



Enhancing Student Satisfaction Through Service Excellence in Higher Education Administration: A Qualitative Case Study

Muhammad Wahyu Ariyanto^a, M Fahmi Zakariyah^a, Khudrotun Nafisah^b, Hafis Muaddab^c

^a Universitas Negeri Surabaya, Surabaya, Indonesia

^b Darul Ulum University, Jombang, Indonesia

^c Universitas Negeri Malang, Malang, Indonesia

ARTICLE INFO

ABSTRACT:

Keywords:

Service Excellence; Educational Administration; Service Quality; Student Satisfaction; Higher Education

Article History:

Received May 1, 2026

Revised May 12, 2026

Accepted May 22, 2026

Available online May 31, 2026

Correspondence:

Muhammad Wahyu Ariyanto,
office administration education,
Universitas Negeri Surabaya,
Surabaya, Indonesia. Email:
muhammadariyanto@unesa.ac.id

This study explores service excellence strategies in improving the quality of educational administrative services to support student satisfaction at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Using a qualitative case study approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis involving administrative leaders, administrative staff, and students. The findings reveal that service quality improvement is implemented through several strategic dimensions, including service responsiveness, administrative standardization, staff professionalism, complaint management optimization, and digital transformation. These strategies contribute significantly to improving administrative efficiency, communication transparency, institutional trust, and students' overall service experiences. The study further demonstrates that student satisfaction is influenced not only by procedural outcomes but also by interpersonal interactions such as empathy, responsiveness, and staff willingness to provide assistance. In addition, the findings indicate that challenges in service quality improvement include resistance to organizational change, limited human resources, inconsistent inter-unit coordination, and infrastructure constraints. The study reinforces the relevance of service excellence and SERVQUAL perspectives in higher education administration while highlighting the importance of sustainable institutional commitment, digital governance, and student-centered service culture. This research provides practical insights for higher education institutions in developing effective administrative service improvement strategies to strengthen educational quality and institutional competitiveness.

This is an open-access article under the [CC-BY-SA](https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-sa/4.0/) license.



INTRODUCTION

Higher education institutions are increasingly required to provide high-quality administrative services as part of their commitment to institutional accountability, student-centered learning, and educational quality assurance. In contemporary higher education systems, administrative services are no longer perceived merely as supporting activities but as strategic components that directly influence students' academic experiences, institutional trust, and overall satisfaction (Ali et al., 2021). The quality of educational administrative services has become particularly important in the context of global competition among universities, digital transformation, and increasing student expectations regarding efficiency, transparency, and accessibility of institutional services (Pham et al., 2023).

Student administrative services in higher education encompass various activities, including academic correspondence, enrollment services, consultation support, academic information dissemination, graduation administration, and complaint management. The effectiveness of these services substantially shapes students' perceptions of institutional quality and organizational responsiveness. According to Total Quality Management (TQM) principles in education, students should be positioned as primary stakeholders whose needs and experiences become central to continuous institutional improvement (Sallis, 2002). Consequently, universities are increasingly pressured to develop service systems that are responsive, technology-driven, and student-oriented.

The importance of service quality in educational administration has been extensively discussed in the service management literature. The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) identifies reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles as fundamental dimensions influencing customer satisfaction. In higher education contexts, these dimensions are strongly associated with students' perceptions of administrative effectiveness and institutional professionalism (Yeo, 2008). Furthermore, Grönroos (1984) emphasized that service quality is determined not only by technical outcomes but also by the functional process through which services are delivered. Similarly, Cronin and Taylor (1992) argued that perceived service quality significantly contributes to customer satisfaction and institutional loyalty.

In recent years, the rapid development of digital technologies has transformed educational administrative systems and increased expectations for integrated and efficient services. Universities are expected to provide digital administrative platforms that enable students to access information quickly, process academic documents efficiently, and



communicate effectively with institutional staff (Bond et al., 2021). However, despite the growing emphasis on digital governance and service excellence, many higher education institutions continue to experience challenges related to delayed administrative responses, inconsistent information delivery, ineffective complaint handling, bureaucratic complexity, and uneven service quality among administrative units. These issues often negatively affect student satisfaction and institutional reputation (Gunarto & Hurriyati, 2020; Espinoza Montes et al., 2024).

Within the Indonesian higher education context, administrative service quality remains an important issue, particularly in public universities that manage large student populations and complex academic systems. Public universities are increasingly expected to improve service efficiency, institutional transparency, and student-centered governance to maintain educational competitiveness and public trust (Mulyono et al., 2022). Universitas Negeri Surabaya, as one of the major public universities in Indonesia, is required to continuously improve the quality of educational administrative services to support institutional competitiveness and student satisfaction. Although the university has implemented various administrative innovations and digital service systems, students still encounter several administrative challenges, including slow response times, limited coordination among administrative units, procedural ambiguity, and inconsistent service experiences during peak academic periods. These conditions indicate that improving administrative quality requires not only procedural adjustments but also comprehensive service excellence strategies supported by organizational commitment and sustainable management practices.

Several previous studies have examined the relationship between service quality and student satisfaction in higher education. Handono (2023) found that employee competence and service quality significantly influence student satisfaction in educational institutions. Merdekawati (2024) emphasized that the quality of academic services is closely associated with students' perceptions of institutional performance, while Irmawati (2025) identified service quality as a major determinant of educational effectiveness. Nevertheless, most previous studies primarily employed quantitative approaches focusing on the measurement of student satisfaction levels and SERVQUAL dimensions. Limited studies have explored how service excellence strategies are institutionally developed, implemented, and managed within educational administrative systems, particularly from a qualitative perspective.

Furthermore, previous research rarely investigates the integration of digital transformation, organizational culture, staff professionalism, complaint management, and



service standardization as interconnected strategic components of service excellence in higher education administration. Research specifically addressing service excellence strategies in Indonesian public universities also remains relatively limited. This indicates the existence of an important research gap concerning the strategic and managerial dimensions of educational administrative service improvement in higher education institutions.

This study addresses these gaps by exploring service excellence strategies implemented to improve the quality of educational administrative services in supporting student satisfaction at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. Unlike previous studies that predominantly focus on service outcomes and satisfaction measurement, this research emphasizes strategic institutional processes, service management practices, organizational challenges, and practical efforts undertaken to achieve service excellence in university administrative systems.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze service excellence strategies in improving the quality of educational administrative services to support student satisfaction in higher education. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of educational administration and service quality literature, particularly within higher education contexts, and practically to the improvement of student-centered administrative service management in universities.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach using a case study design to explore service excellence strategies in improving the quality of educational administrative services to support student satisfaction at Universitas Negeri Surabaya. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of strategic service processes, institutional practices, organizational challenges, and stakeholder experiences related to educational administrative services in higher education settings. Qualitative research enables researchers to explore social phenomena comprehensively and interpret participants' perspectives within their natural contexts (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The study adopted a case study method because it allows researchers to investigate contemporary phenomena holistically within real-life institutional settings (Yin, 2018). This research specifically focused on the academic administration unit at Universitas Negeri Surabaya, particularly educational administrative services associated with academic correspondence, student consultation services, academic document processing, complaint management, and communication between students and administrative personnel.



Participants were selected using purposive sampling techniques based on their direct involvement and experience in educational administrative services. Purposive sampling is appropriate in qualitative research because it enables researchers to identify participants who possess relevant knowledge and substantial experience related to the research objectives (Sugiyono, 2020). The informants consisted of administrative leaders, faculty administrative officers, administrative staff members, and students who had directly interacted with university administrative services.

A total of 12 informants participated in this study, consisting of four administrative leaders, four administrative staff members, and four active students representing different faculties. The inclusion of multiple participant groups was intended to ensure data richness, enhance contextual understanding, and obtain diverse perspectives regarding the implementation of service excellence strategies and student satisfaction in educational administration.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were conducted to obtain comprehensive information regarding service quality improvement strategies, administrative practices, institutional challenges, digital service implementation, and students' perceptions of administrative service experiences. Each interview lasted approximately 45–60 minutes and was conducted face-to-face with participant consent. The interviews were audio-recorded and transcribed verbatim to facilitate systematic analysis.

Direct observation was conducted to examine the actual implementation of administrative service processes, staff responsiveness, communication patterns, service procedures, and the overall service environment within the university administration offices. In addition, document analysis was used to support data triangulation through the examination of institutional documents, including service guidelines, standard operating procedures (SOPs), complaint records, service evaluation reports, and administrative policy documents.

To ensure the trustworthiness and credibility of the findings, this study applied source triangulation, technique triangulation, and member checking. According to Miles et al. (2014), triangulation is essential in qualitative research to strengthen data validity and improve the credibility of research findings. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different categories of participants, while technique triangulation involved cross-checking findings derived from interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was also conducted by confirming interpreted findings with selected participants to

ensure interpretive accuracy and consistency.

Data analysis followed the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), consisting of data collection, data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. Data analysis was conducted continuously throughout the research process to identify emerging themes, recurring patterns, and strategic dimensions related to service excellence implementation in educational administrative services. The analysis process involved open coding, data categorization, thematic interpretation, and synthesis of findings to develop a comprehensive understanding of institutional service improvement strategies and their implications for student satisfaction.

Ethical considerations were carefully maintained throughout the research process. Participation was voluntary, and all participants provided informed consent prior to data collection. Participant anonymity and confidentiality were ensured by removing personally identifiable information from interview transcripts and research reporting. The researchers also ensured that the collected data were used exclusively for academic purposes.

This methodological approach enabled the researchers to comprehensively examine how service excellence strategies were implemented within educational administrative services and how these strategies contributed to improving student satisfaction in higher education institutions.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The findings of this study indicate that service excellence strategies implemented at Universitas Negeri Surabaya play an important role in improving the quality of educational administrative services and supporting student satisfaction. The analysis revealed several major strategic dimensions influencing service quality improvement, including service responsiveness, administrative efficiency, digital service optimization, staff professionalism, and complaint management systems. These dimensions collectively contribute to strengthening institutional trust, improving administrative effectiveness, and enhancing students' overall service experiences.

Current Condition of Educational Administrative Services

The findings demonstrate that the university has made considerable efforts to develop accessible and student-oriented administrative services. Educational administrative services provided by the institution include academic correspondence, study plan approval, graduation



administration, consultation services, dissemination of academic information, and complaint handling mechanisms. These services are strategically important because administrative quality substantially influences students' perceptions of institutional effectiveness and educational quality (Sallis, 2002).

However, despite ongoing improvement efforts, several administrative problems remain evident. Interviews with students revealed that delays in administrative responses, inconsistent information delivery among administrative officers, unclear service procedures, and limited responsiveness in urgent situations continue to affect students' service experiences. These problems become particularly visible during peak academic periods such as course registration, thesis submission, and graduation preparation.

“Administrative responses are sometimes slow, especially during thesis administration and graduation periods. Students often need to contact several offices before receiving clear information.” (SP#002)

“Different administrative officers sometimes provide different explanations regarding the same procedure, which creates confusion among students.” (SP#004)

The findings also indicate that administrative staff encounter substantial institutional pressures in managing service demands. Administrative personnel acknowledged that workload imbalance, limited human resources, and coordination challenges between faculty administration and central university administration often reduce service efficiency and responsiveness.

“The number of service requests often exceeds the available staff capacity, particularly during busy academic schedules, which affects response speed and service consistency.” (AS#001)

These findings suggest that improving administrative service quality requires not only technical procedural adjustments but also strategic organizational management. This result supports the SERVQUAL perspective proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), which emphasizes responsiveness and reliability as critical determinants of perceived service quality. The findings further indicate that students evaluate service quality not only based on service outcomes but also through their overall administrative experiences and communication interactions.

Service Excellence Strategies Implemented

The university applies service excellence strategies through five main approaches. First, improving responsiveness by establishing faster communication channels between students and administrative staff through integrated digital platforms such as academic information systems, official email services, and student service helpdesks. This strategy helps reduce service delays and improves access to administrative information. Digital responsiveness reflects the institutional effort to enhance service reliability and reduce service gaps (Cronin & Taylor, 1 The findings reveal that Universitas Negeri Surabaya implements service excellence through several interconnected strategic approaches aimed at improving administrative quality, institutional responsiveness, and student satisfaction. These strategies demonstrate the university's institutional commitment to developing student-centered administrative services capable of responding to increasing demands for efficiency, transparency, and digital accessibility in higher education.

Strengthening Service Responsiveness Through Integrated Communication Systems

One of the primary strategies implemented by the university involves improving administrative responsiveness through integrated communication systems connecting students and administrative personnel. The university has developed multiple digital communication platforms, including academic information systems, institutional email services, online consultation channels, and student helpdesk mechanisms to facilitate faster and more accessible communication processes.

The findings indicate that digital communication systems significantly improve administrative responsiveness by reducing delays in information delivery and simplifying communication between students and administrative units. Administrative personnel explained that integrated communication platforms enable staff members to respond more efficiently to student requests and minimize administrative bottlenecks during peak academic periods.

“The implementation of integrated digital communication systems helps administrative staff respond more quickly to students’ academic needs and reduces delays in administrative coordination.” (AS#002)

Students also perceived digital responsiveness as an important indicator of institutional professionalism and service reliability. Faster communication processes increased students’ confidence in administrative services and reduced uncertainty regarding academic procedures.

This finding supports Cronin and Taylor (1992), who emphasized that responsiveness is a central determinant of customer satisfaction and service quality perception.

The findings further suggest that responsiveness in educational administration extends beyond technical speed and includes institutional willingness to provide timely, accurate, and supportive communication to students. In this context, responsiveness becomes an important dimension of organizational trust and service effectiveness within higher education institutions.

Strengthening Standard Operating Procedures and Service Transparency

Another important strategy involves strengthening standard operating procedures (SOPs) to improve service consistency, transparency, and procedural clarity. The university continuously updates and standardizes administrative procedures to ensure that students receive uniform information and clear guidance regarding academic administrative requirements.

The findings indicate that procedural standardization helps reduce administrative ambiguity, minimize service duplication, and improve coordination among administrative units. Students reported that clear procedures helped them better understand administrative requirements and reduced confusion during document processing and academic administration activities.

“Clear procedures make administrative processes easier to follow because students know exactly what documents and steps are required.” (SP#003)

Administrative leaders also emphasized that standardized procedures improve institutional accountability and reduce inconsistencies in service delivery practices across faculties and departments. These findings align with Grönroos (1984), who argued that service quality is strongly influenced by the consistency and reliability of service delivery processes.

The study further demonstrates that service transparency contributes significantly to students’ perceptions of fairness, professionalism, and institutional credibility. Consequently, procedural clarity functions not only as an operational mechanism but also as an important component of institutional trust-building.

Enhancing Staff Competence and Professional Service Culture

The university also prioritizes human resource development as a central component of service excellence implementation. Various training programs are regularly conducted to

strengthen staff competence in communication skills, customer service orientation, digital literacy, and problem-solving capacity.

The findings reveal that administrative leaders view professional competence as a strategic factor influencing service quality and student satisfaction. Administrative services are not solely dependent on technical procedures but also on staff attitudes, empathy, communication effectiveness, and willingness to assist students.

“Administrative staff must not only understand procedures but also communicate professionally and empathetically with students.” (AL#001)

Students similarly emphasized the importance of friendliness, patience, and supportive attitudes during administrative interactions. Positive interpersonal experiences significantly influenced students’ evaluations of institutional service quality.

These findings support Handono (2023), who identified employee competence as a significant determinant of student satisfaction in educational institutions. The findings further suggest that service excellence in higher education administration requires the development of a professional service culture emphasizing empathy, responsiveness, and student-oriented values.

Optimizing Complaint Management and Continuous Service Evaluation

Another important strategy identified in this study involves optimizing complaint management systems and institutionalizing continuous service evaluation practices. The university provides formal complaint channels that enable students to submit feedback, report service problems, and communicate administrative concerns more systematically.

The findings demonstrate that student complaints are treated as strategic institutional inputs for identifying service weaknesses and improving administrative performance. Administrative personnel acknowledged that feedback mechanisms help institutions evaluate service effectiveness and formulate improvement strategies more accurately.

“Students feel more appreciated when there are formal channels to submit complaints and receive follow-up responses from the administration.” (Student Participant 1)

This strategy reflects the principles of continuous quality improvement proposed by Sallis (2002), which emphasize the importance of stakeholder feedback in organizational development and educational quality management. The findings further indicate that effective

complaint management contributes to improving institutional accountability, service transparency, and student trust.

Moreover, complaint management systems help universities identify recurring service problems and improve institutional responsiveness toward students' academic and administrative needs. Therefore, feedback mechanisms function not only as evaluative tools but also as strategic instruments for sustaining service excellence.

Accelerating Digital Transformation in Educational Administration

The findings also reveal that digital transformation has become a major institutional strategy for improving administrative service efficiency and accessibility. The university increasingly integrates educational administrative processes into online systems to simplify academic procedures, accelerate document processing, and reduce physical administrative barriers.

Administrative personnel explained that digital services significantly improve operational efficiency while reducing manual administrative workloads. Students similarly perceived digital services as more flexible, practical, and accessible, particularly in accessing academic information and submitting administrative documents.

“Online administrative systems make academic services more practical because students can access services without needing to visit the office repeatedly.” (SP#004)

The findings are consistent with Putri and Hidayat (2022), who argued that information technology integration substantially improves educational service quality and institutional efficiency. The study further demonstrates that digital transformation contributes not only to administrative modernization but also to improving institutional responsiveness, accessibility, and service transparency.

However, the findings also indicate that successful digital transformation requires organizational readiness, staff adaptability, and continuous technological support. Without adequate institutional commitment and staff capacity development, digital systems may not fully achieve their intended service improvement objectives.

Overall, these service excellence strategies reflect the implementation of core SERVQUAL dimensions, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Parasuraman et al., 1988). More importantly, the findings demonstrate that service excellence in higher education administration should be understood as a multidimensional

institutional process involving technological innovation, organizational culture, professional competence, procedural transparency, and continuous quality improvement.

Challenges in Improving Service Quality

Despite the implementation of various service excellence strategies, the findings reveal that several institutional challenges continue to hinder efforts to improve the quality of educational administrative services. These challenges indicate that service excellence in higher education administration is not solely dependent on procedural improvement but also influenced by organizational culture, institutional readiness, resource capacity, and managerial sustainability.

Resistance to Organizational and Digital Transformation

One of the primary challenges identified in this study is resistance to organizational change, particularly in adapting to fully digital administrative systems. Although the university has increasingly implemented digital administrative platforms, some administrative personnel continue to rely on conventional service practices and manual administrative procedures. This situation slows the implementation of innovation and creates inconsistencies between institutional digitalization goals and actual administrative practices.

“Some administrative processes are already digitalized, but several staff members are still more comfortable using conventional working patterns, which sometimes delays service adaptation.” (AS#002)

The findings suggest that digital transformation in educational administration is not merely a technological issue but also an organizational and cultural challenge. Institutional innovation requires changes in work culture, staff mindset, and organizational adaptability. Without adequate institutional support and continuous professional development, digital transformation may encounter operational resistance that reduces the effectiveness of service improvement initiatives.

These findings reflect broader challenges commonly experienced by higher education institutions during organizational modernization processes. Digital transformation requires not only technological infrastructure but also institutional readiness, leadership commitment, and employee adaptability to sustain long-term service innovation.

Human Resource Limitations and Workload Pressure

Another major challenge concerns the imbalance between the number of administrative personnel and the increasing volume of student service demands. Administrative staff reported experiencing substantial workload pressure, particularly during peak academic periods such as student enrollment, thesis administration, and graduation preparation.

“During busy academic periods, the number of service requests increases significantly, while the available staff capacity remains limited.” (AS#001)

The findings indicate that limited human resources reduce administrative responsiveness, increase service delays, and affect service consistency. Excessive workloads also create emotional pressure among administrative staff, which may negatively influence communication quality and interpersonal service experiences.

This finding is consistent with Rahman and Sari (2020), who argued that human resource limitations frequently become barriers to improving educational service quality. The study further demonstrates that service excellence cannot be achieved effectively without adequate institutional investment in staffing capacity and workload management systems.

Moreover, the findings imply that administrative service quality is closely associated with organizational resource sustainability. Universities with high student populations require proportional staffing structures to maintain effective service delivery and institutional responsiveness.

Inconsistent Coordination Across Administrative Units

The study also identified coordination challenges among administrative units across faculties and departments. Differences in procedural implementation, communication practices, and administrative interpretations sometimes result in inconsistent service standards and fragmented student experiences.

Students reported that administrative procedures occasionally vary between faculties, creating confusion regarding service requirements and document processing mechanisms. One student participant explained:

“Administrative procedures sometimes differ across faculties, even for similar academic processes, which makes students confused about the correct procedures.” (SP#002)

These findings suggest that weak inter-unit coordination reduces institutional service uniformity and negatively affects students’ perceptions of administrative professionalism.

Inconsistent communication among administrative units may also reduce organizational efficiency and increase bureaucratic complexity.

The findings further indicate that service excellence requires integrated institutional governance capable of maintaining coordination, consistency, and procedural alignment across administrative structures. Without effective coordination mechanisms, administrative modernization efforts may produce uneven service quality and fragmented institutional experiences.

Financial Constraints and Sustainability Challenges

Another important challenge identified in this study relates to budget limitations affecting staff development programs and service infrastructure improvement. Administrative leaders acknowledged that sustaining service excellence initiatives requires substantial institutional investment, particularly in digital infrastructure, staff training, and continuous quality improvement programs.

“Improving service quality requires continuous investment, especially for technology development and staff competency training.” (AL#002)

The findings indicate that financial limitations may reduce the sustainability of service innovation and slow long-term institutional development. Inadequate investment in service infrastructure potentially weakens institutional competitiveness and limits universities’ ability to respond effectively to changing student expectations.

These findings demonstrate that service excellence should not be viewed as a short-term managerial program but rather as a long-term institutional commitment requiring strategic planning, organizational support, and sustainable resource allocation. Service quality improvement in higher education administration depends heavily on the institution’s capacity to integrate technological development, human resource management, and organizational sustainability within a comprehensive service strategy.

Overall, the challenges identified in this study highlight that improving educational administrative service quality requires multidimensional institutional transformation involving organizational culture change, human resource strengthening, inter-unit coordination, technological readiness, and sustainable managerial commitment. These findings reinforce the argument that service excellence in higher education administration is a continuous organizational process rather than a temporary operational intervention.

Impact on Student Satisfaction

The findings of this study demonstrate that the implementation of service excellence strategies significantly contributes to improving student satisfaction within educational administrative services. Students reported higher levels of satisfaction when administrative services were responsive, communication processes were transparent, and service procedures were clearly communicated. These findings indicate that administrative quality plays an important role in shaping students' perceptions of institutional professionalism, reliability, and organizational effectiveness.

The study further reveals that responsiveness represents one of the most influential dimensions affecting student satisfaction. Fast problem resolution, timely communication, and efficient administrative coordination increased students' trust in institutional services and reduced administrative uncertainty. In higher education contexts, students increasingly expect administrative systems capable of responding quickly and accurately to academic needs, particularly within digitally oriented educational environments. Consequently, responsiveness functions not only as an operational attribute but also as an institutional indicator of organizational commitment to student-centered services.

In addition, the findings indicate that student satisfaction is influenced not only by service outcomes but also by the quality of interpersonal service experiences. Students highly valued empathy, friendliness, supportive communication, and the willingness of administrative staff to provide assistance during administrative processes. Positive interpersonal interactions contributed substantially to students' emotional comfort and institutional trust.

“Students feel more comfortable when administrative staff communicate politely, respond patiently, and genuinely try to help solve administrative problems.” (SP#003)

These findings support Gunarto and Hurriyati (2020), who argued that positive service experiences significantly contribute to satisfaction and institutional loyalty in higher education. The findings also reinforce the argument that service quality in educational administration extends beyond procedural efficiency and includes relational and emotional dimensions of service interaction.

Furthermore, the study demonstrates that service excellence contributes not only to individual student satisfaction but also to broader institutional outcomes, including institutional reputation, student retention, and the overall quality of academic experiences. Students tend to develop stronger institutional trust when administrative systems are perceived as transparent,

accessible, and professionally managed. In this context, administrative services become an integral component of institutional image and educational competitiveness.

The findings also indicate that digital service optimization positively influences students' perceptions of institutional modernity and service accessibility. The integration of digital administrative systems reduces procedural complexity and increases service flexibility, particularly for students requiring fast access to academic information and administrative support. This finding suggests that digital transformation has become an important dimension of service quality within contemporary higher education institutions.

Consistent with Merdekawati (2024), the findings confirm that student satisfaction is closely associated with perceptions of academic service quality and institutional credibility. However, this study further demonstrates that satisfaction is multidimensional and influenced by organizational responsiveness, communication effectiveness, emotional service experiences, and institutional adaptability to students' evolving needs.

Therefore, service excellence should be understood not merely as an operational responsibility but as a strategic institutional investment capable of strengthening organizational trust, improving educational experiences, and sustaining institutional competitiveness in higher education environments.

Theoretical Implications

The findings of this study contribute theoretically to the development of service excellence and service quality literature within the context of educational administration in higher education institutions. This study strengthens the application of the SERVQUAL framework proposed by Parasuraman et al. (1988), particularly regarding the importance of responsiveness, reliability, assurance, empathy, and tangibles in shaping student satisfaction within university administrative services.

However, the findings also extend previous service quality perspectives by demonstrating that educational administrative service quality should not be viewed solely as a customer satisfaction outcome but also as a multidimensional institutional management process involving organizational culture, digital transformation, communication practices, professional competence, and continuous quality improvement mechanisms.

The study further highlights that service excellence in higher education administration is strongly influenced by relational and experiential dimensions of service interactions. Students evaluate institutional quality not only based on procedural efficiency but also through



interpersonal communication, emotional experiences, and perceptions of institutional care and responsiveness. These findings broaden the understanding of service excellence by emphasizing the integration of operational effectiveness and human-centered service values within educational administration contexts.

In addition, this study contributes to the growing discourse regarding digital transformation in higher education administration. The findings demonstrate that digital administrative systems influence service accessibility, institutional responsiveness, and students' perceptions of organizational professionalism. Consequently, digital transformation should be conceptualized not only as technological modernization but also as a strategic component of institutional service excellence.

The findings also reinforce the relevance of continuous quality improvement principles proposed by Sallis (2002), particularly regarding the importance of feedback mechanisms, institutional adaptability, and stakeholder-oriented service management in sustaining educational quality improvement.

Practical Implications

Practically, the findings suggest that higher education institutions need to develop sustainable and integrated service improvement strategies to strengthen educational administrative quality and student satisfaction. Universities should prioritize the development of responsive digital administrative systems capable of improving communication efficiency, reducing procedural delays, and increasing service accessibility for students.

The findings also indicate the importance of strengthening staff competence through continuous professional development programs focusing not only on technical administrative skills but also on communication effectiveness, empathy, customer service orientation, and problem-solving capacity. Administrative personnel play a central role in shaping students' service experiences and institutional trust; therefore, human resource development should become a strategic institutional priority.

Furthermore, universities need to ensure service standardization and coordination consistency across faculties and administrative units to minimize procedural ambiguity and fragmented service experiences. Institutional governance structures should support integrated communication systems and standardized service procedures to improve administrative transparency and organizational effectiveness.

The study also highlights the importance of institutionalizing student feedback mechanisms as part of continuous service evaluation processes. Student complaints and feedback should be treated as strategic institutional resources for identifying service weaknesses and improving organizational responsiveness. In this context, service evaluation should function not only as a monitoring mechanism but also as an instrument for sustaining long-term institutional learning and quality improvement.

Importantly, administrative leaders should position service excellence as a core organizational culture rather than a temporary managerial initiative. Sustainable service quality improvement requires long-term institutional commitment, organizational adaptability, and continuous investment in digital infrastructure, staff development, and quality assurance systems.

Finally, the findings suggest that student satisfaction can serve as an important strategic performance indicator in evaluating the effectiveness of educational administrative services. Universities capable of maintaining responsive, transparent, and student-oriented administrative systems are more likely to strengthen institutional trust, improve educational experiences, and enhance organizational competitiveness within increasingly dynamic higher education environments.

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that service excellence strategies play a crucial role in improving the quality of educational administrative services and enhancing student satisfaction in higher education. The findings demonstrate that service responsiveness, procedural transparency, staff professionalism, complaint management, and digital transformation collectively contribute to strengthening institutional trust, administrative efficiency, and students' overall service experiences.

The study further reveals that student satisfaction is shaped not only by administrative outcomes but also by interpersonal service experiences, particularly responsiveness, empathy, communication quality, and problem-solving effectiveness. These findings reinforce the relevance of the SERVQUAL framework while extending the understanding that service excellence in higher education administration should be viewed as a multidimensional institutional process involving organizational culture, technological readiness, and continuous quality improvement.

Practically, higher education institutions need to develop sustainable student-centered



administrative systems through integrated digital services, continuous staff development, standardized procedures, and systematic feedback mechanisms. Service excellence should therefore be positioned as a strategic organizational culture rather than merely an operational function.

Although this study is limited to a single university context, it provides important insights into how service excellence can strengthen educational administration and institutional competitiveness. Future studies are recommended to examine comparative institutional contexts and explore the long-term impact of digital governance and organizational culture on administrative service quality in higher education.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to Universitas Negeri Surabaya for providing support and research access in conducting this study. Special appreciation is extended to the academic administration unit, administrative staff, faculty officers, and students who willingly participated as informants and shared valuable insights regarding the implementation of educational administrative services.

REFERENCES

- Ali, F., Rasoolimanesh, S. M., Sarstedt, M., Ringle, C. M., & Ryu, K. (2021). An assessment of the use of partial least squares structural equation modeling in hospitality research. *International Journal of Contemporary Hospitality Management*, 33(1), 514–538. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJCHM-12-2020-1450>
- Bond, M., Bedenlier, S., Marín, V. I., & Händel, M. (2021). Emergency remote teaching in higher education: Mapping the first global online semester. *International Journal of Educational Technology in Higher Education*, 18(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1186/s41239-021-00282-x>
- Cronin, J. J., & Taylor, S. A. (1992). Measuring service quality: A reexamination and extension. *Journal of Marketing*, 56(3), 55–68. <https://doi.org/10.1177/002224299205600304>
- Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2018). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.
- Espinoza Montes, I. F., Zevallos Cárhuaz, N. P., & Yurivilca Oscanoa, M. R. (2024). Mediating role of service quality between university social responsibility and student satisfaction in Peru. *International Journal of Evaluation and Research in Education*, 13(2), 1142–1150. <https://doi.org/10.11591/ijere.v13i2.26761>
- Grönroos, C. (1984). A service quality model and its marketing implications. *European Journal of Marketing*, 18(4), 36–44. <https://doi.org/10.1108/EUM0000000004784>

- Gunarto, M., & Hurriyati, R. (2020). Creating experience value to build student satisfaction in higher education. *International Journal of Innovation, Creativity and Change*, 13(4), 456–470.
- Handono, H. (2023). The impact of authentic leadership, teacher competence, and employee competence on student satisfaction with educational services at the Madrasah Aliyah Negeri in the Semarang Residency. *Jurnal Pendidikan Islam*, 12(2), 197–209. <https://doi.org/10.14421/jpi.2023.122.197-209>
- Irmawati, I. (2025). Mutu layanan (service quality) pada satuan pendidikan. *Sustainable Education Journal*, 7(3), 210–222.
- Merdekawati, A. (2024). Kepuasan mahasiswa terhadap mutu layanan pendidikan pada perguruan tinggi. *Ecobisma*, 11(1), 88–101.
- Miles, M. B., Huberman, A. M., & Saldaña, J. (2014). *Qualitative data analysis: A methods sourcebook* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.
- Mulyono, H., Hadian, A., & Purba, J. T. (2022). Digital governance and service quality in Indonesian higher education institutions. *Journal of Educational Administration Studies*, 14(2), 101–115.
- Parasuraman, A., Zeithaml, V. A., & Berry, L. L. (1988). SERVQUAL: A multiple-item scale for measuring consumer perceptions of service quality. *Journal of Retailing*, 64(1), 12–40.
- Pham, H. H., Ho, T. T. H., & Nguyen, M. T. (2023). Digital transformation in higher education: Challenges and opportunities for service quality improvement. *Education and Information Technologies*, 28(5), 5621–5640. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10639-022-11302-1>
- Putri, N. A., & Hidayat, R. (2022). Information technology utilization and educational service quality in higher education institutions. *Journal of Educational Technology and Administration*, 6(2), 88–101.
- Rahman, A., & Sari, D. P. (2020). Human resource challenges in improving educational service quality. *International Journal of Educational Management Studies*, 5(1), 45–57.
- Sallis, E. (2002). *Total quality management in education* (3rd ed.). Kogan Page.
- Sugiyono. (2020). *Metode penelitian kualitatif*. Alfabeta.
- Yeo, R. K. (2008). Servicing service quality in higher education: Quest for excellence. *On the Horizon*, 16(3), 152–161. <https://doi.org/10.1108/10748120810889284>
- Yin, R. K. (2018). *Case study research and applications: Design and methods* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.