

Implementation of Total Quality Service in Improving the Quality of Education at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the implementation of Total Quality Service (TQS) in improving the quality of education at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah. The research employed a descriptive qualitative method with a case study approach. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, participatory observations, and document analysis involving the pesantren leadership, teachers, students (santri), and parents. The findings indicate that the implementation of TQS, supported by the commitment of both leaders and educational staff, has had a positive impact on the improvement of educational quality, both academically and non-academically. Challenges encountered include limited human resources with quality management knowledge and an organizational culture still rooted in traditional practices. However, these challenges can be addressed through strategies such as internalizing TQS values, establishing an internal quality assurance team, and encouraging active involvement of students' parents. Overall, the results highlight the importance of integrating modern quality management principles with traditional pesantren values in creating quality and sustainable educational services.

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Introduction

Educational quality is a key indicator in evaluating the success of an educational institution (Ansori et al., 2023; Fadhli, 2020), and Islamic boarding schools (pondok pesantren) are no exception. In today's dynamic and constantly evolving modern era, society increasingly demands that educational institutions not only provide religious knowledge but also offer professional, systematic, and high-quality educational services (Hambali & Mu'alimin, 2020; Basyit, 2020). Traditionally known as institutions rooted in Islamic values, pondok pesantren are now expected to adapt to contemporary

developments without compromising their identity. In this context, enhancing the quality of education in pesantren is an imperative in order to remain relevant and competitive.

Educational quality is also a central concept in the ever-evolving field of educational management theory, driven by growing public demands for quality educational services. According to modern quality management theories developed by experts such as Deming, Juran, and Crosby—whose explanations are cited from Supadi (2021)—quality is not merely the achievement of final outcomes but also involves a continuous process of improvement. In educational institutions, this approach has evolved into Total Quality Management (TQM), which has subsequently been adapted into the concept of Total Quality Service (TQS), especially in service-based educational environments.

Total Quality Service (TQS), as outlined by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry and cited by Adhari (2021), is an approach that emphasizes customer satisfaction through quality, consistent, and responsive service. In the educational context, this approach regards students (santri), parents (wali santri), educators, and the broader community as key customers who must be served optimally. The principles of TQS include customer focus, participation of all organizational elements, continuous improvement, and leadership involvement in creating a culture of quality (Tambingon et al., 2025). Consequently, the implementation of TQS necessitates a paradigm shift from bureaucratic educational management to one that is more participatory, measurable, and performance-based.

From the perspective of Islamic education, the application of TQS must also integrate spiritual values with modern managerial principles. This aligns with Sallis' view as cited by Ismail (2018), which states that quality management in education must be adjusted to the cultural context of the institution and the characteristics of its learners. Therefore, pondok pesantren, as institutions grounded in Islamic values, need to adopt the principles of TQS contextually by reinforcing traditional pesantren values such as khidmat (service), ikhlas (sincerity), and islah (reform). These values can serve as internal strengths in building a sustainable quality system.

Furthermore, transformational leadership theory is also relevant in supporting the successful implementation of TQS in the pesantren environment. Leadership that can inspire, empower, and facilitate cultural change is vital in creating an organizational climate that is open to innovation and renewal (Muzakki et al., 2023; Fahri et al., 2024). In this case, pesantren leaders should not only act as administrative managers but also as change agents who instill a quality-conscious mindset throughout the institution. Collective commitment and participative leadership will strengthen a high-quality, contextual education service system.

Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah is one of the Islamic educational institutions that plays a strategic role in developing outstanding students (santri), not only in religious knowledge but also in general education. Efforts to improve educational quality are continuously made, including improving human resources, updating curricula, and developing educational facilities. However, in practice, the pesantren still faces challenges related to the educational service system, which is not yet fully standardized and integrated. Therefore, a managerial approach that can effectively address these complexities is needed.

One relevant approach to improving educational service quality is the Total Quality Service (TQS) concept. TQS is a quality management approach that emphasizes customer satisfaction, which in the context of pesantren education includes santri, wali santri, educators, and the surrounding community (Siswanto, 2015). This approach focuses not only on outcomes but also on service processes, work culture, and shared commitment in creating high-quality education. Through the implementation of TQS, educational institutions such as Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah can enhance the effectiveness of teaching and learning processes, optimize infrastructure, and strengthen an integrated, quality-oriented service system.

The urgency of TQS implementation in the pesantren environment is increasingly important, given the need for a structured, adaptive, and quality-based educational service system. Pesantren values such as khidmat, ikhlas, and professionalism can serve as a solid foundation for implementing TQS, ensuring that efforts to improve quality do not conflict with the pesantren's core identity but rather

reinforce it. Nevertheless, pesantren also face significant challenges in maintaining a balance between preserving tradition and embracing educational service innovation.

Based on the above background, this study aims to describe the implementation of Total Quality Service in improving the quality of education at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah, analyze its impact on educational quality, and identify supporting and inhibiting factors that influence the implementation process. It is expected that this research will contribute to helping pesantren develop higher-quality educational service systems, enrich the academic literature on quality management in religious educational institutions, and assist policymakers in formulating sustainable and contextual strategies to improve pesantren education quality.

Material and Methods

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a case study method (Ilhami et al., 2024), focusing on Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah. The purpose of this approach is to gain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of Total Quality Service (TQS) in efforts to improve the quality of education within the pesantren environment.

The research was specifically conducted at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah, with the research subjects including the pesantren leaders, teachers or educational staff (ustadz), students (santri), and the students' parents or guardians (wali santri). Key informants were selected purposively—those directly involved in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of the pesantren's educational service system.

Data were collected using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis (Achjar et al., 2023). Semi-structured interviews were conducted with the leaders and teaching staff to explore perspectives and practices related to the application of TQS. Observations were made on educational activities and interactions within the pesantren environment, while document analysis focused on quality policies, organizational structures, activity schedules, and evaluation reports.

The instruments used included interview guides, observation sheets, and documentation record formats. Data analysis was carried out in three stages: data reduction, data presentation in the form of thematic narratives, and drawing conclusions or verification by linking the findings (Sarosa, 2021). To ensure the validity of the data, source and technique triangulation were used, member checking was conducted with informants to confirm data accuracy, and techniques such as prolonged engagement and audit trails were applied to maintain the consistency of the research process (Susanto & Jailani, 2023).

Results

The implementation of the Total Quality Service (TQS) principles in the educational services at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah is realized through a series of concrete actions focused on comprehensive and continuous quality improvement. The commitment of the pesantren leadership serves as the main driving force in instilling quality values across all institutional elements, from teachers to students (santri). Stakeholder satisfaction is emphasized through improved information transparency, open dialogue forums between the pesantren and students' guardians (wali santri), and the provision of feedback channels for the santri.

In accordance with the principle of continuous improvement, the pesantren regularly conducts learning evaluations, including classroom supervision, observation of student activities, and measurement of educational goal achievements. Training and competency development are also periodically provided to the teachers (ustadz/ustadzah) to ensure that the quality of instruction aligns with contemporary demands. The establishment of an internal quality team acts as a collective strategy that strengthens teamwork, where every educational element plays an active role in maintaining and enhancing service quality.

The leadership of the pesantren demonstrates a visionary approach by embedding TQS as part of the institutional culture, integrating pesantren values with modern managerial practices. This entire process demonstrates that the application of

TQS is not merely a slogan, but a practical framework for building an adaptive, responsive, and high-quality pesantren education system.

Discussion

The Impact of TQS Implementation on Education Quality

The implementation of Total Quality Service (TQS) at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah has made a tangible contribution to the holistic improvement of educational quality. In the academic domain, the application of TQS has driven positive changes in the learning process, such as the adoption of more participatory and communicative teaching methods, improved student (santri) learning discipline, and enhanced teacher competence through instructional training and regular evaluations.

Meanwhile, on the non-academic side, the pesantren has succeeded in creating a more comfortable, orderly, and supportive environment for student development. Efforts to continuously improve quality include upgrading learning facilities—such as the addition of representative classrooms, strengthening of library services, and the provision of digital-based information access. These positive outcomes align with the TQS theory by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry, as cited by Adhari (2021), which emphasizes that the quality of educational services is not measured solely by final outcomes, but also by the quality of the processes that provide meaningful learning experiences and satisfaction for learners..

Challenges and Obstacles in the Implementation of TQS

Although the implementation of Total Quality Service (TQS) at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah has shown significant progress, this study reveals several challenges that hinder its optimal execution. One of the main obstacles is the limited number of human resources with a deep understanding of quality management concepts, highlighting the ongoing need for related training.

The pesantren's organizational culture, which has traditionally relied on oral traditions and inherited practices, poses a barrier to the adoption of systematic service standards. In addition, budget limitations for upgrading infrastructure and facilities constrain the institution's ability to provide adequate support for improving

educational quality. Some teachers (ustadz and ustadzah) are also not yet fully accustomed to service-standard-based approaches, and there is internal resistance to change from those who believe the traditional system is already sufficient.

These findings are consistent with the study by Sallis, as cited by Adien et al. (2025), which emphasizes that the implementation of TQS in educational institutions requires both cultural adaptation and enhanced managerial literacy among administrators to ensure that quality systems operate effectively and sustainably.

Solution-Oriented Strategies and Supporting Success Factors

Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah has implemented various solution-oriented strategies to address challenges in the implementation of Total Quality Service (TQS). One significant measure is the establishment of an Internal Quality Assurance Team, which functions as a supervisory and managerial body to systematically ensure the quality of educational services.

In addition, the pesantren actively collaborates with external training institutions to enhance the capacity of educators and administrators in understanding and applying TQS principles. The internalization of TQS values is also pursued by integrating concepts of quality, excellent service, and continuous improvement into the daily work culture of the pesantren.

The success of TQS implementation is supported by participatory and visionary leadership that encourages all elements of the pesantren to work synergistically. The pesantren's culture, which upholds the values of khidmat (dedication), ikhlas (sincerity), and the spirit of islah (continuous improvement), serves as a strong foundation in building sustainable educational quality.

Equally important is the active role of the students' guardians (wali santri), who provide support and participate in quality improvement efforts, thereby fostering an educational environment that is harmonious and responsive to the needs of all stakeholders.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of Total Quality Service (TQS) at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah has significantly enhanced the quality of education across various aspects—namely, the learning process, academic and non-academic outcomes, and the level of satisfaction among all stakeholders, including students (santri), parents (wali santri), and the surrounding community. These findings reinforce modern quality management theories which emphasize that the quality of educational services must be developed through a holistic approach, involving the active participation of all relevant parties and focusing on customer satisfaction as a primary indicator of success.

However, the success of TQS implementation in this pesantren is closely tied to the need for contextual adaptation—harmonizing the traditional values of pesantren, such as khidmat (devotion), ikhlas (sincerity), and togetherness, with the principles of modern quality management. Furthermore, strengthening the capacity of human resources—particularly educators and administrators—as well as ensuring visionary and transformative leadership are crucial factors for ensuring that TQS can function effectively and sustainably within the pesantren environment. This synergistic approach, combining tradition and innovation, is what drives the comprehensive and continuous improvement of educational quality at Pondok Pesantren Nahdlatul Ummah.

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