

Analysis of Madrasah Choice Determinants Through The Integration of The EKB Model And SERVQUAL

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Abstract:

This study aims to analyze the determinants of madrasah selection by integrating the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell consumer behavior model and the SERVQUAL service quality framework at MAN 3 Kediri. The background of this study is the increasingly competitive environment among secondary educational institutions, which requires madrasahs to understand the factors influencing students' school choice decisions. This research employed a quantitative associative-causal approach. The population consisted of 1,308 students of MAN 3 Kediri, with 297 respondents selected using proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire that had passed validity and reliability testing, and were analyzed using multiple linear regression with IBM SPSS version 27. The findings show that consumer behavior has a positive and significant effect on school choice and serves as the dominant factor with an effective contribution of 28.0%. Service quality also has a positive and significant effect, with an effective contribution of 13.7%. Simultaneously, both variables contribute 56.3% to school choice decisions. These findings indicate that madrasah selection is shaped by consumer preferences and perceived service quality.

Keywords: *consumer behavior, SERVQUAL, madrasah choice, EKB model, service quality*

Abstrak :

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis determinan pemilihan madrasah melalui integrasi model perilaku konsumen Engel, Kollat, dan Blackwell serta kerangka mutu pelayanan SERVQUAL di MAN 3 Kediri. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasarkan pada semakin kompetitifnya lembaga pendidikan tingkat menengah, sehingga madrasah perlu memahami faktor-faktor yang memengaruhi keputusan siswa dalam memilih sekolah. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan jenis asosiatif kausal. Populasi penelitian berjumlah 1.308 siswa MAN 3 Kediri, dengan sampel sebanyak 297 responden yang ditentukan menggunakan teknik proportionate stratified random sampling. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner tertutup yang telah diuji validitas dan reliabilitasnya, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan regresi linear berganda dengan bantuan IBM SPSS versi 27. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa perilaku konsumen berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap pemilihan sekolah serta menjadi faktor dominan dengan sumbangan efektif sebesar 28,0%. Mutu pelayanan juga berpengaruh positif dan signifikan dengan sumbangan efektif sebesar 13,7%. Secara simultan, kedua variabel berkontribusi sebesar 56,3% terhadap pemilihan

sekolah. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pemilihan madrasah dipengaruhi oleh preferensi konsumen dan persepsi terhadap mutu pelayanan.

Kata Kunci: *perilaku konsumen, SERVQUAL, pemilihan madrasah, model EKB, mutu pelayanan*

Introduction

Competition among secondary educational institutions today is increasingly shifting toward competition in educational services. Schools and madrasahs can no longer rely solely on institutional status, geographical proximity, or historical reputation; they must also understand how prospective students and parents form preferences, evaluate services, and make decisions when selecting a school. In this context, school selection can be understood as an educational consumer decision that involves information search, evaluation of alternatives, consideration of value, and confidence in the chosen institution. Such a decision carries a high level of involvement because it is directly tied to the student's academic future, character formation, social security, and religious orientation.

From a consumer-behavior perspective, the decision to choose an educational institution does not arise spontaneously but through a complex mental and social process. The Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (EKB) model explains that consumers process various stimuli before making a decision, beginning with need recognition, followed by information search, evaluation of alternatives, decision, and post-decision behavior (Yuniarti, 2024). In the educational context, such stimuli may include school information (Sri Rahayu, 2021; Sudirjo, 2024; Zulfiah, Putri, & Fadhillah, 2023), family recommendations (Azizah, Simanjuntak, & Muflikhati, 2022) alumni experiences (Akmal & Harianto, 2024; Sari, 2025), institutional image (Kunta & Muslim, 2025), educational cost (Halizah, Nurhajati, & Amin, 2025), teacher quality (Khofifah & Givan, 2025), and perceptions of safety (Tafyiroh & Subiyantoro, 2023; Wahyono & Rofi'i, 2023) and the learning environment (Khofifah & Givan, 2025; Sari, 2025). Educational consumer behavior is therefore shaped not only by rational considerations, but also by social, personal, and psychological factors, including parental motivation in seeking a school that matches their children's academic needs and family values (Juhaidi, 2022; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019; Sona, 2018; Yuniarti, 2024).

The growth of digital information has further strengthened the position of consumers in decision-making. Consumers today can more easily obtain information, compare alternatives, and form beliefs through the experiences of others. In service consumption, information from previous users—whether through direct communication or electronic word of mouth—can influence the decision-making process, since consumers tend to trust genuine experience more than formal promotion. Fitriani and Johan found that electronic word of mouth has a positive and significant effect on purchase decisions, while Mayasari and Anasrulloh showed that consumer decisions are influenced by customer value and perceived-benefit considerations. These findings are relevant to school selection, since parents and students likewise weigh perceived value, service-user experience, and social recommendation before making a choice (Mayasari & Anasrulloh, 2023; Rizki Fitriani & Rahmayani Johan, 2023).

Beyond consumer behavior, service quality is an important factor in

determining an educational institution's appeal. Service quality in education encompasses a school's ability to deliver academic, administrative, and social services that meet the expectations of students and parents. The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry is one of the frameworks widely used to assess service quality through five main dimensions: tangibles (Deviana, Suyoto, Mahjudin, & Permana, 2021), reliability (Hendrayati, H., & Pamungkas, 2013; Januariani, Masrokan, & Fuadi, 2023), responsiveness (Deviana et al., 2021; Kusumadewi Purba & Sailan, 2020), assurance (Kondur & Shuryhin, 2024; Kurniawan, Budiarti, Al Fatih, & Aji, 2025), and empathy. In the school context, these dimensions are reflected in the availability of facilities and infrastructure, the consistency of academic services, the speed of the school's response, the competence of educators, security guarantees, and personal attention to student development (Chandra, 2019).

A number of prior studies show that SERVQUAL is effective for reading the strengths and weaknesses of educational services. Sari found that a school's academic services can be analyzed through the five SERVQUAL dimensions, with particular attention to physical facilities and service reliability. Bahiyyah and Wibowo likewise showed that the quality of madrasah academic services for teachers and education staff generally falls in the satisfactory category, although dimensions such as tangibles, reliability, assurance, and empathy still require improvement (Wacana, Bahiyyah, & Wibowo, 2019). Anggreani and Yafi showed that the SERVQUAL approach can identify service gaps in madrasahs, particularly in attributes that have not yet met educational customers' expectations. These findings confirm that service quality is not merely a technical-administrative matter, but part of an institutional strategy for building satisfaction, image, and public trust (Muhammad, Yafi, Anggreani, & Yafi, 2024).

Service quality in the madrasah context also carries distinctive features, since it is oriented not only toward academic service but also toward character formation and religious values. Religion-based learning—including the strengthening of tahfidz and Islamic culture—is one of the attractions of Islamic educational institutions, as parents increasingly seek schools able to balance academic achievement with moral guidance. Susanto, Desrani, and Zamani found that tahfidz Al-Qur'an learning requires appropriate methods, systems, and service discipline to run effectively. Madrasahs able to consistently deliver both academic service and religious guidance therefore have the potential to gain a competitive advantage in attracting public interest (Susanto, Desrani, & Zamani, 2021).

Other studies on consumer behavior show that consumers with greater knowledge and experience of a service tend to be more critical in evaluating service quality. Azizah, Simanjuntak, and Muflikhati found that knowledge significantly influences consumer complaint behavior, indicating that the greater consumers' understanding of their rights and of service quality, the more likely they are to respond when a service falls short of expectations. In the educational context, parents and students—as users of educational services—likely display a similar tendency: they assess, compare, and respond to school service quality on the basis of their experience and the information available to them (Azizah et al.,

2022).

Although research on consumer behavior and on service quality has been extensively conducted, a research gap remains in the integration of these two perspectives within the context of madrasah selection. Much prior research positions service quality mainly as a determinant of satisfaction or loyalty, while other studies examine consumer behavior in the context of general product or service purchases. Studies that specifically link the EKB model as a consumer-behavior framework with SERVQUAL as a service-quality framework to explain madrasah selection remain relatively limited—even though madrasah selection is a decision that simultaneously brings together psychological, social, customer-value, service-quality, and religious-identity dimensions.

Building on this gap, the present study offers novelty by integrating the EKB Model and SERVQUAL to analyze the determinants of madrasah selection at MAN 3 Kediri. This integration matters because consumer behavior explains how parents and students process information and form preferences, while SERVQUAL explains how a school's service quality functions as an external stimulus that strengthens or weakens the selection decision. The study therefore treats school selection not merely as an outcome of promotion or reputation, but as a decision formed through the interaction between consumer perception and educational service quality.

MAN 3 Kediri is a relevant site for this study because it operates in a competitive educational environment and enrolls a large number of students. According to the research data, the student population of MAN 3 Kediri totals 1,308 students, with a research sample of 297 respondents. The underlying thesis found that consumer behavior and service quality have a positive and significant effect on school selection, both partially and simultaneously. Consumer behavior is the dominant factor, with a regression coefficient of 0.615, while service quality has a coefficient of 0.288. Together, the two variables contribute 56.3% to school selection, while the remaining 43.7% is explained by variables outside this study.

Accordingly, this study aims to analyze the effect of consumer behavior on school selection at MAN 3 Kediri, to analyze the effect of service quality on school selection at MAN 3 Kediri, and to analyze the simultaneous effect of consumer behavior and service quality on school selection at MAN 3 Kediri. The results are expected to make a theoretical contribution to the development of Islamic education management studies—particularly regarding the integration of consumer behavior and service quality—and to provide practical input for madrasahs in formulating strategies to strengthen competitiveness based on consumer understanding and service quality.

Research Method

This study employed a quantitative approach with an associative-causal design. The quantitative approach was used because the data are numerical and were analyzed statistically to test hypotheses about the influence between variables. The associative-causal design was used to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between the independent variables—Consumer Behavior and Service Quality—and the dependent variable, School Selection. The study was

thus directed at testing both the partial and simultaneous effects of the two independent variables on students' decisions to select MAN 3 Kediri.

The research was conducted at MAN 3 Kediri, with Grade X, XI, and XII students as subjects. The population totaled 1,308 students. Because the population had a stratified characteristic by grade level, proportionate stratified random sampling was used, so that each grade level would be proportionally represented in the sample. Sample size was determined using the Isaac and Michael formula with a 5% margin of error, yielding a sample of 297 respondents—considered adequate to represent the population and to objectively test the relationships among the research variables.

The study involved two independent variables and one dependent variable. The Consumer Behavior variable (X1) was developed from the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell (EKB) model (Yuniarti, 2024), with indicators of social, personal, and psychological factors. Social factors include recommendations from friends, family, community figures, and the social environment. Personal factors include cost suitability, family economic condition, school location, and religious lifestyle. Psychological factors include motivation, beliefs, perceptions of the madrasah's image, and confidence in the quality of MAN 3 Kediri. The Service Quality variable (X2) was developed from the SERVQUAL model (Sallis, 2015), comprising five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The School Selection variable (Y) was measured through indicators of interest/preference, choice action, and confidence in the choice made (Kotler, 2002; Kotler, Armstrong, Maulana, Barnadi, & Sabran, 2008) (Kotler, 2002; Kotler et al., 2008).

Data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale: strongly disagree, disagree, neutral, agree, and strongly agree, constructed from the indicators of each variable. For Consumer Behavior, items covered social-recommendation considerations, family economic condition, school location, motivation for choosing the madrasah, and perception of MAN 3 Kediri's image. For Service Quality, items covered respondents' assessment of facilities, teacher and staff service, response speed, service guarantees, and the school's attention to student needs. For School Selection, items measured interest, choice action, and students' confidence in the school chosen. Sample instruments in the thesis appendix show a 1–5 scale ranging from 'strongly disagree' to 'strongly agree.'

Before being used for primary data collection, the instrument was tested for validity and reliability. The validity test ensured that each item measured its intended indicator, while the reliability test assessed internal consistency. According to the thesis's instrument-testing results, the Consumer Behavior, Service Quality, and School Selection variables all passed validity and reliability testing before being applied to the research sample.

Data analysis proceeded through several stages. First, descriptive statistics described respondent characteristics and response tendencies for each variable. Second, classical-assumption tests ensured the data met the requirements for regression analysis, including the Kolmogorov-Smirnov normality test, the linearity test, the multicollinearity test, and the heteroscedasticity test. Third,

hypothesis testing used multiple linear regression analysis with IBM SPSS version 27: the t-test examined the partial effects of Consumer Behavior and Service Quality on School Selection, while the F-test examined their simultaneous effect. The coefficient of determination was used to gauge the magnitude of the independent variables' contribution to the dependent variable.

The multiple linear regression model was formulated as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$$

Where Y is School Selection, a is the constant, b_1 and b_2 are regression coefficients, X_1 is Consumer Behavior, X_2 is Service Quality, and e is the error term. This model was used to determine the extent to which Consumer Behavior and Service Quality explain variation in School Selection at MAN 3 Kediri, both individually and jointly

Result and Discusion

Result

1. Respondent Characteristics

Research data were obtained by distributing questionnaires to 297 student respondents at MAN 3 Kediri, proportionally selected from Grades X, XI, and XII so that the data would represent student perceptions across all grade levels. Respondent characteristics were examined by gender and grade level.

By gender, female respondents numbered 208 (70%), while male respondents numbered 89 (30%). By grade level, Grade X numbered 102 (34%), Grade XI numbered 99 (33%), and Grade XII numbered 96 (32%). This composition shows a fairly proportional distribution across grade levels, though dominated by female students.

Table 1: Respondents by Gender

Gender	Frequency	Percentage
Female	208	70%
Male	89	30%
Total	297	100%

Table 2: Respondents by Grade Level

Grade Level	Frequency	Percentage
Grade X	102	34%
Grade XI	99	33%
Grade XII	96	32%
Total	297	100%

2. Descriptive Analysis

Before conducting multiple linear regression, the data were tested through several classical-assumption tests to ensure the regression model met the required statistical conditions. The normality test used Kolmogorov-Smirnov, while the linearity test examined the Deviation from Linearity value. The

linearity test shows that the relationship between Consumer Behavior and School Selection has a Deviation from Linearity significance of 0.113, while that between Service Quality and School Selection is 0.481. Both values exceed 0.05, so the relationships are declared linear. Multicollinearity and heteroscedasticity tests were also conducted to ensure there was no excessive correlation among independent variables and no unequal residual variance in the regression model.

3. Frequency Distribution Consumer Behavior

The Consumer Behavior variable has a mean of 27.47, median 27, mode 28, range 26, and standard deviation 4.36. The closeness of the mean and median indicates a relatively stable data spread; the mode of 28 shows the most frequent score sits slightly above average; and the standard deviation of 4.36 indicates a reasonable level of variation in responses.

Table 3: Frequency Distribution of Variable X1 (Consumer Behavior)

Category	Mean	Median	Mode	Range	Standard Deviation
Consumer Behavior	27.47	27	28	26	4.36

4. Frequency Distribution Service Quality

The Service Quality variable has a mean of 56.06, median 56, mode 51, range 44, and standard deviation 5.95. The closeness of the mean and median indicates a balanced distribution; the mode of 51 shows the most frequent response score; and the standard deviation of 5.95 indicates variation in respondents' assessment, still within an acceptable range.

Table 4: Frequency Distribution of Variable X2 (Service Quality)

Category	Mean	Median	Mode	Range	Standard Deviation
Service Quality	56.06	56	51	44	5.95

5. Frequency Distribution School Selection

The School Selection variable has a mean of 33.46, median 33, mode 30, range 34, and standard deviation 5.26. The mean not far from the median indicates a relatively stable distribution; the mode of 30 describes the most frequent score; and the standard deviation of 5.26 indicates variation without extreme deviation.

Category	Mean	Median	Mode	Range	Standard Deviation
School Selection	33.46	33	30	34	5.26

6. Instrument Prerequisite Tests

a. Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test

The normality test determines whether the regression model's residual data are normally distributed, using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov

method. The test yielded an Asymp. Sig. of 0.200 and a Monte Carlo Sig. of 0.675. Both values exceed 0.05, so the residual data can be concluded to be normally distributed.

Table 5: Kolmogorov-Smirnov Normality Test (One-Sample)

Statistic	Value
N	297
Mean (residual)	0.0000000
Std. Deviation	3.47675652
Test Statistic (Absolute)	0.032
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0.200
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	0.675
99% CI Lower Bound	0.663
99% CI Upper Bound	0.687

b. Linearity Test

Consumer Behavior on School Selection

The linearity test determines whether the relationship between Consumer Behavior and School Selection is linear. The Deviation from Linearity value is 0.113 (> 0.05), so the relationship is declared linear changes in Consumer Behavior can be analyzed linearly against changes in School Selection.

Table 6: Linearity Test – X1 (ANOVA Table)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups (Combined)	4475.413	24	186.476	13.670	0.000
Linearity	4038.995	1	4038.995	296.089	0.000
Deviation from Linearity	436.419	23	18.975	1.391	0.113
Within Groups	4281.382	266	16.095		
Total	6623.685	316			

Service Quality on School Selection

The linearity test was also applied to the relationship between Service Quality and School Selection. The Deviation from Linearity value is 0.481 (> 0.05), so this relationship, too, is declared linear.

Table 7: Linearity Test – X2 (ANOVA Table)

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Between Groups (Combined)	3720.189	31	120.006	7.121	0.000
Linearity	3218.170	1	3218.170	190.974	0.000
Deviation from Linearity	502.019	30	16.734	0.993	0.481
Within Groups	4281.382	265	16.161		
Total	6623.685	296			

c. Multicollinearity Test

The multicollinearity test examines whether there is an excessively strong relationship between the independent variables, Consumer Behavior and Service Quality, using the criteria Tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10 . Both variables met these criteria, so the regression model shows no multicollinearity and is suitable for multiple linear regression analysis.

Table 8: Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)	0.445	1.932	-	0.230	0.818	-	-
Consumer Behavior	0.613	0.058	0.509	10.643	0.000	0.651	1.535
Service Quality	0.289	0.042	0.326	6.825	0.000	0.651	1.535

Dependent Variable: School Selection

d. Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test ensures that the spread of residuals in the regression model is constant. In the scatterplot, data points appear randomly scattered above and below the value 0 on the Y-axis, without forming any particular pattern (e.g., cone-shaped, widening, or wavy). This indicates that the regression model does not exhibit heteroscedasticity.

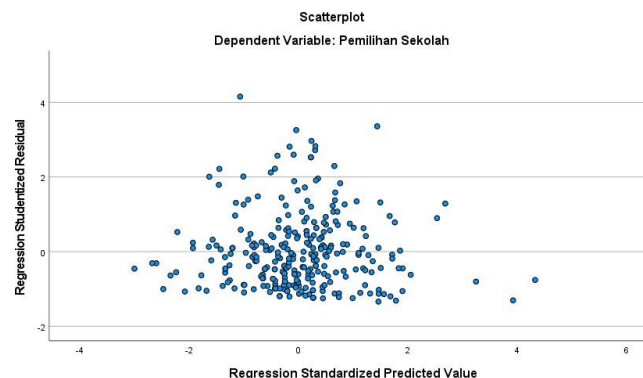


Figure 1: Scatterplot Test

e. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

With all classical assumptions met, the next step was to test the effect of Consumer Behavior and Service Quality on School Selection via multiple linear regression, examining the direction, strength, and contribution of each independent variable. Consumer Behavior has a regression coefficient of 0.615, and Service Quality 0.288 — both positive, meaning increases in either variable are followed by an increased tendency toward School Selection. The significance value for both

variables is 0.000 (< 0.05). Consumer Behavior and Service Quality thus have a proven positive and significant effect on School Selection at MAN 3 Kediri.

Table 9: Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.394	1.930	-	0.204	0.839
Consumer Behavior	0.615	0.058	0.510	10.686	0.000
Service Quality	0.288	0.042	0.326	6.837	0.000

Dependent Variable: School Selection

$$Y = 0.394 + 0.615X_1 + 0.288X_2 + e$$

This equation shows that the constant of 0.394 represents the baseline value of School Selection when Consumer Behavior and Service Quality are held constant. The coefficient of 0.615 for Consumer Behavior indicates that each one-unit increase in Consumer Behavior raises School Selection by 0.615, holding Service Quality constant; the coefficient of 0.288 for Service Quality indicates that each one-unit increase in Service Quality raises School Selection by 0.288, holding Consumer Behavior constant. The larger coefficient for Consumer Behavior shows it is the stronger predictor of the two.

f. Hypothesis Testing

Testing was conducted through partial (t) and simultaneous (F) tests, with decisions based on a significance value below 0.05 and comparison between calculated and table values.

t-Test (Partial); Consumer Behavior

The partial test shows a calculated t-value of 10.686 with significance 0.000 — below 0.05, and greater than the table t of 1.968. Hypothesis 1 is therefore accepted: Consumer Behavior has a positive and significant effect on School Selection at MAN 3 Kediri. The stronger students' social, personal, and psychological considerations in evaluating MAN 3 Kediri, the greater their tendency to choose the madrasah.

Table 10: t-Test (Partial) Results — X1

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.394	1.930	-	0.204	0.839
Consumer Behavior	0.615	0.058	0.510	10.686	0.000

t-Test (Partial); Service Quality

The partial test for Service Quality yields a calculated t-value of 6.837 with significance 0.000 – also greater than the table t of 1.968, with significance below 0.05. Hypothesis 2 is accepted: Service Quality has a positive and significant effect on School Selection. In other words, the service quality students perceive – whether in tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, or empathy – also strengthens their decision to choose MAN 3 Kediri.

Table 11: t-Test (Partial) Results – X2

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
(Constant)	0.394	1.930	-	0.204	0.839
Service Quality	0.288	0.042	0.326	6.837	0.000

F-Test (Simultaneous)

The F-test yields a calculated F-value of 189.309 with significance 0.000, greater than the table F of 3.03 and below 0.05. Consumer Behavior and Service Quality jointly have a significant effect on School Selection; Hypothesis 3 is accepted, and the regression model is deemed appropriate.

Table 12: F-Test (Simultaneous) Results

Source	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	4607.805	2	2303.903	189.309	0.000
Residual	3577.999	294	12.170		
Total	8185.805	296			

a. Dependent Variable: School Selection b. Predictors: (Constant), Service Quality, Consumer Behavior

7. Coefficient of Determination

The coefficient of determination shows an R Square of 0.563 and an Adjusted R Square of 0.560, indicating that Consumer Behavior and Service Quality explain 56.3% of the variation in School Selection, with the remaining 43.7% explained by factors outside the model. The two variables thus make a fairly strong joint contribution to students' decisions to choose MAN 3 Kediri.

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of Estimate
1	0.750	0.563	0.560	3.489

Overall, hypothesis testing shows that all alternative hypotheses in this study are accepted. Consumer Behavior is the most dominant variable, while Service Quality still makes an important contribution to strengthening School Selection decisions. These findings confirm that madrasah selection is shaped not only by the quality of service an institution provides, but also by how educational consumers form perceptions, weigh alternatives, and settle on the school they consider best suited to their needs.

Discussion

1. Consumer Behavior as the Primary Determinant of Madrasah Selection

The findings show that Consumer Behavior is the strongest factor explaining School Selection at MAN 3 Kediri. This confirms that choosing a madrasah cannot be understood merely as an administrative act of enrollment. Behind the decision lies a deliberative process involving social pressure, personal circumstance, perceptions of institutional image, beliefs about the madrasah's quality, and the fit between family expectations and the school's character. Madrasah selection is thus complex, tied to students' academic future, social environment, social security, and religious orientation.

The dominance of Consumer Behavior reinforces the relevance of the Engel, Kollat, and Blackwell model for reading educational decisions. The model positions the consumer as an active subject who passes through need recognition, information search, evaluation of alternatives, decision, and post-choice response (Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019; Yuniarti, 2024). At MAN 3 Kediri, these stages appear in how students and parents seek information about the madrasah, weigh family and social recommendations, compare its advantages against other institutions, and form beliefs about whether MAN 3 Kediri fits their academic needs and expected religious values. The choice, in other words, does not arise spontaneously but forms through a gradual cognitive and social process.

This finding also highlights the importance of social experience in building educational consumers' trust. Recommendations from family, alumni accounts, peer experience, and community views can serve as strong sources of legitimacy for a choice. In educational services, formal school promotion is not always the primary determinant, since prospective students and parents often trust the genuine experience of service users more. A madrasah's reputation therefore grows stronger when built on the positive experiences of students, parents, and alumni — a pattern consistent with consumer-behavior research that positions customer value, user experience, and electronic word of mouth as key elements in decision formation (Halizah et al., 2025; Mayasari & Anasrulloh, 2023; Rizki Fitriani & Rahmayani Johan, 2023; Sona, 2018).

Practically, this result suggests MAN 3 Kediri needs to manage educational-consumer perception more strategically. It is not enough to communicate information about programs and facilities; the madrasah must also ensure students' actual experience genuinely produces a positive impression, which can then develop into social recommendations that influence future prospective students. Positive consumer behavior, in other words, can be built through credible reputation, consistent public communication, and tangible service experience.

2. Service Quality as a Reinforcing Factor in School Selection

Beyond Consumer Behavior, Service Quality also has a positive and significant effect on School Selection. Service quality thus remains an important element in strengthening students' decisions to choose MAN 3 Kediri. Although its effect is smaller than that of Consumer Behavior, it serves

as the concrete evidence students use to judge a madrasah's worthiness — good service makes the choice more rational, while inconsistent service can weaken trust even where the school's image is already well-established.

Within the SERVQUAL framework, service quality is understood through five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. In the madrasah context, tangibles appear in learning facilities, classroom conditions, and the physical environment; reliability in the consistency of academic and administrative services; responsiveness in the readiness of teachers and staff to address student needs; assurance in the sense of safety, educator competence, and institutional trust; and empathy in personal attention to each student's development. Together these dimensions shape students' perception of MAN 3 Kediri's quality as an educational institution (Chandra, 2019).

This finding aligns with studies on educational services showing that SERVQUAL can be used to read the strengths and weaknesses of school or madrasah services. Prior research shows that facilities, service reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy all play an important role in building satisfaction, image, and trust in educational institutions. At MAN 3 Kediri, the effect of Service Quality shows that students weigh not only the madrasah's reputation or status, but also how that service shows up in their everyday experience (Muhammad et al., 2024; Sari, 2025; Wacana et al., 2019).

Madrasah service quality also has distinctive features, since it relates not only to academic and administrative service but also to character formation and religiosity. Madrasahs are seen as bearing a broader responsibility for shaping morals, maintaining a positive social environment, and instilling Islamic values. Service quality at MAN 3 Kediri should therefore be understood as a combination of academic service, personal care, social security, and religious culture; when these elements function well, the madrasah has a strong foundation for maintaining students' and parents' trust. Effective religious service in Islamic education also requires a consistent system, method, and management discipline (Deviana et al., 2021; Januariani et al., 2023).

The implication is that improving service quality should target the aspects students directly experience: better facilities, regularity in academic service, quick responses to student needs, friendly communication, and safety assurance all warrant continuous attention. Service Quality may not be the most dominant variable in the model, but it is the foundation that ensures positive consumer perception does not remain a mere image, but becomes a provable experience.

3. Integration of the EKB Model and SERVQUAL in Madrasah Selection

The simultaneous test shows that Consumer Behavior and Service Quality jointly affect School Selection: the decision to choose MAN 3 Kediri cannot be explained by consumer behavior or service quality alone. Consumer Behavior explains how students and parents form preferences, while Service Quality explains the quality of the stimulus the madrasah

provides. When these aspects reinforce one another, the selection decision becomes stronger and more stable.

Integrating the EKB Model and SERVQUAL gives a fuller reading of madrasah selection. The EKB model explains the consumer's internal process of receiving information, interpreting experience, comparing alternatives, and deciding; SERVQUAL explains the service quality that becomes the object of that assessment. In this relationship, Service Quality can be positioned as an external stimulus entering the consumer's deliberative process, subsequently filtered through perception, motivation, social experience, and evaluation of alternatives before producing a selection decision (Chandra, 2019; Schiffman & Wisenblit, 2019; Yuniarti, 2024).

The conceptual contribution of this study lies in confirming that madrasah selection is a multidimensional process. The decision depends not only on technically visible service quality, but on how educational consumers interpret that quality through experience, information, and the values they hold. The dominance of Consumer Behavior shows that good service needs to be communicated, experienced, and socially validated to become a compelling reason for choosing a school; conversely, positive consumer perception still needs the support of tangible service so that trust in the madrasah does not easily weaken.

This finding addresses the previously identified research gap – the limited body of research linking the EKB Model and SERVQUAL in the context of madrasah selection. Some prior studies position service quality mainly as a determinant of satisfaction or loyalty, while consumer-behavior studies are more often applied to general product and service purchasing decisions. This study shows the two approaches can be integrated to understand the selection of an Islamic educational institution more comprehensively.

For madrasah managers, this result suggests that improving competitiveness cannot rely solely on promotion or isolated facility improvements. Madrasahs need to manage the entire decision journey of prospective students and parents – from information exposure and first impressions to learning experience, public communication, and post-service testimonials. In this way, service quality can transform into trust, trust into recommendation, and recommendation into a stronger decision to select the madrasah.

Conclusion

This study shows that the selection of MAN 3 Kediri is influenced by Consumer Behavior and Service Quality, both partially and simultaneously. Consumer Behavior is the most dominant factor, since madrasah selection is formed through social, personal, and psychological considerations, and beliefs about the institution's image and values. Service Quality, meanwhile, reinforces the decision through students' experience of the school's facilities, service reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

Conceptually, integrating the EKB Model and SERVQUAL shows that madrasah selection is a multidimensional process. The EKB Model explains how educational consumers form preferences and make decisions, while SERVQUAL explains the service quality that forms the basis of consumer assessment. MAN 3 Kediri therefore needs to strengthen its public communication strategy, maintain students' positive experience, and consistently improve service quality so that public trust continues to grow.

Future research is recommended to add other variables such as madrasah image, education cost, digital promotion, word of mouth, student satisfaction, or parental loyalty, so that studies on madrasah selection can be explained more comprehensively.

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