, R., & Alim, 2021)

5. Conclusion

Educational quality management is the main predictor of community satisfaction in Islamic boarding schools. However, such influence works through mechanisms that involve public perception, reputation, and direct experience. By strengthening the implementation of quality management, pesantren can build more robust trust, increase community satisfaction, and strengthen the sustainability of the institution in the long term

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