



The Principal's Role in Implementing Excellent Service at Madrasah

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Abstract

This study aims to analyse the role of the school principal in implementing excellent service at MTs N 8 Sleman by integrating the excellent service concept based on the A3 approach (Attitude, Attention, Action) and A6 principles (Attitude, Attention, Action, Competence, Appearance, Responsibility). A qualitative descriptive method was employed through observation, interviews, and documentation to illustrate how the principal enhances school community satisfaction and manages Islamic education. The results show that the principal demonstrates a friendly and professional attitude, sincerely attends to the needs of the school community, and takes swift, precise, and effective actions. These efforts have positively impacted the school's image and student learning motivation. Furthermore, the principal assumes full responsibility for maintaining a transparent and accountable excellent service. The implementation of excellent service rooted in A3 and A6 serves as an innovative managerial model, strengthening the Islamic education system in the modern era.

Keywords: Madrasah, Ministry of Religious Affairs, Prima Service, School Principal Role.

PRELIMINARY

Excellent service is the main concept promoted in various Ministries of Religion, including in the management of Islamic education (Afriani, 2019). The A3 approach (Attitude, Attention, Action) emphasises the importance of a friendly attitude, genuine concern, and responsive actions in providing services to the school community. Principle A6 (Attitude, Attention, Action, Ability, Appearance, Responsibility) complements the service dimension with professional ability, a representative appearance, and full responsibility as the principal's moral and administrative guidelines.

Excellent service is an important concept in educational management that is oriented towards optimally fulfilling the needs and expectations of school residents (Yaqien, 2017). Improving the quality of services in madrasahs, particularly in junior high schools (MTs), presents both a challenge and an opportunity to enhance the quality of education and student satisfaction. As the primary leader, the principal plays a strategic role in implementing this excellent service. They must be able to mobilise all school components to provide quality, community-oriented services (Friyadi & Sesmiarni, 2025).

Implementing excellent service is not only a task for administrative management but also requires a paradigm shift in how we view service. School principals must be able to apply the principles of quality service that reflect speed, accuracy, friendliness, and fairness in every service (Zahro, 2024). At MTs N 8 Sleman, the implementation of excellent service can have a positive impact on the school's image and increase trust from the school community, including students, parents, educators and education staff.

The principal's role as the primary actor in school management is complex. They are responsible not only for academic success but also for creating a quality service atmosphere and culture (Legi, 2024). The three main roles of the principal according to educational management theory are as a leader, manager and innovator (Alhabsyi et al., 2022). Each of these roles has a direct link to the successful implementation of excellent service.

However, various challenges remain in implementing excellent service at the madrasah level. Lack of resources, skills, and understanding of the concept of outstanding service are key obstacles. Therefore,

it is important to understand how the principal at MTs N 8 Sleman is able to fulfil his role and strengthen the implementation of these services concretely in the field.

Furthermore, developing excellent service is also seen as an effective strategy for increasing student satisfaction. This satisfaction not only impacts the school's image but also impacts student learning motivation and harmonious relationships within the school community. Therefore, this research is important to provide an overview of the practices and processes occurring at MT N 8 Sleman in an effort to realise excellent service.

In addition to providing direct benefits in improving service quality, the implementation of excellent service also has the potential to become an alternative, effective management paradigm for the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the madrasa environment. This managerial innovation is believed to strengthen the education management system, which is oriented towards quality and accountability, thereby meeting community needs more professionally and efficiently. This new paradigm in excellent service requires principals, as leaders, to optimise the utilisation of all madrasa resources professionally and with integrity, while simultaneously building a culture of quality service based on humanistic and inclusive Islamic values.

METHOD

The researcher used a qualitative approach with a case study design (Moleong, 2014) to understand how the principle of excellent service is applied in educational management at MTs N 8 Sleman. Data were collected through interviews with several relevant parties selected purposively to obtain comprehensive perspectives. In addition, participatory observation was conducted (Kusumastuti & Khoiron, 2021) to directly observe excellent service practices in daily activities, as well as collect supporting documents such as management reports and evaluation results.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure only those with experience and knowledge of excellent service were invited to participate. To ensure data accuracy, triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documents. This method helped obtain a more comprehensive picture and reduced the possibility of misinterpretation (Assingkiy, 2021; Sugiyono, 2017).

Data were analysed inductively using thematic analysis. The stages included interview transcription, data coding, and theme grouping, followed by identifying key patterns related to the principal's attitudes, concerns, actions, abilities, performance, and responsibilities in providing excellent service. The analysis results are presented narratively and linked to excellent service theory and educational management practices for ease of understanding and relevance to the research context (Satori & Komariah, 2017).

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The Principal's Role in Implementing Excellent Service at MTs 8 Sleman

Excellent service at an educational institution, especially a madrasa, is a crucial factor in improving the quality of service for students, parents and the surrounding community. (Siregar et al., 2024). MTs N 8 Sleman, as a junior high school, strives to provide services that meet the expectations of all stakeholders. In this context, the principal's role is strategic, as a leadership figure who mobilises all resources to consistently and sustainably provide excellent service.

In the implementation of excellent service initiated by the Ministry of Religion, the A3 approach, which includes Attitude, Attention, and Action, is the main framework for school principals and staff in providing friendly and professional services (Kesuma, 2021). The principal of MTs N 8 Sleman must instil a positive attitude and empathy towards every member of the school community, show real concern for their needs, and take appropriate and responsive actions for the satisfaction of educational customers.

According to leadership role theory, the principal has several important roles, including interpersonal, informational, and decision-making. The interpersonal role emphasises the principal as a leader capable of building harmonious relationships with teaching staff, students, and parents, thereby creating a work and learning culture that supports quality service (Selvia et al., 2024). In MTs N 8

Sleman, an effective principal is able to motivate teachers and educational staff to contribute maximally in providing the best service.

Furthermore, the principles of excellent service, encompassing attitude, attention, actions, abilities, appearance, and responsibility, are also crucial. The principal at MTs N 8 Sleman is not only required to possess professional skills and assume full responsibility for his duties, but also to maintain an appearance that reflects professionalism and excellent service. By integrating these principles, the principal can deliver services that are not only effective but also leave a positive impression on service users.

The principal's informational role includes collecting, processing, and disseminating information relevant to improving service quality. The principal at MTs N 8 Sleman is responsible for ensuring that each work unit and teacher receives the latest data and information regarding service needs and evaluations, allowing for swift and appropriate corrective action. This information is also used to build transparency and accountability in school management (Yanti et al., 2024).

Furthermore, leadership role theory states that decision-making is a vital aspect that the principal must carry out. In providing excellent service, the principal of MTs N 8 Sleman is expected to be able to make strategic decisions that support innovative learning methods, human resource management, and responsive handling of student complaints and needs. Appropriate decisions strengthen staff and community trust in the quality of school services.

Implementing excellent service is not just about administrative procedures but also about changing the work culture, which requires firm and visionary leadership. The principal at MTs N 8 Sleman is an agent of change, aligning the school's vision with the needs of educational customers through teacher competency development and the implementation of service standards oriented toward customer satisfaction.

Educational leadership literature shows that school principals who successfully implement excellent service are leaders who can carry out managerial functions while simultaneously providing ongoing professional development to the teaching team. (Asyarah et al., 2025). At MTs N 8 Sleman, this role is evident in various structured training, monitoring and evaluation programs to improve the competence of all school members.

In line with principle A6, which also emphasises responsibility, the principal must take full responsibility for the services provided, ensuring that all processes meet expected standards and taking corrective action when necessary. This approach ensures sincere and consistent service, building trust among the entire school community and potential service users.

Furthermore, the principal's role as an effective communication facilitator is crucial for smooth interactions between the school and the community. MTs N 8 Sleman utilises the principal's role to bridge student and parent aspirations through discussion forums, social media, and a responsive complaint service. This approach strengthens bonds of trust and improves the school's image as a caring and professional institution (Legi, 2024).

The role of the principal in implementing excellent service at MTs N 8 Sleman, when viewed through the lens of leadership role theory and the concept of exceptional service that integrates A3 and A6, is as the main driver who integrates interpersonal, informational, and strategic decision functions and prioritises attitudes, attention, actions, abilities, appearance, and responsibilities. Adaptive and collaborative leadership allows the school to continue to innovate and improve the quality of service in order to achieve the vision of superior education and be oriented towards customer satisfaction.

Excellent Service by the Principal to Increase Student Satisfaction

Excellent service in education plays a central role as a key supporting factor for the success of a school. At MTs N 8 Sleman, the excellent service implemented by the principal emphasises their role not only as administrative managers but also as drivers of service quality that directly address the needs and expectations of the entire school community, from students and teachers to parents. The principal's strategic role in realising excellent service makes them a central figure in determining the image and public trust in the school (Nurohman, 2024).

In implementing excellent service, the principal of MTs N 8 Sleman pays attention to the A3 approach, which includes Attitude, Attention, and Action. A positive, friendly, and empathetic attitude is

the main foundation for building harmonious relationships among school residents. Full attention to the needs of each individual, as well as quick and appropriate actions in resolving problems, ensures services that are not only professional but also sincere and oriented towards user satisfaction. In line with that, the A6 principle is also applied by adding the elements of Ability, Appearance, and Responsibility, which strengthen the quality of service through the competence of the principal and teachers, professional appearance, and full responsibility for the services provided.

The essence of excellent service is providing services that not only meet expectations but also strive to exceed them. The principal at MTs N 8 Sleman upholds service principles such as responsiveness, prompt problem-solving, politeness, and sensitivity to the needs of the school community. This quality of service significantly fosters a pleasant and safe school environment, which in turn creates a conducive learning climate and supports academic growth (Asih, 2025).

Effective communication is a key pillar in achieving excellent service. The principal regularly initiates meetings with teachers and the school committee as a forum for open dialogue to discuss problems and formulate joint solutions. This participatory approach creates space for the expression of aspirations, strengthens solidarity, and fosters mutual trust among school components, ensuring that all members of the school community feel valued and heard (Aisyah & Nugraha, 2024).

Furthermore, the principal at MTs N 8 Sleman actively participates in teacher capacity development and school infrastructure improvements. Through regular training and workshops, the principal fosters the professionalism of teachers and educational staff, while also improving facilities to support the teaching and learning process. This ongoing investment demonstrates a strong commitment to excellent service that is tangible and has a positive impact (Saputra, 2025).

Another equally important aspect is the implementation of fair and transparent policies. The principal ensures that every decision is based on objective considerations and principles of fairness, so that all parties feel treated equally and have their rights protected. This fair policy reinforces a sense of security and strengthens trust in school governance (Muharam et al., 2023).

Regular evaluations are a crucial tool for measuring the effectiveness of excellent service. Through satisfaction surveys and structured internal evaluations, MTs N 8 Sleman consistently monitors the school community's perceptions of the services provided. Evaluation results showing a significant upward trend in the student satisfaction index serve as indicators of successful leadership and continuous improvement based on more constructive feedback.

The principal's visionary and communicative leadership is the foundation for successful service excellence. By integrating systematic administrative management with a humanistic approach, the principal creates a framework that is not only efficient but also friendly and supports a positive, productive, and harmonious work climate for the entire school community (Helmi et al., 2023). The impact of this excellent service is not only administrative but also contributes significantly to improving the quality of education and the overall well-being of the school community. This enhanced service quality impacts student learning motivation, teacher professional support, and active parental involvement, all of which form a sustainable educational ecosystem (Jayadiah et al., 2024).

To ensure the sustainability of this positive impact, developing the capacity of principals in excellent service must be a priority. Ongoing training and mentoring programs are essential to maintain commitment, update knowledge, and hone the skills of principals, enabling them to serve as role models and inspiration for other schools in the surrounding area (Susanto, 2021). It means that the excellent service provided by the principal at MTs N 8 Sleman is a manifestation of holistic strategic leadership. A responsive, fair, and participatory management approach strengthens the school's foundation as a professional, innovative educational institution oriented toward the satisfaction and well-being of all school members, making it a best practice example in the implementation of junior high school education in Indonesia.

Excellent Service as an Alternative for Islamic Education Management within the Ministry of Religion

Islamic education management within the Ministry of Religion faces the challenge of improving the quality of services effectively and efficiently (Fitria et al., 2024). In this context, excellent service is a strategic alternative that can be implemented to improve the quality of Islamic education management.

The concept of excellent service emphasises providing services that exceed the expectations of users, including students, teachers, and the community.

Excellent service in Islamic education transcends mere administrative tasks; it embodies a holistic integration of faith, piety, and noble morals throughout the entirety of the educational experience. It involves nurturing not only intellectual understanding but also spiritual growth and ethical character development, aligning with the core Islamic values outlined in the Qur'an and Sunnah (Hendawi et al., 2024). Such service is not confined to structured learning activities but is deeply embedded in the interactions, attitudes, and environment shaped by educators and all participants in the educational process. The cultivation of values like compassion, respect, and social responsibility within this framework reflects Islam's inclusive and humanistic principles, which strive to develop individuals who are knowledgeable, morally upright, and socially conscious.

To implement excellent service effectively, the commitment and active participation of all stakeholders—teachers, students, parents, and the community, are essential. Their collaborative engagement fosters a supportive and welcoming learning atmosphere that encourages both academic and character development in students. When these stakeholders work collectively, they create an environment conducive to learning that respects diversity and promotes inclusivity in line with Islamic teachings. This collaborative framework ensures educational practices are not only comprehensive and professional but also empathetic, fostering a sense of belonging and mutual respect (Makweya & Sepadi, 2025). The result is a dynamic and nurturing ecosystem where Islamic values flourish alongside educational excellence, demonstrating that excellent service in Islamic education requires a shared vision and dedication from every party involved.

One reason why excellent service is a relevant management alternative is that this approach is highly responsive to the needs and expectations of the school community. Within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, madrasah principals and education administrators can adopt the excellent service model to create a transparent, accountable, and customer-oriented education system (Fitriani, 2020).

Excellent service directs every element of Islamic education to be proactive in providing solutions and innovation. It includes, for example, prompt service, effective communication, and attention to developing students' spiritual and intellectual potential. This approach aligns with the goals of Islamic education, which prioritise the formation of individuals with noble character and competitiveness (Ichsan et al., 2023).

In its implementation, Islamic education management, based on excellent service, encourages participatory and collaborative leadership. The principal, along with teachers and administrative staff, works synergistically to create quality and sustainable services. Parent and community involvement is also a focus in improving educational quality (Ichsan, 2020).

Evaluation and monitoring are essential components of excellent service. The Ministry of Religious Affairs in Indonesia can implement a comprehensive assessment system to measure satisfaction levels and service effectiveness in Islamic educational institutions. These evaluation results are used to drive continuous improvement, ensuring that educational management remains responsive to the dynamic needs of the school community.

Excellent service as a management alternative offers a paradigm shift from a bureaucratic approach to a more humane approach oriented toward quality service. Within the Ministry of Religious Affairs, this opens up opportunities to create Islamic education that is adaptive and relevant to current developments without abandoning Islamic values. Overall, the implementation of excellent service in Islamic education management within the Ministry of Religious Affairs is a strategic effort to improve service quality. By focusing on the satisfaction of school residents and stakeholders, excellent service can be a driving force for the transformation of Islamic education management to be more professional, innovative, and competitive.

CONCLUSION

Excellent service implemented at MTsN 8 Sleman through the A3 approach (Attitude, Attention, Action) and the A6 principle (Attitude, Attention, Action, Ability, Appearance, and Responsibility) has proven to be a key factor in improving the quality of Islamic education services, where the principal as a strategic leader is able to integrate interpersonal, informational, and decision-

making roles to build a friendly, responsive, and professional service culture, which not only improves the school's image but also increases the satisfaction of the school community and motivates academic growth and harmonious relationships between residents; this approach, which is based on humanist Islamic values, encourages participatory and collaborative leadership with the synergistic involvement of teachers, staff, students, and the community, and through continuous evaluation and monitoring, MTs N 8 Sleman is able to respond to the needs of the school community adaptively so that services continue to improve systematically and continuously, strengthening accountability and professionalism from a bureaucratic paradigm to a more humane management; Overall, this study emphasizes excellent service as an alternative strategic and innovative management within the Ministry of Religious Affairs that prioritizes customer satisfaction and the development of the principal's capacity as a driver of change, which facilitates the transformation of Islamic education management that is effective, efficient, competitive, and maintains moral values, faith, and piety in the learning process, while providing an important empirical basis for the development of policies and practices of Islamic education services at the madrasah level.

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