

MANAGEMENT STRATEGIES IN IMPROVING SERVICE QUALITY: A CASE STUDY OF PERMATHA CENTER TUTORING INSTITUTE

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Abstract

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Total Quality Management,
Service Quality,
Quality Culture

At present, numerous non-formal educational institutions are engaged in efforts to enhance quality through diverse management strategies. However, only a limited number have succeeded in sustaining and expanding their operations amid intense competition. Permata Center Tutoring is a relatively new non-formal education provider that has experienced rapid growth by emphasizing process excellence and earning widespread community trust. This study seeks to examine in greater depth the quality control mechanisms employed, the implementation of quality management practices, and the positive impacts derived from these efforts. Utilizing a qualitative approach, data were collected through direct observation and in-depth interviews with the founder of Permata Center Tutoring. The findings indicate that quality does not necessarily require formal systems to be effectively established; rather, it can be cultivated through core values, trust, and consistent, high-quality service delivery. By emphasizing social values and aligning with local community needs, Permata Center Tutoring exemplifies how Total Quality Management (TQM) can be contextually applied to achieve sustainable growth.

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INTRODUCTION

Education is a fundamental element in fostering advanced and evolving civilizations, serving as a vital tool to cultivate a superior generation capable of navigating



modern challenges. Consequently, education functions as a systemic framework designed to orchestrate the progression of human civilization.

The trajectory of education aligns with the essence of national life: to develop individuals, families, and communities that are moral and uphold humanitarian values. Furthermore, education serves as a medium for building collective understanding, fostering ideas that reflect cultural identity, civilizational progress, and the shared heritage of human values regarding the universe, human existence, and the meaning of life.

The quality of educational services is generally assessed through user perceptions of the processes and outcomes provided. Bayne-Jardine et al. (2000) state that quality in education encompasses an evaluation of learning processes that develop student potential while meeting accountability standards for stakeholders. Thus, educational quality is measured not only by academic results but also by the added value and benefits received by the "customers."

In line with this view, Grisay and Mahlck (1991) explain that evaluating an educational system's quality involves analyzing two primary aspects: first, the extent to which student learning outcomes (knowledge, skills, and values) align with educational goals; and second, the relevance of those outcomes to individual and societal needs.

One of the fundamental principles for designing an effective and relevant educational system is Quality Management, as it provides the philosophical foundation for creating a sustainable system through continuous improvement. Total Quality Management (TQM) is understood as a philosophy and a set of guiding principles for the continuous improvement of an organization. It is a strategy that utilizes quantitative approaches and human resource potential to drive improvements in the quality of products and services. This concept covers the entire organizational process to meet customer expectations, both present and future. TQM also integrates basic management principles, existing improvement initiatives, and technical tools into a systematic approach oriented toward continuous enhancement.

In the contemporary era, the quality of education is a primary focus amidst intense competition. This competition is not limited to formal institutions like schools and universities but also extends to non-formal sectors such as tutoring centers. Tightening competition and increasing public demands drive tutoring center managers to overcome challenges by enhancing quality through their respective innovations and versions.

Providing consistently effective services is a challenge often faced by formal and non-formal institutions alike, including the Permatha Center Tutoring Center. Academic services alone are no longer sufficient to address the complex issues in today's educational world. Educational institutions are required to compete through integrated service processes and periodic quality improvements. They are expected to apply quality management theories accurately to create structured systems ranging from human resource management and planning to implementation and regular evaluation. Additionally, institutions must remain adaptive to increasingly complex global developments. All these elements are part of TQM, which positions quality as the responsibility of every member of the organization, not just the management.

Tutoring centers are non-formal educational services that support students' academic achievements. As competition grows, many parents concerned about their children's progress seek additional learning opportunities outside of school hours. Beyond

an attractive curriculum, high-quality and reliable service is the most critical aspect of establishing a tutoring center that achieves customer satisfaction.

In practice, the implementation of quality management in non-formal education remains diverse. While some institutions have adopted formal systems like ISO or internal accreditation, many others apply TQM principles contextually based on experience and local needs. An interesting case study in this context is Tutoring Institute Permatha, an institution founded in 2016 that experienced significant growth, particularly during the pandemic. Permatha Center provides tutoring with a personalized, result-oriented approach. Despite being relatively new, it has shown significant progress and achieved profitability, even if it has not yet fully recouped its initial capital investment.

In the concept of quality management, the success of an organization is not only measured by academic progress but by how well the organization is managed to ensure a positive, comprehensive, and sustainable impact. In this regard, quality management must address customer satisfaction, process efficiency, teacher professionalism, and environmental adaptation.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to explore the strategies employed in managing the Permatha Center Tutoring Center and identify the factors that have allowed this young institution to flourish, specifically regarding the principles of Total Quality Management.

LITERATURE REVIEW

W. Edwards Deming states that quality is defined as consistency or alignment between market needs and consumer expectations. A company can dominate the market if it is capable of producing goods that harmonize with consumer needs and desires, as high quality makes such products more appealing.

Quality must also be viewed as a continuous process rather than a one-time achievement. This aligns with Deming's principle of "continuous improvement," where organizations must constantly innovate, evaluate, and adapt to changing market demands. When quality is maintained consistently and holistically, it does more than just satisfy customers; it builds strong loyalty and trust. To understand the process of Total Quality Management (TQM), we can refer to Kanji and Asher (1993), who posit that all work is a "process" and that TQM is a continuous improvement journey for individuals, groups, and the organization as a whole.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach, utilizing observation as the primary technique for data collection. This approach was selected to gain a profound understanding of the management strategies used to enhance service quality at Tutoring Institute Permatha Center. Data were gathered through direct observation of tutoring activities, interviews with management, tutors, and students, as well as documentation related to training programs and service evaluations. The objective of this research is to obtain a comprehensive overview of the management strategies implemented and their impact on the quality of tutoring services. The findings of this study are intended to serve as a foundational basis for developing effective training programs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

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academic paper. I have removed the footnote numbers within the body text as requested, while maintaining the scholarly tone.

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Quality is the element that distinguishes the superior from the mediocre. In an educational context, quality serves as a vital indicator that separates successful institutions from those in decline. Thus, quality has become a central issue in determining a school's ability to grow and remain viable in an increasingly competitive educational landscape.

Field findings reveal several important aspects regarding quality management at Tutoring Institute Permatha Center, which implements TQM principles. Founded in 2016, the center made a strategic move in 2020 from a residential complex to a regency area populated primarily by lower-middle-class families. The founder, Suci Rahayu, established the center to apply the knowledge gained during her university studies by providing tutoring services in Cinunuk. The primary focus was helping local children who required additional academic support during their free time.

This background reflects a vision oriented toward community value. According to Garvin, there are five perspectives on quality: the transcendental, product-based, user-based, manufacturing-based, and value-based approaches. Tutoring Institute Permatha Center prioritizes the value-based approach, emphasizing positive reputation and customer trust. Quality here is viewed as "affordable excellence" balancing product performance with costs. High value is found in services that provide the best benefits at the most appropriate price, often referred to as a "best-buy" option.

Human resource management at Tutoring Institute Permatha Center has evolved since its inception. The institution now operates 11 branches, each managed by local owners who act as extensions of the central office, supported by 24 active tutors. This model demonstrates a flexible yet coordinated structure.

To ensure effectiveness, the center conducts evaluations every three months. These sessions identify obstacles and rectify errors to ensure institutional sustainability. As noted by Amirudin (2018), educational institutions must manage human resources optimally to ensure roles and responsibilities remain stable and proportional, allowing educational goals to be met effectively.

The quality improvement process generally occurs across four stages: input, process, output, and customer assessment. Results must adhere to predetermined standards followed by planning, implementation, evaluation, and follow-up mirroring the Plan–Do–Check–Act (PDCA) cycle.

Tutoring Institute Permatha Center's systems reflect continuous quality control.

Routine evaluations, service flexibility, and a student-centered approach show that TQM principles are being practiced. While the center does not utilize formal systems like ISO, its quality practices have grown organically through experience, market sensitivity, and a commitment to student learning outcomes.

The curriculum at Tutoring Institute Permatha Center is inherently flexible, adapting to the specific academic needs of students. Rather than a rigid, one-size-fits-all curriculum, the center acts as a facilitator to help students master their respective school subjects. This philosophical foundation transforming "unable" students into "capable" ones has built significant consumer trust. A notable success is the BPJ Kids Kalistung Ceria program for children aged 3–6, which uses a fun, personalized approach suited to early childhood development.

Customers are crucial for maintaining organizational stability and relevance. Attention to customers is achieved by identifying expectations and ensuring transparency in feedback to drive quality improvement. Studies show that successful TQM implementation leads to reduced errors, time efficiency, and high customer satisfaction. However, experts like Mani et al. (2003) warn that TQM failures often stem from a lack of strategic planning or a supportive organizational culture.

The recruitment process at Tutoring Institute Permatha Center extends beyond academic qualifications; the center seeks tutors who are energetic, cheerful, creative, and responsible. This emphasizes soft skills as a pillar of service quality for children and adolescents.

Furthermore, the founder, Miss Siti, has shifted her focus from direct teaching to tutor mentoring and institutional development. There is also a concerted effort to professionalize administrative and clerical systems (TU). In TQM terms, these are supporting processes that, while invisible to the customer, ensure service consistency.

The work ethos at Permatha Center is built on sincerity, responsibility, and professionalism. This "quality culture" ensures that the institution is not merely business-oriented but is grounded in integrity and social benefit. According to Indonesian regulations (Permendikbud No. 28/2016), quality assurance is a systematic, integrated, and continuous process to ensure education meets set standards. The goal is to establish a quality culture that encompasses knowledge, beliefs, morals, and social rules.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that Tutoring Institute Permatha Center has successfully implemented the principles of Total Quality Management (TQM) in a contextual and sustainable manner. Without relying on formal quality systems, the institution has maintained service excellence through an approach that emphasizes routine tutor mentoring, pedagogical flexibility, periodic evaluations, and a work culture rooted in sincerity and responsibility. The rapid growth of the institution further demonstrates that public trust in service quality is a primary factor behind its success.

The business ethics applied such as avoiding binding contracts for students and prioritizing service over immediate high profits have become integral parts of a robust quality culture. Furthermore, management's awareness of the importance of an organized administrative system represents a positive step toward building a more solid institutional foundation.

Moving forward, it is recommended that Tutoring Institute Permatha Center

begins to strengthen its administrative systems and quality documentation more systematically. This will ensure consistency in practices across all branches and facilitate long-term evaluation processes. This strategic approach is expected to reinforce service quality while enhancing the institution's professionalism in the eyes of the public.

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