

## QUALITY MANAGEMENT OF EDUCATIONAL SERVICES FROM THE PERSPECTIVE OF ISLAMIC EDUCATION MARKETING MANAGEMENT

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### Abstract

*The era of disruption and global competition has fundamentally altered the educational landscape, requiring Islamic educational institutions to innovate to enhance their competitiveness. Society now holistically evaluates the entire service experience, making service quality a determining factor. This study aims to analyze the implementation and impact of educational service quality management from the perspective of Islamic education marketing. Using a qualitative approach with an in-depth literature review, this research explores the frameworks of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Service Quality (SERVQUAL). The findings indicate that the five SERVQUAL dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) constitute an effective model, strengthened by the integration of Islamic values such as amanah, ihsan, and rahmah. This implementation proves to not only enhance stakeholder satisfaction and loyalty but also to shape students' character to excel both academically and spiritually. From a marketing perspective, consistent and authentic service quality functions as a strategic investment to build brand equity. Quality creates a virtuous cycle: positive experiences breed trust, which in turn triggers loyalty and word-of-mouth advocacy.*

*Keywords: Service Quality Management, Educational Marketing, Islamic Education, Total Quality Management*

### Abstrak

*Era disrupsi dan persaingan global telah mengubah lanskap pendidikan, menuntut lembaga pendidikan Islam untuk berinovasi guna meningkatkan daya saing. Masyarakat kini mengevaluasi pengalaman layanan secara holistik, menjadikan kualitas jasa sebagai faktor penentu. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis implementasi dan dampak manajemen kualitas jasa pendidikan dalam perspektif manajemen pemasaran pendidikan Islam. Menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan metode studi literatur yang mendalam, penelitian ini mengeksplorasi kerangka kerja Total Quality Management (TQM) dan Service Quality (SERVQUAL). Hasilnya menunjukkan bahwa kelima dimensi SERVQUAL (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy) menjadi model efektif yang diperkuat oleh integrasi nilai-nilai Islam seperti amanah, ihsan, dan rahmah. Implementasi ini terbukti tidak hanya meningkatkan kepuasan dan loyalitas stakeholder, tetapi juga membentuk karakter peserta didik yang unggul secara akademis dan spiritual. Dari perspektif pemasaran, kualitas jasa yang konsisten dan autentik berfungsi sebagai investasi strategis untuk membangun ekuitas merek (brand equity). Kualitas menciptakan siklus virtuos: pengalaman positif melahirkan kepercayaan, yang memicu loyalitas dan advokasi dari mulut ke mulut.*

*Kata Kunci: Manajemen Kualitas Jasa, Pemasaran Pendidikan, Pendidikan Islam, Total Quality Management*



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## INTRODUCTION

The era of disruption and global competition has fundamentally changed the educational landscape. Digital technology, shifting social values, and the emergence of various alternative learning models require Islamic educational institutions to innovate and move beyond conventional methods. Innovation to improve service quality is no longer an option, but a strategic imperative. The public, particularly millennials and Gen Z as parents of students, are now increasingly critical and discerning in choosing educational institutions. They no longer focus solely on academic outcomes such as exam scores or graduation, but also evaluate the overall service experience. Aspects such as security, transparency of communication, ease of access to information through digital platforms, and concern for children's psychological development are key considerations.

Therefore, a strategic marketing management approach is crucial for positioning Islamic educational institutions not merely as an option, but as a relevant and superior primary choice. This study explores in depth how service quality management plays a central role in this marketing strategy, serving as a foundation for building long-term trust and loyalty. This research is crucial for providing a comprehensive roadmap for Islamic educational institution managers in building sustainable competitive advantage amidst the rapid flow of change.

The dynamics of society 5.0 have shifted the paradigm of educational marketing from merely one-way promotional activities to building value-laden relationships with all stakeholders, including students, parents, alumni, and the wider community. In this context, service quality is the primary foundation for building a positive image and reputation in the eyes of the public. Every touchpoint, from the new student admission process and daily interactions to after-sales service, becomes part of the product offered. Islamic educational institutions are required to be able to adapt to changing times, such as adopting hybrid learning systems or AI technology for personalized learning, without losing their Islamic identity. In fact, this identity must be a differentiator and strengthen the value of services. Study by Hakim & Pratama<sup>1</sup> Research shows that institutions that fail to innovate in their services, particularly in terms of responsiveness and technology utilization, tend to lose traction amidst increasingly fierce competition. Therefore, a synergistic integration of modern service quality, relational marketing strategies, and Islamic values such as trustworthiness, *ihsan*, and justice is essential to creating an authentic formula for excellence.

The main theoretical basis underlying this research is the concept of Total Quality Management (TQM) in the context of education. TQM, popularized by W. Edwards Deming,<sup>2</sup> emphasizes continuous improvement and the active participation of all components of the

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<sup>1</sup> L. Hakim & R. Pratama, "Strategi Inovasi Layanan Pendidikan Islam Di Era Society 5.0," *Jurnal Manajemen Dan Kebijakan Pendidikan* 7, no. 1 (2023): 77–92.

<sup>2</sup> E.W. Deming, *Out of the Crisis* (Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Center for Advanced Engineering Study., 1986), 75.

institution. In its implementation, TQM focuses not only on the final result (output), but also on the processes that ensure that quality can be consistently achieved. This involves establishing clear standards, regular training, and a performance monitoring system oriented towards customer satisfaction. Furthermore, the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al.<sup>3</sup> provides a highly relevant operational framework for measuring service quality. This model identifies five main dimensions of the gap between customer expectations and perceptions: (1) Reliability, (2) Assurance, (3) Tangibles, (4) Empathy, and (5) Responsiveness. The integration of TQM principles, SERVQUAL dimensions, and Islamic values creates a unique and superior quality model. For example, reliability is strengthened by the value of trust, empathy is internalized through the value of *ihsan*, and assurance is reflected in competence accompanied by Islamic etiquette.

Competition in the world of education is no longer local, but has become global. Islamic educational institutions now have to compete not only with popular national schools but also with international schools and homeschooling models. This requires a systematic, measurable, and accountable approach to quality management. Research conducted by Siregar<sup>4</sup> revealed a crucial finding: millennial parents, as the dominant consumer segment today, are more concerned with aspects of their children's learning experiences and a conducive, inclusive, and mentally healthy school environment than simply academic achievement. They are looking for schools that can become a "second home" for their children, where they feel safe, valued, and motivated to grow. This shift in preferences must be met with a targeted service quality strategy. Islamic educational institutions can no longer rely solely on a religious image, but must demonstrate through excellent service that they also excel in the worldly aspects that modern parents desire.

The specific challenges faced by Islamic educational institutions are often related to the dual orientation between achieving worldly academic excellence and maintaining spiritual values. Service quality management serves as a bridge to align these two orientations, which are not inherently contradictory. By implementing high quality standards across service aspects, learning processes, and character development, institutions can demonstrate that worldly and hereafter excellence are two sides of the same coin. For example, a superior science program (worldly) can be integrated with an understanding of the signs of God's greatness (hereafter). Discipline in time management (hereafter) can be linked to the importance of maintaining timely prayer (hereafter). The findings of Wahyuni et al.,<sup>5</sup> strengthens this argument by showing that superior madrasas in

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<sup>3</sup> A. Parasuraman, et.al., "SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality," *Journal of Retailing* 64, no. 1 (1988): 12–40.

<sup>4</sup> N. Siregar, "Preferensi Orang Tua Milenial Dalam Memilih Lembaga Pendidikan Islam: Sebuah Studi Fenomenologi," *Journal of Islamic Education Studies* 10, no. 2 (2022): 88–101.

<sup>5</sup> S. Wahyuni, et.al., "Model Integrasi Keunggulan Akademik Dan Spiritual Di Madrasah Unggulan," *Tarbawi: Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan* 16, no. 3 (2020): 301–5.

various regions have succeeded in attracting the interest of the wider community, precisely because of their success in harmoniously combining these two aspects, creating graduates who are intellectually intelligent and spiritually mature.

Several previous studies have confirmed a positive relationship between the quality of educational services and parental satisfaction. For example, research by Firdaus et al.,<sup>6</sup> found that the dimensions of empathy and responsiveness had a significant influence on parental satisfaction. Similarly, a study by Sari & Hidayat<sup>7</sup> concluded that the quality of physical facilities (tangibles) and teacher competence (assurance) are the main predictors of parental loyalty. However, there is limited research specifically addressing this within the framework of Islamic educational marketing management, where quality is viewed not only as an internal operational goal but also explicitly managed as a strategic tool for building a strong brand image and brand equity.

Service quality is often studied as an independent variable influencing satisfaction, but few have placed it at the core of their marketing strategy. This article attempts to fill this gap by analyzing how service quality management can be effectively managed and "marketed" to create sustainable positive perceptions. Recent research has begun to address more specific aspects but remains fragmented. Junaidi & Rozak,<sup>8</sup> For example, they have begun researching the implementation of customer relationship management (CRM), but their focus is more on technology implementation and they have not yet delved into how the foundation of service quality shapes these customer relationships. Meanwhile, Jannah<sup>9</sup> Some studies have examined the brand image building strategies of modern Islamic boarding schools, but they haven't deeply linked them to the underlying quality management system. An image built through promotion will quickly be destroyed if the actual customer experience doesn't match the promise. This article will combine these various aspects—service quality as the foundation, relationship marketing as the process, and brand equity as the outcome—into a coherent and integrated framework.

Based on the background and identification of research gaps, this article is structured with a sharp and focused problem formulation: (1) What is the concept of educational service quality management from a strategic marketing management perspective? (2) What is the strategy for implementing service quality management integrated with Islamic values in Islamic educational institutions? (3) What is the significant impact of implementing comprehensive service quality

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<sup>6</sup> A. Firdaus, et.al., "Pengaruh Kualitas Layanan Pendidikan Terhadap Kepuasan Orang Tua Siswa Di Sekolah Dasar Negeri," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 7, no. 2 (2019): 115–28.

<sup>7</sup> N. Sari & R. Hidayat, "Kualitas Layanan Sekolah Sebagai Determinan Loyalitas Orang Tua Siswa," *Jurnal Ekonomi Dan Bisnis* 24, no. 4 (2021): 501–16.

<sup>8</sup> F. Junaidi & A. Rozak, "Customer Relationship Management Dalam Meningkatkan Loyalitas Wali Siswa Di Pondok Pesantren," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 11, no. 1 (2024): 78–95.

<sup>9</sup> M. Jannah, "Strategi Pembentukan Brand Image Pesantren Modern Di Jawa Tengah," *Tazkiya: Journal of Islamic Education* 15, no. 3 (2022): 210–25.

management on the formation of brand equity in Islamic educational institutions? The discussion of these three problems is expected to not only answer academic questions, but also provide practical and applicable contributions to the development of Islamic educational management science and its practitioners in the field. The results of this study are expected to serve as a reference for managers of Islamic educational institutions to design, implement, and evaluate quality management systems that are not only operationally efficient, but also effective as a primary weapon in the competition of educational marketing in the modern era.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Quality management of educational services is a fundamental pillar in the efforts of Islamic educational institutions to build image, trust, and loyalty. In an era of critical competition, quality is no longer an added value but an absolute requirement for survival. Theoretically, this concept is deeply rooted in the theory of Total Quality Management (TQM) pioneered by management experts such as W. Edwards Deming. TQM, originally applied in the industrial sector, offers a philosophy of continuous improvement centered on the customer. In the educational context, TQM is adapted to improve the quality of academic services, administrative efficiency, and the quality of interactions. The goal is not simply to meet accreditation standards, but rather to build an ingrained and sustainable quality culture across all managerial aspects, in line with the Islamic principle of *tawāun* (cooperation).

From a service marketing management perspective, education is viewed as a service with unique characteristics. Zeithaml, et.al.,<sup>10</sup> identified four key characteristics of services: intangibility, inseparability, variability, and perishability. These characteristics make managing the quality of educational services a complex challenge. Intangibility, for example, makes it difficult for prospective parents to "try" educational products, requiring institutions to use "physical evidence" such as adequate facilities and competent teacher profiles. Inseparability emphasizes that teacher quality is a direct reflection of service quality. Variability demands standardized operating procedures (SOPs) and ongoing training, while perishability reminds us that empty classroom capacity is an irreplaceable loss, necessitating strategic planning.

Therefore, managing the quality of educational services must holistically consider customer satisfaction, building institutional credibility, and communicating Islamic values that form the basis of service ethics. Kotler and Keller<sup>11</sup> emphasizes that modern service marketing emphasizes building long-term relationships and creating emotional value. In the context of Islamic education,

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<sup>10</sup> V.A. Zeithaml, et.al., *Delivering Quality Service: Balancing Customer Perceptions and Expectations* (The Free Press, 1990).

<sup>11</sup> P. Kotler & K. L. Keller, *Marketing Management* (Pearson Education, 2016), 118.

this emotional value encompasses spiritual serenity and the belief that the institution is capable of safeguarding the child's development, both in this worldly and the hereafter. These values are combined with the principles of *ihsan* (doing one's best), *amanah* (trustworthiness), and *maslahah* (creating the public good) as the spiritual foundation that drives service.

Meanwhile, marketing Islamic education comprehensively integrates the values of monotheism and Islamic ethics. Marketing within this framework is not merely a commercial strategy, but also an elegant means of preaching and strengthening character through quality service. According to Abdurrahman,<sup>12</sup> The marketing concept of Islamic education emphasizes four ethical pillars: honesty (*shiddiq*), responsibility (*amanah*), professionalism (*fathanah*), and polite and correct communication (*tabligh*). *Shiddiq* is demonstrated through cost transparency and unmistakable advertising. *Amanah* is reflected in a commitment to student safety and responsible financial management. *Fathanah* is demonstrated through the implementation of an up-to-date curriculum and data-driven management. *Tabligh* serves as the foundation for thoughtful and empathetic communication. Therefore, superior service quality is the most tangible and effective evidence of the implementation of Islamic values, far more convincing than mere slogans.

Several previous studies have strengthened this theoretical and practical foundation. Research at several leading madrasas, such as that conducted by Suryadi<sup>13</sup> and modern Islamic boarding schools such as research conducted by Rohmah,<sup>14</sup> shows that the consistent implementation of TQM and Islamic value-based services such as the continuous improvement cycle (Plan-Do-Check-Act) and spiritual mentoring programs have a significant impact on increasing satisfaction, loyalty, and the image of the institution. Zulfa and Rahman<sup>15</sup> In their research on integrated Islamic schools, they stated that quality management emphasizing friendly service, learning innovation, and a strong religious nuance were key factors in maintaining their existence. They found that parents sought not only academic achievement but also a sense of spiritual security. Furthermore, Hakim and Fauzi<sup>16</sup> highlights the crucial role of school leadership that has a quality vision and is able to empower teachers as the key to successful TQM

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<sup>12</sup> M. Abdurrahman, *Pemasaran Pendidikan Islam: Strategi Dan Etika Dalam Meningkatkan Daya Saing Lembaga* (Raja Grafindo Persada, 2017), 56.

<sup>13</sup> D. Suryadi, "Implementasi Total Quality Management (TQM) Dan Dampaknya Terhadap Kepuasan Siswa Serta Citra Madrasah," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan* 5, no. 2 (2020): 178–90.

<sup>14</sup> S. Rohmah, "Pengaruh Kualitas Jasa Berbasis Nilai Islami Terhadap Loyalitas Santri Di Pesantren Modern," *Studi Agama Dan Masyarakat* 14, no. 3 (2021): 234–50.

<sup>15</sup> H. Zulfa & S. Rahman, "Strategi Manajemen Kualitas Jasa Dalam Mempertahankan Eksistensi Sekolah Islam Terpadu Di Era Disrupsi," *Jurnal Pendidikan Dan Keislaman* 11, no. 1 (2022): 88–103.

<sup>16</sup> A. Hakim & M. Fauzi, "Peran Kepemimpinan Kepala Sekolah Dalam Implementasi Total Quality Management (TQM) Di Madrasah," *Jurnal Aplikasi Manajemen Pendidikan* 9, no. 1 (2021): 45–56.

implementation. On the other hand, a study by Kusumawati<sup>17</sup> found challenges in measuring service quality objectively, especially the empathy and assurance dimensions, thus suggesting the use of a combination of quantitative and qualitative methods.

From the various research findings and theoretical analyses, it can be concluded that good quality educational services are not solely oriented toward material satisfaction, but must also deeply reflect the spiritual and moral values that define the institution. Parental satisfaction is not merely achieved through luxurious facilities, but also through the belief that their children are growing up in an environment that loves Allah and His Messenger. Therefore, Islamic educational institutions are required to combine modern managerial professionalism with lofty Islamic principles. This synergy will create a competitive advantage that is difficult to replicate, as it is rooted in the organization's character and culture.

Implicitly, this research is based on the hypothesis that the stronger and more consistent the implementation of service quality management based on Islamic values, the more positive the public's perception, trust, and loyalty will be. This positive perception, in turn, will strengthen the institution's brand image and brand equity, ultimately becoming the primary foundation for building sustainable competitive advantage. This model offers a compromise for Islamic educational institutions to become modern and relevant without sacrificing their spiritual identity and mission.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study employed a qualitative approach with a library research approach. This approach was chosen to gain a comprehensive and in-depth understanding of the concept and practice of educational service quality management through exploration of theoretical sources and previous research findings. The data used were secondary data sourced from books, scientific journals, seminar proceedings, and credible academic articles relevant to the research focus. The data collection process was carried out systematically by searching academic databases such as Google Scholar, Scopus, and Science Direct. The data analysis technique used was content analysis. The collected data were then selected, grouped by theme, and analyzed to identify patterns, relationships, and core findings from various literature sources. The analysis process was carried out interactively and continuously, starting from data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. Data validity was maintained through source triangulation, namely by comparing and checking the accuracy of data from various different literature sources to obtain consistent and credible findings.

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<sup>17</sup> D. Kusumawati, "Mengukur Kualitas Jasa Pendidikan: Tantangan Dan Solusi Metodologis," *Jurnal Evaluasi Pendidikan* 8, no. 2 (2022): 112–25.

The scope of this study was limited to literature published between 2020 and 2024. This time limit was implemented to ensure that the findings and discussions presented are up-to-date and relevant to the current context in the field of educational marketing management. Keywords used in the literature search included "service quality in education," "educational marketing," "Islamic education management," "TQM in madrasah," and "SERVQUAL model in education." Inclusion and exclusion criteria were applied to select the most qualified and appropriate literature. Although the literature review provided in-depth conceptual analysis, this study has limitations, namely the lack of direct empirical testing in the field. Therefore, the findings of this article are theoretical and conceptual in nature, which can serve as a basis for further empirical research. However, with comprehensive literature coverage and in-depth analysis, this article is expected to provide a complete and reliable picture of the topic discussed.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

### **Educational Service Quality Management in Marketing Management**

Based on a comprehensive literature analysis, the concept of service quality management in education has undergone significant evolution. This evolution has shifted from simple, reactive inspections to more proactive quality assurance systems, ultimately culminating in the philosophy of total quality management (TQM).<sup>18</sup> TQM is no longer viewed as a separate program, but rather as an organizational culture that demands the involvement of all members, from leaders to non-academic staff, in continuous improvement efforts to meet and even exceed customer expectations. From a modern marketing perspective, this paradigm has undergone a fundamental shift. Service quality is no longer viewed as a cost center to be minimized, but rather as a strategic investment to build and strengthen brand equity. Every dollar invested in improving quality, whether in the form of teacher training, facility improvements, or service system enhancements, is a long-term investment in building trust, loyalty, and brand advocacy.

Superior and competitive Islamic educational institutions are those that consciously implement a holistic quality approach. This approach views quality not as a single entity, but as an ecosystem encompassing input quality (new students, teachers, curriculum, and resources), process (learning methods, classroom interactions, administrative services), output (academic achievement, graduation, graduate competencies), and outcome (long-term impact on alumni lives, social contributions, and life blessings). These four dimensions are the primary focus, simultaneously and integrately promoted to the public. This promotion is not merely advertising, but rather honest and

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<sup>18</sup> P. Kotler & K. L. Keller, *Marketing Management*, 77.

transparent communication of values. This aligns with the findings of Nurdin & Yusuf.<sup>19</sup> which emphasizes that consistent and proven quality is the most persuasive marketing message, far surpassing gimmicks or discounts. When parents see tangible evidence of quality, for example through alumni achievements, testimonials, or transparency of the learning process, their trust is built organically and solidly.

Furthermore, the concept of quality in Islamic education has a transcendental dimension that fundamentally differentiates it from secular concepts. Quality is measured not only by worldly metrics such as customer satisfaction or graduation rates, but also by the extent to which the educational process brings students closer to the Creator and shapes them into individuals with noble character.<sup>20</sup> The goal of Islamic education is to create a perfect human being with a balance of intellectual, spiritual, and emotional intelligence. Therefore, the quality management of Islamic education services must develop measurable and evaluable indicators of spiritual quality. These indicators are no longer abstract, but rather observable manifestations of behavior, such as the level of discipline in carrying out obligatory worship, the habit of doing good to others (noble morals), the ability to integrate Quranic values into problem-solving, and social sensitivity.

Research by Qodir & Asy'ari<sup>21</sup> made a significant contribution by developing the "Spiritual Service Quality" (SSQ) instrument. This instrument revolutionarily integrates the dimensions of piety (taqwa), character (akhlak), and social contribution (social contribution) into the framework for assessing the quality of Islamic educational services, complementing the SERVQUAL dimensions. For example, in the empathy dimension, the SSQ measures not only the extent to which staff understand students' academic needs but also their sensitivity to their spiritual and emotional well-being. In the assurance dimension, in addition to teacher professional competence, it also measures teachers' ability to be role models (uswah hasanah) in religious behavior. This integration creates a unique value proposition that is very difficult for general educational institutions to imitate. This unique value becomes the foundation for authentic marketing, where institutions do not sell "education plus religion," but rather "education based on and ending with the values of faith."

To implement the concept of holistic quality with this transcendental dimension, Islamic educational institutions need to design an integrated management system.<sup>22</sup> At the input stage, the teacher recruitment process assesses not only academic competence but also personality, religious understanding, and commitment to the values of amanah (trustworthiness) and ihsan (good deeds).

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<sup>19</sup> I. Nurdin & M. Yusuf, *Strategi Pemasaran Berbasis Kualitas Di Lembaga Pendidikan Islam* (Penerbit Akademia, 2019), 112.

<sup>20</sup> A. Parasuraman, et.al., "SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality," 34.

<sup>21</sup> A. Qodir & H. Asy'ari, "Pengembangan Instrumen Spiritual Service Quality Untuk Mengukur Kualitas Layanan Pendidikan Islam," *Jurnal Penelitian Pendidikan Islam* 18, no. 2 (2023): 215–30.

<sup>22</sup> E. Sallis, *Total Quality Management in Education* (Routledge, 2014), 34.

Similarly, new student admissions are not solely based on academic tests but also on observations to understand students' character and spiritual potential. The curriculum designed must seamlessly integrate general knowledge with Islamic values, not simply the addition of religious subjects. Science material can be linked to the concept of the greatness of the universe, while history lessons can highlight Islamic civilization.

At the process stage, service quality management demands strict yet flexible standardization. Classroom learning should be designed to be interactive, collaborative, and student-centered, with teachers acting as both facilitators and spiritual mentors. Islamic values such as *tawazun* (balance), *shidq* (honesty), and *ta'awun* (cooperation) are internalized through learning methods. Administrative service processes, from online registration to complaint handling, should be designed to be easy, fast, and responsive, reflecting the principles of efficiency and respect for time. The use of information technology, such as school applications that allow parents to monitor their children's progress in real time, is an integral part of efforts to improve process quality.

Output and outcome is the ultimate benchmark for the success of quality management. Measurable outputs include academic, non-academic, and spiritual achievements (the number of students who have memorized the Quran, the consistency of congregational Dhuha prayers). However, what is more important is the outcome, namely the long-term impact. Institutions need to conduct alumni tracking to evaluate their worldly career success and the extent to which they uphold Islamic values. Success stories of alumni who are not only materially wealthy but also known as pious individuals become the most valuable marketing asset, authentic proof of the quality of the promised outcomes.

From a marketing perspective, this entire quality ecosystem is strategically communicated. Content marketing strategies become highly relevant. Institutions produce articles, videos, or podcasts showcasing the excellence of the learning process, interviews with inspiring teachers, or stories of student social projects. Social media is used to build community and showcase authentic school life. This inbound marketing approach attracts prospective parents who share the institution's values and vision, making the recruitment process more effective and efficient. Parents who come already "sold" on the values offered tend to become loyal partners and strong supporters of the institution.

Ultimately, the synergy between service quality management and marketing management in the context of Islamic education creates a virtuous cycle. Superior and authentic quality results in a positive customer experience. This positive experience breeds satisfaction and trust. Satisfaction and trust fuel loyalty and word-of-mouth advocacy, the most effective and cost-effective form of marketing. A strong and positive brand image, in turn, attracts quality input from both students and educators who are ready to engage in the process of continuous quality

improvement. This cycle, if managed with commitment and based on sincere intentions (lillahi ta'ala), will not only produce a competitively superior Islamic educational institution but also one that truly fulfills its function as a means to achieve blessings (falah) in this world and the hereafter.

### **Implementation of Quality Service Management in Islamic Educational Institutions**

Islamic education in the modern era faces complex challenges: it is not only responsible for shaping religious character but also obligated to provide quality and competitive educational services. This demand drives the adoption of a structured quality management system. The implementation of service quality management in Islamic educational institutions can be effectively measured using a modified SERVQUAL model, which not only measures secular service aspects but also integrates Islamic values as the core of the service.<sup>23</sup> This model serves as a comprehensive lens for evaluating the extent to which an institution is able to meet the expectations of stakeholders, from students, parents, to the wider community.

First Dimension, Tangibles (Physical Evidence), realized through clean, comfortable, and representative facilities, as well as state-of-the-art learning technology. In the Islamic context, physical evidence is not merely aesthetic, but reflects the values of cleanliness (an-nathafah) and beauty (al-jamal) as part of faith. Facilities such as mosques as spiritual centers, science laboratories that support the exploration of God's creation, green parks, and libraries with rich Islamic collections are tangible manifestations of this dimension. The existence of an online learning platform (Learning Management System/LMS) and an integrated academic information system also serve as modern physical evidence that demonstrates the institution's readiness to face digitalization.

Reliability Dimension Reliability is reflected in the institution's ability to accurately and consistently deliver on service promises, such as timely graduation and a structured curriculum. This reliability reflects the characteristics of amanah (trustworthiness) and shiddiq (truthfulness) that must be inherent in every process. Operationally, fulfilling this dimension requires a well-documented quality management system, including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for every service, from New Student Admissions (PPDB) to graduation, designed to minimize errors. Case study at Insan Cendekia State Islamic Senior High School by Halim<sup>24</sup> The results demonstrate that implementing an integrated management information system significantly improves the reliability of academic and administrative services by ensuring consistency and reducing human

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<sup>23</sup> A. Parasuraman, et.al., "SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality," 12–40.

<sup>24</sup> A. Halim, "Sistem Informasi Manajemen Terintegrasi Sebagai Upaya Peningkatan Reliabilitas Layanan Akademik," *Jurnal Teknologi Pendidikan Dan Pembelajaran* 8, no. 3 (2020).

error. The reliability of providing real-time child development reports to parents through a dedicated app also provides concrete evidence that builds fundamental trust.

**Responsiveness Dimension** This is implemented through responsiveness to parental complaints and flexibility in addressing individual student needs. This aligns with the Islamic principle of facilitating (*taysir*) and acting swiftly in good deeds. Institutions should have multi-directional and open communication channels, such as complaint hotlines, digital suggestion boxes, and regular meetings. Beyond simply responding, ideal responsiveness is proactive. Teachers and counselors should be able to identify potential student difficulties early, both academic and psychological, and promptly provide appropriate interventions. Flexibility in offering remedial programs, enrichment programs, or adjustments to learning methods for students with special needs demonstrates a high level of responsiveness, ultimately creating an effective and caring learning environment.

**Assurance and Empathy Dimensions Strengthened** by the integration of Islamic values, such as honesty (*shiddiq*), trustworthiness, and caring (*rahmah*), demonstrated by all educational staff. The role of teachers and educational staff is key to these two dimensions. Pedagogical, professional, and personal competence, grounded in noble morals, guarantees the quality of the learning process. Assurance lies not only in the teacher's professional certification, but rather in the belief given to parents that their children are being educated by individuals with integrity and capable of being role models (*uswah hasanah*). A sustainable teacher development program, such as that implemented in the Integrated Islamic School (SIT), according to Azizah's research,<sup>25</sup> proven to improve teachers' capacity to create a safe, inclusive, and enjoyable learning environment. This training focuses not only on technical aspects but also on strengthening teachers' spiritual and emotional intelligence. Furthermore, empathy is demonstrated by understanding students' backgrounds, potential, and individual needs, so that each child feels valued and their development is taken into consideration. This is an implementation of the universal concept of *rahmah* (compassion).

To implement these five dimensions holistically, many Islamic educational institutions have adopted the Total Quality Management (TQM) philosophy.<sup>26</sup> The application of TQM in the context of Islamic education emphasizes the role of transformational leadership inspired by the concept of *khalifah fil ardh* (leader on earth), who is responsible not only for worldly outcomes but also for the good of the hereafter. Such leaders are able to inspire the entire school community to commit to a noble vision of quality. Human resource management not only recruits staff based on

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<sup>25</sup> S. Azizah, "Dampak Program Pembinaan Guru Berkelanjutan Terhadap Kualitas Pembelajaran Di Sekolah Islam Terpadu," *Lentera Pendidikan: Jurnal Ilmu Tarbiyah Dan Keguruan* 24, no. 1 (2021): 45–58.

<sup>26</sup> E. Sallis, *Total Quality Management in Education*, 65.

academic expertise but also conducts religious and personality screening to ensure alignment with the institution's values. The active participation of all stakeholders—teachers, students, parents, and the community—in continuous improvement is key to success. Study by Al-Faruqi<sup>27</sup> Research shows that madrasas that consistently implement the Plan-Do-Check-Act (PDCA) cycle can significantly increase parent satisfaction by up to 30% within two years. This PDCA cycle ensures that every decision is based on data, evaluated, and acted upon for continuous improvement.

One of the biggest challenges in implementing TQM is building a quality culture that is evenly distributed throughout the organization.<sup>28</sup> This culture cannot be built solely through regulations and standard operating procedures (SOPs), but requires exemplary leadership and the collective commitment of all members. Cultural change often faces obstacles, such as resistance from senior staff or limited financial resources. Research by Maulana & Sholeh<sup>29</sup> In modern Islamic boarding schools, researchers have found that internalizing the values of *ihsan* (doing good and sincerely) in every task and interaction can transform service quality from simply meeting standards to a form of worship. When a caretaker cleans the floor with the intention of seeking Allah, or a teacher checks assignments with sincerity, the resulting quality exceeds minimum standards. This spiritual approach is a unique strength of Islamic educational institutions in building an authentic and profound culture of quality.

The role of boarding schools (Islamic boarding schools) in Islamic education also provides significant added value across all dimensions of quality. The dormitory environment allows for 24-hour coaching that not only strengthens character and discipline but also enhances tangibles through the management of shared living facilities, reliability in daily schedules, and empathy through intensive interaction between students and caregivers. This model creates a holistic educational ecosystem, where learning is not limited to the classroom but permeates every aspect of daily life, instilling Islamic values in a practical and contextual manner.

In the end, implementing service quality management in Islamic educational institutions is not just adopting western management models. It is a process of Islamization of management itself, where every principle, process and standard is imbued with the values of faith and piety. The aim is not only to produce graduates who are academically intelligent and competitive, but what is more important is to produce a generation of *rahmatan lil 'alamin* humans who are knowledgeable, have noble character, and are able to carry out their mandate as caliphs on earth. Thus, quality in Islamic education is an endless journey towards perfection in service, as reflected in the words of Allah,

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<sup>27</sup> M. Al-Faruqi, "Penerapan Siklus PDCA Untuk Meningkatkan Kepuasan Orang Tua Di Madrasah Aliyah," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 7, no. 2 (2019): 115–28.

<sup>28</sup> W. Swan, *The Juran Way: A Quality Journey for a Better World* (Juran Institute, Inc, 2017), 131.

<sup>29</sup> I. Maulana & M. Sholeh, "Internalisasi Nilai Ihsan Sebagai Fondasi Budaya Mutu Di Pesantren Modern," *Journal of Islamic School Management* 6, no. 1 (2024): 301–5.

"And I did not create jinn and humans except that they should worship Me" (QS. Adz-Dzariyat: 56), where every quality management activity is part of worship itself.

### **The Impact of Service Quality Management Implementation on Brand Equity in Islamic Educational Institutions**

Amidst increasingly fierce competition in the education industry, Islamic educational institutions are required not only to excel academically and religiously, but also to build a strong brand image.<sup>30</sup> Brand equity, which refers to the added value inherent in a service, is a strategic asset that determines the survival and growth of an institution. One of the fundamental pillars in building this asset is the consistent and sustainable implementation of service quality management. Superior service quality is no longer merely an operational choice, but rather a strategic weapon that directly cultivates and strengthens brand equity, creating a solid defense against the onslaught of competitors.

From a marketing perspective, high-quality service creates success stories and positive testimonials, which are the best organic promotional materials. Alumni who excel professionally while maintaining high morals are tangible evidence of the quality of the educational process. They are living brand ambassadors. According to Schmitt's experiential marketing theory,<sup>31</sup> Parents and prospective students aren't just purchasing an educational service; they're "buying" a transformative experience that they hope will change their lives. Islamic educational institutions that create profound spiritual and intellectual experiences through excellent programs and caring interactions will hold a special place in the hearts of their communities, far beyond mere advertising.

The most tangible impact of implementing service quality management is increased brand equity. The brand equity model developed by Keller<sup>32</sup> explains that brand equity is built from a pyramid consisting of salience (awareness), performance/judgments (performance/judgments), feelings/imagery (feelings/imagery), and resonance (resonance). Superior service quality directly affects each of these levels. First, consistent quality increases brand salience because customer satisfaction drives positive word-of-mouth (WOM). Second, reliable performance and adequate facilities strengthen positive perceptions of the institution's quality. Third, empathetic interactions and security guarantees create positive feelings and a brand image as a caring institution. Ultimately, all of this gives rise to brand resonance—a deep psychological connection and unconditional loyalty from stakeholders.

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<sup>30</sup> A. D. Aaker, *Managing Brand Equity: Capitalizing on the Value of a Brand Name* (The Free Press, 1991), 75.

<sup>31</sup> B. H. Schmitt, *Experiential Marketing: How to Get Customers to Sense, Feel, Think, Act, and Relate to Your Company and Brands* (The Free Press, 1990), 114.

<sup>32</sup> K. L. Keller, "Building Customer-Based Brand Equity: A Blueprint for Creating Strong Brands," *Marketing Science Institute Working Paper Series*, 2001, 01–107.

Superior service quality creates customer satisfaction, which in turn fosters loyalty and word-of-mouth recommendations, the strongest form of organic marketing. In the educational context, parental satisfaction is key. Parents who feel heard, whose children feel safe and valued, and who see tangible evidence of their children's development will naturally become the best promoters. The institution's image as not only academically superior but also possessing a strong Islamic character becomes a selling point that is difficult to replicate. Thus, service quality management serves as a sustainable, long-term marketing strategy, slowly but surely building reputation and public trust.

Furthermore, strong brand equity provides a sustainable competitive advantage. One benefit is the ability to maintain a price premium without losing interest. Parents no longer view education costs as mere expenses, but rather as valuable investments in their children's futures. They are willing to pay more because they believe the value they receive is commensurate with, or even exceeds, the cost. This trust is built over years through consistent, quality service.

Furthermore, institutions with a high-quality reputation are more resilient to communication crises. In the age of social media, a small incident can quickly escalate into a major crisis. However, institutions with a substantial brand equity reservoir are more likely to survive. People tend to give the benefit of the doubt to institutions they have long trusted. A mistake is more often perceived as an anomaly rather than a reflection of the institution's culture. Recent research by Salamah et al.<sup>33</sup> demonstrated that, amidst the onslaught of international schools, madrasas with strong brand equity are actually experiencing increased interest. Their research shows that the public, especially the educated middle class, is increasingly confident in madrasas' ability to produce an intellectually intelligent and spiritually strong generation. This demonstrates that quality integrated with Islamic values is not a liability, but rather a strategic asset that serves as a key differentiator in the market.

To understand this relationship more deeply, it is necessary to look at how each dimension of service quality (SERVQUAL) specifically contributes to building brand equity.<sup>34</sup> Tangibles, such as clean facilities and state-of-the-art technology, create a brand image that communicates professionalism. Reliability is the foundation of brand trust. When an institution consistently schedules exams and delivers on promises, it builds trust. Responsiveness and Empathy are the engines of brand affinity and brand love. When teachers promptly respond to complaints or counselors make time for students, a strong emotional connection is created. Assurance, reflected

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<sup>33</sup> et. al. Salamah, "Resiliensi Brand Equity Madrasah Di Tengah Persaingan Sekolah Internasional: Studi Fenomenologi Di Kota Metropolitan," *Jurnal Manajemen Pendidikan Islam* 10, no. 2 (2022): 145–60.

<sup>34</sup> A. Parasuraman, et.al., "SERVQUAL: A Multiple-Item Scale for Measuring Consumer Perceptions of Service Quality," 12–40.

in teacher competence and campus security, builds brand credibility. All of these dimensions work synergistically, building a comprehensive brand narrative.

It is also important to realize that in the digital age, the impact of service quality on brand equity is amplified exponentially.<sup>35</sup> Every positive interaction, such as a teacher quickly responding to a message on an app or a successful event shared on social media, becomes organic content that strengthens a brand's image. Conversely, unresolved complaints can easily go viral and damage a reputation. Therefore, modern service quality management must be inclusive, encompassing not only in-person services but also digital experiences. Institutions need to manage their online reviews and social media seriously, ensuring the image projected online aligns with the actual quality of service on campus.

Ultimately, implementing service quality management is not a project with an endpoint, but rather a cultural journey. It requires commitment from all levels. When all elements of an institution understand that every action they take is part of building a brand, strong brand equity is no longer just a goal, but an inevitable outcome. This brand equity becomes a protective shield, a magnet of attraction, and a foundation that enables Islamic educational institutions to continue to grow, fulfilling their mission of producing a generation of rahmatan lil 'alamin (blessings for the universe), and providing a lasting positive impact on society.

## CONCLUSION

Based on a comprehensive literature analysis, this study concludes that quality management of educational services integrated with Islamic values has transformed into the core of the most powerful marketing strategy for Islamic educational institutions in the modern era. This concept is no longer merely an operational necessity, but rather a strategic imperative that determines the competitiveness and sustainability of institutions. The findings indicate that quality management has evolved from a simple monitoring stage to the philosophy of Total Quality Management (TQM), which, from an Islamic perspective, has acquired a transcendental dimension. Quality is not only measured by worldly achievements, but also by the extent to which the educational process is able to shape a perfect human being who is intellectually and spiritually balanced, making worldly and afterlife excellence two sides of the same coin.

Practically, the implementation of quality management is most effectively measured through a modified SERVQUAL model. Its five dimensions—Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy—are reinforced by Islamic values. Physical facilities (Tangibles) reflect the cleanliness and beauty of Islam; reliability is a manifestation of the

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<sup>35</sup> M. J. Zeithaml, V. A., & Bitner, *Services Marketing: Integrating Customer Focus Across the Firm* (McGraw-Hill/Irwin, 2003), 65.

characteristics of trustworthiness and shiddiq (honesty); responsiveness aligns with the principle of taysir; assurance is reinforced by the competence and personality of teachers with noble character (uswah hasanah); and empathy is a tangible manifestation of mercy. This synergistic implementation ultimately creates a significant impact on the formation of brand equity. Authentic and consistent quality creates a virtuous cycle: positive customer experiences create satisfaction and trust, which trigger loyalty and word-of-mouth advocacy, thus strengthening a strong brand image that is difficult for competitors to imitate.

### **Research Implications**

The findings of this study have important implications, both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research makes a significant contribution to the development of Islamic educational management by offering a more holistic framework. This study successfully fills a gap in the literature by explicitly positioning service quality management as the center of gravity of marketing strategies, rather than simply a supporting variable. The introduction and integration of the concept of "Spiritual Service Quality (SSQ)" into the SERVQUAL model enriches service quality theory, which has been dominated by secular perspectives, while strengthening the academic argument that the excellence of Islamic education lies in its ability to harmoniously integrate worldly and otherworldly aspects.

Practically, the implications of this research provide highly relevant guidance for managers of Islamic educational institutions. This means that top management must shift their mindset, viewing investment in quality not as a cost item but as a long-term strategic asset for building a strong brand. Institutions are encouraged to immediately design and implement a structured quality management system, starting from the input stage (recruiting teachers and students aligned with values), process (learning and services imbued with Islam), to output and outcome (tracking alumni who excel academically and spiritually). Furthermore, marketing strategies must shift from one-way promotion to authentic communication of value through content marketing, showcasing tangible evidence of quality processes and outcomes, such as alumni success stories or flagship programs that combine science and religious values.

### **Limitations**

While this research makes significant contributions, it is important to recognize several inherent limitations. First, it relies entirely on a library research approach with secondary data. This means there is no direct empirical testing in the field, such as interviews, observations, or surveys of Islamic educational institutions, stakeholders, or educational practitioners. Consequently, the conclusions and implications are theoretical and conceptual in nature. While the proposed

framework is argumentatively sound, its practical validity and implementation effectiveness across various institutional contexts require further empirical research.

Second, the scope of the reviewed literature is limited to publications from 2020 to 2024. This limitation was deliberately made to maintain the relevance of the findings to contemporary contexts, such as the era of disruption and Society 5.0. However, this focus on recent literature could potentially overlook historical foundations or classic works that might offer a more in-depth perspective on the evolution of the concepts of quality management and marketing in Islam. These two limitations indicate ample opportunity for future researchers to develop and test the framework proposed in this article.

### **Suggestion**

To further develop and apply these findings, several suggestions can be made. Islamic education managers and practitioners are strongly advised to immediately formulate a comprehensive and systematic implementation roadmap. This step should begin with a thorough quality audit, followed by the establishment of clear standards, and followed by a serious commitment to training and character development programs for all education personnel to ensure the even internalization of the values of amanah (trustworthiness), ihsan (goodness), and rahmah (mercy). Equally important is the development and measurement of concrete, observable indicators of spiritual quality, such as levels of religious discipline and noble moral behavior, to complement traditional academic assessments and provide a holistic picture of graduate quality.

For future researchers, there is an opportunity to empirically test the conceptual framework proposed in this study. Quantitative research or in-depth case studies could be conducted to measure the significant impact of integrated quality management implementation on stakeholder satisfaction and the strength of an institution's brand equity. Furthermore, further research could focus on validating and refining the "Spiritual Service Quality (SSQ)" instrument for widespread application across various types of Islamic educational institutions. Finally, an interesting topic for further exploration is the impact of digital transformation, such as the use of AI and hybrid learning platforms, in supporting the implementation of service quality management without compromising the personal and spiritual touch that are the unique strengths of Islamic education.

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