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University Image in Islamic Higher Education: Associations with Organizational Culture and Service Quality

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ABSTRACT

This study examined whether students' perceptions of organizational culture and service quality were associated with university image in Islamic higher education. Participants were 250 Islamic Religious Education undergraduates recruited through convenience sampling at three institutions in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. A cross-sectional questionnaire used contextually adapted measures, and partial least squares structural equation modeling was used to estimate the relationships. Both associations were positive when organizational culture and service quality were included in the same model. Service quality had the larger standardized coefficient, although the difference between coefficients was not tested directly. The findings connect students' overall institutional judgments with their assessments of institutional conduct and academic and administrative support. For program leaders, they suggest examining how students experience the university's stated values in the provision of services and in dealings with staff. The evidence comes from concurrent student perceptions and cannot establish causal effects or represent the wider student population. University image remains distinct from satisfaction, loyalty, and academic achievement, which were not measured in this model.

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Introduction

For current students, university image is a judgment about the institution they attend. It can draw on public reputation, but also on what they encounter during their studies. Research on university image and reputation provides the conceptual basis for this study (Panda et al., 2019; Patlán Pérez & Martínez Torres, 2017; Romiani et al., 2024) . The adapted measure used here concerns reputation, credibility, distinctiveness, and institutional identity. The question is how these judgments relate to students' assessments of the university's organizational culture and services.

Islamic universities give this question a particular educational context. Their academic

provision is accompanied by ethical and religious commitments that form part of their institutional identity. Students in Islamic Religious Education study within that setting while also relying on the university's academic and administrative support. Research on Islamic higher education has examined values through management practices and quality assurance (Mispani et al., 2026; Yuliana et al., 2026). Examining student perceptions brings attention to how the institution is assessed by those receiving its educational provision.

Organizational culture offers one way of approaching those assessments. Denison and Mishra (1995) and Schein (2010) connect culture with shared values, assumptions, and patterns of organizational practice. Students are not necessarily familiar with the assumptions held by staff or leaders, but they can assess the conduct they encounter. This study therefore examines perceived culture through a contextual adaptation of the source measure. The wider culture literature and work on student academic behavior in Indonesian universities support considering institutional practices as part of student experience (Bogale & Debela, 2024; Burhanuddin et al., 2024). Their relationship with university image among Islamic Religious Education students warrants closer examination.

Service quality concerns the support students receive through academic assistance, administration, communication, and facilities. Cronin and Taylor's (1992) performance-based approach is appropriate to this focus on experienced provision. Studies involving satisfaction, image, and loyalty have examined how students assess services within a university(Borishade et al., 2021; Melean Romero et al., 2024; Suranta & Rahmawati, 2024). These outcomes are related, but they do not answer the same question. A judgment about institutional credibility differs from satisfaction with a service or an intention to recommend the institution.

Studies of service quality, image, satisfaction, and loyalty provide a basis for understanding students' evaluations of universities. They do not, however, answer an identical question: satisfaction concerns an evaluation of experience, loyalty concerns future intentions, and image concerns judgments about the institution itself. The question pursued here is whether students' perceptions of organizational culture are associated with university image after accounting for service quality. Including both predictors in the same model allows institutional conduct to be considered alongside academic and administrative provision, while estimating the association of each with image.

In Islamic higher education, ethical and religious commitments form part of institutional identity, making students' perceptions of institutional conduct relevant to understanding university image. The adapted culture measure captures assessments of professionalism, integrity, innovation, role modeling, and Islamic leadership, while the service measure addresses the support students receive. This study examines both assessments among Islamic Religious Education students at three Islamic higher education institutions in Yogyakarta. It adds empirical evidence on whether perceived culture and service quality each retain an association with university image when considered together. The findings concern these combined measures; they do not isolate the contribution of religious values or establish differences from non-Islamic institutions. Figure 1 presents the two proposed associations.

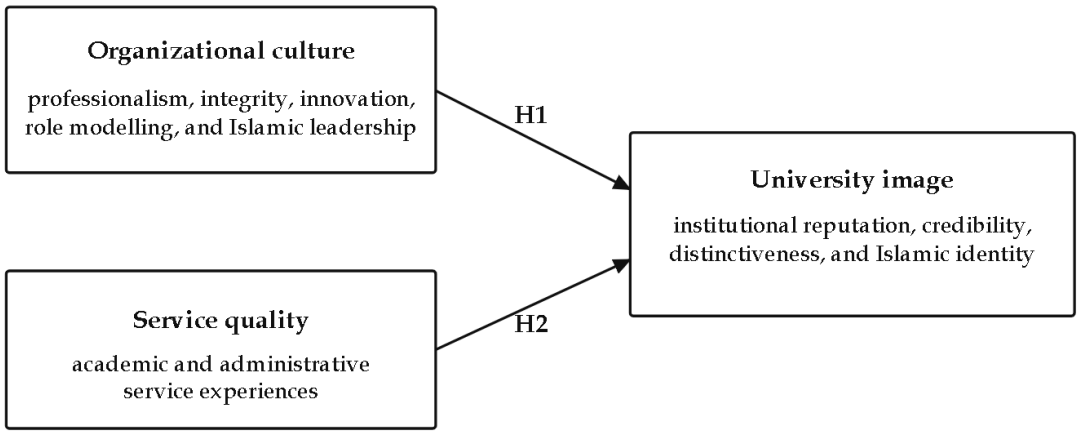


Figure 1. Proposed relationships among the study constructs

The following hypotheses guide the analysis:

H1. Organizational culture is positively associated with university image.
H2. Service quality is positively associated with university image.

Method

Research Design and Participants

A cross-sectional survey was conducted between June and July 2024 among Islamic Religious Education undergraduates in semesters three to seven at three Islamic higher education institutions in Yogyakarta, Indonesia. Convenience sampling yielded 250 participants: 100 from Institution A and 75 each from Institutions B and C. The questionnaire was administered through Google Forms, and all 250 submitted responses were retained for analysis.

An overall regression power calculation with two predictors, $\alpha = .05$, power = .95, and $f^2 = .15$ indicated a minimum sample size of 107 (Faul et al., 2009; Hair et al., 2022). The sample exceeded this benchmark, which concerns the overall model rather than the power of each individual path. Recruitment did not give students known selection probabilities, and the institutional distribution did not establish proportionate population representation. The findings therefore describe associations within the participating sample and cannot be generalized statistically to all students at the three institutions or to Islamic higher education more broadly. Responses were analyzed together, without estimating differences between institutions or semesters.

Questionnaire Adaptation

The questionnaire contained 34 Indonesian-language items rated on five-point Likert scales. Organizational culture was measured using eight items (OC1–OC8) adapted from Denison and Mishra (1995). The 22 service-quality items (SQ1–SQ22) drew on Cronin and Taylor (1992) performance-based approach, while the four university-image items (UI1–UI4) were adapted from Patlán Pérez and Martínez Torres (2017).

Translation and contextual adjustments related the measures to students' experiences in Islamic higher education. The culture items addressed professionalism, integrity, innovation, role modeling, and Islamic leadership. Service-quality items covered academic support, administration, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, communication, facilities, and student-centeredness. The image items concerned reputation, credibility,

distinctiveness, and institutional identity. These descriptions identify the content of the adapted measures; they do not reproduce the original instruments' complete factor structures or dimension labels. Islamic leadership remained part of the culture measure and was not modeled separately.

Three experts in educational management, Islamic education, and research methodology reviewed the questionnaire before it was piloted with 40 Islamic Religious Education students outside the main sample. All 34 items were retained following this process. Reliability and construct validity were subsequently assessed using the main survey data. The reported assessments apply to the adapted measures in this sample; equivalence with the original instruments or across institutions was not established.

PLS-SEM Analysis

The model was estimated in SmartPLS 4, with organizational culture and service quality entered simultaneously as predictors of university image. All constructs were specified reflectively. Measurement quality was examined before the structural relationships were interpreted (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler, 2021; Sarstedt et al., 2022).

The measurement assessment covered outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), and heterotrait–monotrait ratios (HTMT). Loadings and AVE provided evidence on indicator reliability and convergent validity, while alpha and composite reliability addressed internal consistency. High reliability estimates were considered alongside the possibility of overlapping item content. HTMT point estimates below 0.85 were taken as supporting separation between constructs (Hair et al., 2022; Henseler, 2021). Bootstrap confidence intervals for HTMT were not reported.

Inner variance inflation factors (VIFs) were examined for collinearity between the two predictors. Structural assessment then considered standardized path coefficients, their statistical significance, effect sizes (f^2), and the variance explained in university image. Significance testing used 5,000 bootstrap resamples and a p-value threshold of .05. R^2 and adjusted R^2 summarized the model's explanatory power (Hair et al., 2022; Sarstedt et al., 2022). Each coefficient was interpreted as an association with image while accounting for the other predictor. Their numerical difference was not tested directly, and the cross-sectional data did not support causal conclusions.

Neutral instructions and clearly worded items were used to reduce response artifacts. Full-collinearity VIFs were also assessed against a threshold of 3.3 as a supplementary diagnostic for common-method concerns (Fuller et al., 2016; Kock, 2015). This diagnostic could not rule out bias arising from the use of the same respondents to measure all constructs at one time point.

Ethical Considerations

Participants received information about the study, participated voluntarily, and were assured of anonymity and aggregate reporting.

Results and Discussion

Results

1. Measurement Model

All 34 indicators were retained. Their outer loadings exceeded 0.70 across organizational culture (OC), service quality (SQ), and university image (UI). Table 1 reports the ranges for each construct.

Table 1. Summary of outer loading ranges for retained indicators

Construct	Indicators	Loading range	Assessment
Organizational culture	OC1–OC8	0.801–0.911	> 0.70
Service quality	SQ1–SQ22	0.724–0.905	> 0.70
University image	UI1–UI4	0.863–0.881	> 0.70

Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceeded conventional minimum thresholds, and AVE supported convergent validity (Table 2). The especially high reliability estimates are considered further in the limitations.

Table 2. Reliability evidence and extracted variance by construct

Construct	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability	AVE
Organizational culture	0.943	0.953	0.717
Service quality	0.977	0.979	0.682
University image	0.898	0.929	0.767

Note. AVE = average variance extracted.

2. Discriminant Validity and Collinearity

HTMT estimates ranged from 0.270 to 0.486, below the 0.85 criterion (Table 3). The reported point estimates therefore supported separation among the three constructs.

Table 3. HTMT discriminant-validity results

Construct relationship	HTMT	Assessment
OC–SQ	0.386	< 0.85
OC–UI	0.270	< 0.85
SQ–UI	0.486	< 0.85

Inner VIFs indicated little collinearity between the two predictors. The full-collinearity VIFs were also below the diagnostic threshold used in the study (Table 4).

Table 4. Collinearity and common-method diagnostic

Construct or path	VIF type	VIF	Assessment
OC → UI	Inner	1.006	Low
SQ → UI	Inner	1.006	Low
Organizational culture	Full-collinearity	1.068	< 3.3
Service quality	Full-collinearity	1.262	< 3.3
University image	Full-collinearity	1.338	< 3.3

Note. VIF = variance inflation factor.

3. Structural Model

Both paths were positive, with reported p values below .001, supporting H1 and H2 (Table 5). The effect size was small for organizational culture and moderate for service quality.

Table 5. Estimated structural paths and hypothesis decisions

Hypothesis	Path	β	t	p	f^2	Effect size	Decision
H1	OC → UI	0.216	4.048	< .001	0.062	Small	Supported
H2	SQ → UI	0.438	7.622	< .001	0.255	Moderate	Supported

Note. β = standardized path coefficient; f^2 = effect size.

Together, organizational culture and service quality explained 25.3% of the variance in university image (R^2 = 0.253; adjusted R^2 = 0.247), as shown in Table 6.

Table 6. Explained variance in university image

Endogenous construct	R^2	Adjusted R^2	Variance explained
University image	0.253	0.247	25.3%

Discussion

1. University Image and Students' Institutional Experience

Students who assessed organizational culture and service quality favorably also tended to hold a favorable image of their university. Both associations remained positive when the predictors were considered together. The cultural association is particularly relevant here: students' judgments of the institution were related to perceived conduct even after their assessment of services was taken into account. Together, the two predictors explained 25.3% of the variance in university image, providing a partial account of institutional evaluation among the participating students.

The meaning of this result depends on the outcome being examined. Ali et al. (2016), positioned satisfaction between service quality and institutional image in a model that also included loyalty. Suranta and Rahmawati (2024) examined image within the relationship between university social responsibility and loyalty. In the present study, image concerns

reputation, credibility, distinctiveness, and institutional identity. A favorable judgment on these aspects does not establish satisfaction or an intention to recommend or return to the institution. Keeping these outcomes separate allows the findings to speak specifically to how students viewed their university.

2. Organizational Culture and Institutional Identity

Organizational culture had a modest positive association with image ($\beta = 0.216$; $f^2 = 0.062$). The adapted measure combined professionalism, integrity, innovation, role modeling, and Islamic leadership. Students' assessments of these features remained associated with image alongside service quality, suggesting that their institutional judgments encompassed more than the support they received.

This interpretation requires attention to what students can observe. Denison and Mishra (1995), Schein (2010), and Bogale and Debela (2024) discuss culture through organizational assumptions, values, and practices. Students encounter some expressions of that culture through communication, procedures, and the conduct of institutional representatives, while having less access to internal deliberations or assumptions shared among staff. The result therefore concerns perceived features of institutional conduct. Burhanuddin et al. (2024) examined culture in relation to student academic behavior in Indonesia; the present analysis connects students' cultural assessments with their judgments of the university.

Syamsudin (2024) reported a non-significant culture–loyalty relationship among Islamic Religious Education students at a private Islamic university in Yogyakarta. The positive association reported here need not contradict that result. Image and loyalty ask different questions: an institutional judgment does not necessarily translate into a future intention. Differences in samples, measures, and analytical models also prevent the two findings from demonstrating that culture relates differently to these outcomes. They do, however, reinforce the need to specify which student evaluation a study seeks to explain.

At Islamic universities, the cultural finding has relevance to the credibility of institutional identity. Ethical and religious commitments form part of how these institutions present their educational purpose. Students may encounter those commitments through professional conduct and ethical example, as well as through formal statements. Mispani et al. (2026) examined value-based leadership, quality assurance, and cultural integration within Islamic university management. The present study adds students' assessments to that discussion: favorable perceptions of the combined cultural features accompanied a favorable institutional image.

Whether students perceive consistency between stated commitments and everyday conduct is consequently a useful question for institutional review. That consistency was not measured directly, however. Nor can the cultural coefficient be attributed specifically to Islamic leadership or religious values, since those elements were not estimated separately from the other cultural features.

3. Service Quality and University Image

Service quality was positively associated with university image ($\beta = 0.438$; $f^2 = 0.255$). Both estimates were numerically larger than those for organizational culture. The difference between the coefficients was not tested directly, so these values do not establish that service quality had a statistically stronger association or was the dominant predictor. The supported finding is that service quality retained a positive association with image while perceived culture was included in the model.

Academic and administrative services give students repeated opportunities to evaluate how their university operates. Access to support, clear information, and responses to requests offer a plausible basis for judgments about institutional credibility. The survey did not trace particular encounters or changes in image over time, but the association places

students' experience of provision within the interpretation of their institutional judgments.

Previous studies help clarify the scope of this finding. Asnawi and Setyaningsih's (2020) i-HESQUAL work included the internalization of Islamic values alongside academic and support services. Teeroovengadum et al. (2019) examined service-quality dimensions within a model involving image, satisfaction, and loyalty. The present measure combined several areas of provision using a performance-based adaptation. Its coefficient therefore concerns overall perceived service quality, rather than a separate religious component or a particular service domain.

The role assigned to image also varies across studies. Setyadi et al. (2023) examined image as a mediator, while Supriyanto et al. (2025) studied academic service quality in relation to satisfaction and loyalty. Borishade et al. (2021) included satisfaction and loyalty, Seitova et al. (2024) focused on satisfaction, and Melean Romero et al. (2024) examined image and loyalty. These studies place service provision within students' broader evaluations of universities, but their outcomes and model structures differ from those used here. The present result contributes evidence on the service–image association after accounting for perceived organizational culture.

The Islamic setting invites a further interpretation. Students may assess responsiveness, respectful communication, and reliable procedures in light of the ethical commitments associated with institutional identity. This possibility connects service provision with the educational context, but it remains an interpretation rather than a mechanism established by the data. The study did not measure perceived consistency between religious commitments and service delivery, and it included no non-Islamic comparison group.

The combined service score also leaves practical questions unresolved. Its 22 indicators covered academic support, administration, reliability, responsiveness, empathy, communication, facilities, and student-centeredness. Their overall association cannot identify whether advising, facilities, or administrative processes should receive priority. Bouranta et al. (2025) included online learning in service assessment within a blended learning setting, while Leskaj et al. (2024) examined student services through university strategies. These approaches draw attention to the arrangements through which support is delivered. Comparable detail would be needed before the present findings could guide changes to particular services.

Students' perspectives are another boundary of the interpretation. Zhu and Sharp (2022) examined student and academic staff accounts, and Tsiligiris et al. (2022) considered individual cultural orientations in relation to service expectations. The breadth of research documented by Wider et al.'s (2024) further illustrates the variety of settings and measures within private higher education. Here, the evidence concerns the participating students' overall perceptions. Agreement with staff assessments and differences associated with individual cultural orientations were not examined.

4. Implications for Islamic Higher Education Management

The two associations support bringing students' accounts of conduct and provision into the same institutional review. Questions about professionalism, integrity, and ethical example can be considered alongside difficulties in obtaining advice, understanding requirements, or receiving responses. This would give managers a more grounded account of how institutional commitments are encountered in students' academic lives.

For example, follow-up discussions could explore whether procedures are communicated clearly, whether students understand the reasons for decisions, and how staff respond when students encounter academic or administrative problems. Such evidence could help locate concerns that an aggregate survey score cannot identify. The present results do not show that any particular procedure or institution was problematic.

The numerically larger service coefficient is insufficient grounds for prioritizing services over culture or redirecting resources. The study evaluated associations, not interventions, and did not test the difference between coefficients. Decisions about improvement would need evidence about specific difficulties, their consequences for students, and the feasibility of addressing them.

5. Limitations and Further Research

The model accounted for 25.3% of the variance in university image. Accreditation, graduate outcomes, affordability, prior reputation, and institutional communication were not measured and could be considered in future research. Their possible relevance should not be taken as evidence that they explain the variation left unaccounted for here.

Convenience recruitment limits the findings to the surveyed Islamic Religious Education students at three institutions in Yogyakarta. Responses were analyzed together, without estimating relationships by institution or semester. Age and gender were not recorded. The analysis therefore cannot support population-wide generalizations or conclusions about institutional and demographic differences.

Further work is also needed on the adapted measures. Expert review and a pilot preceded their use, but equivalence with the original instruments or across settings was not established. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability for service quality were 0.977 and 0.979, respectively, and composite reliability for organizational culture was 0.953. These estimates may reflect overlapping item content alongside consistency (Hair et al., 2022, 2024). Examination of item content, dimensional structure, and cross-language equivalence would help assess that possibility. Separate cultural dimensions, service domains, and Islamic identity were not tested.

Finally, the same students reported all constructs at one time point. The associations cannot establish temporal order or causal effects, and common-method bias remains possible despite the full-collinearity diagnostic. Bootstrap confidence intervals for paths and HTMT, together with response-screening rules, were not reported, limiting assessment of uncertainty and reproducibility. Repeated observations, staff accounts, and administrative records could provide a broader basis for interpretation. Any extension to satisfaction, engagement, loyalty, or academic achievement would require those outcomes to be measured separately.

Conclusion

Students' perceptions of organizational culture and service quality were positively associated with university image in this sample of 250 Islamic Religious Education undergraduates at three institutions in Yogyakarta. Together, the predictors accounted for 25.3% of the variance in image. Service quality had a numerically larger standardized coefficient, although the difference between the coefficients was not statistically tested.

These findings give Islamic higher education managers a reason to examine students' experiences of institutional conduct alongside the academic and administrative support they receive. Students' accounts could help identify where everyday practices warrant closer attention. The aggregate results, however, do not identify priorities for intervention or establish that changes in conduct or services would improve university image.

The survey captured perceptions at one point in time, so it cannot establish whether cultural and service assessments preceded students' judgments of the university. Convenience recruitment also limits generalization beyond the participating students. Research involving a wider range of institutions and probability sampling where feasible would provide a firmer basis for assessing the scope of these associations. Following students over time and exploring their experiences through interviews could help explain

how institutional judgments develop. Where universities introduce specific improvements, experimental or quasi-experimental evaluations could examine whether those changes affect image.

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