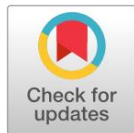


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Choosing Faith and Quality: Biographical Stories of Parents Navigating Islamic School Service Management and Marketing Narratives

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ABSTRACT

Background. Increasing competition among Islamic elementary and early childhood education institutions demands innovative management strategies to maintain their existence. In the industrial area of East Karawang District, this situation is exacerbated by the rapid growth of educational institutions and the growing urban population. As a result, disparities have emerged between institutions, with some experiencing an increase in student enrollment, while others are experiencing a decline in interest due to uneven service standards.

Purpose. This study aims to analyze educational service management as a strategy for recruiting new students from an Islamic perspective in Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) and Early Childhood Education (Raudhatul Athfal) throughout East Karawang District.

Method. The research method used was a qualitative case study design. Data were collected through participatory observation, in-depth interviews with 47 informants, and documentation studies in 12 educational units. Data were analyzed using the thematic interactive model, including data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data trustworthiness was ensured through source and method triangulation.

Results. The research results show that institutions that implement excellent service management based on Islamic values such as transparency (amanah), caring (ihsan), and professionalism (itqan) have proven more successful in recruiting new students. Specifically, these strategies are implemented through a real-time digital-based information system, ongoing public relations communications, and the implementation of distinctive Islamic flagship programs. The strategy, which integrates Islamic values into the framework of Karawang Regency, has successfully fostered a high level of public trust.

Conclusion. The implications of this study confirm that service management based on Islamic ethics provides a practical contribution as a superior strategic guide for educational institution managers in increasing competitiveness and sustainably fostering community loyalty. For future development, this study implies the need to institutionalize these Islamic values into standardized operating procedures (SOPs) and integrate them with digital customer relationship management (CRM) to anticipate more complex educational market shifts.

KEYWORDS

Educational Management, Islamic Perspective, New Students, Recruitment Strategy, Service Management

INTRODUCTION

In today's era of globalization, Islamic educational institutions are required to continuously adapt to the dynamics of changing times and the increasingly stringent competition between educational institutions. Educational

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service management is no longer viewed merely as a routine administrative activity but has shifted to become a strategic instrument that determines the sustainability of an institution (Fawzi et al., 2025). Excellent service quality is a key determinant in building trust and satisfaction among stakeholders, particularly parents and students (Zakaria et al., 2025). From an Islamic perspective, optimal service is not merely positioned as a managerial strategy but rather a concrete manifestation of devotion, worship, and a reflection of noble character (Mubarok et al., 2026). Islamic ethical principles such as honesty, kindness, and mutual assistance provide a solid philosophical foundation for achieving sustainable service satisfaction (Thalgi, 2024). Therefore, the integration of spiritual values and modern management professionalism is an urgent necessity for the existence of Islamic educational institutions (Nafik et al., 2025).

At the elementary and early childhood education levels, competition to attract new students is increasingly fierce and demands continuous innovation (Agustian et al., 2023). The growth of various basic educational institutions, both formal and non-formal, is currently experiencing rapid growth (Yang et al., 2026). Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (Islamic elementary schools), Islamic elementary schools, and early childhood education and Raudhatul Athfal (Islamic boarding schools) are competing to offer a variety of excellent programs (Edy et al., 2024). However, not all institutions are able to maintain a stable number of new students enrolling each year (Killmer et al., 2025). Some elementary-level institutions are experiencing a significant surge in enrollment, while others are facing a worrying decline in public interest (Alduraiddi et al., 2025). This situation indicates a clear disparity in management and the attractiveness of each institution.

The imbalance in student numbers between institutions in each region is significantly influenced by how each school manages its service units (Pronello, 2026). Urban communities in industrial areas are increasingly selective and critical in choosing the best educational institution for their children (Kumar et al., 2025). Parents not only look at the physical aspects of the school building but also assess the friendliness, speed of response, and comfort experienced from the beginning of the registration process (Kuhn, 2024). Unfortunately, awareness of the importance of systematic, excellent service management remains unequal among elementary and preschool administrators (Wu et al., 2025). Many institutions only realize the importance of a service strategy when the new student intake period begins (Tsao, 2025). As a result, the institution's potential for growth is hampered by a lack of trust and positive recommendations from the surrounding community (Aisyah et al., 2027).

Field observations of student enrollment performance in the East Karawang District indicate a clustering of management quality that directly impacts student growth rates. Based on periodic reviews of enrollment data, only a small number of institutions are able to achieve the superior category, with enrollment growth exceeding the regional average. Most other institutions remain in a developing position, with enrollment graphs tending to stagnate from year to year. In fact, several Islamic schools (madrasah) and Raudhatul Athfal have experienced a continuous decline, with student recruitment rates dropping between 10% and 25% below the district's minimum target. This situation is reinforced by internal evaluation reports, which indicate that the decline is due to weak staff responsiveness and a lack of information transparency. Therefore, this issue requires appropriate managerial management to maintain the continued existence of Islamic educational institutions in the region.

The focus of this research is the gap in the quality of educational service management, which has not been optimally integrated with Islamic values. Many elementary and preschool educational institutions in East Karawang District implement service strategies based solely on a general commercial approach. However, the primary characteristics of an Islamic educational institution lie

in the values of exemplary behavior, morality, and sincere service based on religious ethics. When these spiritual and professional aspects are not aligned, public trust in the institution's credibility will gradually decline. Therefore, a comprehensive service strategy is needed that combines the reliability of the administrative system with the noble values of Islam. This research aims to analyze how service governance based on Islamic ethics can provide a solution to this problem.

East Karawang is a sub-district characterized by a dynamic urban area with a high level of competition among Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, there is a marked variation in student enrollment success rates among institutions in the area. This research focuses on analyzing educational service management as a strategy for recruiting new students, examined in depth from an Islamic perspective. By establishing this specific focus and locus, the research is expected to capture the dynamics of service delivery authentically and in-depth from the perspectives of various administrators and parents.

Theoretically, the development of service quality in education is generally dominated by secular concepts such as the SERVQUAL model, which focuses on tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Dzakwan & Ubit, 2025). However, these general management theories often neglect the ethical-spiritual dimension, which is the primary foundation of the operation of Islamic educational institutions (Mazar et al., 2026). Public trust in the Islamic education ecosystem is determined not only by physical evidence and speed of service, but also by transparency based on the values of trust and brotherhood (Reghunadhan, 2020). Consequently, there is a discrepancy when madrasah administrators force the absolute application of modern management theories without aligning them with religious aspects (Syahbani, 2025). This study seeks to fill this theoretical gap by examining the relevance of the spiritual dimension in complementing existing service satisfaction indicators.

Empirically, previous studies on new student admission strategies have focused primarily on commercial marketing aspects and the effectiveness of promotional media (Aslan & Butabaeva, 2025). The reality on the ground shows that intensive promotion will not yield sustainable results if not balanced by an adequate daily service system (Budi et al., 2026). Most studies ignore how direct interaction, staff friendliness, and exemplary values in schools are key determinants of parents' school choices (Somboonvechakarn et al., 2022). Still, little research has explored in depth the impact of implementing values such as ta'awun, ihsan, and tabligh (property and service) on increasing community loyalty to Islamic schools. This research will comprehensively examine the gap between marketing practices in the field and the importance of ethical service values.

Studies on educational service management continue to experience rapid development, supported by various cutting-edge scientific findings. Qiao and Liang stated that the effectiveness of educational institution management is highly dependent on the principal's ability to coordinate all service activities to stakeholders (Qiao & Liang, 2026). On the other hand, Safrina and her friends emphasized that service quality is the main key in meeting customer expectations and maintaining organizational sustainability (Safrina et al., 2025). In the context of Islamic education, Rosidin and his colleagues emphasized the importance of integrating integrated quality management with moral values to create sustainable competitive advantage (Rosidin et al., 2025). Recent research by Trisnantari and colleagues on the island of Java shows that the reputation of the institution and the quality of public relations are the dominant factors influencing parents' decisions (Trisnantari et al., 2024). Meanwhile, Norman and his colleagues concluded that strengthening Islamic values as the spirit of school policy was proven to significantly increase the satisfaction and loyalty of stakeholders (Norman et al., 2025).

This study offers a novel approach through the development of an educational service model that fully integrates the modern SERVQUAL dimension and the Islamic spiritual-ethical dimension. The novelty of this research context lies in the utilization of local wisdom and Islamic values as a practical instrument to increase the attractiveness of institutions at the elementary and early childhood levels. Furthermore, this study formulates a new operational framework, called the Karawang framework, an acronym for indicators determining the success of new student admission strategies. This approach views service not only from a technical-operational perspective but also positions it as part of the mission of da'wah and worship. Through the integration of these various perspectives, a service management concept is produced that is more adaptive to the development of contemporary Islamic educational institutions.

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This study aims to analyze in depth how educational service management is implemented in Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) and Raudhatul Athfal in the East Karawang District. Furthermore, this study aims to explore the integration of Islamic values into the service governance of these institutions. It also aims to map the factors that determine success in attracting prospective new students. The findings of this study are aimed at providing concrete recommendations and practical guidance for educational institution managers in developing excellent service strategies. By achieving these objectives, it is hoped that an increase in service quality standards will be achieved evenly across all Islamic educational institutions in the Karawang region.

This research is crucial because it can provide significant theoretical contributions to the body of Islamic educational management scholarship, particularly regarding the development of a service model based on spiritual values. Practically, this study is crucial as an evaluation tool and strategic reference for school principals and foundation managers in optimizing new student enrollment. Furthermore, the findings of this study can assist policymakers at the regional level in designing more targeted programs to improve the competency of educational staff. The significance of this research also lies in its concrete efforts to restore the noble values of Islam as the primary spirit in the governance of educational institutions. Ultimately, this research is crucial for strengthening the competitiveness and public trust in the future of education for the Muslim generation in Indonesia.

RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This research uses a qualitative approach with an instrumental and collective case study design. This approach was chosen intentionally because the researcher aims to deeply understand the phenomenon of educational service management in an authentic context (Creswell, 2019). Through this type of research, the researcher can comprehensively explore how Islamic values are integrated into service management to attract new students. The case study design allows the researcher to capture the complexities and uniqueness of each educational institution (Yin, 2018).

Thus, the resulting data is not only descriptive but also provides a comprehensive understanding of managerial realities on the ground.

This research was conducted in 12 educational units spread across the East Karawang District, Karawang Regency. These locations included five Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) and seven Early Childhood Education (Raudhatul Athfal) institutions. These locations were selected based on the highly competitive nature of the institutions' recruitment of new students in the region. The research period lasted six months, from January to June 2025. This timeframe was considered ideal because it coincided with the new student admission process at each institution.

The subjects in this study were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on specific criteria determined by the researcher. These criteria included institutions having been operating for at least five years, having varied student enrollment growth, and having management openness to research. Based on these criteria, 12 elementary and early childhood education institutions were selected as formal research subjects. The research informants consisted of 47 individuals, consisting of school or madrasah principals, deputy principals for student affairs, administrative staff, early grade teachers, and parents. All informants were considered to possess rich and relevant information regarding service management practices in their respective institutions.

The research design employed an instrumental and collective qualitative case study. It is instrumental because the focus extends beyond understanding a single unique institution; rather, these cases serve as instruments to gain a deeper insight into the broader phenomenon of Islamic-based service management. Furthermore, a collective case study design was selected because this research was conducted across multiple educational units (12 institutions) with varied characteristics, allowing the researchers to compare, contrast, and ultimately construct a general, comprehensive pattern of Islamic educational service management (Sugiyono, 2023). Meanwhile, documentation techniques were used by collecting brochures, social media promotional materials, new student registration reports, and the institution's work programs.

The primary instrument in this qualitative research is the researcher herself, who acts as planner, implementer, collector, and data analyst. To ensure objectivity in the field, the researcher developed supporting instruments in the form of an in-depth interview guide, observation sheets, and documentation checklists. The interview guides were aimed at exploring the service dimensions and the implementation of Islamic values in institutional management. The observation sheets were used to systematically record service interactions and the prevailing atmosphere within the school (Moleong, 2019). With these structured instruments, the researcher was able to maintain the focus of data collection and ensure it remained relevant to the research objectives.

The data analysis technique used in this study follows the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana. Data analysis was conducted through four systematic, iterative stages: data condensation, data display, conclusion drawing, and verification. In the condensation stage, the researcher summarized, selected, and focused the raw data from interviews and field observations. The data was then presented in descriptive narratives and comparative tables to facilitate understanding of emerging patterns (Miles et al., 2014). The final stage was drawing credible conclusions and continuously verifying them throughout the research.

The validity of the data in this study was tested through the application of rigorous auditing techniques to ensure the credibility of the research findings. The researchers employed triangulation techniques, including source triangulation, method triangulation, and theory triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from interviews with the principal, teachers, and

parents. Method triangulation was achieved by comparing the results of direct field observations with written documents held by the institution (Sinaga, 2023). Furthermore, the researchers conducted member checking with key informants to ensure that the recorded data matched what the informants had conveyed.

The research implementation procedure consists of three main, systematically planned stages: the pre-fieldwork stage, the fieldwork stage, and the final data analysis stage. In the pre-fieldwork stage, the researcher developed the research design, obtained permits, and tested the research instruments. The fieldwork stage focused on data collection through participant observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation at 12 educational institutions. The final stage involved intensive data processing, data reduction, presentation of findings, and the preparation of a comprehensive research report (Murdiyanto, 2020). Through this structured series of procedures, the authenticity and scientific quality of this research can be reliably verified.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study, conducted at 12 elementary and early childhood education institutions in East Karawang District, indicate systematic variation in the implementation of service management. Based on the data collected, there is a clear distinction between institutions with structured service systems and those that remain reactive. Field findings indicate that key aspects influencing the success of new student recruitment include administrative governance, the quality of teaching staff competencies, and responsive communication. Furthermore, Islamic ethical values such as transparency, kindness, and teamwork are effectively integrated into daily service operations at superior institutions. The physical presence of the school and the religious atmosphere within the institution also contribute to determining attractiveness. Thus, the general pattern found indicates that successful new student recruitment is strongly influenced by the alignment between modern management professionalism and Islamic service ethics.

Implementation of Islamic Values in Service Management

Regarding administrative management, the study found that superior institutions consistently apply the principle of trustworthiness (*amanah*) throughout all stages of student admission. This principle is demonstrated through transparency regarding detailed tuition fees and registration procedures, with no hidden fees from prospective parents. The principal of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Al-Hidayah emphasized this by stating in an interview, “We always provide transparent cost details from the outset to prospective parents. This is part of the trust we must uphold.” Through this policy, the school strives to establish public accountability, both managerially and morally. This demonstrates that the value of honesty, implemented from the outset, has been effective in minimizing public doubts about the integrity of Islamic educational institution management.

From the statement above, it can be understood that financial transparency is a concrete manifestation of the principle of honesty firmly upheld by the institution’s management to alleviate public doubts. Descriptively, this information transparency serves as the initial foundation for a sense of security for prospective parents due to the absence of deliberately concealed details. Parents feel valued from the outset when the school clearly explains all details of their child’s learning needs without any data manipulation. This indirectly creates a positive perception that the institution is managed by responsible and trustworthy individuals. Therefore, accountability in financial administration at a superior institution is not merely the fulfillment of technical obligations, but rather a moral commitment that directly impacts the formation of public trust.

In addition to the principle of trustworthiness, the optimal application of the value of *ihsan*, or kindness, is also evident in the daily service interactions demonstrated by the registration officers.

This value is implemented through deep concern, such as providing responsive consultation services, comfortable waiting room facilities, and friendly staff. Based on observations, officers at the superior institution greet each guest with a sincere smile and provide detailed program explanations without appearing rushed. School documentation also shows the existence of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for service that require all staff to prioritize Islamic politeness. When prospective parents experience warmth and sincerity from the moment they first arrive, they will feel welcomed into the institution’s environment. Thus, this value of *ihsan* serves as an emotional bond between the school and the surrounding community.



Figure 1. New Student Admissions Services

From the observations and documentation above, it is clear that implementing the value of *ihsan* in service significantly improves the psychological well-being of prospective parents. The friendliness and courtesy demonstrated by admissions officers are not merely a marketing strategy, but a reflection of the noble morals taught in Islam. When schools are able to translate these values into concrete actions, the institution’s professionalism is naturally established in the eyes of the public. The comfort parents feel when consulting about their child’s educational needs narrows the communication gap between the school and the community. This allows prospective applicants to more effectively convey information about the school’s vision and mission. Therefore, implementing the value of *ihsan* has proven to be a crucial element in building harmonious partnerships from the beginning of the orientation period.

Table 1. Research Findings

Service Indicators	Focus / Subfocus	Field Implementation	Data Sources
Transparency & Accountability	Islamic Service Ethics (Amanah)	Preparation of a clear and transparent breakdown of PPDB costs	Interview with the Principal of Madrasah Ibtidaiyah (MI) Al-Hidayah and registration brochure
Responsiveness & Empathy	Excellent Service (Ihsan)	Quick consultation services via WhatsApp and home visits	Direct observation of the PPDB process and interviews with parents
Teamwork & Solidarity	Internal Management (Ta’awun)	Equitable division of PPDB committee duties among staff	Work program documents and interviews with the student affairs committee
Communication &	Da’wah &	Honestly disseminating	Promotional media

Outreach	Information (Tabligh)	advantages through brochures and social media	documentation study and management interviews
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Based on the table above, it can be understood that all research findings are divided into four main indicators that reflect the integration of Islamic values in service management. Each form of implementation in the field is supported by valid data obtained from various data collection instruments, including interviews, observations, and document studies. This table also shows that superior institutions have successfully translated spiritual concepts into concrete and measurable managerial actions to attract prospective students. By combining these various dimensions, the school is able to provide excellent service that meets parents' expectations. Thus, all aspects of service at this Islamic educational institution are not only administrative but also have religious value.

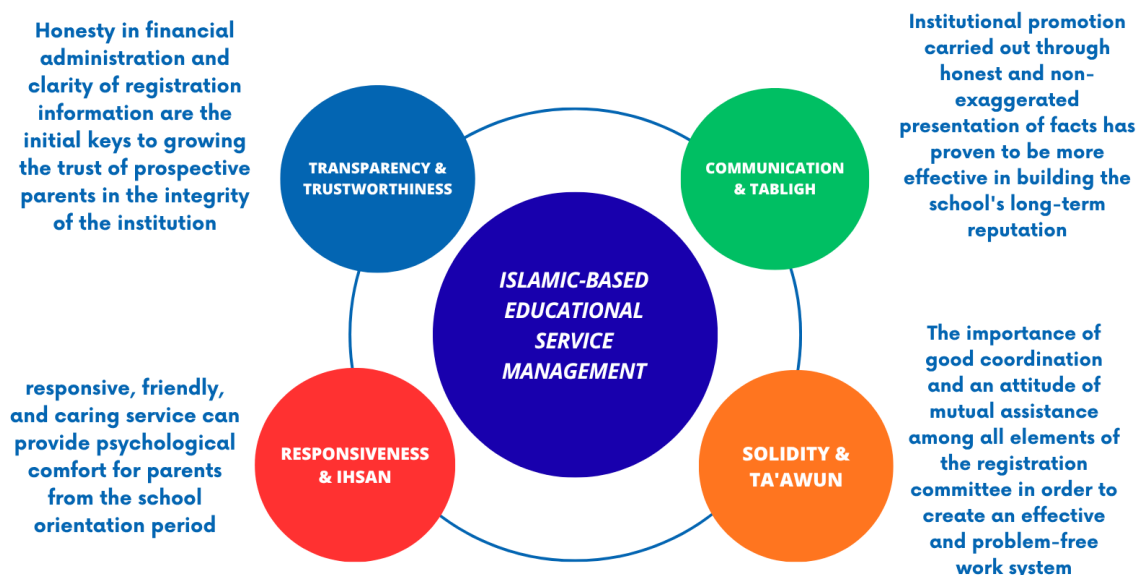


Figure 2. Islamic Education Service Management Framework Chart in Attracting New Students

Determining Factors for the Success of New Student Recruitment Strategies

The determining factor for the success of a new student recruitment strategy is closely linked to how systematically an institution grounds its operational services in Islamic ethics. Empirical data highlights a significant performance gap: institutions that adopt a comprehensive, Islam-based service excellence model experience a substantial average growth of 20% in new student enrollment. In comparison, schools with suboptimal or conventional administrative services face a recruitment deficit, with student enrollment falling approximately 15% below regional targets. This difference is driven by several key operational factors, including staff responsiveness, information clarity, and institutional trust.

The competence of educators is the factor most frequently considered by parents. Teachers' dedication to teaching and their ability to communicate politely are key factors attracting students when choosing an educational institution. This finding is supported by the testimony of one parent who stated, "Parents choose institutions based on the quality of the teachers they hear or witness directly." Testimonials from parents regarding the quality of teachers' teaching create a positive reputation that spreads widely through word of mouth within the community. School documentation also shows that leading institutions regularly hold pedagogical competency training and moral development for their teachers. This demonstrates that the reliability of human resources at a school plays a vital role in attracting new applicants.

Based on the interview results above, it is clear that teacher professionalism and competence in the public eye significantly influence community preferences in choosing a school. Parents' assessment of a school is highly dependent on how teachers interact with and demonstrate their commitment to educating their children. Positive testimonials from previous parents serve as a highly effective natural promotional tool for Islamic educational institutions. This demonstrates that teachers are not only responsible in the classroom but also serve as living representatives of the school's quality of service and reputation. Therefore, continuously improving teacher competence is a strategic step that directly impacts the sustainability of student enrollment each year.

The next determining factor identified in the field is the effectiveness of communication strategies that leverage the satisfaction of existing parents. Research shows that most new parents enroll their children after receiving positive recommendations from relatives or neighbors. Based on observations at several leading Islamic elementary schools, administrators actively facilitate regular forums between teachers and parents to maintain close relationships. Enrollment reports also note that the largest percentage of new enrollees come from recommendations from the families of active students. When parents are satisfied with the school's treatment of their children, they voluntarily become credible agents of information dissemination within their communities. Therefore, maintaining internal customer satisfaction has proven to be the most sustainable marketing strategy, outperforming both print and digital promotional media.

Based on the observations and document data above, it is clear that parental satisfaction is a key driver of educational institutions' marketing communications. Personal recommendations from fellow parents are considered more credible by prospective applicants than school brochures or banners. This demonstrates that a school's investment in improving the quality of daily services directly impacts long-term promotional success. The emotional closeness and mutual trust between the school and parents fosters strong loyalty to the institution. Therefore, schools do not need to incur significant marketing costs if they can maintain excellent service standards that satisfy existing parents.

The interconnectedness of field findings forms a broad, mutually supportive and inseparable pattern. The implementation of Islamic values in transparent administrative governance directly strengthens the initial trust of prospective parents. This trust is further bolstered by the parents' direct experience of the friendliness and responsiveness demonstrated by all school staff throughout the registration process. When parents are satisfied with the service and Islamic atmosphere, they voluntarily provide positive recommendations to the wider community through word of mouth. These recommendations ultimately boost the effectiveness of the new student recruitment program in subsequent years. Thus, all aspects of service, including administration, teacher competence, and Islamic ethical values, work synergistically to enhance the institution's attractiveness.

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DISCUSSION

This study found that the effectiveness of educational service management in attracting new students at Islamic Elementary Schools (Madrasah Ibtidaiyah) and Early Childhood Education (Raudhatul Athfal) in East Karawang District is largely determined by the integration of modern management professionalism and the strengthening of Islamic ethical values. This key finding indicates a prominent trend where institutions that combine the principles of openness (*amanah*) and caring (*ihsan*) successfully record a significant increase in enrollment. Conversely, institutions that rely solely on commercial promotion without reinforcing the value of daily service tend to experience stagnation in the number of new students. This pattern indicates that parental satisfaction with the religious atmosphere and the quality of interpersonal relationships are the primary attractions for Islamic educational institutions. Furthermore, the competence of educators, coupled with word-of-mouth communication, has proven to be the most powerful strategic instrument. Thus, the competitive advantage of Islamic educational institutions rests not only on physical reliability but also on the depth of implementation of spiritual values directly felt by the community.

In depth, this finding implies that educational services from an Islamic perspective are no longer viewed merely as administrative instruments but rather as a manifestation of morality and *da'wah* (Islamic outreach). This finding stems from a shift in the perspective of urban communities in East Karawang, who are increasingly selective and prioritize exemplary behavior in selecting elementary and early childhood schools. The process of building public trust occurs through parents' direct experiences with the fair, friendly, and responsive treatment demonstrated by all elements of the school. The uniqueness of this finding lies in the fact that religious values such as *amanah* (trustworthiness) and *ihsan* (goodwill) serve as a far stronger bond of loyalty than financing discount programs or luxurious physical facilities. Its significance is evident in the formation of a harmonious institutional atmosphere, which automatically radiates positive credibility to the external environment. Therefore, school administrators who are able to systematically integrate these spiritual values will receive ongoing moral support from the community.

The success of this new student recruitment process is greatly influenced by how the school translates the value of *ihsan* into concrete operational service standards. When admissions officers respond quickly and empathetically to prospective parents' questions, parents' psychological well-being is immediately established from the very beginning of the visit. Similarly, the implementation of the value of *amanah* (trustworthiness) through cost transparency directly alleviates community concerns about unexpected expenses. The uniqueness of this finding is also evident in the strong synergy between the satisfaction of active parents and their willingness to become volunteer promotional agents in their neighborhoods. The strong emotional connection between teachers, staff, and parents fosters a strong sense of belonging to the educational institution. Thus, the significance of this finding confirms that the most effective strategy for recruiting new students is optimizing the quality of daily services within the school itself.

The results of this study expand and support various service management theories and relevant studies previously developed by academics. The findings regarding the importance of parent satisfaction to organizational sustainability align with the SERVQUAL service quality theory by Suhartini, which emphasizes the dimensions of responsiveness and empathy as determinants of customer satisfaction (Suhartini, 2023). In the context of this study, these dimensions do not merely function as standard corporate mechanics, but are deeply contextualized into Islamic behavior. The dimension of *responsiveness*, for instance, manifests through the staff's swift, zero-complaint handling during admission cycles, driven by the prophetic value of *itqan* (professionalism). Similarly, *empathy* is operationalized not just as polite gestures, but through *ihsan* (compassionate

care), where school administrators provide personalized, non-discriminatory consultation to prospective parents regardless of their socio-economic backgrounds.

Furthermore, the results of this study support Aquino et al. argument that the effectiveness of educational institution management is highly dependent on the ability of school leadership to coordinate all service activities (Aquino et al., 2021). Nevertheless, this study provides a new contribution that complements Rosidin et al. study by proving that integrated quality management must be fully aligned with moral values to create a competitive advantage (Rosidin et al., 2025). These findings also reinforce the results of Ramadhan and Sarwono, which concluded that institutional reputation and the quality of public relations are dominant factors influencing parental decisions (Ramadhan & Sarwono, 2024). By incorporating the Islamic spiritual-ethical dimension, these findings successfully bridge the theoretical gap between secular management and contemporary Islamic educational management.

In the context of utilizing religious wisdom, the results of this study align with Kurniawan et al. view, which states that strengthening Islamic values as the foundation of school policy has been proven to significantly increase stakeholder loyalty (Kurniawan et al., 2024). These findings also confirm the study by Nisa, which asserted that organizational performance based on the principles of trust and good deeds will foster a much more stable level of public trust (Nisa, 2025). Conversely, the results of this study slightly correct or contradict several previous studies that overemphasize new student admission strategies on commercial promotion and the absolute use of digital media. Field data demonstrates that intensive promotion will not produce sustainable results if not balanced by an adequate daily service system. Thus, these findings enrich the literature on Islamic education management by offering a holistic service model that combines technical reliability with spiritual sincerity.

All the results discussed in this study have fully answered the research problem formulation and achieved the research objectives that were set from the beginning. The research question regarding the implementation of service management in Madrasah Ibtidaiyah/Elementary Schools and Early Childhood Education/Raudhatul Athfal in the East Karawang District area was answered through the findings of the distribution pattern of institutional service quality. The goal of exploring the process of integrating Islamic values in service governance was achieved by identifying the structured implementation of the principles of amanah and ihsan. In addition, mapping of the determining factors for success in recruiting new students has been described in depth through an analysis of educator competency and the effectiveness of parent-teacher communication. By achieving these objectives, this study successfully presents a complete and accurate portrait of managerial dynamics in the field in an authentic manner. Therefore, the draft service strategy resulting from this study can be used as a credible practical guide for educational institution managers.

The theoretical implications of this research provide a significant contribution to the development of Islamic educational management scholarship, particularly in formulating indicators for spiritually-based service delivery. Practically, the results of this study can serve as a strategic reference for school principals and foundation managers in developing school work programs that are more oriented toward customer satisfaction. For educators and educational staff, these findings emphasize the importance of improving pedagogical competence while strengthening the inculcation of Islamic morals in interactions. Furthermore, for policymakers at the regional level, this research provides a foundation for designing equitable service quality training programs for both private and public schools. These implications also emphasize the importance of curriculum integration that focuses not only on academic achievement but also on fostering a religious school

culture. Ultimately, the results of this study direct Islamic educational institutions to return to exemplary values as a primary instrument in maintaining organizational existence.

Despite producing comprehensive findings, this study still has limitations that need to be honestly acknowledged for the sake of future studies. The main limitation lies in the scope of the study area, which only covered one sub-district in East Karawang, so the results cannot necessarily be broadly generalized to other regions with different cultural characteristics. Furthermore, the focus of this study was limited to the perceptions of institutional administrators and parents, without in-depth inclusion of the views of external parties such as supervisors from relevant agencies. Based on these limitations, it is recommended that future researchers expand the research locus to a wider area to obtain richer data variations. Further research is also recommended to explore the influence of the use of Sharia-based information technology in the new student registration service system. Finally, future quantitative studies are recommended to statistically test the strength of the influence of each service dimension on parents' decisions in choosing an Islamic educational institution.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results, integrating Islamic values into educational service management at Madrasah Ibtidaiyah and Raudhatul Athfal in East Karawang District is highly effective for attracting new students. This recruitment process was optimized through amanah (openness) and ihsan (concern), backed by educator competence and word-of-mouth communication driven by parent satisfaction. Through an in-depth exploration of school service governance, this research successfully achieved its initial objectives. Scientifically, these findings contribute significantly to Islamic education management scholarship by formulating the "Amanah-Ihsan" Integrated Educational Service Model. This model advances contemporary scholarship by demonstrating that service quality metrics, such as responsiveness and assurance, must not operate purely on secular mechanics. Instead, they should be deeply anchored in prophetic ethics. This theoretical integration offers a distinct novelty by establishing a new paradigm where institutional competitiveness is structurally driven by spiritual accountability. Practically, the results provide strategic implications for institutional managers to strengthen a culture of excellent service as a primary instrument for maintaining organizational sustainability and public trust. To implement this model effectively, other Islamic educational institutions can adopt a three-tier practical strategy: first, institutionalizing amanah into real-time, digital-based financial and academic information dashboards to eliminate parental anxiety; second, training frontline staff to practice ihsan through personalized, non-discriminatory complaint-handling and consultation systems; and third, standardizing these values into formal Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) for annual student admission cycles. This research provides a foundation for future managerial recommendations and advises future researchers to expand the geographic scope to enrich managerial data.

DECLARATION OF AI AND AI ASSISTED TECHNOLOGIES IN THE WRITING PROCESS

During the preparation of this work, the author utilized ChatGPT (OpenAI) as an aid to improve the language quality, correct grammatical structure, and restructure paragraph flow to make it more systematic and understandable. However, all results generated through this assistance are not used directly without a thorough evaluation process. The author continues to critically review, in-depth revision, and validation of each section of the manuscript to ensure accuracy, consistency, and suitability for the writing objectives. Therefore, the entire content and final quality of the manuscript are entirely the author's responsibility.

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AUTHORS' CONTRIBUTION

Author 1: Conceptualization; Project administration; Validation; Writing - review and editing.

Author 2: Conceptualization; Data curation; In-vestigation.

DECLARATION OF COMPETING INTEREST

The author declares that I have no known financial conflicts of interest or personal relationships that could be construed as influencing the work reported in this article.

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