

Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Excellent Service Management in Educational Institutions: A Case Study of Sukma Bangsa School, Pidie

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ARTICLE INFO

Keywords: Service Excellence, Customer Satisfaction, Educational Management, Sukma Bangsa School

Received : 19, April

Revised : 20, May

Accepted: 30, June

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ABSTRACT

This study explores the implementation of excellent service management in improving customer satisfaction at Sukma Bangsa School in Pidie District. As educational institutions face increasing expectations from students and parents, delivering high-quality services has become essential. The research aims to examine how service excellence through teacher professionalism, effective communication, supportive infrastructure, and responsive administration contributes to stakeholder satisfaction. Using a qualitative descriptive approach, data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis. The findings reveal that the school has implemented structured programs focused on continuous teacher development, open communication with parents, and regular evaluations of service quality. The majority of stakeholders expressed satisfaction, particularly in the areas of teaching, facilities, and school responsiveness. However, challenges such as limited resources and the need for more frequent training remain. The study concludes that excellent service management significantly enhances customer satisfaction and institutional reputation. Recommendations include improving infrastructure, increasing stakeholder involvement, establishing a customer service unit, and seeking alternative funding sources. These measures are essential for sustaining quality and meeting evolving educational demands. This research contributes to the broader discourse on educational management and offers practical insights for schools aiming to improve service delivery and stakeholder trust.

INTRODUCTION

Education plays a crucial role in shaping human resources and advancing national development. Schools, as formal educational institutions, are tasked not only with providing academic instruction but also with fostering students' ability to face increasingly complex social and global challenges. In the era of educational service competition, schools are compelled to improve service quality to meet the expectations of students and parents as the primary stakeholders (Muhammad & Murtafiah, 2023).

Excellent service management, or service excellence, in schools involves a commitment to delivering optimal educational and administrative services that ensure customer satisfaction. According to Siregar et al. (2024), implementing excellent service enables educational institutions to enhance their reputation and maintain the trust of stakeholders. This study focuses on how such a management approach can be adopted to improve service quality and client satisfaction in Sukma Bangsa School, Pidie District, a well-regarded institution striving to meet these growing expectations.

Customer satisfaction in education is measured by the degree to which educational services meet or exceed student and parent expectations. As Ayuningtyas (2022) notes, satisfaction emerges when perceived performance aligns with or surpasses expectations. In the school context, this translates to responsive communication, quality teaching, efficient administrative processes, and supportive infrastructure. Schools that provide excellent service are more likely to attract new students, retain current ones, and gain positive public perception.

Despite the growing attention to service quality, many schools continue to face challenges in providing optimal services. These include limited resources, outdated facilities, insufficient training for educators, and inefficient administrative systems. To address these challenges, a comprehensive and systematic approach to managing educational services is required—one that prioritizes continuous improvement and active stakeholder engagement (Amiruddin, 2021). The present study seeks to analyse how excellent service management is implemented at Sukma Bangsa School and its effect on stakeholder satisfaction. By exploring strategic planning, professional development programs, resource allocation, and communication systems, the study aims to identify best practices and areas needing enhancement. In addition, it evaluates how routine feedback mechanisms such as satisfaction surveys inform continuous service improvement.

This research adopts a qualitative descriptive approach to provide an in-depth understanding of the phenomena within the real-life context of the school. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically and practically: enhancing the existing body of knowledge on educational management and providing actionable insights for school leaders and policy-makers. Ultimately, the study aims to demonstrate that implementing excellent service management is not merely an administrative necessity but a strategic imperative. Schools that successfully align their services with the needs and expectations of their clients can foster a positive educational experience,

improve learning outcomes, and sustain institutional growth in an increasingly competitive educational landscape (Setiawan et al., 2023).

LITERATURE REVIEW

The concept of management has evolved as a systematic process of planning, organizing, directing, and controlling organizational resources to achieve predetermined goals effectively and efficiently. In the educational context, management is central to ensuring that institutions operate in an orderly, goal-oriented, and sustainable manner. Sherly (2020) explains that educational management is a critical element in organizing school resources and activities to create an effective teaching and learning environment. The role of the school principal as the manager is especially crucial, as their leadership influences not only operational performance but also the overall quality of educational outcomes.

Excellent service management, or *pelayanan prima*, has become increasingly important in the education sector due to heightened expectations from stakeholders and the intensification of competition among schools. According to Mugianti (2018), excellent service refers to the commitment to deliver the best service that exceeds customer expectations and ensures satisfaction. In educational settings, this includes timely and transparent administration, responsive communication, supportive learning environments, and the continual professional development of teachers. Amiruddin (2021) emphasizes that professional management of educational services is essential in positioning a school competitively and sustainably in a dynamic educational market.

Customer satisfaction in schools reflects how well the educational institution meets or surpasses the expectations of its key clients: Students and their parents. Ayuningtyas (2022) defines satisfaction as the emotional response resulting from the comparison between expected and actual service performance. In the school context, satisfaction is achieved when students feel supported in their academic journey and parents perceive tangible progress and quality care in their children's education. Setiawan et al. (2023) further highlight that satisfaction is influenced by several key dimensions of service quality, including tangibility, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Research by Maryam (2024) revealed that inadequate facilities and lack of support services often hinder students' satisfaction in university-level education. Similarly, Rizka et al. (2020) found that in Al Azhar Syifa Budi Cibubur, high-quality service had a significant positive impact on parental satisfaction, whereas high pricing policies had a negative correlation. These findings reinforce the view that delivering quality services, maintaining reasonable costs, and ensuring strong customer relationships are vital strategies in sustaining client satisfaction in educational settings.

The importance of strategic service management is also underlined by Aryani and Najwa (2024), who argue that building a culture of service excellence requires institutional commitment, leadership responsiveness, and continuous evaluation. They suggest that consistent internal training,

communication improvement, and client feedback mechanisms can significantly boost customer satisfaction and institutional reputation. In school environments, this translates to regular teacher training, parental involvement, accessible communication channels, and infrastructure upgrades all of which contribute to service excellence. In sum, the literature demonstrates a strong correlation between service management and customer satisfaction in education. A school that adopts a proactive approach to managing its services not only through quality teaching but also through administrative efficiency, stakeholder engagement, and continuous feedback will be better positioned to meet the evolving needs of its clients. This body of literature forms the foundation for analyzing how service excellence is implemented at Sukma Bangsa School, and how it contributes to increasing stakeholder satisfaction.

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach, aiming to explore and understand the implementation of excellent service management in improving customer satisfaction at Sukma Bangsa School, Pidie District. The qualitative method was chosen to capture in-depth information directly from participants, with the goal of understanding their perspectives, experiences, and practices related to school management and service delivery.

Research Design

The research design is descriptive qualitative, emphasizing a naturalistic and holistic view of the phenomenon being studied. According to Creswell (2020), qualitative research seeks to understand the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The researcher acted as the primary instrument in collecting and interpreting the data, engaging directly with participants through interviews, observation, and documentation.

Research Site and Duration

The study was conducted at Sukma Bangsa School in Pidie District, a leading educational institution known for its emphasis on holistic learning and community engagement. The research was carried out over a period of four months, from December to February 2025, allowing the researcher sufficient time to collect, verify, and analyse data thoroughly. The selection of this school was based on accessibility, relevance to the research objectives, and the school's reputation for educational innovation.

Participants

Participants in this study included the principal, vice principals, teachers, and support staff at both junior and senior high school levels. The selection of participants was purposive, focusing on individuals who have direct roles in planning, implementing, and evaluating school services. These participants were chosen due to their involvement in decision-making and their insights into the quality-of-service delivery and customer satisfaction in the school context.

Data Collection Techniques

Three primary data collection techniques were used:

1. **Observation:** Direct observation of school activities and management practices related to service delivery. The researcher took field notes

during school routines, meetings, and interactions involving students and parents.

2. Interviews: Semi-structured interviews were conducted with school leaders and teachers. An interview guide was used to ensure consistency while allowing flexibility for participants to elaborate on relevant topics.
3. Documentation: Institutional documents such as school policies, customer feedback reports, meeting minutes, and training records were reviewed to support and triangulate findings from interviews and observations.

Credibility and Trustworthiness

To ensure the credibility of the research, several strategies were employed:

- Triangulation was used by comparing data from multiple sources and methods (interviews, observation, and documents).
- Member checking was conducted by sharing interpretations and summaries with participants to confirm accuracy.
- Prolonged engagement in the field and persistent observation helped the researcher gain a deeper understanding of the context and reduce biases.
- Audit trails were maintained through detailed documentation of the research process and decision-making steps.

Data Analysis

Data analysis followed the Miles and Huberman model, which includes three main components:

1. Data reduction: Summarizing, categorizing, and focusing on essential elements of the collected data.
2. Data display: Organizing data into visual formats such as tables or narrative matrices to facilitate understanding.
3. Conclusion drawing and verification: Identifying themes, patterns, and insights that respond to the research questions, followed by verifying these findings through comparison with existing literature and feedback from participants.

This methodology allowed the researcher to explore the phenomenon comprehensively, providing rich, contextual insights into how excellent service management is practiced at Sukma Bangsa School to improve stakeholder satisfaction.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings of this study are based on observations, interviews, and document analysis conducted at Sukma Bangsa School, Pidie District. The results are organized around four key components: program implementation, service strategies, organizational structure and supervision, and challenges in managing excellent services.

Implementation of Excellent Service Programs

The school has implemented structured programs that aim to enhance communication between stakeholders, upgrade teaching quality, and improve the learning environment. Both school principals (SMP and SMA) emphasized

that the programs are discussed and evaluated regularly. Teachers receive continuous professional development, and technology integration is actively promoted in classrooms. Regular meetings are held to assess progress and incorporate feedback from students and parents.

Strategies to Improve Customer Satisfaction

Key strategies identified include proactive parent engagement, responsive administration, and diverse extracurricular offerings. The school actively collects customer feedback through surveys, which guide adjustments to school policies and programs. Communication tools like newsletters and online platforms are used to ensure parents are informed and involved.

Organization and Supervision

The management of excellent service is systematically organized with clear role distribution. Leadership is distributed among the principal, vice principals, and administrative heads. Supervision is conducted through regular internal evaluations, monthly performance reviews, and feedback mechanisms. Budget allocations are also strategically managed to support infrastructure development and service quality.

Challenges in Service Management

Despite the school's strong commitment to service quality, several challenges were identified: limited funding for infrastructure development, the need for more frequent teacher training, and the pressure of adapting quickly to curriculum changes. These constraints, while being addressed progressively, still pose significant hurdles to optimal service delivery.

Survey Results and Analysis

A customer satisfaction survey was conducted among parents and students to assess perceptions across five key service areas: teacher professionalism, communication, facilities, administrative services, and extracurricular programs.

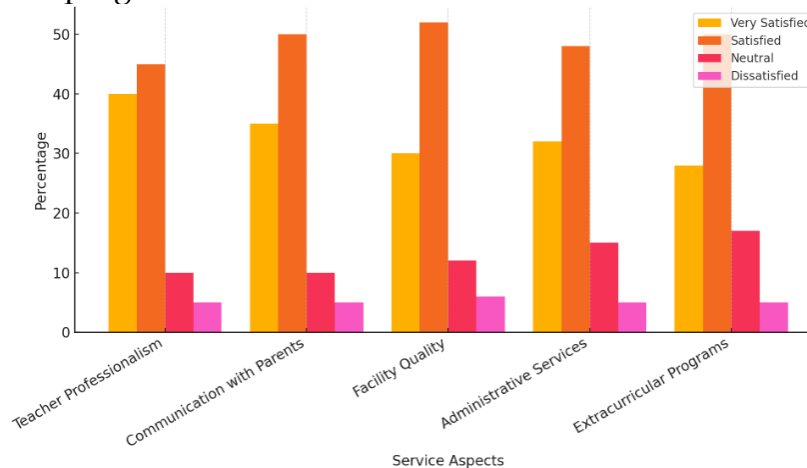


Figure 1. Customer Satisfaction Survey Results at Sukma Bangsa School

The survey revealed several key insights into customer satisfaction at Sukma Bangsa School (Figure 1). A significant proportion of respondents, approximately 40%, expressed that they were very satisfied with the professionalism of teachers. This was followed by high levels of satisfaction in

school communication systems (35%) and the quality of school facilities (30%), highlighting these as areas of strength in the institution's service delivery.

Moreover, the satisfied category dominated across all measured service aspects, with percentages ranging from 45% to 52%. This suggests that while there is room for improvement to reach the "very satisfied" benchmark, the majority of stakeholders still view the school's services positively and consistently.

In contrast, neutral and dissatisfied responses were minimal across all categories, with none exceeding 17% and most remaining below 10%. This overall distribution indicates a strong level of satisfaction among parents and students, validating the school's continuous efforts in maintaining and enhancing its service excellence.

The results of this study highlight the importance of implementing excellent service management in improving stakeholder satisfaction in educational institutions. At Sukma Bangsa School, the integration of quality teaching, effective communication, responsive administration, and supportive facilities has been crucial in meeting the needs of both students and parents. These findings are in line with previous research which suggests that service excellence is a significant determinant of customer satisfaction in education (Siregar et al., 2024; Ayuningtyas, 2022).

One of the most notable findings is the high level of satisfaction with teacher professionalism. This supports the argument by Fadhli (2021) that the competency of educational personnel, especially teachers, is central to achieving educational goals and stakeholder trust. When teachers are well-trained and professionally developed, they can deliver engaging, effective, and meaningful instruction, which significantly enhances the learning experience of students.

The role of communication also emerged as a vital factor. The school's initiative to maintain regular interaction with parents, through meetings and feedback surveys, aligns with the model of participative educational management emphasized by Amiruddin (2021). He explains that open, two-way communication between schools and stakeholders fosters mutual understanding, encourages collaboration, and ultimately enhances satisfaction and trust in the institution.

In terms of facilities, the positive response from parents and students demonstrates that physical infrastructure and learning environments remain a core element of perceived service quality. This is consistent with Maryam's (2024) findings, which highlight that access to adequate learning resources, such as multimedia equipment, comfortable classrooms, and reliable technology, strongly influence learners' satisfaction and motivation.

However, despite these strengths, the study also reveals challenges that hinder optimal service management, particularly limited resources and the need for continuous staff development. These issues are commonly reported in educational service research. For instance, Rizka et al. (2020) found that even when schools deliver high-quality services, constraints such as inadequate funding and insufficient training can diminish the overall service experience if not addressed strategically. The school's use of routine evaluation and feedback

systems to adjust its programs reflects an adaptive management style that is both reflective and responsive. According to Setiawan et al. (2023), such practices are essential in a competitive educational environment, as they allow institutions to identify gaps, enhance service strategies, and maintain a customer-focused approach.

Overall, the findings support the notion that excellent service management in schools is not limited to teaching alone but extends across communication, infrastructure, leadership, and responsiveness. When implemented systematically, it can significantly elevate stakeholder satisfaction and institutional reputation. As competition among educational institutions continues to grow, schools must prioritize continuous improvement, innovation, and service personalization to meet evolving expectations.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study set out to explore the implementation of excellent service management at Sukma Bangsa School in Pidie District and its impact on customer satisfaction, particularly among students and parents. The findings reveal that the school has made significant efforts in enhancing service delivery through effective communication, professional teacher development, improved infrastructure, and routine feedback mechanisms. These initiatives have led to generally high levels of satisfaction among stakeholders, confirming the value of service excellence as a strategic approach in educational management.

Key elements contributing to customer satisfaction include the professionalism of teachers, responsive administrative services, and the consistent involvement of parents in school activities. The school's leadership has also demonstrated a proactive attitude in addressing stakeholder needs through structured programs and regular evaluations. However, the study also identified challenges, such as limited funding and the need for more frequent staff training, which may impede sustained service quality if not managed effectively.

Overall, the study concludes that excellent service management is vital for maintaining stakeholder trust and improving educational outcomes. Schools that prioritize quality services, communication, and adaptability are more likely to enhance their reputation and remain competitive in the education sector. Based on the findings of this research, several recommendations are proposed to support the continuous improvement of service management at Sukma Bangsa School. First, the school should strengthen continuous professional development by investing more in regular training for teachers and staff. This is essential to ensure that educators remain current with the latest pedagogical practices, communication strategies, and service delivery models. Enhancing the professional capacity of staff will not only improve the quality of instruction but also elevate overall service interactions with stakeholders.

Second, there is a need to enhance infrastructure and learning facilities. Although current resources have contributed positively to stakeholder satisfaction, periodic updates and the integration of modern educational technology are necessary to align with the dynamic demands of 21st-century

learning environments. Upgrading physical and digital infrastructure can enrich the learning experience and reinforce the school's commitment to excellence. Third, the school is encouraged to establish a customer service unit or coordinator. Appointing a dedicated individual or team to manage service quality and handle stakeholder feedback could streamline communication channels and ensure that issues are addressed promptly and effectively. This role would serve as a bridge between the school and its clients, fostering stronger relationships and improved responsiveness.

Fourth, it is recommended to increase stakeholder involvement in planning. Greater participation from parents and students in school program development can ensure that institutional initiatives are relevant, inclusive, and reflective of the community's needs. Collaborative planning not only builds trust but also enhances the sense of ownership among stakeholders.

Fifth, to overcome budgetary limitations, the school should seek alternative funding sources. Exploring partnerships with private entities, applying for educational grants, or initiating community-based fundraising efforts can provide additional financial support for service enhancement projects.

Lastly, the school should monitor and evaluate service performance regularly. Maintaining consistent feedback mechanisms such as surveys, interviews, and performance reviews will help identify gaps and measure the effectiveness of implemented strategies. A culture of continuous evaluation promotes transparency and accountability while enabling timely improvements. By implementing these recommendations, Sukma Bangsa School can further enhance its management of excellent service, maintain high levels of stakeholder satisfaction, and contribute to the broader goal of educational excellence and institutional sustainability.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

I would like to express my deepest gratitude to the leadership, teachers, and staff at Sukma Bangsa School in Pidie for their willingness to participate and share insights that greatly enriched this study. Special appreciation is extended to the Postgraduate Program of Educational Administration at Universitas Syiah Kuala for providing the academic environment and support needed to carry out this research.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so further research is still needed on this topic "Enhancing Customer Satisfaction through Excellent Service Management in Educational Institutions: A Case Study of Sukma Bangsa School, Pidie".

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