Assessing the Impact of Service Quality on Student Satisfaction: A Case Study of Barokatul Ishlah Islamic Boarding School Cooperative

Fitri Wahyuni¹, Daud², Ahmad Edi Saputra³

- ¹ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; fitriwahyuni@gmail.com
- ² Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; Daudvanjava12@gmail.com
- ³ Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; ahmadedis@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Education serves as the fundamental cornerstone of national development, aiming not only to produce intellectually capable individuals, but also morally grounded, socially responsible, and skillful citizens. In Indonesia, pesantren (Islamic boarding schools) hold a strategic position within the educational system due to their holistic approach, which integrates religious instruction, character formation, and, increasingly, vocational training. This study aims to analyze the influence of service quality on student (santri) satisfaction at the cooperative of Barokatul Islah Islamic Boarding School, located in Rantau Karya Village, Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency. Employing a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design, the study adopts the SERVQUAL model, encompassing the dimensions of reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness. A total of 101 student respondents were selected through purposive sampling. The results of a simple linear regression analysis indicate that service quality has a significant and positive effect on student satisfaction, with an R2 value of 0.608 and a significance level of 0.000. These findings suggest that improvements in service quality-particularly in the dimensions of tangibles and empathy - have a direct impact on student satisfaction. This research highlights the importance of managing pesantren cooperatives professionally and in alignment with Islamic values, in order to support the value-oriented, spiritual, and economically self-reliant educational goals of the pesantren system.

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Corresponding Author:

Fitri Wahyuni

Institut Islam Al-Mujaddid Sabak; fitriwahyuni@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a foundational pillar for national development and progress, shaping the social, economic, political, and cultural fabric of societies. In today's globalized world, where the flow of information, technology, and labor transcends national boundaries, nations must prioritize building

strong educational institutions that can produce not only intellectually capable individuals but also morally upright, socially responsible, and skill-oriented citizens(Mustofa, 2023; Tanjung, Anaswan, & Nisak, 2023). The escalating demands of the 21st century—marked by complex global challenges and competitive labor markets—necessitate a redefinition of what constitutes "quality" in education. Indonesia, a nation rich in cultural and religious diversity, is home to a wide range of educational systems. Among these, Islamic boarding schools, or pondok pesantren, hold a distinctive place due to their holistic approach that combines religious instruction with personal discipline, moral development, and increasingly, vocational education(Kadarsih, Munip, Aminah, & Rahmy, 2023; Karnadjaja, 2023). The pesantren's emphasis on character building through spiritual and communal living provides a unique educational environment that differs significantly from formal public schools.

Historically, pesantren have functioned as centers of Islamic learning focused almost exclusively on the transmission of religious knowledge, memorization of classical texts, and the spiritual formation of santri under the guidance of a kyai (Islamic scholar)(Arif, Fatonah, & Faza, 2020; Gusmian & Abdullah, 2022). However, as socio-economic realities evolve and the need for economic independence becomes more urgent, many pesantren are adapting by integrating vocational training and entrepreneurship into their curriculum(Hidayat, Hardi, Sucipto, & Sunarti, 2023; Hidayat, Mubyarto, Ritonga, & Sunarti, 2023). This transformation reflects a broader awareness among pesantren leaders that their graduates must be equipped not only with theological knowledge but also with practical skills that can support self-sufficiency and community development. One of the most prominent innovations in this regard has been the establishment of pesantren cooperatives (koperasi pesantren), which serve as small business entities operating within the pesantren. These cooperatives provide santri with real-world experience in trade, management, and financial literacy, thereby enhancing their readiness for life beyond the boarding school while contributing to the pesantren's operational sustainability.

The increase in santri enrollment across many pesantren underscores the rising trust of communities in these institutions. However, it also brings forth new logistical and administrative challenges, particularly in meeting the growing needs of the students. In many pesantren, the cooperative becomes the central entity through which students can access essential goods such as food, toiletries, religious books, stationery, clothing, and other educational materials. By internalizing such services within the pesantren compound, cooperatives help maintain the sanctity and safety of the pesantren environment, limiting students' need to leave the campus(Dewi & Febrianto, 2023; Djaja et al., 2023; Saryanti, Daud, Kadarsih, Munamah, & Dewi, 2024). Beyond fulfilling material needs, a well-functioning cooperative also plays an indirect but significant role in enhancing the learning process by reducing barriers to access. When students can conveniently and reliably obtain what they need, they are more likely to stay focused on their studies and spiritual development. Therefore, the cooperative becomes an essential cog in the wheel of pesantren life.

Like any other service-oriented institution, the effectiveness of a pesantren cooperative depends largely on its ability to meet or exceed the expectations of its users—who in this case are the santri. In the business world, customer satisfaction is often considered a key metric for success, and the same logic applies in educational settings. When students perceive that the services they receive are responsive, efficient, and tailored to their needs, their overall satisfaction with the institution increases. In the context of pesantren cooperatives, student satisfaction can influence not only their loyalty to the cooperative itself but also their broader perception of how well the pesantren is managed. A well-served student may feel more connected, respected, and valued within the educational environment, reinforcing positive behavioral and academic outcomes(Devi, Ma'ani, & Wahab, 2023; Susanto, Putra, & Nisak, 2024). Therefore, measuring and improving service quality within cooperatives is not merely a business strategy—it is also a pedagogical necessity.

In the field of service management, numerous frameworks have been developed to assess and improve service quality. One of the most widely used is the SERVQUAL model, which identifies five key dimensions that customers use to evaluate service: reliability (ability to perform the promised service dependably and accurately), assurance (competence and courtesy of staff), tangibles (physical facilities and equipment), empathy (caring and individualized attention), and responsiveness (willingness to help customers). These dimensions are relevant and adaptable to the pesantren cooperative context, where students may assess the service not only by the physical layout or product availability but also by the behavior and professionalism of the staff, many of whom may also be educators. Utilizing a standardized model like SERVQUAL enables institutions to systematically diagnose service gaps, prioritize improvements, and ensure that the cooperative fulfills its role as a support system within the educational ecosystem(A. A. Saputra, 2023; A. E. Saputra & Susanti, 2024).

Despite the growing number of pesantren adopting cooperative models, there remains a scarcity of empirical research that specifically examines how service quality affects student satisfaction in rural or semi-rural pesantren settings. Most available studies tend to focus on mainstream educational institutions or cooperatives in urban areas, where infrastructure and professional management are more accessible. Consequently, there is limited understanding of the unique challenges faced by pesantren cooperatives operating in under-resourced areas(Nurjali, Nisak, Wulandari, & Mun'amah, 2023; Rahma, Musthofa, & Fatimah, 2024). These may include limited capital, lack of trained staff, dual-role burdens on teachers, and cultural norms that influence management styles. Filling this research gap is important not only for academic completeness but also for informing policy and practice among stakeholders in Islamic education and cooperative development. Localized studies can provide contextually relevant solutions and highlight best practices that are replicable in similar educational environments across Indonesia and other Muslimmajority regions.

Barokatul Ishlah Islamic Boarding School in Desa Rantau Karya, Tanjung Jabung Timur, represents a compelling case for such a localized study. The pesantren has experienced a significant surge in student enrollment, increasing from just 18 students in 2021 to 135 in 2025. This rapid expansion reflects the institution's growing appeal and the community's trust. However, such growth also places immense pressure on institutional infrastructure and service delivery mechanisms, particularly its cooperative(Musthofa, 2024; Musthofa & Wulandari, 2024; Nuri, Junaidi, & Achmad, 2024). The cooperative, which initially functioned as a small shop selling basic items, is now expected to serve a much larger and more diverse student body. As the demands of the students increase, so too must the cooperative's ability to provide timely, accurate, and personalized service. This transition from a small-scale operation to a more complex service provider creates both opportunities and challenges that warrant detailed investigation.

Preliminary observations at the Barokatul Ishlah cooperative reveal several service quality issues that may affect student satisfaction. Among the most commonly reported problems are delays in processing orders, lack of responsiveness to complaints, and inconsistent customer service behavior from staff members. Many cooperative workers also serve as full-time teachers, which divides their attention and limits their availability. In some cases, students have reported that their orders were either delayed or inaccurately fulfilled, leading to dissatisfaction and loss of trust(Kuswanto, Abidin, Pestano, & Ikhlas, 2024; Kuswanto, Fajanela, & Abidin, 2024; Munip, 2024). Moreover, a lack of empathy and professional communication further exacerbates these concerns. These issues suggest that while the cooperative plays an important role in student life, its current operational model may not be fully equipped to handle the demands placed upon it. These shortcomings emphasize the need for systematic assessment and improvement of service quality.

Improving the service quality of pesantren cooperatives is not solely a managerial concern; it also intersects with the moral and spiritual objectives of Islamic education. In Islam, service to others

is both a communal responsibility and a spiritual act. Therefore, cooperatives operating in Islamic educational settings must adhere to values such as honesty (shiddiq), trustworthiness (amanah), effective communication (tabligh), and wisdom (fathanah). These values are not merely abstract ideals—they are functional principles that can shape cooperative policies, staff behavior, and management practices. By aligning operational strategies with Islamic ethics, pesantren cooperatives can foster a culture of excellence that reflects both professional standards and religious teachings. This alignment can also enhance the credibility of the cooperative in the eyes of the students and the wider community.

In light of the challenges and opportunities outlined above, this study seeks to assess the influence of service quality on student satisfaction within the Barokatul Ishlah pesantren cooperative. Specifically, the study applies the SERVQUAL framework to identify which dimensions of service quality are most strongly associated with perceived satisfaction among santri. Through quantitative analysis and data collection from student respondents, the research aims to provide actionable insights that can inform cooperative management practices. Additionally, the study explores the interplay between service quality and institutional values, contributing to a more holistic understanding of how educational cooperatives can be structured and managed in accordance with both modern service principles and Islamic teachings.

This research contributes to the limited body of literature on pesantren-based cooperatives by offering an empirically grounded case study that explores service quality from the perspective of its primary beneficiaries: the students. The findings are expected to generate practical recommendations for improving cooperative management, enhancing student satisfaction, and promoting institutional sustainability(Kurniawan, Marwendi, Yusuf, Aiman, & Tauvani, 2024). Furthermore, the study reinforces the importance of embedding service quality within educational environments that are spiritually and morally oriented. For policymakers, educators, and cooperative managers, the research offers a valuable reference for designing interventions that can enhance the performance of cooperatives not only in Barokatul Ishlah but also in similar pesantren across Indonesia and the Muslim world.

2. METHODS

This study employs a quantitative research approach with an explanatory design(Bowen, Rose, & Pilkington, 2017) aimed at objectively examining the influence of service quality on student satisfaction at the "Kopontren" Cooperative of Barokatul Islah Islamic Boarding School. The quantitative method is appropriate given the research objective, which focuses on measuring the relationship between two clearly defined variables—service quality as the independent variable and student satisfaction as the dependent variable. Data are collected using structured instruments and analyzed statistically to test the proposed hypotheses. The theoretical framework is based on the SERVQUAL model, which includes dimensions such as reliability, assurance, empathy, and responsiveness. These dimensions are adapted to the educational and cooperative context of the boarding school to ensure contextual relevance and construct validity.

The population of this study consists of all 135 students enrolled as cooperative members at Barokatul Islah for the 2024/2025 academic year. A purposive sampling technique is applied to select participants based on specific inclusion criteria, such as being active cooperative users within the past six months and meeting minimum attendance requirements. The sample size is determined using Slovin's formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in a final sample of 101 students. Sampling is conducted randomly among those who meet the criteria to reduce bias and enhance the generalizability of findings. Data collection is carried out using a Likert-scale questionnaire, where

respondents indicate their level of agreement with a series of statements reflecting the constructs under study. The questionnaire includes 16 items each for the service quality and student satisfaction variables.

To ensure data quality, the instrument undergoes validity and reliability testing. Validity is assessed through Pearson's Product Moment correlation to determine whether each item accurately reflects its intended construct, while reliability is measured using Cronbach's Alpha, where a coefficient of 0.70 or higher indicates acceptable internal consistency. Data analysis includes descriptive statistics, normality tests, and simple linear regression to evaluate the effect of service quality on student satisfaction. The coefficient of determination (R²) is calculated to assess the strength of the relationship, and a t-test is used to determine statistical significance at a 5% alpha level. Ethical considerations such as informed consent, confidentiality, and voluntary participation are upheld throughout the research process.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The establishment of Pondok Pesantren Barokatul Islah in early 2020 marks a significant milestone in the educational landscape of Tanjung Jabung Timur, Jambi, Indonesia. Founded on Wednesday, February 26, 2020 (26 Jumadil Akhir 1441 H), the institution officially began accepting students on Sunday, July 12, 2020, with an initial cohort of 25 santri—15 male and 10 female. From its inception, the pesantren adopted the Amtsilati method as its core approach to classical Islamic book (kitab kuning) studies, with all incoming students required to purchase the associated materials at the time of enrollment. Under the visionary leadership of Kyai A. Hizbulloh Maksum, the pesantren has progressively developed its academic and operational structure, relying on both community involvement and committed educators who supervise student life intensively. As of 2024, the institution now accommodates 146 santri, reflecting significant growth in both educational reach and institutional capacity. Its educational offerings have also expanded, encompassing Madrasah Tsanawiyah (MTs) and the Pendidikan Kesetaraan Pondok Pesantren Barokatul Islah (PKPPS), at both wustha and ulya levels, making it a comprehensive institution of Islamic learning in a strategic coastal location with diverse socio-economic student backgrounds.

The study investigated the impact of service quality on student satisfaction within the pesantren's cooperative unit (koperasi), which plays a vital role in supporting daily needs and educational materials for the santri. A total of 101 santri were surveyed, with a gender distribution of 59.41% male and 40.59% female. Regarding educational background, 56.44% of respondents were at the junior secondary level (SMP), while 43.56% were in senior secondary education (SMA). Descriptive statistical analysis revealed that the service quality variable (X) had a minimum score of 19 and a maximum of 71, with a mean of 34.48 and a standard deviation of 11.65. The dependent variable, student satisfaction (Y), ranged from 23 to 61, with a mean score of 36.03 and a standard deviation of 7.96. These values suggest moderate satisfaction and perceived service quality among the students. Classic assumption tests confirmed the normality and homoscedasticity of the data, fulfilling key prerequisites for linear regression analysis.

The results of the simple linear regression analysis demonstrate a statistically significant and positive relationship between service quality and student satisfaction. The derived regression equation, Y = 17.316 + 0.532X, indicates that for every unit increase in service quality, student satisfaction increases by approximately 0.532 units. The t-test yielded a value of 12.385 with a significance level of p = 0.000, indicating that the effect of service quality on student satisfaction is both highly significant and positive. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination (R^2) was calculated at 0.608, meaning that 60.8% of the variance in student satisfaction is explained by service quality, with

the remaining 39.2% attributable to other external factors not captured in the model. These findings not only validate the theoretical assumptions regarding the role of service quality in customer (or student) satisfaction but also underscore the importance of effective cooperative service management in the context of faith-based educational institutions. The results hold valuable implications for institutional improvement strategies, especially in developing Islamic educational environments where community-based services intersect with pedagogical commitments.

Service quality has been proven to exert a significant influence on the satisfaction levels of students (santri) at the Barokatul Islah Islamic Boarding School Cooperative in Rantau Karya Village, Tanjung Jabung Timur Regency. The statistical test results revealed that the calculated t-value (12.385) far exceeds the critical t-table value (0.676), with a significance level of 0.000 (p < 0.05). This finding confirms that service quality contributes meaningfully, in a partial sense, to shaping customer satisfaction perceptions. Enhancing service quality directly creates a positive experience for students as consumers of the cooperative's services. The implications of this result reinforce the notion that pesantren cooperatives function not only as religious economic entities but also as service institutions requiring professional management practices and a customer-oriented approach.

The attractiveness of cooperatives in delivering high-quality services serves as a strategic element in fostering customer loyalty, particularly within religious-based institutions such as Islamic boarding schools. Students, as the primary users of the services, exhibit high satisfaction levels—especially in the tangibles dimension—with a positive response rate of 59.44%, categorized as good. This indicates that the physical and visible aspects of service—such as facilities, staff appearance, and environmental comfort—have been effectively managed. These findings call for the cooperative's management to not only maintain but also further enhance the quality of these aspects in order to strengthen the cooperative's position as a leading service provider within the pesantren environment.

The success of delivering services that meet customer expectations is largely determined by the employees' understanding of their service-related responsibilities. Consistent and standardized employee performance is a vital component in supporting overall service quality. Positive student responses to the delivery of services reflect that the cooperative's operational systems align well with customer needs and expectations. This alignment demonstrates both efficient internal communication and the effectiveness of the management's organizational structure.

Religious values embedded in service provision distinguish pesantren cooperatives from conventional business entities. The Qur'anic verse Al-Baqarah 2:267 explicitly emphasizes the importance of giving from what is good and not from what is inferior. These values underlie shariabased service quality, which prioritizes honesty, politeness, reliability, and a sense of accountability as acts of devotion to Allah (SWT). From an Islamic perspective, service quality is not solely evaluated through the lens of worldly customer satisfaction, but also through the spiritual values of barakah (blessing), trustworthiness (amanah), and adherence to sharia principles. Sharia service standards—including responsiveness, assurance, empathy, reliability, and Islamic physical evidence—form the foundation for creating both spiritual and material satisfaction for students.

The service model adopted by pesantren cooperatives offers a holistic approach to customer satisfaction. This model integrates not only the functional dimensions of service but also spiritual elements(Fatimah, Devi, Wandi, Mun'amah, & Sarwono, 2024; Fia, Musthofa, & Devi, 2024) . Service delivery is perceived not merely as a transactional activity, but as part of a broader mission of da'wah and character development. In this context, student satisfaction is shaped not only by the efficiency of the cooperative's services but also by the congruence of values and norms embedded within each service interaction(Fajri, Abidin, & Lestari, 2024; Ismail & Musthofa, 2024; Syariah, 2024). The research findings illustrate that the integration of service excellence and Islamic values constitutes an effective formula for building student loyalty.

Student satisfaction is the outcome of a comparison process between pre-service expectations and post-service perceptions. When service performance meets or exceeds expectations, satisfaction levels increase significantly. This aligns with customer satisfaction theories which state that satisfaction results from a cognitive and affective evaluation of service performance(Abidin, 2024; Ariyani et al., 2024). Conversely, when service delivery falls short of expectations, dissatisfaction arises, potentially damaging the cooperative's reputation. Therefore, it is crucial for management to develop a deep understanding of customer expectation profiles in order to design adaptive and responsive service systems.

The contribution of this research lies in its institutional context, which remains underexplored in service management literature. It reveals that student cooperatives, as socio-economic entities, hold significant potential in establishing sharia-based service systems capable of delivering high levels of customer satisfaction(Lubis, Irfana, Purwatiningsih, Nisak, & Sari, 2024; Sya'bana, Nisak, Suryaningsih, Rukiyanto, & Hastuti, 2024). These findings provide a foundation for developing a pesantren-based cooperative management model that integrates conventional service principles with Islamic values in a balanced manner.

Accordingly, this study introduces a novel perspective within the domain of customer satisfaction research, particularly in the setting of Islamic boarding school cooperatives—an area that has received limited attention in international scholarly discourse(Munip et al., 2024; Mustari, Mere, Pitri, Wibowo, & Nilfatri, 2024). The integration of religious values, service management, and the institutional context of religious education renders this research both relevant and contributive to the advancement of Islamic economics and value-based service management literature.

4. CONCLUSION

It is concluded that service quality has a significant influence on student (santri) satisfaction within the cooperative of Barokatul Islah Islamic Boarding School in Tanjung Jabung Timur. Utilizing the SERVQUAL model—which encompasses the dimensions of reliability, assurance, empathy, tangibles, and responsiveness - this study finds that improvements in service quality directly enhance student satisfaction. This is evidenced by a coefficient of determination of 60.8% and a highly significant p-value (p = 0.000). These findings suggest that high-quality cooperative services particularly in terms of physical infrastructure and service behavior - can generate positive user experiences, strengthen students' loyalty to the institution, and contribute to more effective learning and character development. The novelty of this study lies in its empirical, data-driven approach to examining the relationship between service quality and satisfaction in the context of pesantren cooperatives, an environment that remains underrepresented in service management literature. Furthermore, the research introduces an integrative framework that combines modern service management principles with Islamic values such as amanah (trustworthiness), shiddiq (truthfulness), tabligh (effective communication), and fathanah (wisdom), establishing a foundation for shariacompliant service delivery. This integration represents a new contribution to the development of value-based management literature. The practical implication of this research is the need for pesantren cooperatives to be managed professionally and with a customer-oriented mindset, while remaining aligned with the spiritual and educational missions of the pesantren. The cooperative model that incorporates Islamic values can serve as a reference for the development of other pesantren-based cooperatives in Indonesia and across the Muslim world, offering a service system that is not only functionally satisfying but also spiritually meaningful.

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