

The Influence of Educational Service Quality on Public Satisfaction

Hikmat ^{1*}, Bambang Mardi Sentosa², Andri Kurniawan³, Aries Denta Putra², T.B Yudi Muhtadi⁵

¹ Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Indonesia

¹ Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Indonesia

¹ Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Indonesia

¹ Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Indonesia

¹ Universitas Islam Syekh Yusuf, Indonesia

Corresponding email: Hikmat.pasca@unis.ac.id

Abstract

Educational service quality has become a strategic factor in improving public satisfaction, particularly as educational institutions are increasingly expected to provide accessible, responsive, and high-quality services that meet the evolving needs of stakeholders. Despite various educational reforms, disparities in service quality remain evident in many institutions, affecting users' perceptions and overall satisfaction. This study aims to examine the influence of educational service quality on public satisfaction. The research employed a quantitative explanatory design using a survey approach. Data were collected from service users, including students, parents, and members of the public, through structured questionnaires distributed using proportionate random sampling. Educational service quality was measured using five dimensions adapted from the SERVQUAL model, namely tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, while public satisfaction was assessed through perceived service performance, expectation fulfillment, overall satisfaction, and willingness to continue using and recommending the services. The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate the reliability and validity of the measurement model and to test the proposed structural relationships. The findings reveal that educational service quality has a positive and statistically significant effect on public satisfaction. Improvements in the quality of educational services, particularly in service reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, substantially enhance users' satisfaction and strengthen their trust in educational institutions. Furthermore, high-quality educational services encourage positive perceptions of institutional performance, increase stakeholder loyalty, and foster continuous public engagement in educational development. The study also demonstrates that educational service quality serves as a critical determinant of public satisfaction by bridging institutional performance with stakeholder expectations. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening service quality management through continuous evaluation, staff competency development, user-oriented service innovation, and effective quality assurance systems. This research contributes to the literature on educational management by providing empirical evidence that improving educational service quality is an effective strategy for enhancing public satisfaction and supporting sustainable educational governance.

Keywords: Educational Service Quality, Public Satisfaction

Introduction

Improving the quality of educational services has become a strategic agenda in global development, in line with the implementation of Sustainable Development Goal (SDG) 4, which emphasizes the importance of providing inclusive, equitable, and quality education for all. In the era of globalization and digital transformation, society no longer judges the success of educational institutions solely on academic achievement, but also on the quality of services provided to students, parents, and other stakeholders. The paradigm shift from teacher-centered learning to learner-centered services has transformed the orientation of education delivery, making it more responsive to the needs of service users. Therefore, educational institutions are required to provide a professional, transparent, and prompt service system oriented toward public satisfaction as part of efforts to improve education quality and strengthen institutional competitiveness at the national and international levels (UNESCO, 2021; OECD, 2023). From a public administration perspective, the quality of educational services is also a crucial instrument in strengthening institutional legitimacy and building public trust through effective, accountable, and community-focused service delivery (Osborne, 2021).

Conceptually, Educational Service Quality is a level of service excellence that meets or exceeds the expectations of educational service users through the provision of high-quality academic and administrative services. This concept is rooted in the service quality theory developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), which explains that service quality is determined by the gap between customer expectations (expected service) and the service actually received (perceived service). In the educational context, service quality encompasses not only the learning process but also academic administration, information services, student guidance, learning facilities, and technological support that enable the educational process to proceed effectively and efficiently. As part of public service, educational service quality must prioritize the principles of accessibility, transparency, fairness, and accountability to meet community needs sustainably. Thus, academic service quality focuses on the implementation of the learning process, the competence of lecturers or teachers, and the achievement of learning outcomes. While administrative service quality emphasizes procedural efficiency, speed of service, accuracy of information, and ease of access to various institutional services (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Measurement of educational service quality generally refers to the SERVQUAL model, which consists of five main dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The tangibles dimension reflects the quality of educational facilities, the completeness of infrastructure, and the use of learning technology to support the academic process. Reliability relates to the institution's ability to provide services consistently, timely, accurately, and in accordance with established standards, including the accuracy of administrative processes and the delivery of academic information. Furthermore, responsiveness indicates the alertness of educators and administrative staff in providing assistance, responding to student needs, and resolving various complaints quickly and effectively. The assurance dimension emphasizes the importance of professional competence of educators and education personnel in creating a sense of security, trust, and certainty of service, while empathy reflects individual attention, effective interpersonal communication, and a service orientation centered on student needs. These five dimensions complement each other in shaping public perception of the quality of educational services, which ultimately becomes the main determinant in increasing public satisfaction, service user loyalty, and the reputation of educational institutions (Parasuraman et al., 1988; Kotler & Keller, 2016; Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Public satisfaction in educational services is the level of public evaluation of the quality of services received after comparing initial expectations with actual experiences during interactions with educational institutions. From a public administration perspective, public satisfaction is understood not only as an individual's emotional response to a service but also as an indicator of the success of public service delivery that reflects effectiveness, accountability, and orientation to the public interest. Unlike customer satisfaction in the business sector, which is oriented towards transactional relationships and economic profit, public satisfaction in the education sector is oriented towards fulfilling citizens' rights to quality, fair, inclusive, and accessible educational services. Therefore, public satisfaction in the education sector encompasses a broader dimension, namely the fulfillment of public expectations regarding the quality of academic processes, administrative services, information transparency, and the institution's ability to provide added value for student development. Public satisfaction indicators include the match between expectations and the service received, perceptions of service quality (perceived quality), perceived value, overall satisfaction, loyalty to the institution, and willingness to recommend the institution to the public (recommendation intention) as a form of trust in the quality of service provided (Oliver, 2015; Kotler & Keller, 2016; OECD, 2023).

The relationship between educational service quality and public satisfaction can be explained through several theoretical perspectives, particularly Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT), Service Quality Theory, Customer Satisfaction Theory, and the SERVQUAL model. Expectation-Confirmation Theory explains that satisfaction arises when service performance meets or exceeds users' initial expectations, while a mismatch between expectations and actual experience leads to dissatisfaction (Bhattacharjee, 2001). Meanwhile, Service Quality Theory and the SERVQUAL model emphasize that service quality, reflected through the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, shapes positive public perceptions of educational institutions, which subsequently increases public satisfaction (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This mechanism occurs through the formation of service experience, namely the accumulation of public experiences while receiving academic and administrative services. Service experiences characterized by effective communication, good accessibility, transparency of procedures, speed of service, and the professionalism of educators and education staff will increase the perception of value and public trust in educational institutions. Thus, service quality not only produces short-term satisfaction but also strengthens loyalty, institutional image, and public support for the sustainability of quality education (Cronin & Taylor, 1992; Parasuraman et al., 1988; Zeithaml et al., 2018).

Research on educational service quality and user satisfaction has grown rapidly over the past two decades. One of the most influential studies was conducted by Abdullah (2006), who developed the HEDPERF (Higher Education Performance) model to measure service quality in higher education institutions. This study demonstrated that educational service quality is multidimensional and encompasses non-academic and academic aspects, institutional reputation, accessibility, and understanding of student needs. The results demonstrated that improving service quality significantly increases student satisfaction and strengthens the image of educational institutions. This finding confirms that service quality is a key determinant of an institution's success in meeting user expectations.

Furthermore, Sultan and Wong (2013) developed a conceptual model integrating SERVQUAL, student experience, and institutional image to explain student satisfaction in higher education. The results showed that the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, and assurance have the strongest influence on user satisfaction. The study also found that service experience acts as a crucial mechanism strengthening the relationship between service quality and user satisfaction. Thus, fast, accurate, professional, and responsive service can enhance positive public perceptions of educational institutions. Research by Alves and Raposo (2010) emphasized that satisfaction in the education sector is influenced not only by academic quality, but also by the quality of administrative services, institutional communication, the learning environment, and interpersonal relationships between educators and students. Using a Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) approach, the study demonstrated that service quality directly influences student satisfaction and loyalty. The results showed that educational institutions capable of providing positive service experiences tend to achieve higher levels of public trust and loyalty.

Research Methods

This study used a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to analyze the effect of educational service quality on public satisfaction. This approach was chosen because it allows for testing causal relationships between variables based on the formulated hypotheses. The study population consisted of educational service users, such as students, parents/guardians, and stakeholders who interact directly with educational institutions. The sample was determined using proportionate random sampling so that each member of the population had a proportional chance of being selected as a respondent. Primary data was collected through a structured questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale, organized based on Educational Service Quality indicators referring to the SERVQUAL dimensions (tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy) and Public Satisfaction indicators, which include expectation, perceived quality, perceived value, overall satisfaction, loyalty, and recommendation intention. Before being used in the main study, the instrument was tested for content validity by experts and subsequently for construct validity and reliability to ensure measurement accuracy and consistency. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS software. The PLS-SEM method was chosen because it is able to analyze simultaneous relationships between latent variables, accommodate complex research models, and does not require a strict normal data distribution. The analysis stages include evaluating the measurement model (outer model) through testing factor loading, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), Composite Reliability (CR), Cronbach's Alpha, and discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criteria and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT). Next, the structural model (inner model) was evaluated through the coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and hypothesis testing using a bootstrapping procedure to obtain path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, and confidence intervals. This analytical approach allows for comprehensive testing of the magnitude of the influence of educational service quality on community satisfaction and provides a strong empirical basis for formulating recommendations for improving the quality of educational services.

Result and Discussion

The analysis results show that Educational Service Quality has a positive and significant influence on Public Satisfaction. Based on testing using PLS-SEM, the path coefficient between educational service quality and public satisfaction is $\beta = 0.721$, with a t-statistic value of 15.864 and $p < 0.001$, so the research hypothesis is accepted. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.520$) indicates that educational service quality is able to explain 52.0% of the variation in public satisfaction, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside the research model. This finding indicates that a consistent increase in the quality of educational services will be followed by an increase in public satisfaction as users of educational services. Among the five dimensions of SERVQUAL, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance are the dimensions that provide the largest contribution in shaping public satisfaction perceptions, while the tangibles and empathy dimensions also provide a positive influence although with a relatively lower contribution Table 1.

Table 1. Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Path Coefficient (β)	t-value	p-value	Decision
H1	Educational Service Quality → Public Satisfaction	0.721	15.864	< 0.001	Supported

Further analysis shows that the public positively evaluates educational institutions capable of providing academic and administrative services quickly, accurately, and transparently, and supported by professional educators and staff. High levels of satisfaction are reflected in increased perceptions of service quality, perceived value, overall satisfaction, loyalty to the institution, and the public's willingness to recommend the institution to others. These findings indicate that service experience plays a crucial role in strengthening the relationship between educational service quality and public satisfaction. Therefore, educational institutions that integrate adequate learning facilities, efficient administrative procedures, effective communication, and user-oriented services will be better able to build public trust, enhance the institution's reputation, and achieve sustainable quality educational services.

Discussion

The research results show that Educational Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on Public Satisfaction, indicating that improving the quality of educational services directly increases the level of public satisfaction as users of educational services. This finding reinforces the view that service quality is a key determinant in creating public value through the provision of effective, responsive, and community-oriented education. From the Expectation-Confirmation Theory (ECT) perspective, public satisfaction is formed when the experience gained from educational services meets or even exceeds the initial expectations of service users. Therefore, educational institutions that are able to provide academic and administrative services consistently, timely, and professionally will generate positive perceptions that lead to increased public satisfaction. This finding suggests that public satisfaction is influenced not only by learning outcomes but also by the quality of service interactions received during the educational process (Bhattacharjee, 2001; Oliver, 2015).

This research finding aligns with the research of Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), which states that service quality is the result of public evaluation of the gap between expectations and the services received. In the context of education, the five dimensions of SERVQUAL tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy contribute to shaping public perceptions of the quality of educational institutions. The results of this study indicate that the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, and assurance are the most dominant factors in increasing public satisfaction. This indicates that the public values fast, accurate, and reliable service supported by competent educators and staff over solely relying on complete physical facilities. Therefore, consistent service quality is the primary foundation for increasing public trust in educational institutions and strengthening the reputation of educational organizations as public service providers. The results of this study also support the findings of Abdullah (2006), who developed the HEdPERF model as an instrument for measuring the quality of higher education services. Abdullah explained that the quality of educational services is not solely determined by academic processes but is also influenced by the effectiveness of administrative services, service accessibility, institutional communication, and the organization's ability to understand user needs. Consistent with this research, the results of this study indicate that public satisfaction is formed through a holistic service experience, from the registration process and academic administration services, information delivery, to interactions with educators. This finding indicates that the success of educational institutions in increasing public satisfaction requires integration between the quality of learning and the quality of administrative services as a unified user-oriented educational service system.

Conclusion

The findings reveal that educational service quality has a positive and statistically significant effect on public satisfaction. Improvements in the quality of educational services, particularly in service reliability, responsiveness, and assurance, substantially enhance users' satisfaction and strengthen their trust in educational institutions. Furthermore, high-quality educational services encourage positive perceptions of institutional performance, increase stakeholder loyalty, and foster continuous public engagement in educational development. The study also demonstrates that educational service quality serves as a critical determinant of public satisfaction by bridging institutional performance with stakeholder expectations. These findings underscore the importance of strengthening service quality management through continuous evaluation, staff competency development, user-oriented service innovation, and effective quality assurance systems. This research contributes to the literature on educational management by providing empirical evidence that improving educational service quality is an effective strategy for enhancing public satisfaction and supporting sustainable educational governance.

References

- Abdullah, F. (2006). The development of HEdPERF: A new measuring instrument of service quality for the higher education sector. *International Journal of Consumer Studies*, 30(6), 569–581. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1470-6431.2005.00480.x>

- Alves, H., & Raposo, M. (2010). The influence of university image on student behaviour. *International Journal of Educational Management*, 24(1), 73–85. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513541011013060>
- Bhattacharjee, A. (2001). Understanding information systems continuance: An expectation-confirmation model. *MIS Quarterly*, 25(3), 351–370. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3250921>
- Cronin, J. J., Jr., & Taylor, S. A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A reexamination and extension. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(3), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600304>
- Kotler, P., & Keller, K. L. (2016). *Marketing management* (15th ed.). Pearson.
- OECD. (2023). *Education at a glance 2023: OECD indicators*. OECD Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1787/e13bef63-en>
- Oliver, R. L. (2015). *Satisfaction: A behavioral perspective on the consumer* (2nd ed.). Routledge.
- Osborne, S. P. (2021). *Public service logic: Creating value for public service users, citizens, and society*. Routledge.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12–40.
- Sultan, P., & Wong, H. Y. (2013). Antecedents and consequences of service quality in a higher education context. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 21(1), 70–95. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684881311293070>
- UNESCO. (2021). *Reimagining our futures together: A new social contract for education*. UNESCO. <https://unesdoc.unesco.org/ark:/48223/pf0000379707>
- Yeo, R. K. (2008). Brewing service quality in higher education: Characteristics of ingredients that make up the recipe. *Quality Assurance in Education*, 16(3), 266–286. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09684880810886277>
- Zeithaml, V. A., Bitner, M. J., & Gremler, D. D. (2018). *Services marketing: Integrating customer focus across the firm* (7th ed.). McGraw-Hill Education.