Service Quality and Perceived Value as Determinants of Word of Mouth via Santri Satisfaction: A Study of Islamic Boarding Schools in Jombang Regency

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Abstract:

In the era of increasingly tight educational competition, word of mouth is a vital key element in the strategy of developing educational institutions. In the Islamic boarding school education environment, there are various factors that influence word of mouth, the most important of which are service quality and perceived value. The purpose of the study was to analyze the role of student satisfaction in mediating service quality and perceived value in terms of word of mouth at Islamic boarding schools in Jombang Regency. This is a quantitative study with a causality design. Students from five major Islamic boarding schools in Jombang Regency, specifically Darul Ulum, Mambaul Ma'arif, Tebuireng, Tarbiyatun Nasyiin, and Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding Schools, comprise the population. The analysis tool, SEM AMOS, yielded a sample size of 200 respondents. The results of the study revealed that service quality and perceived value affect word of mouth through student satisfaction. To generalize the findings, we still need to develop variables that influence word of mouth; additionally, we need to conduct research with different objects, not only in the Islamic boarding school education industry but also in other service industries.

Keywords: Islamic Boarding School, Perceived Value, Service Quality, Student Satisfaction, Word of mouth

1. Introduction

Education is an essential requirement for all individuals to get the maximum degree of knowledge necessary for competitiveness in the labor market. According to the most recent statistics from the Global Education Monitoring Report (UNESCO, 2023), Indonesia's higher education participation rate stands at 41.3%, trailing behind other ASEAN nations like Malaysia (48.2%) and Thailand (52.3%). Education is a crucial instrument for success in both emerging and industrialized nations. (Psacharopoulos & Patrinos, 2018) discovered that each additional year of education enhances income by 8-10%. Education elucidates several aspects of life. Education facilitates the retention of new information for subsequent application (Afthanorhan et al., 2019).

According to Law Number 20 of 2003 of the Republic of Indonesia about the National Education System, Indonesia's educational framework encompasses formal, non-formal, and informal education, which mutually enhance and enrich one another. Formal education is delivered from kindergarten to university. Home and environmental education, especially throughout early infancy, is informal. Alternative educational institutions, including Islamic boarding schools, provide a unique function in the national education system.

Islamic boarding schools has distinctive characteristics like traditional Islamic educational institutions. The Directorate of Islamic Boarding School Education of the Ministry of Religion (2023) indicates that there are 30,000 Islamic boarding schools in Indonesia, accommodating more than 5 million students. The "City of Santri" in Jombang Regency has around 300 Islamic boarding schools, each with distinctive characteristics. Prominent Islamic boarding schools in Jombang, such as Tebuireng, Bahrul Ulum Tambakberas, Mambaul Ma'arif Denanyar, and Darul Ulum, have cultivated national stars and thousands of graduates across all vocations.

Islamic boarding schools have transitioned from being solely religious institutions to comprehensive establishments that include both religious and secular instruction. Islamic boarding schools are currently

categorized as Salaf (classical), semi-developing, developing, khalaf (contemporary), and ideal ((M. Ridlwan Nasir, 2010). The Ministry of Religion (2023) indicates that 60% of Islamic boarding schools employ a formal education system, modernizing while preserving core beliefs.

The intense competition among educational institutions renders word of mouth (WOM) crucial for their sustainability, especially Islamic boarding schools. Oral communication between the communicator and the recipient, which the recipient considers non-commercial concerning a brand, product, or service, was initially characterized by (Arndt, 1967) As communication progressed, so too did this concept. ((Vieira et al., 2019)) Acknowledging the progression of word-of-mouth (WOM) from conventional forms to electronic (e-WOM), social media, and visual mediums, all of which shape prospective consumers' opinions of educational institutions.

(Harrison-Walker, 2001) delineates the intricacies of word-of-mouth (WOM) in education through the dimensions of WOM Activity/Enthusiasm (frequency and specificity of communication) and WOM Praise (valence and intensity of recommendation). (Goyette et al., 2010). This comprehension can be enhanced by recognizing intensity, valence, content, and WOM catalysts. In pesantren education, selecting an educational institution is a significant, long-term decision.

WOM significantly influences the choosing of educational institutions, as evidenced by empirical studies. (Bruce & Edgington, 2008) found that students selected institutions based on recommendations. The research conducted by (Hemsley-Brown & Oplatka, 2015) determined that word-of-mouth significantly impacts the choosing of educational institutions more than other forms of marketing communication.

The positive word-of-mouth for educational institutions is propelled by exceptional service. Since (Parasuraman et al., 1985)developed the SERVQUAL model with five conventional dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—the concept has progressed. An empirical investigation by (Sultan & Wong, 2019) revealed that student word-of-mouth is influenced by service quality, especially in education and amenities. (Lukens-Bull, 2010) identified that spiritual direction and dormitory facilities contribute to students' positive opinions of pesantren. Parents and children seek superior religious education, modern facilities, an efficient pedagogical approach, and proficient management. Inability to meet these expectations might jeopardize the pesantren's reputation and viability.

A significant element in favorable word-of-mouth is perceived value. Zeithaml, 1988 The consumer's overall assessment of the product's usefulness, derived from its benefits and costs, is termed perceived value. (Ledden et al., 2007) multidimensional model encapsulates the intricacies of perceived value in schooling. Career opportunities, academic achievements, symbolic rewards, social advantages (networks, relationships), and sacrifices (financial, temporal, opportunity) must be evaluated.

(Harefa, 2020) assert that religion-based education holds spiritual (religious knowledge, moral development) and cultural (traditional values, community connections) importance. Consolidate this understanding by defining six categories of educational value: functional, epistemological, image, emotional, social, and price/quality (Chen & Chen, 2010; LeBlanc & Nguyen, 1999; Zameer et al., 2019)established that perceived value significantly impacted positive word-of-mouth.

Pesantren education employs satisfaction to link service quality, perceived value, and word-of-mouth communication. (Oliver, 1999) Satisfaction occurs when consumption aligns with needs, desires, or objectives in a gratifying manner. (Elliott & Healy, 2001) delineate three principal elements of happiness in education: Academic Experience (teaching quality, course content), Campus Life (facilities, support services), and Student Development (personal growth, career preparation). Mediation of customer happiness is becoming increasingly vital for service quality. (DeShields et al., 2005) discovered that faculty, staff, and academic experience influence satisfaction.

The function of satisfaction mediation exhibits empirical variability. Satisfaction completely mediates the influence of administrative, interpersonal, and technical quality on word-of-mouth (Dandis et al., 2022; Kazungu & Kubenea, 2023) assert that satisfaction mediates the relationship between service quality and word-of-mouth communication. Satisfaction mediates variably throughout several trials. Enhanced service quality elevated satisfaction but did not influence word-of-mouth intention (Jiewanto et al., 2012)

Research (Arango, 2014; Giantari et al., 2021) indicates that satisfaction influences the relationship between value perception and word-of-mouth communication (WOM). The research indicates that perceived values enhance satisfaction, hence increasing word-of-mouth communication. Prior research has shown conflicting findings, creating a gap for the development of a comprehensive WOM model that incorporates

perceived value, service quality, and satisfaction. This study investigates the influence of service quality and perceived value on word-of-mouth at Islamic boarding schools in Jombang Regency, with contentment serving as an intervening variable.

2. Literature Review

(Kotler & Keller, 2010) describe word-of-mouth promotion as the dissemination of information, whether spoken, written, or digital, among persons concerning the quality or personal experience associated with the acquisition or utilization of a product or service. Word-of-mouth denotes interpersonal communication intended to affect purchase behavior, initiated and propagated by individuals who do not earn remuneration (Williams et al., 2020) The phrase "word of mouth" is a phenomena wherein customers, serving as both recipients and communicators, engage in discourse around brands, products, and services absent a distinct commercial incentive. The concept of word-of-mouth encompasses promotional communications initiated by service providers, together with formal customer interaction channels, including suggestions and complaints (Marchand et al., 2017).

Customer satisfaction pertains to an individual's emotional state of contentment or discontent following the assessment of services received in comparison to their initial expectations (Kotler & Keller, 2009). As stated by (Saif, 2014), satisfaction is defined as a subjective emotional condition marked by an individual's sensation of contentment or pleasure. (Mosahab et al., 2010) assert that consumers who are happy with their experience are more inclined to participate in word-of-mouth communication, disseminating good comments to others. Customer satisfaction is a metric that assesses the degree of contentment consumers derive from an organization's competencies, products, and services (Hsu, 2018; Ngo Vu & Nguyen Huan, 2016).

Service quality is a subjective assessment resulting from a cognitive process wherein customers juxtapose their original expectations with the actual services they perceive to have gotten (Nunkoo et al., 2020; Parasuraman et al., 1985; Roy et al., 2018). conducted a study to determine five fundamental dimensions of service quality. Initially, we possess concrete categories encompassing elements such as visual physical structures, equipment, personnel, and communication materials. An other crucial issue to examine is reliance, which denotes the ability to provide the promised service reliably and accurately. The third feature is responsiveness, denoting the inclination to assist consumers and deliver prompt service. Guarantee, as the fourth dimension, pertains to the presence of competence and civility by employees, enabling them to successfully convey trust and confidence to clients. This encompasses personnel proficiency, politeness, reliability, and the general impression of safety offered by the service. The final factor is empathy, which pertains to the specialized care and attention that firms provide to their clients. This is accomplished by enabling access to the organization's representatives, promoting good communication, and exhibiting a sincere comprehension of consumer requirements.

Customer-perceived value is defined as a thorough assessment of the utility of a product or service, influenced by the customer's perception of what they receive against what they provide in exchange (Zeithaml, 1988)Perceived value has been articulated in several manners, encompassing consumer utility, the juxtaposition of perceived benefits against sacrifices, psychological pricing, worth, and quality (Woodruff, 1997). The perceived worth pertains to the student's expectations concerning the outcomes of acquiring and utilizing the offered services, encompassing both advantages and costs (Spreng et al., 1993).

3. Research Hypothesis

Customer satisfaction increases with exemplary service. This presupposes that clients prioritize prompt and quality service. Service quality, encompassing reliability, responsiveness, certainty, empathy, and tangible attributes, enhances consumer satisfaction. This is corroborated by studies (Afthanorhan et al., 2019; Twum & Peprah, 2020). Perceived value encompasses customers' assessments of a product or service's financial and non-financial benefits and expenses. Increased value for money enhances consumer satisfaction. This underscores the significance of fulfilling customer satisfaction criteria. Research (Arango, 2014; Azis et al., 2020; Tondo et al., 2017) indicates that the perceived value among Indonesian students enhances their satisfaction with private higher education.

Students frequently express satisfaction with the service, resulting in favorable discussions or recommendations. Customers are more inclined to endorse a service based on its quality, cost, or experience.

Exceptional service quality motivates students and parents to disseminate information on educational services, as noted by (Aulia & Djuarsa, 2015; Sugiharto et al., 2023).

When a service or product appears more useful, users are more inclined to share positive experiences on social media or in person. Develop premium services to enhance word-of-mouth promotion. (Arvianto & Rohim, 2017) discovered that perceived value enhances word-of-mouth communication. The perceived value requires enhancement. Provide products and services while cultivating a positive reputation to enhance word-of-mouth referrals.

Favorable client experiences are generally disseminated through direct interaction or social media platforms. These data suggest that enhancing consumer happiness can increase brand or service attractiveness and facilitate word-of-mouth promotion. Pleasure enhances word-of-mouth, as indicated by (Munap & Yahaya, 2019; Torabi & Bélanger, 2021). Customers experience more satisfaction when the service surpasses their expectations. This enhances brand loyalty and encourages word-of-mouth promotion. Positive word-of-mouth advertising, the most original and effective marketing strategy, may impact potential customers. Service quality should be prioritized. Encourage existing clients to generate positive word-of-mouth endorsements. These recommendations can enhance the service provider's market share and clientele. Service quality affects word-of-mouth via customer satisfaction (Kazungu & Kubenea, 2023; Rasheed & Rashid, 2023). Consumer satisfaction is significantly affected by perceived value, defined as the quality of a product or service in relation to its cost. Conversely, satisfaction influences intentions and behaviors related to word-of-mouth promotion. Consumer satisfaction and referrals rise with value-centric products and services. Consumer satisfaction and perceived value are closely linked, enhancing word-of-mouth communication. (Giantari et al., 2021) discovered that satisfaction with perceived values influences word-of-mouth communication.

H1: Service quality and perceived value have a positive and significant impact on student satisfaction.
H2: Service quality and perceived value have a positive and significant impact on word of mouth
H3: Student satisfaction have a positive and significant impact on word-of-mouth
H4: Service quality and perceived value influence word-of-mouth through student satisfaction.

4. Research Methods

This research employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the relationship between service quality, perceived value, customer satisfaction, and word of mouth in Islamic boarding schools. The study population comprises 28,595 students from five major Islamic boarding schools in Jombang Regency that have operated for more than 100 years: Darul Ulum, Mambaul Maarif, Tebuireng, Tarbiyatun Nasyiin, and Bahrul Ulum Islamic Boarding Schools. Using proportional sampling, 200 respondents were selected as the research sample, distributed proportionally across the five institutions based on their student population. The research examines four main variables: service quality (X1) as measured through quality of personal interaction, physical service environment quality, and quality of results; perceived value (X2) evaluated through functional, emotional, social, epistemic, and conditional dimensions; student satisfaction (Y1) assessed through learning program and teaching methods; and word of mouth (Y2) measured by intensity, positive valence, and content. Data collection employs a structured questionnaire using a 5-point Likert scale.

The analysis utilizes Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) through AMOS software, incorporating both measurement model analysis and structural model evaluation. Model fitness is assessed using multiple criteria. The research location selection is justified by East Java's historical significance in Islamic education and Jombang's unique characteristics as the birthplace of Indonesia's largest Islamic organization, Nahdlatul Ulama. The study examines both direct relationships between variables and mediating effects, with hypothesis testing conducted through path analysis within the SEM framework.

5. Result & Discussion
Result

The study involved 200 respondents from five major Islamic boarding schools in Jombang Regency, with a gender distribution showing a female majority (58%) compared to male respondents (42%). The age demographics revealed that most respondents were adolescents aged 12-17 years (57%), followed by young adults aged 18-23 years (36%), and adults aged 24-30 years (7%).

Table 1. Respondent Demographics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	84	42%
	Female	116	58%
Age	12-17 years	114	57%
	18-23 years	72	36%
	24-30 years	14	7%

Educational background analysis showed that the majority of respondents were at the high school level (SMA/MA/SMK) representing 62% of the total sample, while 34.5% were pursuing undergraduate degrees, and only 3.5% were at the junior high school level. Regarding the duration of stay in Islamic boarding schools, there was a relatively even distribution between those staying 4-6 years (37.5%) and 1-3 years (37%), while 25.5% had resided for more than 7 years.

Information about the Islamic boarding schools primarily spread through family networks, with 59% of respondents learning about the institutions from their siblings. Friends (17.5%) and self-knowledge (14.5%) were the next most common sources, while digital platforms like social media (6.5%) and school websites (2.5%) played a minor role in information dissemination.
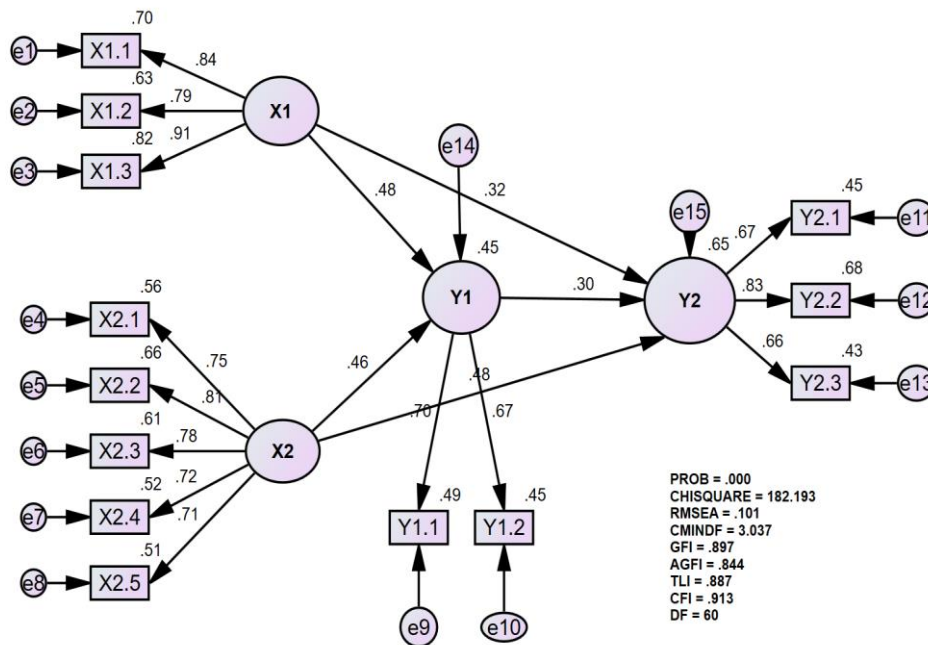

Figure 1. SEM Analysis Results

Table 2. Goodness of Fit Test Results

Goodness-of-Fit Index	Cut-off Value	Model Results	Information
X2 Chi Square	77,931	72,009	Good
Significance probability	≥ 0.05	0,119	Good
RMSEA	≤ 0.08	0,033	Good
GFI	≥ 0.90	0,950	Good
CMIN	≤ 2.00	1,220	Good

TLI	≥ 0.90	0,988	Good
CFI	≥ 0.90	0,991	Good

Table 3. Confirmatory Factor Analysis Results

Variable	Indicator	Loading Factor	P-value
Service Quality	Quality of Results	0.902	0.000
	Personal Interaction	0.846	0.000
	Physical Environment	0.788	0.000
Perceived Value	Emotional	0.811	0.000
	Social	0.787	0.000
	Functional	0.741	0.000
Word of Mouth	Positive Valence	0.862	0.000
	Intensity	0.725	0.000
	Content	0.710	0.000

Table 4. *Direct Effects Results*

Relationship	Standardized Regression Weight	Estimate	S.E.	C.R.	P Value
Service Quality → Satisfaction	0.401	0.295	0.092	3.216	0.001
Perceived Value → Satisfaction	0.405	0.350	0.116	3.016	0.003
Service Quality → Word of Mouth	0.221	0.175	0.084	2.080	0.038
Perceived Value → Word of Mouth	0.435	0.404	0.106	3.809	***
Satisfaction → Word of Mouth	0.294	0.316	0.132	2.399	0.016

Table 5. Direct and Indirect Effects

Path	Direct Effect	Indirect Effect	Total Effect
Service Quality → WOM	0.221	0.118	0.339
Perceived Value → WOM	0.435	0.119	0.554
Satisfaction → WOM	0.294	-	0.294

The findings of the evaluation of the goodness of fit criteria in table 2 show that all model assessments have been met, so the model can be accepted. The Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis

demonstrated strong model fitness with all goodness-of-fit criteria met. Preliminary tests confirmed data normality (multivariate CR = 2.001), absence of outliers (highest Mahalanobis distance = 26.727), and no multicollinearity issues (determinant = 0.015). The confirmatory factor analysis revealed significant loadings for all indicators, with quality of results (0.902) being the strongest indicator for service quality, emotional aspect (0.811) for perceived value, and positive valence (0.862) for word of mouth.

Hypothesis testing revealed significant direct effects of service quality (β=0.401, p=0.001) and perceived value (β=0.405, p=0.003) on satisfaction. Both variables also showed significant direct effects on word of mouth (service quality: β=0.221, p=0.038; perceived value: β=0.435, p<0.001). Satisfaction demonstrated a significant mediating role, with total effects (0.339 for service quality and 0.554 for perceived value) exceeding direct effects, confirming its importance in strengthening the relationship between independent variables and word-of-mouth communication in Islamic boarding schools. These findings support all proposed hypotheses and highlight the complex interplay between service quality, perceived value, satisfaction, and word-of-mouth behavior.

Discussion

The study identified intriguing methods by which service quality affects student satisfaction, particularly through the quality of results. Students appreciate these discoveries since their exam scores reflect their learning efforts and their academic ratings have improved compared to the previous semester. When students see a correlation between their effort and their grades, they get validation and recognition. Significantly, enhancing academic performance from semester to semester signifies genuine learning advancement, which is gratifying. The ustadz/ustadzah elucidated the material clearly and consistently encouraged discourse, which resulted in the students' enthusiasm for the pedagogical approach. The discussion area at the Islamic boarding school is spacious, allowing pupils to seek clarification on lectures from the ustadz/ustadzah during the evening. These findings corroborate previous research (Chandra et al., 2019; Herman, 2022; Khoo et al., 2017) on service quality and educational satisfaction.

The satisfaction of students is affected by perceived value, particularly emotional worth, which is essential to the pesantren experience. Two fundamental personal experiences—students' comfort in the dormitory and their enjoyment of the daily routine in the pesantren—illustrate this emotional relevance. The students' perception of home in the dormitory transcends mere physical amenities, fostering an environment of a 'second home' that provides security, comfort, and warmth. Affirmative engagements between students and caregivers in a nurturing dormitory build profound emotional bonds and a sense of pesantren community.

The students' satisfaction with the pesantren's routine indicates a harmonious balance between academic responsibilities and mental well-being within the curriculum and activities. Organized activities such as studying the yellow book, group prayers, and extracurricular programs emphasize students' comprehensive self-development. This renders learning pertinent and enjoyable, promoting personal and spiritual development.

This favorable emotional value supports student satisfaction. When children develop an emotional attachment to the pesantren, they exhibit increased receptiveness to learning and more adaptability to challenges. This psychological comfort also cultivates a learning environment in which students may optimize their potential and establish robust pesantren bonds. Consequently, emotional value amplifies immediate gratification and facilitates the transformation and continuity of student learning. This corroborates the findings (Arango, 2014; Joung et al., 2016; Mcdougall & Levesque, 2000) that perceived values influence educational satisfaction.

The pedagogical approach that forecasts student enjoyment is both pragmatic and profound. Ustadz/ustadzah interpret and elucidate content, simplifying complex concepts into accessible, pertinent language for students. Furthermore, the conversation method known as 'sorogan' facilitates students in enhancing their understanding through engagement.

Student satisfaction is more significantly affected by perceived value, particularly emotional value, than by service quality. Given that pesantren functions as a residential school, emotional well-being is essential for student growth. When children experience emotional ease, their learning and participation improve significantly. These findings provide insights for enhancing student satisfaction with instructional techniques. Pesantren should prioritize fostering an environment that promotes students' emotional well-

being while adhering to academic quality requirements via educational attainment. A balance between these two aspects would enhance the relevance and value of learning for students.

The research indicated that the quality of human interaction significantly enhances positive word of mouth among students. When ustadz or ustadzah encounter learners, they greet them cheerfully and engage in dialogue when inquiries arise. The ustadz/ustadzah's congenial environment cultivates a familial atmosphere and establishes emotional connections that enable students to feel esteemed and embraced within the pesantren's extensive community.

Significantly, the ustadz/ustadzah's willingness to listen and respond to students' inquiries has fostered a conducive learning environment. Students no longer feel reticent about posing questions, as they are assured of receiving answers. Students exhibit increased confidence in studying science and recognizing their potential when they perceive themselves as heard and valued.

The impact of this favorable interaction beyond the classroom. Student narratives were exuberantly conveyed to families and acquaintances beyond the pesantren. It is an environment for education and a secondary residence characterized by affection and assistance, they stated. They frequently enthusiastically urge people to engage with the pesantren's enjoyable educational atmosphere. They spontaneously recount enjoyable tales, expressing gratitude for their pesantren experiences. These findings corroborate previous research (Dandis et al., 2022; Rasheed & Rashid, 2023) indicating that service quality promotes educational word of mouth.

Word of mouth is significantly affected by social aspects about perceived value. Two fundamental experiences that influence students' daily lives are the invitations exchanged among pesantren peers for various occasions and the collaborative efforts of students in diverse activities. in dawn, senior students awakened their classmates for collective prayers and Qur'an recitation in the mosque of the Islamic boarding school. Students collected food rations for a single room, organized the area, and conducted post-meal cleanup. Hadrah, calligraphy, and sports constituted their afternoon pastimes. These activities cultivate intimacy, emotional bonds, reciprocal support, and a feeling of community among students.

Learning entails collaborative working within a framework of mutual cooperation. Advanced pupils offer to assist peers who are experiencing difficulties. Students convene for informal study groups post-maghrib or prior to bedtime. Advanced students will mentor less knowledgeable peers in the deliberative forum. To enhance their understanding of the yellow book, students engaged in discussion. Friends safeguard and aid in procuring food from the pesantren kitchen, even when students are ill.

Students inherently desire to share their narratives with family and friends beyond the pesantren following this enriching and pleasurable social experience. They enthusiastically articulated how the pesantren imparted notions of togetherness that are difficult to find elsewhere. How kids develop self-reflection and consideration of collective interests. Student narratives depicted the splendor of camaraderie, which established a vast family that supported and strengthened one another. Predictably, they enthusiastically invited their friends to partake in the pesantren's educational and enriching existence.

The traditions of Islamic boarding schools encompass weekly Ro'an (community service), where all students collaboratively clean the pesantren, and Haflah akhirussanah, where each student participates according to their abilities, including decoration, food preparation, and performance practice. These instances foster camaraderie and impart the need of collaboration to attain objectives. This corroborates the findings of(Giantari et al., 2021; Kuppelwieser et al., 2022; Soares & da Costa, 2008) that perceived value influences word of mouth.

Two primary types demonstrate that word-of-mouth have an intrinsic positive valence. The students fervently articulated the benefits they gained, ranging from practical education to rewarding spiritual and social experiences. Their willingness to invite acquaintances to Islamic boarding schools indicates their confidence and satisfaction with these institutions.

The social values inherent in pesantren life are the most intriguing discoveries of this study, since they propel word of mouth. Profound and significant social experiences influence more than interpersonal relationships. Engaging in daily activities and academic pursuits fosters robust connections among students. The endorsement of a pesantren arises from collective experience. Social interaction in pesantren fosters positive recollections that inspire students to narrate experiences. Social engagement in pesantrens has been demonstrated to enhance student loyalty. Social values in these cooperative activities foster profound bonds of camaraderie and create indelible life experiences that students are eager to share.

This indicates that pesantrens should advocate positive social values in everyday life to foster favorable word of mouth. Collaborative activities promote unity, cooperation, and a feeling of community, therefore enhancing the pesantren's reputation. This necessitates enhancing ustadz/ustadzah-student relationships to foster a comprehensive and meaningful learning environment, whereby societal values and personal warmth converge to cultivate a holistic educational experience.

Student happiness is maximized via word-of-mouth pedagogical methods. The ustadz/ustadzah's clear elucidations enable pupils to communicate Islamic boarding school activities to their families. Senior pupils who have resided in Islamic boarding schools for years have recognized the enduring benefits of educational methodologies, rendering this experience noteworthy. This feature is gaining significance since the majority of students learn about pesantren through relatives, suggesting that favorable educational experiences may disseminate organically through familial networks.

The ustadz/ustadzah's interactive pedagogical approach fosters student satisfaction and encourages them to share information about the Islamic boarding school's premier curriculum with their peers. A number of children who discovered pesantren through acquaintances demonstrated that dynamic learning discussions may be stimulating. This communication pattern demonstrates that educational methods naturally foster word of mouth. The educational curriculum is an essential metric for student happiness. The pesantren learning approach is characterized by each Islamic topic. This elicits joy in children and motivates them to share their experiences from the pesantren with their relatives. The experiential components of the learning program enable students to apply knowledge in practical contexts. Students communicate to their friends on the pesantren's premier curriculum following this comprehensive learning experience.

This study revealed that students' satisfaction with teaching methodologies (clarity of ustadz/ustadzah and discussions) and learning programs (integration of subjects with Islamic values and practical exercises) has motivated them to enthusiastically share favorable experiences regarding Islamic boarding schools. Research indicates that instructional methodologies and educational initiatives are essential for fostering robust word-of-mouth communication, both through routine family interactions and discussions with peers on exemplary programs.

This study pertains to the respondents' age, predominantly including adolescent pupils in the psychosocial development phase who engage in interaction and experience sharing. The clarity of comprehension and opportunity for communication are essential for adolescents in their learning process, hence the resulting happiness will motivate them to authentically and vigorously share these experiences. Adolescents like disseminating information about the new educational program that amalgamates Islamic principles with practical application.

This study corroborates the findings of (Kazungu & Kubenea, 2023; Sugiharto et al., 2023; Torabi & Bélanger, 2021) that contentment influences educational word-of-mouth communication. The research indicated that student satisfaction derived from comprehensible teaching methods, opportunities for debate, Islamic value-oriented learning programs, and practical exercises will influence word-of-mouth referrals at Islamic boarding schools in Jombang Regency. Students who expressed satisfaction with Islamic boarding schools communicated their experiences to family and friends. These findings underscore the necessity for Islamic boarding schools to sustain and enhance their accessible and engaging pedagogical approaches, as well as their distinctive and relevant educational programs, to promote good word of mouth among students.

Students at the Islamic boarding school in Jombang Regency express satisfaction with the service, particularly with personal connections. This illustrates that children exhibit happiness when the ustadz/ustadzah welcomes them with a smile and permits them to pose inquiries related to their learning. In addition to instruction, the ustadz/ustadzah cultivates emotional closeness with students by warm greetings and smiles at each encounter. The ustadz/ustadzah's openness to student inquiries signifies the presence of a dialogue space that fosters reciprocal learning.

The quality of the physical service environment, wherein each student is provided with a bench while studying, together with the pesantren area, also contributes. These favorable environments promote learning. Optimal physical surroundings, including vacant classrooms and outdoor spaces, enhance students' concentration on their studies.

Learning outcomes are significant, since students' academic performance improves each semester, indicating their educational efforts. The increase in learning outcomes indicates that the educational curricula

of Islamic boarding schools enhance student achievement. Meeting student expectations fosters student satisfaction, allegiance, and ongoing enrollment at the pesantren.

Students achieve a whole learning experience when warm interpersonal interactions, a conducive physical environment, and improved learning outcomes are integrated. Students experience profound satisfaction when ustadz/ustadzah are competent educators who prioritize their development, offer appropriate resources, and enhance achievements. This satisfaction compels students to recommend it. This study corroborates the findings of (Aulia & Djuarsa, 2015; Kazungu & Kubenea, 2023), and (Munap & Yahaya, 2019) that service quality affects word of mouth via satisfaction.

Meeting student expectations can generate word-of-mouth value. The assurance of knowledge at Islamic boarding schools fosters student satisfaction. The perceived value can provide students with the benefits and functions they need. Student satisfaction might enhance word-of-mouth promotion. Students that appreciate the pesantren persist in their studies and advocate for it.

Emotional values affect student satisfaction and referrals. The comfort of the pesantren dormitory will enhance students' long-term commitment to studying there, particularly if their expectations are fulfilled. A learning program that integrates Islamic principles to fulfill criteria aligns with expectations, potentially impacting word of mouth. Student satisfaction may rise when the pesantren fulfills their requirements, including straightforward instruction and practical experience. Student pleasure is contingent upon the clarity of understanding. Content students remain at the same pesantren, enhancing word-of-mouth promotion. This study corroborates the findings of (Giantari et al., 2021; Khuong & Phuong, 2017) that perceived values affect word of mouth via satisfaction.

The research indicates that ustadz/ustadzah facilitate rapid assistance to children through empathetic interpersonal connections. Providing excellent service and a sense of comfort is crucial, as the pesantren fosters a conducive learning environment and an enjoyable educational experience, which are essential for fulfilling student expectations and cultivating positive word-of-mouth among students who will continue their studies there. Consequently, student satisfaction is essential for the sustainability of Islamic boarding schools in the current competitive educational landscape.

Research findings indicate that service quality and perceived value influence word of mouth via student satisfaction at Islamic boarding schools in Jombang Regency. This correlation shown that personal contact, comfort, and enjoyment of studying inside the pesantren will enhance students' motivation to persist in their studies, particularly when their expectations are fulfilled.

6. Conclusion

The caliber of outcomes within service quality is evidenced by academic performance and bolstered by strong pedagogical strategies, including an all-encompassing boarding learning framework. The perceived value, particularly its emotional dimension, exerts a significant impact on student happiness by fostering a sense of belonging in the dormitory and facilitating adaptation to the pesantren's schedule. A nurturing environment and organized activities, ranging from the yellow book to extracurricular programs, facilitate the comprehensive development of students. The preeminence of perceived value over service quality highlights the distinctive attributes of the pesantren education system, wherein emotional factors and personal experiences play a pivotal role in determining the satisfaction of students immersed in the pesantren milieu.

The caliber of human engagement is expressed in the amiability of the ustadz/ustadzah, their receptiveness to inquiries, and their attentiveness to pupils, fostering a familial ambiance. The perceived values, particularly social values, exert a more significant impact on word of mouth through collaborative activities, a culture of reciprocal learning, and pesantren customs that reinforce camaraderie. The senior-junior structure that mutually assists in many daily tasks enhances the emotional connection among pupils. The preeminence of social values over service quality illustrates the unique attributes of pesantren education, wherein profound social experiences are paramount in fostering student endorsements, aligned with the pesantren's focus on communal values.

Accessible pedagogical approaches and enough conversation opportunities encourage students to inherently convey favorable experiences to their families, serving as the primary source of information for selecting a pesantren. An innovative educational program that incorporates Islamic principles and practical application significantly influences the intensity of word-of-mouth communication, evidenced by students'

enthusiasm in sharing information about the exemplary program with their peers. The traits of students, predominantly teens, reinforce this conclusion due to their developmental stage of active interaction and experience sharing. The integration of interactive learning techniques and distinctive, practical programs is essential for fostering satisfaction that promotes organic word-of-mouth dissemination.

The incorporation of Islamic principles in education is essential. The amicability of the educators and the newly acquired knowledge, along with a curriculum that incorporates Islamic principles, exemplifies the happiness fostered by the Islamic boarding school among the pupils. The established contentment prompts students to willingly share the advantages gained at the pesantren through word-of-mouth in Jombang Regency.

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