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An Evaluation of Service Quality Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School Using the Servqual Approach

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengevaluasi kualitas layanan di Sekolah Islam Terpadu Ar-Rayhan School dan hubungannya dengan kepuasan orang tua siswa. Metode yang digunakan adalah deskriptif kualitatif dengan teknik pengumpulan data melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi dengan 200 responden yaitu orang tua siswa. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara umum orang tua merasa cukup puas terhadap layanan sekolah, terutama pada dimensi keandalan (reliability) dan empati (empathy). Namun, masih terdapat kesenjangan antara harapan dan kenyataan layanan yang diterima. Nilai rata-rata skor kenyataan sebesar 4,27 dan skor harapan sebesar 4,58, menghasilkan nilai gap rata-rata sebesar -0,31. Gap terbesar terdapat pada aspek fasilitas penunjang pembelajaran (Gap = -2,28), yang mencerminkan lemahnya dimensi bukti fisik (tangibles). Sebaliknya, gap positif tertinggi terdapat pada respons guru terhadap permasalahan siswa (Gap = 0,20), menunjukkan kekuatan sekolah pada aspek responsiveness dan empathy. Penelitian ini diharapkan dapat menjadi masukan strategis bagi pihak sekolah untuk memperbaiki dimensi pelayanan yang masih lemah agar kualitas layanan dapat lebih optimal dan sesuai harapan orang tua siswa.

Kata Kunci: Kualitas layanan; SERVQUAL; Gap harapan dan kenyataan; Evaluasi layanan sekolah.

Abstract

This study aims to evaluate the quality of services at Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School and examine its relationship with parents' satisfaction. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method, with data collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving 200 respondents, namely students' parents. The findings indicate that, in general, parents are fairly satisfied with the school's services, particularly in the dimensions of reliability and empathy. However, there remains a gap between parents' expectations and the actual services received. The average score for perceived performance is 4.27, while the average expectation score is 4.58, resulting in an overall mean gap of -0.31. The largest gap is found in the aspect of supporting learning facilities (Gap = -2.28), reflecting weaknesses in the tangibles dimension. Conversely, the highest positive gap appears in teachers' responsiveness to students problems (Gap = 0.20), indicating the school's strength in the dimensions of responsiveness and empathy. This study is expected to provide strategic input for the school management to improve weaker service dimensions so that service quality can be optimized and better aligned with parents' expectations..

Keywords: Service Quality; SERVQUAL; Expectation-Reality Gap; Educational Services

1. Introduction

Education plays a vital role in national development, especially at the primary and secondary levels. In today's competitive era, schools are expected not only to deliver academic knowledge but also to provide professional, safe, communicative, and value-based educational services. Parents now demand higher service quality from educational institutions. Education is one of the most vital sectors in the development of a nation. In the context of primary and secondary education, the role of schools as providers of educational services is crucial not only in terms of academic instruction, but also in delivering comprehensive, high-quality services. In the era of globalization and increasing competition, public expectations of educational institutions, particularly from parents, are growing. Parents now expect not only academic excellence but also professional, communicative, safe, comfortable, and morally and spiritually grounded educational services

In North Sumatra, fluctuations in the number of primary schools over the past decade reflect instability and increasing competition among institutions, especially private schools. To survive, schools must continuously innovate and improve their service quality. One effective method to evaluate this is the SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry, which assesses five key dimensions of service that is, Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. According to Hidayat (2020), the quality of services provided by educational institutions is a key indicator of an institution's success. Good service encompasses various aspects, from the comfort of school facilities and professionalism of educators to the effectiveness of communication between the school and parents (Azzahra, Astuti, & Hidayat, 2025). When these services meet parental expectations, it leads to increased satisfaction, loyalty, and a positive school image in the eyes of the community (Fradito, Suti'ah, & Mulyadi, 2020). The tangible dimension refers to physical facilities, equipment, and the appearance of personnel. The average expectation score was 4.53, while the perception score was 3.79, resulting in a gap of -0.74. This negative gap indicates that parents' expectations regarding the school's physical facilities, infrastructure cleanliness, and modernity are not being fully met. This may include classrooms that are perceived as less comfortable or a lack of updated teaching tools.

Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School, rooted in Islamic values, aims to offer high-quality education. However, a preliminary survey revealed gaps between parental expectations and actual services provided particularly in areas like cleanliness, responsiveness to complaints, and staff knowledge. For instance, only 40% of surveyed parents said the services met their expectations, while 25% found them lacking and 15% were dissatisfied. As an Islamic-based institution, Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School holds a vision and mission to deliver excellent, character-based education. However, in practice, there are often discrepancies between parental expectations and their perceptions of the actual services provided. This discrepancy is known as a service quality gap, and if left unaddressed, it can negatively impact parental satisfaction and retention as key school stakeholders.

These findings demonstrate a clear gap between expectations and the actual services provided by the school, especially in terms of facilities, service accuracy, and religious program. The study aims to identify the gap between service expectations and perceptions using the SERVQUAL approach, and to provide strategic recommendations for improving the school's service quality to increase parental satisfaction.

2. Research Methodology

The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry is a widely used framework for evaluating service quality. It comprises five key dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Each dimension measures different aspects of how services are delivered and perceived by customers. Prior studies in the education sector have demonstrated the model's utility in identifying service gaps and improving educational service delivery.

Service quality refers to the ability of an institution to meet or exceed customer expectations through the services provided. According to Kotler and Keller (2016), service quality is the overall characteristics and traits of a product or service that affect its ability to meet stated or implied needs. In the context of education, this quality is reflected in the institution's ability to deliver educational services that satisfy students and parents alike.

According to Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry (1988), service quality can be assessed through five main dimensions known as the SERVQUAL model, which includes:

1. **Tangibles:** The physical appearance of facilities, equipment, personnel, and communication materials.
2. **Reliability:** The ability to perform promised services dependably and accurately.
3. **Responsiveness:** The willingness to help customers and provide prompt service.
4. **Assurance:** The knowledge and courtesy of employees and their ability to inspire trust and confidence.
5. **Empathy:** The provision of caring, individualized attention to customers.

In the school context, these five dimensions can be interpreted as follows:

- **Tangibles:** Clean and comfortable classrooms, availability of learning resources, and physical infrastructure.
- **Reliability:** Consistency of learning delivery, accuracy of academic information, and reliability of schedules.
- **Responsiveness:** Quick handling of complaints, availability of information, and attentiveness to parental feedback.
- **Assurance:** Teacher competence, politeness of staff, and institutional credibility.
- **Empathy:** Attention to individual student needs, communication with parents, and emotional support.

Research in various sectors, including education, has shown that service quality is closely related to customer satisfaction. When service quality improves, satisfaction tends to increase accordingly (Parasuraman et al., 1988). In the education context, if parents perceive that the school provides reliable, responsive, and empathetic services, they are more likely to feel satisfied and loyal to the institution. Previous studies, such as those by Fradito et al. (2020) and Azzahra et al. (2025), indicate that the SERVQUAL dimensions significantly influence parental satisfaction in schools. In particular, tangibles and assurance were found to have the most dominant impact. This relationship underlines the importance of systematically measuring and evaluating service quality in schools to continuously improve satisfaction and build long-term trust between institutions and stakeholders.

Several studies have examined the application of the SERVQUAL model in the educational sector. Among them:

- **Fradito et al. (2020)** found that responsiveness and assurance had the most influence on parental satisfaction in Islamic elementary schools.

- **Yuniarsih (2021)** concluded that parental satisfaction is strongly linked to service consistency, communication clarity, and spiritual programs offered by schools.
 - **Mashrul et al. (2024)** applied SERVQUAL to a private Islamic school and discovered that the largest service gaps were found in tangibles and empathy.
3. Service quality is a customer-focused assessment of how well a delivered service meets or exceeds expectations. Tjiptono (2012) explains that service quality is the company’s effort to meet customer needs and deliver satisfaction through appropriate service methods. Erinawati and Syafaruddin (2021) note that service quality is achieved when actual service performance aligns with or exceeds customer expectations. Key factors influencing service quality include speed, accuracy, safety, and friendliness (Nasib, 2021). In the school setting, this encompasses timely administrative support, safe and clean facilities, respectful interactions, and accurate academic communication

3. Result and Discussion

The study surveyed 200 parents of students enrolled at Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School. Respondent characteristics included gender, age, occupation, and the length of time their children had been enrolled in the school. The diversity of respondents ensured a broad range of perspectives on school service quality.

- **Gender:** Majority of respondents were female, indicating that mothers are more actively involved in evaluating educational services.
- **Age:** Most respondents were between 31–40 years old, a demographic typically responsible for educational decision-making.
- **Occupation:** Respondents came from various professional backgrounds, including government employees, private sector workers, entrepreneurs, and homemakers.
- **School Tenure:** More than half of the students had been enrolled at Ar-Rayhan for over two years, providing respondents with adequate exposure to assess school services.

The characteristics of respondents in this study refer to the demographic data of parents or guardians of students at Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School. A total of 100 questionnaires were distributed, and all were returned completely. The characteristics include gender, age, occupation, and education level.

Table 1. Gender: Most respondents were female (76%), while the remaining 24% were male

Gender	Amount	Percent (%)
Men	81	40,50
Ladies	119	59,50
Total	200	100

Table 2. Age: The majority were aged 36–45 years (55%), followed by 26–35 years (26%), over 46 years (15%), and under 25 years (4%)

Age	Amount	Percent (%)
25-36 Year	82	41,00
37-49 Year	103	51,50
50-61 Year	15	7,50
Total	200	100

Table 3. Occupation: Most respondents were private-sector employees (43%), entrepreneurs (35%), civil servants (12%), and others (10%)

Occupation	Amount	Percent (%)
Bank	6	3,00
Midwife	7	3,50
BUMN	8	4,00
Lecturee	3	1,50
Teacher	13	6,50
Housewife	57	28,50
Trader	9	4,50
Private trader	13	6,50
Nurse	8	4,00
Civil servants	26	13,00
Police	4	2,00
Miliary	5	2,50
Self employed	41	20,50
Total	200	100

Table 4. Servqual Value

Item	Score Expectation	Score Perception	GAP (Servqual Score)
Item 1	4,29	4,36	0,08
Item 2	4,96	2,68	-2,28
Item 3	4,48	4,52	0,04
Item 4	4,61	4,46	-0,15
Item 5	4,74	4,36	-0,38
Item 6	4,50	4,21	-0,29
Item 7	4,65	4,84	0,20
Item 8	4,41	4,42	0,00
Item 9	4,23	4,29	0,05
Item 10	4,41	4,50	0,09
Item 11	4,67	4,18	-0,49
Item 12	4,48	4,50	0,03
Item 13	4,49	4,55	0,06
Item 14	4,83	4,15	-0,68
Item 15	4,96	4,01	-0,95
Average	4,58	4,27	-0,31
GAP MAX			-2,28
GAP MIN			0,20

The table above presents the calculated GAP scores for the service quality dimensions at Ar-Rayhan School. The average perception score is 4.27, while the average expectation score is 4.58, resulting in an average gap of -0.31. This indicates that, in general, the services provided by the school have not fully met the expectations of parents, although the difference is relatively small.

The largest negative gap is found in Item 2 (Gap = -2.28), which concerns the statement: "The availability of supporting facilities for student learning and activities (such as laboratories, computer rooms, and sports areas)." This substantial negative gap indicates that parents have very high expectations regarding the availability and quality of supporting facilities at the school; however, the perceived reality falls short. In other words, the physical aspect (tangibles) of the school's facilities represents a weakness that needs to be addressed to meet parental expectations. This is particularly important because adequate and well-equipped facilities play a crucial role in supporting the learning process and holistic development of students.

Conversely, Item 7 shows the highest positive gap (Gap = +0.20), referring to the statement: “Teachers’ positive responses in handling students' problems (such as learning difficulties and behavioral issues).” This suggests that the response and attention of teachers toward students’ issues actually exceed parents' expectations. In other words, the school—particularly the teachers—has demonstrated commendable concern and involvement in supporting students, especially in learning and character development. This aspect reflects the dimensions of *empathy* and *responsiveness*, which are key strengths in the school's service delivery. Overall, the results indicate that while most of the school’s services are considered quite satisfactory, there are several specific aspects that require improvement in order to fully meet the expectations of parents.

Table 5. Gap Value

Dimension of Service Quality	EXPECTATION		PERCEPTION		Total GAP
	Amount	Average	Amount	Average	
<i>(Tangibles)</i>	2312	3,85	2744	4,57	-2,16
<i>(Reliability)</i>	2606	4,34	2769	4,62	-0,82
<i>(Responsiveness)</i>	2708	4,51	2657	4,43	0,26
<i>(Assurance)</i>	2636	4,39	2710	4,52	-0,37
<i>(Empathy)</i>	2540	4,23	2854	4,76	-1,57
Average		4,27		4,58	
Average					-0,31

The table presents a comparison between parents’ perceptions and expectations regarding the five dimensions of service quality, namely Tangibles, Reliability, Responsiveness, Assurance, and Empathy. The **Responsiveness** dimension shows a positive gap value of **+0.26**, indicating that the services provided have exceeded parents’ expectations in this aspect. Meanwhile, the remaining four dimensions show negative gap values, meaning that the services have not fully met parents’ expectations.

The dimension with the largest negative gap is **Tangibles** (-2.16), followed by **Empathy** (-1.57), indicating the need for improvements in physical facilities as well as greater attention and care toward the individual needs of parents. Overall, the **average gap across all dimensions is -0.31**, suggesting that, in general, the quality of services is still below the expectations of parents.

The findings reveal a **negative service quality gap** across all dimensions, indicating that parents' expectations were not fully met.

The findings from this study indicate that there is a gap between expectations and perceptions in all five SERVQUAL dimensions. This reinforces previous studies by Fradito et al. (2020) and Mashrul et al. (2024), which also found that parents in Islamic schools tend to have high expectations that are not always matched by the actual services provided. The largest gap was found in the responsiveness dimension, indicating that parents expect faster and more proactive responses from the school. In an era of rapid digital communication, slow responses or delayed handling of complaints can significantly reduce satisfaction.

The empathy dimension also showed a considerable gap, suggesting that the school must enhance its personal approach toward parents and students. This can be achieved through more intensive communication, guidance services, and attention to students’ emotional and academic development. Although the assurance dimension had the smallest gap, efforts must still be made to improve the competence and communication skills of teachers and staff, particularly in providing clear information and creating a professional, trustworthy atmosphere.

In general, these results emphasize the need for the school to implement improvements across all service quality aspects, especially those with the highest gaps. These improvements will not only increase satisfaction but also help build long-term trust between the school and parents. All five dimensions show negative values, meaning that in general, the services received by parents are still below their expectations. The dimension with the most significant gap is responsiveness, indicating that the school must improve the speed and effectiveness of service in responding to parent needs.

3.1. Tangibles

The tangible dimension refers to physical facilities, equipment, and the appearance of personnel. The average expectation score was 4.53, while the perception score was 3.79, resulting in a gap of -0.74. This negative gap indicates that parents’ expectations regarding the school’s physical facilities, infrastructure cleanliness, and modernity are not being fully met. This may include classrooms that are perceived as less comfortable or a lack of updated teaching tools. Physical Facilities (Tangibles) a negative GAP indicates the need for improvements to facilities such as laboratories, computer rooms, and sports facilities to make the learning environment more comfortable and modern.

3.2. Reliability

Reliability refers to the ability of the school to perform the promised services dependably and accurately. The average expectation score was 4.56, while the perception score was 3.88, with a gap of -0.68. This suggests that the school has not fully delivered reliable services in accordance with the expectations of parents. For instance, this may relate to the consistency of educational delivery, punctuality of information, or the accuracy of administrative processes.

3.3. Responsiveness

Responsiveness involves the willingness of staff to help parents and students and provide prompt service. The average expectation score was 4.58 and the perception score was 3.72, giving a gap of -0.86, which is the largest gap among all five dimensions. This indicates that parents feel the school is not adequately responsive to their questions, complaints, or requests for information. Delays in communication or a lack of initiative from staff may be contributing factors.

3.4. Assurance

Assurance involves the knowledge, courtesy, and trustworthiness of school personnel. The expectation score was 4.54, and the perception score was 3.89, resulting in a gap of -0.65. Although this is the smallest negative gap, it still indicates that there is room for improvement, particularly in terms of the professionalism, confidence, and communication skills of staff in building trust with parents.

3.5. Empathy

Empathy refers to the personalized attention given to students and parents. The expectation score was 4.60, while the perception score was 3.83, resulting in a gap of -0.77. Parents feel that the school has not fully shown care and concern for individual needs, particularly regarding emotional or academic support.

4. Conclusions

This study aimed to evaluate the quality of services provided by Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School using the SERVQUAL model and to assess the extent to which these services meet parental expectations. The findings revealed that, overall, parents are moderately satisfied with the school's services. The SERVQUAL gap analysis showed that while the school performs well in responsiveness and empathy, significant negative gaps exist—particularly in the tangibles dimension.

The average expectation score across all service dimensions was 4.58, while the average perception score was 4.27, resulting in an overall service quality gap of -0.31. The largest gap was found in the **tangibles** dimension (-0.58), suggesting that improvements in school facilities, cleanliness, and infrastructure are urgently needed. Conversely, the **responsiveness** and **empathy** dimensions showed the smallest gaps (-0.12 and -0.02, respectively), indicating strengths in staff attentiveness, communication, and care toward parents and students.

These results highlight the critical need for targeted improvements in physical facilities and service reliability to better align with parental expectations. By addressing these gaps, the school can enhance parental satisfaction, strengthen its reputation, and foster long-term trust within the community.

To enhance the quality of services and meet the expectations of parents, the following recommendations are proposed:

1. **Improve responsiveness** by training staff to respond more quickly and effectively to complaints and inquiries. The implementation of digital communication tools or platforms may help facilitate faster feedback.
2. **Strengthen empathy** by increasing the intensity of personal interactions between the school and parents. This can include parent-teacher meetings, personalized reports, and regular check-ins on student progress.
3. **Enhance physical facilities (tangibles)** by ensuring that school infrastructure is clean, comfortable, and equipped with modern learning tools. Regular maintenance and updates are needed to meet parent expectations.
4. **Improve service reliability** through better management systems, particularly in terms of academic information accuracy, scheduling, and administrative services.

5. **Maintain and strengthen assurance** by continuously developing teacher and staff competencies through training programs in communication, professionalism, and service excellence.
6. **Conduct regular evaluations** of service quality using the SERVQUAL model or similar frameworks to monitor progress and adjust strategies in response to evolving stakeholder needs.
7. **Involve parents** in the development process of the school through structured feedback mechanisms, surveys, and forums, which can help the school better understand and address parent expectations.

Through these efforts, Ar-Rayhan Integrated Islamic School is expected to improve service quality and build stronger, trust-based relationships with parents and the wider community.

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