**Transforming Madrasah Education: Public Service Delivery and Digital Integration in Kemenag Sleman**

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| **Article Info** | **Abstract** |
| ***Article history:***  Received: 06/23/2023  Revised: 06/30/2023  Accepted: 07/10/2023 | **Purpose –** This study aims to explore the implementation of public service delivery by the Madrasah Education Section in Kemenag Sleman, focusing on operational procedures, educator and student development programs, religious moderation, tolerance, and digital transformation initiatives.  **Design/methods/approach –** Adopting a qualitative research design, the study utilized descriptive analysis to understand the intricacies of public service delivery in the context of madrasah education. Key methods included structured face-to-face interviews with the Head of Madrasah Education and an extensive review of relevant documents. This approach enabled a detailed examination of the service offerings and operational dynamics within the Madrasah Education Section.  **Findings –** The study reveals a comprehensive array of services and programs, including operational permits, development of educators and students, and initiatives in religious moderation and digital transformation. It highlights the integration of digital tools in educational management and curriculum development, addressing the dynamic needs of contemporary madrasah education.  **Research implications/limitations –** The findings offer valuable insights into the public service delivery mechanisms within religious educational settings. However, the study's focus on a single district limits its generalizability, suggesting the need for further research in diverse regions for a more comprehensive understanding.  **Practical implications –** This research underscores the importance of adapting educational services to technological advancements and societal changes, emphasizing digital integration in educational management and curriculum development to enhance the quality of education and cater to diverse student needs.  **Originality/value –** The study contributes significantly to the discourse on public service implementation in educational settings, particularly in religious institutions. It provides a unique perspective on how madrasah education can evolve to remain effective and relevant amidst changing societal dynamics and technological advancements. |
| ***Keywords:***  *Digital Transformation, Madrasah Education, Public Service Delivery, Religious Education, Sleman District.* |
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**Introduction**

Public service provision, particularly in the educational sector, is a cornerstone for societal advancement and equitable access to resources. The standardization of public services, a topic of global relevance, is vital in enhancing transparency, efficiency, and accessibility within the community. This standardization is especially pertinent in the context of madrasah education, where it can significantly impact community welfare and educational equality (Abdussamad, 2015; Sellang et al., 2022). In this regard, the Sleman District Ministry of Religious Affairs (Kemenag) has taken commendable steps towards improving public service delivery in madrasah education. This initiative reflects a broader commitment to societal well-being and addresses existing disparities in educational access.

Previous research has extensively explored the dynamics of public service delivery, highlighting the benefits and challenges inherent in the system. Studies have indicated that effective public service in education can lead to improved academic outcomes and greater societal benefits (Lovato et al., 2023; Viégas et al., 2018). However, these studies have also identified challenges such as high transactional costs, inconsistencies in service delivery, and the complex integration of public and private sectors (Estreicher & Milch, 2016; Mainardi, 2015). Additionally, the importance of strategic management and the adoption of new public management reforms have been emphasized as critical factors for enhancing public service efficiency (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2015; Smith, 2008). These findings provide a foundation for understanding the complexities of public service in education but also highlight the need for further research in specific contexts, like madrasah education.

The literature also reveals the impact of private competition on public service performance, suggesting that the presence of private options can lead to varying outcomes in public service delivery (Shon & Jilke, 2022). Studies have demonstrated that while private competition can enhance public service efficiency in some cases, it may also lead to a decline in performance in others (Bifulco & Ladd, 2006; Reback, 2005). This dichotomy underscores the need for a balanced and strategic approach in managing public services. Furthermore, the role of public service motivation (PSM) in influencing service delivery outcomes has been explored, with findings indicating a positive correlation between PSM and academic performance (Andersen et al., 2014; Kim, 2021). These insights are crucial for understanding the factors that drive effective public service delivery in education.

The relevance of value-based education and curriculum in the public service sector has been a subject of discussion in recent studies. The emphasis on incorporating values and ethics in public affairs education is seen as vital for preparing students to navigate the complexities of modern public service delivery (Holt, 2019; Stuteville & DiPadova-Stocks, 2011). These studies argue for a curriculum that not only imparts technical knowledge but also fosters a sense of civic responsibility and ethical decision-making. Additionally, the integration of community-based service activities in school programs has been shown to enhance prosocial values among students, further contributing to a motivated and ethically inclined public service workforce (Kim, 2021; Tao & Wen, 2023).

Research has also identified the influence of socio-economic and cultural factors on public service delivery and its outcomes. Studies have highlighted the importance of contextualizing public service strategies to local administrative and cultural settings, acknowledging the diversity in public service needs across different regions (Bianchi & Salazar Rua, 2022; Ferlie & Ongaro, 2015). This contextualization is particularly relevant in the case of madrasah education, where cultural and religious factors play a significant role in shaping educational approaches and outcomes. Moreover, the role of social institutions in developing public service motivation among students has been recognized as a key factor in enhancing service delivery (Setyo & In’am, 2020; Simms, 2023).

Despite the extensive research on public service delivery, gaps remain, particularly in the context of madrasah education in Indonesia. Existing studies have not adequately addressed the specific challenges and opportunities within this sector, especially in terms of integrating technological advancements and digital tools in service delivery (Johnsen & Johansen, 2021; Larat & Chauvigné, 2017). Furthermore, there is a lack of comprehensive research on how madrasah education, governed by religious and cultural norms, navigates the challenges of public service delivery while maintaining its unique identity and values. This gap points to the need for an in-depth exploration of the public services provided by the Madrasah Education Section at Kemenag Sleman, especially in the context of increasing digitalization and societal changes.

This study, therefore, aims to investigate the implementation of public services by the Madrasah Education Section at Kemenag Sleman. The focus will be on assessing the efficiency, effectiveness, and societal impact of these services. By doing so, the research seeks to contribute to the broader understanding of public service delivery in the education sector, with a particular emphasis on madrasah education. The findings are expected to offer insights into the optimization of public services in educational institutions, addressing the unique challenges and leveraging the opportunities present in this context. Ultimately, this study aims to provide actionable recommendations for enhancing public service delivery in madrasah education, contributing to the field of public administration and educational policy.

**Methods**

This qualitative study, employing descriptive analysis, aimed to elucidate the public service delivery by the Madrasah Education Section at the Kemenag Sleman. Kemenag Sleman is a governmental institution dedicated to overseeing and managing religious affairs within the Sleman region. This ministry plays a crucial role in promoting religious harmony, facilitating religious activities, and providing services to the community in matters related to faith and worship. The methodology involved structured face-to-face interviews with key informants, notably the Head of Madrasah Education, and extensive documentation review to gather relevant and authentic evidence. Systematic, prepared questions were utilized in the interviews to ensure the collection of specific, targeted data, while recording devices and cameras were employed to accurately capture and document the interactions. The documentation process involved collecting, scanning, and archiving pertinent documents and archives, providing a robust evidentiary base. The data collected through these methods were then meticulously categorized and analyzed to construct a comprehensive narrative of the public service procedures at the Madrasah Education Section. Throughout the study, measures to ensure reliability and validity were stringently applied, including the use of consistent data collection techniques and triangulation of data sources, thereby enhancing the credibility and trustworthiness of the research findings.

**Results**

1. Organizational Structure

Table 1 is the organizational structure of the madrasah education section of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Sleman Regency for the year 2023:

Table 1. Organizational Structure

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| --- | --- | --- |
| No | Staff Position | Name |
| 1 | Head of Madrasah Education Section | Drs. H. Suharto |
| 2 | Planning and Budgeting | Fujiroh Prihatin, S.E. |
| 3 | Data Processing | Yulia Saraswati, S.Pd., M.Pd. |
| 4 | Education Management | Syamsuddin, S.Pd.I., M.Pd. |
| 5 | General Administration | Muh. Agus Pambudi |
| 6 | General Administration | Heru Kusriyanta |
| 7 | General Administration | Muhammad Labib |

1. Madrasah Education Services

The Head of Madrasah Education provides services to education in madrasahs under the auspices of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, including RA/BA, MI, MTS, and MA. Additionally, the Head of Madrasah Education is responsible for the development of teachers, both class and subject teachers. The standard services in the madrasah education section include letters of recommendation for operational permits or madrasah education, application requests, filling out forms online, proposals, and attachments such as photocopies of the Ministry of Law and Human Rights decree, photocopies of the foundation's establishment act, photocopies of land certificates, madrasah building plans, photos of madrasah buildings, photocopies of diplomas of all educators and educational staff, a statement of absolute responsibility not to receive BOS (School Operational Assistance) funds for one academic year, printouts of online forms, minutes of visitation and verification, and recommendations for school transfers. The service requirements include a request letter from the original madrasah specifying the target school, photocopies of birth certificates, showing/reporting cards or photocopies of report cards, and recommendations to continue schooling.

1. Madrasah Education Section Programs

The madrasah education section conducts various programs, such as development for supervisors, madrasah heads, teachers, and students, religious moderation, tolerance, and digital transformation. These programs are implemented through the MBKM implementation, technical guidance (Bimtek), curriculum development, assessment, and the Pancasila student profile. Development aims to enhance superior madrasahs through monthly coordination, for example, madrasah leadership coordination meetings to encourage madrasahs to create uniqueness through diversification. Programs in Sleman include academic madrasahs, literacy madrasahs, SKS madrasahs, etc. Additionally, to improve the madrasah curriculum quality, the Ministry of Religious Affairs collaborates in competency enhancement with Training Centers, Campuses, service providers, and digital application support, including professional organizations like KKG, MGMP, PGMI, KKM encompassing KKMI, MGSSMA, madrasah head working groups, and automatic education offices. Regular monitoring by madrasah supervisors ensures all programs run smoothly, with mandatory implementation of religious moderation, tolerance, and digital transformation. Moreover, each madrasah is required to report on administration and other aspects.

1. Madrasah Education Data Management

The Sleman Regency Ministry of Religious Affairs manages data and information through online applications. Madrasah education, from the implementation of learning, educational reporting, including daily activity reports, is all digital-based, with student data available on EMIS, SIMPATIKA, SIMSARPRAS, SEDAKEP, specifically for Sleman. Services range from employee/educational staff performance in Sleman, etc.

1. Madrasah Education Budget Management

Numerous aids are provided for education in Madrasahs for both teachers and students. The government provides BOP (Educational Operational Assistance) based on the number of students. RA/BA teachers meeting the criteria and holding a teaching certificate receive TPG (Teacher Professional Allowance), either regular TPG or TPG Invasing. Furthermore, state Madrasahs (MIN, MTsN, MAN) directly under the Ministry of Religious Affairs receive DIPA (Budget Implementation Entry), meaning the government funds MIN, MTsN, and MAN through the Ministry and manages the funds directly through DIPA. In contrast, private Madrasahs (MI, MTs, MA) do not receive DIPA but only BOS funds.

1. Opportunities and Challenges for the Madrasah Education Section

The opportunities faced by the Madrasah Education Section include the digital era, where madrasahs play a significant role in ensuring that educational services are conducted digitally. However, challenges include the hedonistic lifestyle of current youth, influenced by trends like K-POP, which also poses challenges for parents, making madrasahs a preferred choice. Another challenge is extreme religious preaching, necessitating the teaching of religious moderation, and confronting the hedonistic lifestyle of youth.

1. Challenges of the Madrasah Education Section

The challenges faced by the madrasah education section include managing a large number of both private and state madrasahs. However, the number of staff in the madrasah education section is limited, leading to challenges in human resources and facilities to meet the needs while running programs.

Discussion

The research on "Implementation of Public Services by the Madrasah Education Section in the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Sleman Regency" aims to delve deeper into the public services provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Sleman. This investigation aligns with the increasing complexity in public service delivery and the evolving challenges faced by educational institutions (Barrows et al., 2016; Smith, 2008) Existing literature highlights varied dimensions of public service in education, ranging from the impact of service availability on student performance Lovato et al (2023) to the transactional costs involved in integrated mentoring approaches (Ashley, 2023).

The study's findings reveal that the Madrasah Education Section provides comprehensive services including the development of educational staff and management of various educational programs. These services are crucial, given the mixed evidence regarding access to primary education and health services in developing regions Mainardi (2015) and the impact of private competitors on public service performance (Shon & Jilke, 2022). The digital transformation initiatives are particularly noteworthy, resonating with the current global shift towards digital-based educational processes (Granfield, 2007).

Comparing our results with previous findings, the emphasis on digital transformation and religious moderation aligns with contemporary shifts in public service delivery (Ferlie & Ongaro, 2015). However, the challenges posed by the hedonistic lifestyles of youth and extreme religious preaching present a unique context not widely explored in previous studies (Johnsen & Johansen, 2021; Larat & Chauvigné, 2017). Our study supports the notion that public service delivery in education requires adaptive strategies to address local cultural and administrative contexts (Bianchi & Salazar Rua, 2022).

The implementation of diverse programs in the Madrasah Education Section, such as supervisor development and religious moderation, reflects a strategic approach to enhance educational quality. This is consistent with the findings of Wibawa et al. (2023), who noted high success rates in human resource management in Indonesian vocational schools. Furthermore, the collaboration with professional organizations for curriculum enhancement Kim (2021) indicates a move towards inclusive and collaborative public service models.

The significance of these findings lies in the realization that public services in education, particularly in religious institutions, are evolving to meet contemporary challenges. The emphasis on digital transformation and religious moderation not only addresses local needs but also aligns with global trends in public service management (Simms, 2023; Tao & Wen, 2023). The study underscores the importance of adaptive and responsive public service models in education.

While the study provides valuable insights, cautious interpretation is warranted. The context-specific nature of our findings, particularly concerning the challenges posed by the hedonistic lifestyle of youth and extreme religious preaching, may not be universally applicable. Moreover, the impact of these initiatives on long-term educational outcomes remains to be seen, necessitating further investigation (Bifulco & Ladd, 2006; Holt, 2019).

The implications of our findings are far-reaching. They highlight the need for public service sectors, especially in education, to adapt and innovate in response to societal and technological changes. This study reinforces the necessity of integrating digital tools in educational management and curriculum development to enhance the quality of education and cater to the diverse needs of students (Kim, 2021; Setyo & In’am, 2020). Moreover, the focus on religious moderation and confronting the challenges of a hedonistic lifestyle among youth is critical for shaping a balanced educational environment that not only imparts academic knowledge but also instills ethical and cultural values (Andersen et al., 2014; Johnsen & Johansen, 2021). These findings suggest that educational institutions, particularly those in religious settings, must continually evolve to remain effective and relevant in the face of changing societal dynamics.

**Conclusion**

The study aimed to investigate the public service implementation by the Madrasah Education Section in Kemenag Sleman, revealing a range of services and programs focused on operational permits, educator and student development, religious moderation, tolerance, and digital transformation. The findings highlight the need for educational services to adapt to technological advancements and societal changes, emphasizing the integration of digital tools in educational management and curriculum development to enhance education quality and address diverse student needs. The study, while focused on a single region and thus limited in generalizability, underscores the importance of addressing contemporary challenges such as youth lifestyle trends and extreme religious beliefs to maintain a balanced educational environment. Future research should extend to different regions for comparative analysis and further explore the long-term impacts of digital transformation in education, contributing significantly to the discourse on public service implementation in educational settings, particularly in religious institutions.

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