The Effect of Total Quality Management and Customer Relationship Management on Student Satisfaction at SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi with Brand Image as a Mediation Variable

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Abstract. *This study aims to explain the influence of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on student satisfaction with brand image as a mediating variable at SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi. This study is an explanatory research that focuses on testing the causal relationship between variables that play a role in shaping student satisfaction, especially in the context of service quality and school image. This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey method by distributing questionnaires to 150 respondents consisting of students in grades X, XI, and XII. Data analysis was carried out using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4, through the stages of outer model testing, inner model testing, and hypothesis testing. The results of the study indicate that: (1) Total Quality Management has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction; (2) Customer Relationship Management has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction; (3) brand image has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction; (4) brand image mediates the effect of Total Quality Management on student satisfaction; and (5) brand image mediates the effect of Customer Relationship Management on student satisfaction. The R² value of 0.685 indicates that the model is able to explain 68.5% of the variation in student satisfaction. Overall, this study confirms that service quality, the quality of the school-student relationship, and school image contribute significantly to shaping student satisfaction. These findings provide important implications for school management to strengthen the implementation of TQM, improve the effectiveness of CRM, and optimize brand image management to increase satisfaction and the competitiveness of educational institutions.*

Keywords: *Brand Image; Customer Relationship Management; Student Satisfaction; Total Quality Management*

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1. Introduction

Education is a fundamental factor in national development because it can produce a generation that is competitive, innovative, and has superior character. In the context of national development, education plays a role not only in transferring knowledge but also in shaping values, skills, and competencies that form the basis for improving the quality of human resources. Schools, as formal educational institutions, play a strategic role in producing a generation that is competitive, productive, and able to adapt to global developments. This aligns with UNESCO's view that quality education is the key to creating an inclusive, sustainable, and highly competitive society. (UNESCO, 2021).

In modern educational management, schools are not only required to produce quality graduates but also to provide satisfactory services to students, their primary customers. Student satisfaction has now become a crucial measure of school management success. Sallis emphasized that student satisfaction demonstrates an institution's ability to meet student needs and expectations. This finding is supported by Seitova, who found that student satisfaction levels reflect the effectiveness of educational service quality. (Seitova et al., 2024).

The shift in the educational paradigm from a results-oriented to a quality-oriented orientation has encouraged schools to implement the concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM). These two approaches, originally developed in the business world, are now being adapted in educational institutions to improve student performance and satisfaction. According to Hidayat and Nugraheni (2022), implementing TQM in schools can continuously improve the learning process, while CRM plays a role in building effective communication between schools and students as educational customers. (Hidayat & Nugraheni, 2022).

Total Quality Management Total Quality Management (TQM) emphasizes continuous quality improvement through the involvement of all school elements—teachers, staff, and leaders—in providing services that meet student expectations. This principle positions student satisfaction as a measure of educational success. Meanwhile, Customer Relationship Management (CRM) focuses on fostering long-term relationships between schools, students, and parents through intensive communication and responsive service. According to Kusumawati, effective CRM implementation in schools can build student trust and loyalty toward the educational institution. (Kusumawati, 2023).

SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi, a private school in the South Tambun area, has strived to implement Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) principles in its management activities. These efforts are evident through the implementation of regular quality evaluation programs, improvements in academic and non-academic services, and optimization of digital communication between the school, students, and parents. These steps demonstrate the school's commitment to improving service quality while strengthening relationships with all educational stakeholders.

However, observations and interviews revealed that some students still complained about the timeliness of administrative services, limited learning facilities, and slow responses to student needs. These complaints illustrate a discrepancy between students' expectations of the school's service quality and the reality they experience. This indicates that student satisfaction has not been fully achieved, despite the school's efforts to implement various improvements through quality improvement programs and communication services.

Empirically, this situation indicates a gap between students' expectations and perceptions of school service quality. Students demand high-quality education, but the implementation of quality principles has not been evenly distributed across all aspects. Sallis (2010) explains that the success of TQM in schools is reflected in the institution's ability to meet student expectations sustainably. This aligns with the findings of Hidayat and Nugraheni (2022), who highlighted service quality discrepancies as a major challenge in implementing education quality management in Indonesia.

In fact, according to Sallis (2010), the success of implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) in schools is reflected in increased student satisfaction and engagement in the learning process. Therefore, complaints from some students indicate that TQM principles have not been optimally implemented across all aspects of school services.

Furthermore, from a Customer Relationship Management (CRM) perspective, the relationship between schools and students should be two-way. Schools need to understand students' needs, interests, and aspirations, and respond quickly to any complaints to build trust and loyalty. Kotler and Keller's book, Marketing Management, emphasizes that CRM success is determined by an institution's ability to manage communications and create long-term, mutually beneficial relationships. (Kotler & Keller, 2016).

The fact that some students still feel dissatisfied indicates that the implementation of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) strategies in schools needs to be strengthened, particularly in terms of personal communication and ongoing student data management. These efforts are crucial for schools to understand individual student needs more deeply and build responsive, long-term satisfaction-oriented relationships. This aligns with Faizah's perspective, which emphasizes that the effectiveness of CRM in educational institutions depends on the school's ability to maintain consistent communication and build trust with students. (Faizah, 2024).

In addition to quality and customer relations, a school's brand image also plays a significant role in influencing student satisfaction. Keller (2003) defines brand image as the collective perception formed in the minds of consumers regarding an institution's excellence, reputation, and identity. In an educational context, a positive school image can foster students' pride and trust in the institution. (Hamidsyukrie & Fahruddin, 2024).

In the context of education, a school's brand image is shaped by its academic reputation, student achievement, teacher competence, and the availability of supporting facilities. A positive school image encourages students to feel proud and satisfied with being part of the institution. Lunarindiah emphasized that a positive school image reflects the success of

educational management in building student trust, loyalty, and satisfaction with the services provided. (Lunarindiah, 2024).

Conversely, if a school's image is weak among students and the community, satisfaction levels can decline even if service quality is good. This situation suggests that brand image plays a mediating role between the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on student satisfaction. A positive school image can strengthen the influence of quality and customer relationships in shaping students' perceptions of satisfaction. (Osman & Al Adwan, 2024).

Several previous studies support the relationship between the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and improvements in quality and student satisfaction. Hidayat found that the implementation of TQM in the learning process at SMP Muhammadiyah 06 Dau Malang increased the effectiveness of educational services by 82%, with student satisfaction with teaching quality increasing by 78%.(Hidayat et al., 2023),Rahmadani and Soddiq's research also shows that the implementation of TQM at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Ma'arif Darussholihin Linfhi made a positive contribution of 0.684 to improving the quality of education and student satisfaction.(Rahmadani & Soddiq, 2023).Meanwhile, Arisanti found that TQM-based school management at SMA Negeri 1 Driyorejo Gresik increased teacher and staff commitment by 81%, which directly impacted student satisfaction with academic services by 75%. These findings confirm that the consistent application of TQM principles has a significant impact on improving service quality and student satisfaction in high schools. (Hana & Fanan, 2024).

In the field of Customer Relationship Management (CRM), Faizah's research shows that the implementation of CRM in educational institutions significantly increases student satisfaction with a coefficient of determination (R^2 = 0.64) and an indirect influence through brand image of 0.58.(Faizah, 2024) These results demonstrate that consistent communication and responsive service can strengthen a school's image and increase student loyalty. Conversely, Rahmad's research found that CRM implementation has no significant impact if the school lacks an integrated communication system between teachers, students, and parents. (Rahmad, 2022).

In terms of brand image, Osman et al. (2024) emphasized that institutional image plays a significant role in shaping student satisfaction and loyalty. The results showed that brand image significantly influenced satisfaction with a coefficient value of β = 0.67 and loyalty with a coefficient value of β = 0.59, while satisfaction acted as a mediating variable with an indirect effect of 0.398. These findings confirm that a positive school image not only improves perceptions of service quality but also encourages students to remain loyal and actively participate in school activities. (Osman & Al Adwan, 2024).

Based on this review, there remains a research gap between the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on student satisfaction, particularly in the context of secondary education. Several studies have shown a positive and significant effect between the implementation of TQM and CRM on student satisfaction (Hidayat et al., 2023; Faizah, 2024), but other findings show inconsistent results

if the school's image has not been firmly established (Osman et al., 2024; Rahmad, 2022). These discrepancies in results underscore the need for more in-depth studies to understand the role of brand image as a mediating variable that can strengthen the relationship between quality, customer relationships, and student satisfaction.

This study also found an empirical gap at SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi, namely a mismatch between efforts to improve service quality and the school's communication strategies with students' perceptions of service quality and the institution's image. Although the school has implemented various TQM and CRM-based programs such as internal quality evaluation, facility improvements, and strengthening digital communication, some students still feel that the service does not fully meet their expectations. This condition indicates a gap between the implementation of managerial policies and the actual experiences of students as recipients of educational services.

Therefore, this research is crucial and urgent to address the theoretical and empirical gaps identified in the field. This study attempts to analyze the extent to which the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) impacts student satisfaction at SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi. Furthermore, this study aims to examine whether the school's brand image acts as a mediating variable that can strengthen the relationship between the implementation of TQM, CRM, and student satisfaction with the school's educational services.

The urgency of this research aligns with the demands of 21st-century educational management, which emphasizes the importance of implementing Total Quality Management (TQM) and strengthening sustainable relationships with educational customers through the concept of Customer Relationship Management (CRM). In this era of intense competition, schools are required not only to maintain academic quality but also to create a satisfying learning experience. Sallis (2010) emphasized that educational quality must be managed comprehensively and sustainably to achieve student satisfaction, while Sukmayadi and Yahya highlighted the importance of managerial innovation in facing the challenges of modern education. Therefore, this research is expected to contribute to the development of an adaptive school management model oriented towards student satisfaction. (Sukmayadi & Halim Yahya, 2020).

If the results of this study prove that the implementation of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) significantly impacts student satisfaction through brand image, schools can use these findings as a basis for formulating strategies to improve quality and strengthen their reputation. These findings can also serve as a reference for school management in developing a more integrated, responsive, and student-satisfaction-oriented service system.

Conversely, even if the influence of TQM and CRM on student satisfaction through brand image proves weak, the results still hold significant value for school development. These findings can serve as indicators of areas that need improvement, including leadership, quality culture, and internal communication systems. Thus, the research results not only

provide an empirical picture of the school's managerial condition but also serve as a basis for strategic evaluation for improving the institution's future performance.

From a theoretical perspective, this study integrates the three management concepts of Total Quality Management (TQM), Customer Relationship Management (CRM), and brand image into a single conceptual model of student satisfaction at the secondary school level. This model combines the principles of quality management, customer relationship management, and perceptions of institutional image as a single entity that mutually influence student satisfaction. This approach has not been widely applied in the context of private schools in Indonesia, even though private educational institutions are increasingly being urged to adopt modern management principles that are efficient, adaptive, and customer-oriented.

Thus, this research not only contributes to the academic development of educational management but also offers practical recommendations for SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi. The research findings are expected to serve as a reference for improving the quality of educational services, strengthening the relationship between schools and students through the application of Customer Relationship Management principles, and building a positive school image amidst increasing competition among private educational institutions.

Based on the description that has been presented previously regarding the background, as well as the urgency, this research is entitled The Influence of Total Quality Management and Customer Relationship Management on Student Satisfaction at SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi with School Brand Image as a Mediating Variable.

2. Research Methods

This research uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research approach. This approach was chosen because the research aims to test the causal relationship between variables through numerical measurement and statistical analysis.

According to Alharahsheh and Pius (2020), explanatory research is used to explain causal relationships and test the influence between variables based on established theories. This approach is suitable for research involving hypothesis testing and analysis of direct and indirect influences, such as in this study, which examined the effect of Total Quality Management (TQM) and Customer Relationship Management (CRM) on Student Satisfaction with Brand Image as a mediating variable.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. The Influence of Total Quality Management on Student Satisfaction

The results of the study indicate that Total Quality Management (TQM) has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction, with a coefficient value of 0.332, a t-statistic of 3.904, and a p-value of 0.000, which means the hypothesis is accepted (Table 4.11). This finding confirms that improving overall quality at SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi has a real contribution in shaping the level of student satisfaction with educational services. Empirically, this relationship illustrates that quality is not merely an administrative factor,

but a strategic factor that influences students' perceptions and experiences in participating in the educational process.

Theoretically, these findings support the principles of total quality management proposed by Deming (1986), which emphasize that quality improvement must be systemic, sustainable, and involve all elements of the organization. In the school context, TQM implementation is evident in teacher consistency in the learning process, accuracy in material delivery, clarity in academic communication, accuracy in administrative services, and the readiness of learning support facilities. When these five pillars are met, these conditions create a stable, comfortable learning experience that meets student expectations, thereby increasing their satisfaction.

Sallis (2010) also emphasized that educational quality is a form of service that reflects the institution's commitment to meeting customer (in this case, student) expectations. Therefore, educational quality is not merely a school's internal condition but is also perceived externally through student experiences. When students see a school committed to meeting consistent quality standards, for example through learning policies, teacher monitoring, academic discipline, and a clean school environment, this positive perception automatically increases their level of satisfaction.

From the perspective of educational customer behavior, Oliver (1997) explains that satisfaction arises when customer expectations are met or exceeded. In this study, good TQM implementation has been shown to have a direct impact on satisfaction indicators such as: students feel they made the right decision to attend school, are willing to provide recommendations, and demonstrate academic loyalty, which is generally reflected in the high mean value of the student satisfaction variable. This means that the stronger the TQM implementation, the more likely the school is to meet students' academic and non-academic expectations.

This finding is consistent with research by Hidayat (2023), Faizah (2024), and Andayani (2023), which shows that TQM is directly related to student satisfaction. In the education sector, consistent quality has been shown to be a greater determinant of student satisfaction than fleeting innovations. This is also relevant to the context of SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi, which is strengthening its quality system as a strategy to increase student satisfaction and interest in enrolling new students.

Practically, the results of this study have important managerial implications: schools need to maintain and expand internal quality standards, particularly in aspects directly perceived by students, such as teacher performance, learning facilities, academic administrative responsiveness, and school culture. Systemic quality improvement will strengthen students' perceptions that the school provides excellent service, thus contributing to loyalty, positive recommendations, and increased school competitiveness in the PPDB (Entrance Exam) competition.

These findings also indicate that TQM not only impacts internal school governance but also serves as a key foundation for student satisfaction and the sustainability of a school's

reputation. Therefore, TQM can be used as a strategic instrument for developing the quality of educational services and sustainably improving student satisfaction.

3.1.1. The Influence of Customer Relationship Management on Student Satisfaction

The results of the study indicate that Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction, with a coefficient value of 0.288, a t-statistic of 2.513, and a p-value of 0.012 (Table 4.11). These results indicate that the better a school manages its relationships with students, the higher the perceived level of satisfaction. CRM in the school context is not only related to formal interactions, but also concerns students' emotional experiences when communicating with teachers and staff, responsiveness to student needs, and the quality of school information services.

From a service marketing theory perspective, Kotler and Keller (2016) state that well-managed relationships can increase trust, emotional comfort, and service perceptions. Schools that are able to build positive interactions through open communication, rapid responses, and personalized service will encourage higher levels of satisfaction. At SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2 Bekasi, responsive service to student issues, clarity of academic information, and attention to detail during the learning process have been shown to be key variables in shaping student satisfaction.

This research also reinforces Buttle's (2009) argument that CRM effectively increases satisfaction when it creates humanistic and ongoing interactions. In a school context, students want more than just fast administrative services; they also want personal attention, a hearing of their aspirations, and solutions to learning challenges. When schools meet these emotional needs, satisfaction levels increase because students feel valued as individuals.

Empirically, the findings of this study are consistent with Rahmanda (2022), Zahra (2023), and Nugroho (2024), who found that CRM significantly contributes to student satisfaction. Good interactions between schools and students have been shown to increase students' positive perceptions of the quality of services provided. In the case of SMA Pusaka Nusantara 2, students perceived that the school was attentive to their needs, resulting in greater satisfaction with the overall learning experience.

From a managerial perspective, these results provide strategic implications that CRM needs to be an integral part of school policy. Improving the quality of school-student relationships can be achieved through enhanced classroom communication, prompt academic services, effective counseling, and accelerated responses to student issues. The better these relationships, the higher the potential for students to demonstrate academic loyalty and provide positive recommendations about the school.

These findings also reinforce the point that CRM is not just a business marketing strategy, but is highly relevant in the service-oriented world of education. Schools that are able to build strong emotional and academic relationships with students will experience higher levels of student satisfaction, ultimately improving the quality of the learning experience and the school's public reputation.

3.1.2. The Influence of Brand Image on Student Satisfaction

The analysis results show that brand image has a positive and significant influence on student satisfaction, with a coefficient value of 0.360, a t-statistic of 3.588, and a p-value of 0.000 (Table). This value indicates that the more positive the school's image in the eyes of students, the higher their level of satisfaction with the learning experience and educational services.

According to Keller's theory (2013), brand image is a perception created from direct and indirect experiences that shape an assessment of an institution. In the context of schools, brand image is built through the quality of facilities, teacher competence, school discipline, learning environment, student relationships, and a consistent academic reputation. If students perceive a school as a high-quality, friendly, and competent institution, these perceptions are reinforced through satisfaction with all aspects of the school's services.

These findings also align with educational marketing theory that positive perceptions of a school play a significant role in shaping students' evaluations of their experiences. A strong school image creates a halo effect, where students tend to evaluate all aspects of the school positively due to a positive overall impression. For example, students who are proud of their school's image are more likely to positively perceive the school's learning practices, facilities, and policies.

Empirically, these findings are consistent with research by Fathony (2022), Lunarindiah (2024), and Octaviani (2024), which concluded that brand image is a determining factor in student satisfaction. Schools that demonstrate a positive reputation create a more enjoyable, motivating, and secure learning environment for students. Thus, this positive perception significantly improves student satisfaction.

The managerial implications of these findings are significant. Schools need to strengthen their brand identity through consistent quality, academic achievement, student character building, effective public communication, and improved facilities. A positive school image not only impacts student satisfaction but also strengthens the school's appeal in the admissions process.

Overall, the strong influence of brand image on student satisfaction suggests that perception is a crucial factor that cannot be ignored. A school's reputation determines how students evaluate their experience, so the more positive the school's image, the higher the level of student satisfaction.

3.2. The Influence of Total Quality Management on Student Satisfaction through Brand Image

The results of the indirect effect analysis show that TQM has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction through brand image, with a coefficient value of 0.131, a t-statistic of 2.081, and a p-value of 0.038 (Table). This means that part of the influence of TQM on student satisfaction is channeled through strengthening the school's image. The better the quality of service implemented by the school, the stronger the school image formed, and ultimately the higher the student satisfaction.

Theoretically, these findings support Deming's view that consistent quality creates a good reputation, and this reputation influences customer satisfaction. When schools implement TQM through continuous quality improvement, consistent instruction, prompt administrative services, and proper facility maintenance, students will develop positive perceptions of the school. These perceptions then become the foundation for increased student satisfaction with educational services.

School brand image is essentially a form of students' emotional and cognitive evaluation of the quality of the educational organization. When TQM is implemented comprehensively, students perceive the school as a professional, credible institution capable of providing quality educational services. This perception not only increases student pride in the school but also reinforces positive evaluations of the learning experience, significantly increasing satisfaction.

Empirically, the results of this study align with the findings of Octaviani (2024), Kartini (2022), and Andayani (2023), which showed that brand image mediates the relationship between service quality and satisfaction. The implementation of TQM not only works directly but also creates positive perceptions that then strengthen the overall student experience.

The managerial implications of these findings are significant: if schools want to increase student satisfaction, quality must be a key strategy for image enhancement. Strong quality will shape positive perceptions and enhance the school's long-term appeal. Therefore, schools should integrate TQM throughout the educational process and use the resulting quality improvements to build a strong brand image.

Thus, the combination of TQM and brand image will be a strategic foundation in increasing student satisfaction and strengthening the school's competitive advantage.

3.2.1. The Influence of Customer Relationship Management on Student Satisfaction through Brand Image

The analysis results show that CRM has a positive and significant effect on student satisfaction through brand image, with a coefficient value of 0.170, a t-statistic of 4.393, and a p-value of 0.000 (Table 4.12). These findings indicate that CRM not only directly influences satisfaction but also creates a positive perception of the school's image, which in turn increases student satisfaction.

Theoretically, Kotler and Keller (2016) state that a good relationship between service providers and customers strengthens positive perceptions of the organization. In an educational context, when students experience positive interactions with teachers and the school, warm communication, caring, and academic attention, the school's image in their eyes is significantly strengthened. This image then results in positive assessments of the learning experience, thereby increasing student satisfaction.

Brand image In this context, CRM acts as an emotional bridge. CRM creates a sense of appreciation and care, while brand image transforms these experiences into positive perceptions and pride in the school. Therefore, a humanistic school-student relationship not

only increases immediate satisfaction but also builds the school's reputation as a friendly institution that cares about student development.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Lunarindiah (2024), Zahra (2023), and Rahmanda (2022), which showed that CRM influences institutional image, and that this image, in turn, significantly impacts customer satisfaction. In other words, CRM and brand image work together to reinforce each other in shaping satisfaction.

The managerial implications of these findings are quite strategic: schools need to strengthen CRM not only to enhance direct relationships with students but also to build a stronger and more credible reputation. This can be achieved by strengthening communication between teachers and students, increasing empathy in academic services, better managing student complaints, and improving academic and non-academic consulting services.

Thus, effective CRM will strengthen the school's image, which becomes a key channel for increasing long-term student satisfaction. Schools that manage relationships well will have a strong reputation, ultimately increasing overall student loyalty and satisfaction.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis using SEM-PLS and the discussion in Chapter IV, this study produces several important conclusions, including: 1. Total Quality Management (TQM) has a positive and significant impact on student satisfaction. This demonstrates that consistent educational service quality, standardized learning processes, and continuous improvement can directly increase student satisfaction. 2. Customer Relationship Management (CRM) has also been proven to have a positive and significant impact on student satisfaction, so that the quality of school-student relationships, effective communication, and responsiveness of service are important factors in forming positive perceptions of educational services. 3. Brand image has a positive and significant influence on student satisfaction, indicating that a strong school image, good academic reputation, and consistent institutional identity increase student pride and their satisfaction in participating in the educational process. 4. TQM has a significant influence on student satisfaction through brand image, so that school image becomes an important channel that strengthens the impact of quality on satisfaction. 5. CRM also has a significant influence on student satisfaction through brand image, which means that the quality of the school-student relationship contributes to forming positive perceptions which then increase the level of satisfaction. Overall, this research model is able to explain 68.5% of the variation in satisfaction. students. These findings confirm that service quality, relationship quality, and Brand Image is the main factor that shapes student satisfaction at Pusaka High School Nusantara 2 Bekasi.

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