

Exploring The Transformative Zone of Tolerance in Indigenous Education: Insights from Pesantren-Based Services

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ABSTRACT. As an indigenous Indonesian Islamic educational institution, pesantren offers unique services valued by its users. Service quality, oriented toward zero-defect service and user satisfaction, has a unique meaning due to the intertwined differences in satisfaction and value orientations. This study aims to understand the zone of tolerance in Pesantren, the factors that cause tolerance or tolerance of services, and the implications of a zone of tolerance for students. This study uses a qualitative case study approach, with data collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. The research results show that tolerance zones in Islamic boarding schools encompass tolerance for delays in access, dysfunction in the guidance and counseling process, and limited services. Meanwhile, factors contributing to the emergence of tolerance for service quality include cultural awareness, awareness of limited resources, social class strata, service users' understanding of environmental realities, and their patient character. The existence of pesantren-based tolerance zones has positive implications, including strengthening the values of independence and adaptability, increasing mental resilience, and fostering a sense of togetherness and solidarity. The study concluded that spaces within the zone of tolerance for service quality in pesantren are among the educational media that strengthen the internalization of core values. The research findings also reveal a gap between service and expectations, encompassing pedagogical mechanisms with transformative functions. Thus, these findings demonstrate a new concept, the Transformative Zone of Tolerance, a space of service tolerance that serves not only as a buffer against dissatisfaction but also as an instrument for students' character development. .

Keywords: Zone of Tolerance, Quality of Service, Expectation of Service, Pesantren

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INTRODUCTION

The dynamic development of digital technology and social media does not always address a community's cultural aspects. These developments allow the dissemination of customer experiences within an educational institution to identify service weaknesses. However, the stringency of service demands also depends on the surrounding cultural context. Just as Pesantren, which has long been a crucible for religious learning, has many zones of tolerance (Adimayuda et al., 2025; MUSPAWI, 2018; Rosodor & Putra, 2025; Wulandari & Zaman, 2023). As educational institutions, Pesantrens, as institutions of preaching and centers for learning religious values, are expected to uphold zero-defect governance standards (Kartiko et al., 2025; Permani, 2011; Shalihah

& Tohet, 2020). However, in practice, there is a mutually understood and accepted zone of tolerance among guardians, administrators, and alums. Students, alumni, administrators, and some student guardians even assume this is common and label it with rationally unrelated terms (Aini et al., 2022; Baso, 2012). This zone of tolerance covers indiscipline in different facet of student life at the Islamic boarding school such as tardiness in activities and services. In a similar way, tolerance of academic achievement allows for the variance of the results. Since we realize that each person learns differently, students who are not meeting a particular standard within the given time limit will have more chances and support. So the tolerance zone of Islamic boarding schools is not the same as the tolerance zone elsewhere.

Studies on the Zone of Tolerance (ZoT) conducted by researchers are often dominated by a commercial service management perspective. This research explains service quality when measured by customer expectations, service performance gaps, and user satisfaction levels. In previous research, the Zone of Tolerance (ZoT) is understood as the tolerance range between desired service and adequate service, which aims to protect an organization from customer dissatisfaction when service performance falls below expectations (Chen, 2022; Kango et al., 2021; Shen et al., 2020; Walker & Baker, 2000). These studies have also positioned service delays, limited facilities, or service deviations as negative conditions that must be minimized or even avoided to maintain customer loyalty and organizational competitiveness. Thus, the dominant assumption in the Zone of Tolerance (ZoT) theory remains rooted in the expectation-disconfirmation paradigm, which views service imperfections as an indicator of managerial weakness or service failure. On the other hand, research findings also acknowledge that customer tolerance levels can vary depending on user experience and the perceived importance of certain service attributes (Liljander & Strandvik, 1993; Walker & Baker, 2000). These findings confirm that rejection or adaptation to service gaps is a passive psychological response to suboptimal service. Therefore, existing research findings focus only on predicting customer dissatisfaction, evaluating service gaps, and market-oriented service strategies (Stodnick & Marley, 2013). Consequently, existing research focuses only on service satisfaction standards that operate within the framework of efficiency, standardization, and materialistic service satisfaction.

The studies conducted are problematic when related to indigenous educational institutions such as pesantren. Inherent culture, traditions, and values contribute to the understanding that limitations in a process bring culturally acceptable lessons and are not always perceived as failures that must be addressed immediately. In the context of Islamic boarding schools, the occurrence of discrepancies between the ideal of service and the reality of service is even interpreted as an instructive experience that should naturally be part of the educational process. Therefore, this reality cannot be adequately explained in existing research related to the zone of tolerance. This gap negates the fact that existing studies only interpret the zone of tolerance within a black-and-white normative framework and not within a transformative educational framework. The studies conducted above also confirm that there has been no research related to how local cultural values shape the meaning of tolerance in services. In the Javanese-Islamic cultural context of Islamic boarding schools, values such as “*nrimo*” (accept what is given), maintaining social harmony, simplicity, sincerity, and belief in blessings contribute to a broader tolerance for service limitations. The Javanese-Islamic cultural context will certainly differ compared to research findings in more market-oriented or tight cultural contexts, where service deviations tend to trigger immediate dissatisfaction and result in narrower tolerance limits (Li et al., 2017). Therefore, the Islamic boarding school context is theoretically important because it challenges the universal assumptions of ZoT theory and demonstrates that service imperfections are not always understood as shortcomings to be tolerated but can also function as pedagogical spaces that generate value.

This research fills report gaps. Parental trust in Pesantren as an educational institution has many reasons. Laxity is often masked by claims of long-term benefits from students, graduates, administrators, and some parents. This article discusses the form of the zone of tolerance at Islamic boarding schools, its origins, and its effects on student production. The third talks fill gaps in

previous research. This study should help us comprehend Pesantren's zone of tolerance, its acceptability, and its effects on student performance. Pesantren and student parents depend on each other. This boosts both sides' value (Gaubatz, 2002; Mustain Thahir, 2014; Roqib, 2021). Effective quality management firms collaborate with suppliers and consumers to promote pesantren education, assuring trustworthiness. Pesantren survival in changing society. Alumni solidarity helps Islamic boarding schools thrive by strengthening infrastructure and spreading word of mouth.

This study shows that there are variances in values which ideally lead to satisfaction. This tradition is highly received, and is regarded a vital component of the learning process or instilling unique values in Islamic boarding schools. It also exists in service users' long-term memory. In Islamic boarding schools, tolerance of delays in each service is included in the tolerance area. The degree of leniency is determined by anthropological and psychological aspects of students, graduates, administrators and parents. The social class of kids in the lower middle class is their experiences and capacity to adapt to cultural values, varied perspectives, and social adjustment tactics that create a tolerant mindset. Tolerance zones lessen needs and benefit service providers in the short run. The long term potential of the tolerance zone can be beneficial such as adaptation, independence, problem solving abilities, and participation. The dynamics of tolerance in Islamic boarding schools are intriguing to study.

METHOD

This investigation was conducted in East Javanese Islamic boarding schools which are classed as salaf and semi-modern depending on their religious beliefs. These criteria are intimately related to the concepts of moderation and orthodoxy in terms of change and the demands of the times. Regarding education, traditional Islamic boarding schools tend to view books as flexible products, such as the *Tafsir Jalalain*, *Kutubus Sittab*, *Riyadlus Sholihin*, *'Awamil Jurjani*, *Jurmiyah*, *Imrithy*, *Al-Amtsilah al-Tashrifyyah*, *Kailany*, *Alfjyah ibn Malik*, *Aqidatul Awam*, *Dasuqi*, *Bidayatul Hidayah*, *Ihya Ulumuddin*, and others (Bruinessen, 2013; Fanani & Islam, 2022; Riddell, 2019). Meanwhile, semi-modern pesantren combine those texts with other readings deemed relevant. Both categories of pesantren have the same proportions of "guardians of morality" and "contributors of other skills" among students. In other words, allocating resources to provide both aspects is not disproportionate and remains in line with the original purpose of establishing the pesantren. Thus, the two categories of pesantren that are the focus of this research share similar values and governance systems. The main difference lies in the learning system, which does not target other aspects as significantly.

The purpose of this qualitative case study is to learn more about the zone of tolerance in pesantren, how it manifests in different service settings, what causes it, and what effects it has. Here, case studies are employed to investigate the many manifestations of the tolerance zone, their origins, and the consequences that follow. This investigation made use of a multiple instrumental case study methodology. So, the social setting, culture, religious beliefs, power dynamics, and patterns of interaction that emerge in a pesantren life are all necessary for comprehending the zone of tolerance. In order to comprehend the pesantren tolerance zone, this study uses pesantren as an exemplar of a natural context where researchers may explore the ways in which administrators, parents, students, and alumni perceive service quality and set boundaries for how much they can tolerate service disparities.

This investigation was done till data saturation. When it no longer produces fresh data and the themes have repeated, data projection will be done. However, the investigation was confined to six months. To identify tolerance zone themes, causes, and ramifications, categorization was done. Thus, this inquiry involves social activities and their causes. Socio-cultural contexts help informants interpret their acceptance of the tolerance zone and become objective about its implications. Answering issues concerning the zone of tolerance, its causes, and its effects requires data. Data sources include words, behaviors, and documentation about the study's focus on the

zone of tolerance, its components, and its effects on pupils. Answering the study's topic requires data sources including information, messages, and connected events. This study used purposive and snowball sampling to select informants. As shown in table 1, pesantren administrators, parents, students, and graduates from both Islamic boarding schools were chosen as key informants.

Table 1. Characteristics of Research Informants

Informant Category	Gender	Age Range	Minimum Length of Stay (in years)	Total	Selection Basis
Kyai	Male	40-72	10	4	Caretakers and leader of pesantren
Administrator	Male	20-42	6	2	Foster guardians, dormitory
	Female	20-38	6	2	administrators, and educational staff of pesantren
Teacher	Male	30-52	4	2	Religious teachers at schools and Islamic educational
	Female	30-52	4	2	institutions in pesantren
Santri	Male	16-19	3	4	Students who live in dormitories and
	Female	16-19	3	4	benefit from services at pesantren
Parent	Male	45-60	0	4	Parents of students whose children are beneficiaries of the services
Alumni	Male	30-55	3	2	Alumni with experience living
	Female	30-55	3	2	and studying at pesantren

This research uses observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation provides an accurate picture of occurrences that answer the form, reasons that cause the zone of tolerance, and its effects on students. Observation activities produce events or behaviors connected to the research objective. In-depth interviews are used to study the zone of tolerance's form, causes, and effects on pupils. The documentation technique collects associated materials to support the form, the zone of tolerance's causes, and its effects on students.

Data is analyzed using Miles, Huberman, and Saldana (2014). Analysis involves data condensation, display, and verification. This analysis method lets researchers organize and filter complex data. Data condensation also helps researchers simplify without losing meaning. Understanding patterns and links between concepts requires visualizing data. Data visualization aids study interpretation by revealing patterns and trends. Next, the data is checked, therefore this portion checks data and research findings for accuracy and validity. This research can provide more detailed, organized, and dependable conclusions on Islamic boarding schools' zone of tolerance and student outcomes using these data analysis methods. Thus, at the data condensation stage, the researcher open-coded the interview results and classified them into research-related themes. Presenting a topic matrix and verifying conclusions using triangulation and member checking follow.

In this research process, data validity was checked using source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing data from multiple informants. Method triangulation, on the other hand, involved using different data collection techniques and comparing them. Furthermore, to maintain the credibility of the information obtained, the researcher also employed member checking, which involved confirming the findings with the research informants.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

The Form of the Zone of Tolerance in Pesantren

The tolerance zone in service expectations lies between desired service and adequate service. Based on research findings, various forms of the zone of tolerance in Pesantren that do not affect satisfaction with services include delayed access, limited services, and dysfunction in mentorship and guidance.

Table 1 Data on Forms of the Zone of Tolerance in Pesantren

Interview/ Observation Data	Coding	Source of Information
My child's progress reports are often late. I sometimes only receive the report card weeks after the scheduled time.	Limited Access to Administrative Services	Informant EA, Age 42
One of the main reasons is the provider's network issues in this area. Sometimes the telecommunications signal is unstable, making it difficult to access the internet.	Delay in Accessing Information Sources	Observation, Dec 14 2024
Healthcare services in pesantren are sometimes inadequate.	Healthcare Services	Informant FN, Age 28
Pesantren have limitations in facilities and infrastructure, such as limited internet access.	Delay in Accessing Information Sources	Infomant GS, Age 34
The administrative process at the pesantren sometimes takes quite a long time.	Delay in Administrative Access	Informant DI, Age 16
Most students who have experienced skin disease issues consider it a part of their spiritual journey and an experience that deepens their bond with the pesantren.	Limitations of Healthcare Services	Informant Bs, Age 50
I try to understand that it is not always possible for every guardian or administrator to give sufficient attention to each student.	Dysfunction of Mentorship and Guidance	Informant HB, Age 42
I also realize that not all students have the same opportunities, especially due to differences in the quality of service between one guardian and another.	Dysfunction of Mentorship and Guidance	Informant Ar, Age 45
The practice of diversifying activities by gender in Pesantren is common and understandable.	Diversification of Activities Based on Gender	Informant Ar, Age 45
I do not see any discrimination or injustice in the organization of activities at the pesantren. However, the activities conducted differ between male and female students.	Diversification of Activities Based on Gender	Informant DI, Age 16

Table 1 shows four aspects that illustrate four forms of tolerated matters in services at the pesantren as below:

First, Access Delays. With the increasing importance of technology in education, delays in providing internet access and digital devices have become a serious issue. Some pesantrens still lack stable internet access, hindering students from seeking additional information or attending online classes, especially during the COVID-19 pandemic. However, the delay in access does not make students, alumni, or even parents dissatisfied. The reality of pesantren, which does not allow the use of technology or information media operated directly by students, also contributes to delays in access to information and other knowledge sources that can support students' personal

development. This practice often leads students to rely solely on the pesantren environment, religious texts, and teachers as sources of information to enhance their knowledge.

Second, Service restrictions. Service responsibility helps determine an institution's or organization's management quality and performance. High-quality educational services are needed to facilitate student development in an educational institution. Service providers are responsible for meeting community and user needs, expectations, and standards. Students, alumni, and parents are more tolerant of pesantren service problems. The tolerance zone for pesantren education includes poor administrative administration, hygiene, and health services. Families and students understand the sluggish administrative process because they know bureaucratic procedures take time, just like other services that are appropriate and represent students' identities. Thus, administrative, cleaning, and health services within the zone of tolerance are not necessarily regarded dissatisfactory. The pesantren managers understand that service duties like environmental cleaning can be difficult to accomplish. However, they acknowledge that this experience is integral to the pesantren's identity and spirituality, which the pupils value. Thus, despite understanding of health risks, pesantren administrators struggle with the low level of environmental cleanliness service obligation. According to the data above, pesantren service recipients accept its faults, such as poor health care, delayed administrative administration, and poor hygiene, within the tolerance zone. Awareness of restricted resources and environmental conditions helps service recipients embrace these flaws as part of the pesantren experience.

Third, mentoring/guiding dysfunction. Mentorship and supervision from guardians or administrators improve pesantren education, especially when guardians fail. Mr. Sulthon's statement that mentorship and career guidance can assist students plan and prepare their careers supports the significance of mentorship and career guidance. The guardians can help students choose educational and employment options that match their needs and potential by understanding their interests, aspirations, and abilities. In practice, mentorship and advice, which should be a desirable service, fall under the pesantren's zone of tolerance, where if not supplied, it does not impair service satisfaction. Service users are lenient because they realize the pesantren's limited resources.

Fourth, variety in extracurriculars Each school, including Pesantren, has several activities. This allows the school to accommodate students' different talents and interests. The pesantren has numerous activities like other schools, however some are gender-specific. Service users like the pesantren despite differences. Men and women have practical differences like pencak silat. Only guys play. Pesantren residents feel gender-based activity service disparity is proportional and doesn't affect their enjoyment. The pesantren offers gender-restricted activities based on students' interests and talents. Because the pesantren is proportional, service customers are satisfied even when male and female students have different hobbies.

The pesantren's zone of tolerance includes services between desired and adequate that don't negatively effect student, alumni, and parent happiness. Delays in internet access and digital devices that hinder learning, limitations in administrative, cleanliness, and health services that service users still accept, and dysfunction in mentorship and career guidance that, while important, do not significantly affect student satisfaction are examples of the zone of tolerance. Additionally, gender-limited extracurricular activity diversity falls within the zone of tolerance, where these inequalities are proportional and do not reduce pesantren satisfaction. Because they understand the pesantren's resource and condition constraints, service users are satisfied despite various service inadequacies.

Causing Factors in the Zone of Tolerance

The zone of tolerance is one of the customer behaviors that aligns with each customer's characteristics. Therefore, each organization or educational institution differs in the tolerance zone for service users' excuses.

Table 2 Factors Causing the Zone of Tolerance

Interview Description	Coding	Source of Information
I think the limited services are part of the pesantren tradition that prioritizes simplicity	Cultural Awareness	Informant Ag, Age 43
The awareness that the pesantren operates with a limited budget makes us more able to accept these shortcomings	Awareness of Resource Limitations	Informant Md, Age 23
We understand that pesantren teaches the values of independence and simplicity. That's why we don't mind too much if there are shortcomings in the facilities.	Cultural Awareness	Informant HB, Age 42
I consider the limitations of services as part of the educational process in the pesantren. My child learns to live simply and independently	Mentality of Patience	Informant AM, Age 41
We come from a small village with a modest income. For us, the most important thing is that the children receive a strong religious education. Facilities like simple rooms and ordinary food are not a big issue. If our child can learn religion well, we can tolerate other shortcomings.	Social Class of Service Users	Informant Ls, Age 36
We are aware that pesantren have different cultures and rules compared to schools outside of pesantren. We are already accustomed to the limited facilities, because we consider this as part of the learning process that matures us.	Cultural Awareness	Informant NS, Age 20
The limitations of services in the pesantren, such as internet access and cleanliness, are common for us. We are used to it and consider it part of life in the pesantren.	Understanding the Reality of the Environment	Informant UH, Age 19
In the pesantren, we are taught to always be patient and grateful for everything that exists. This makes us not easily complain. For example, we were always asked to queue to shower and eat. Of course, the length of time it took each person to shower varied, so it taught those of us next in line to be patient.	The Mentality of Patience in Service Users	Informant ZM, Age 20
The location of our pesantren is in an area that is difficult to access. This situation makes it difficult for us to obtain adequate resources, but the students and their parents understand this condition.	Understanding Environmental Reality	Informant, ZM, Age 20
The limited facilities are not a big issue for us, because what matters most is the education and values being taught.	Awareness of Resource Limitations	Informant ND, Age 18
Most of our students come from low to middle-income families. They come here with the hope of receiving a good religious education without having to pay high fees.	Social Class of Service Users	Informant HB, Age 42
The students appeared focused and were discussing with their friends. Although there is no internet access, they are making the most of the available resources	Awareness of Resource Limitations	Observation, June 20, 2024

The pesantren is in a remote area with difficult access, yet the students remain enthusiastic in participating in the teaching and learning activities.	The Mentality of Patience in Service Users	Observation, June 21, 2024
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Table 2 lists five pesantren tolerance zone indicators. Cultural Awareness first. Cultural awareness in pesantrens helps create a zone of tolerance. Students are used to the restricted amenities and don't mind. The Santri realize that pesantren culture and rules emphasize independence and simplicity more than those of outside schools. This attitude makes kids accept constraints as part of maturing learning. This leads to knowledge and acceptance of facility shortages. Students internalise pesantren values and customs, becoming aware of their limitations. The pesantren's traditions and rituals are being accepted as "nrimo" (open-mindedness) principles and culture are developed. Recognizing limitations fosters tolerance for existing conditions.

Second, the Service User Social Class. According to interviews with pesantren teachers and parents, most pupils come from lower-middle-class homes. These conditions influence attitudes and perceptions on affordable, high-quality education. The former teacher indicated they want a cheap, high-quality religious education. Parents emphasize the importance of religious education for their children despite limited meals and lodging. Each showed that their limited budgets prompted them to prioritize the pesantren's religious education over its physical luxuries. This story shows that pesantrens may tolerate the lack of physical comforts if they meet the spiritual and religious demands of their communities. This reveals how important socioeconomic status is in creating pesantren tolerance.

Third, Resource Constraint Knowledge. Awareness of limited resources helped create the pesantren's zone of tolerance. Kids understand that the pesantren has a limited budget. Students tolerate the Pesantren's lack of amenities but want better health and sanitary services. Students and parents emphasize education and internalized values over infrastructure, which are not essential to education. Student constraints do not necessarily lower the quality of instruction. Students are still focused, talking to friends and using resources. Thus, awareness shows how students can adapt to Pesantren's conditions and enjoy learning.

Fourth, Awareness of Environment Environmental awareness is a key factor in Islamic boarding school tolerance zones. There are regular internet and hygiene restrictions. Students and parents are used to Pesantren's rules and embrace them as part of life. The Pesantren where the research was conducted was mostly rural, making it harder for boarding schools to be reached by public transportation and other means that would allow parents to communicate or obtain adequate resources for their children. Students and parents supported or were intolerant of these constraints. This acceptance showed the Pesantren's adaptability and resilience in tackling their surroundings.

Fifth, the Attitude of Service Users' Patience. The mentality of patience of service consumers in Pesantren as one of the reasons that cause the creation of a zone of tolerance. The Pesantren is located in a remote place that makes transport difficult; yet, students are keen to take part in teaching and learning activities. Pesantren teach us to always be patient and grateful for everything that exists, even with the limitations. This makes it difficult for students to complain easily about the facilities and obstacles the Pesantren faces. Parents of students also see the limitations of services as part of the educational process that teaches students to live simply and independently. This mentality shows how Pesantren shapes the character of students who are patient and resilient in facing various limitations.

The study found that Islamic boarding schools have tolerance zones based on cultural knowledge, socioeconomic position, resource restrictions, environmental realities, and service user patience. Students at Pesantren embrace self-sufficiency and cultural knowledge to cope with minimal resources. The data shows most pupils are from low- to middle-income families. Different tastes are fostered than in wealthier areas. Integrated ideals in great religious education matter. Students also realize the Pesantren budget's limits and respect education and ideals. Understanding Pesantren's context helps pupils and parents tolerate inadequate services. The Pesantren patience

philosophy motivates students. Though isolated and inaccessible, they rarely complain. These studies show how these traits affect Pesantren students' resilience and tolerance.

Implications of the Zone of Tolerance for Santri

The data obtained through interviews and observations to support the results of the research on the influence of tolerance zones on students of Islamic boarding schools are as follows.

Table 3 Data on the Implications of the Zone of Tolerance for Students

Interview Description	Coding	Source of Information
Learning to be patient and not grumble. This condition helps me to be more mentally tougher and face problems	Improvement of Mental Resilience	Informant UM, Age 44
I'm learning to adapt rapidly. We learn to accept what comes and to keep our eyes on the objective.	Ability to Adapt to the Environment	Informant NS, Age 20
The students seem at ease and unbothered by the plain and sparsely furnished setting. They appear to maximize what they have and stay on track for the teaching and learning activities.	Ability to Adapt to the Environment	Observation
Due to our frequent collaboration, we grew quite close. Because of the constraints, we became closer and more mutually supportive.	Enhancement of a Sense of Togetherness and Solidarity	Informant ZM, Age 20
I make an effort to look on the bright side and discover methods to remain productive. This allows me to adjust swiftly.	Ability to Adapt to the Environment	Informant DI, Age 16
We frequently coordinate our study schedules and provide mutual support. We become less dependent on the amenities and more self-sufficient as a result of this.	Strengthening the Values of Independence	Informant Gs, Age 15
Overcoming obstacles and maintaining focus on my objectives are skills I honed. I am strengthened by this.	Improvement of Mental Resilience	Informant Ls, Age 36

Based on the interview and observation as in Table 3, The pesantren's tolerance zone is helpful for students. Statistics in Table 3 suggest that a zone of tolerance in the pesantren helps students grow and develop. First, build mental strength. A zone of tolerance for students in the pesantren builds mental resilience, among other benefits. Thus, kids can be patient and not whine. It builds mental strength. Students are stronger to overcome stressors this manner. A tolerance zone also helps pupils adapt and stay focused despite various challenges. These challenges build kids' mental toughness. The entire event shows how pesantren limitations and barriers make students stronger. Second, promoting independence. A zone of tolerance for pesantren pupils promotes independence. Students assist each other and create study programs, making them more independent and less dependent on services. Thus, pupils learn to innovate and optimize resources. These activities foster independence and confidence in pupils to handle problems. Thus, pesantren limitations foster student character through independence. Third, environmental adaptability. The existence of a zone of tolerance in Pesantren has crucial implications such as the ability to adjust to the environment. Santri tries to identify the good side of the current limits and discover solutions to be productive". This, in turn, boosts students' ability to take an adaptive stance towards all the dynamics surrounding them. Santri A said that in terms of adaptability to the environment, they are taught to accept situations as they are and stay focused on their goals so they can adapt rapidly. It is noted that the pupils are not bothered by the simple and less equipped atmosphere and they are comfortable. They seem to use what is provided and are concentrated on teaching and learning activities. This skill reflects that the pupils are able to adjust to any conditions successfully, thus, increasing their resilience and adaptability in many scenarios. *Fourth*, A Stronger Sense of

Togetherness and Solidarity. One of the important impacts of the zone of tolerance towards the pupils in the pesantren was the increase of the sense of togetherness and solidarity. Santri admitted that the inadequate facilities often forced them to work together. The sense of togetherness and solidarity among students strengthens social ties and creates a harmonious and supportive learning environment.

Research on Pesantren students and the zone of tolerance shows several key conclusions. First, Pesantren's constraints boost mental resilience. Students gain mental strength by being patient and not complaining. Second, constraints reinforce independence. In the zone of tolerance, kids work together, solve issues imaginatively, and maximize limited resources while becoming less dependent on school amenities. Thirdly, students are flexible. Students are encouraged to see the positive in adversity and work hard. Finally, the zone of tolerance strengthens community. Due of restricted resources, students collaborate and bond more. Thus, this study shows how Pesantren's zone of tolerance develops kids into strong, independent, critical thinkers who collaborate well with others.

Discussion

The results of the research indicate that the form of the zone of tolerance in Pesantren is different from other sectors or institutions. Perceptions of service relevance reveal that various locations have different levels of tolerance (Liljander & Strandvik, 1993). Pesantren as a cultural entity has an understanding of services such as late access (Ubaedullah et al., 2019), limited services (Khusumadewi, 2022), dysfunctional mentorship (Jahidin, 2023), and diversification of extracurricular activities (Ikhwan et al., 2025; Rahman, 2019). Late access is one of the things that make Pesantren not able to provide quality services according to the expectations of service users. Likewise, several studies find that Pesantren tends to be less financially and logistically equipped than other institutions (Syamsuri et al., 2023). This makes service demands more tolerant of student, teacher, and parent restrictions. Pesantren education emphasizes morality over wealth and expensive schools (Baso, 2024; Nu'man, 2023). In this context, honesty (Heriyadi, 2023), morality (Anam et al., 2019; Baso, 2012), values (Fahrudin, 2025; Sugianto et al., 2024), justice (Akhmad Aflaha et al., 2022), Sincerity must be shown between pesantren components and stakeholders (customers). The tolerance zone in pesantren is more tolerant due to its basic structure. This is because the institution prioritizes moral and ethical instruction than material provision. This is to ensure the viability of the institution and stakeholder satisfaction amidst numerous limits.

Research findings on pesantren-based zones of tolerance confirm that pesantren are unique in their understanding of the limitations of their services. The form of service provided within the space of acceptance by students, alumni, and parents aligns with Nurcholish Madjid's, who stated Pesantren backwardness includes physical facilities, lifestyle trends, and curriculum issues (Wekke, 2023). This is due to various internal and external factors that limit Islamic boarding schools' ability to meet modern expectations for the quality of educational services (Ubaedullah et al., 2019; Ul-Zaman et al., 2025). In this sense, the pesantren are faced with the issue of preserving the traditional values, but fulfilling the required quality requirements during the era of globalization. The financial capacity of Pesantren is decided by the modality of the financial ability of the student's parents. This also impacts the ability of Pesantren to provide quality services according to the expectations (Dermawan et al., 2026). This affects Pesantren's ability to adapt to modern needs, which require quality in all areas. The research also found that cultural knowledge, socioeconomic class, awareness of limited resources, understanding of environmental realities, and service users' patience shape tolerance zones in pesantrens. Cultural understanding in pesantren promotes tolerance. Pesantren students live in inadequate conditions but don't feel at a disadvantage because the school has a separate culture and norms. Independent living and simplicity are emphasized in the pesantren. Fenn & Geertz, 1974; Karen, (1983) states that pesantren ideals and cultural norms assist kids accept limits as part of their maturation. This shows how taught principles help kids

develop character by fostering tolerance for current conditions. Cultural understanding helps individuals understand the pesantren's values, which matter more than its facilities.

Similarly, the characteristics or social backgrounds of pesantren students, although recently shifting, have not significantly altered the ratio of students from lower-middle economic backgrounds (Ali et al., 2023; Dermawan et al., 2026). Economic limitations leave students and their families seemingly without choice but to accept the conditions of their chosen educational institution, which is considered affordable but does not eliminate the desired educational substance (Assa'idi, 2021). Bourdieu & Wacquant (Bourdieu & Wacquant, 2019) stated that social class influences how individuals assess and prioritize various aspects of life. Economically disadvantaged families prioritize education and spirituality over physical facilities. The show that low-income children are more tolerant of lack of amenities if the religious education is worth it (Bassok & Loeb, 2014; DeMatthews et al., 2021; Yilmaz & Temizkan, 2022). Data shows that socioeconomic class affects students' impressions of Islamic boarding schools. Furlong, (2015) found that low-income households prioritized education and values over material goods. Religious training will make people more tolerant of infrastructural concerns like internet outages. People are more tolerant of Islamic boarding schools' lack of facilities if students' spiritual and academic needs are met. Islamic boarding schools strongly weigh socioeconomic position when determining tolerance.

Islamic boarding schools' unique space of acceptance of services that should be defect-free affects the emergence of a pedagogical space that benefits the school's objectives (Baso, 2012; Muflihin & Madrah, 2019). Islamic boarding schools' restrictions encourage innovation and independence (Abubakar, 2018; Muslimah et al., 2019; Siraj et al., 2022). Students learn patience and not to grumble from Pesantren's constraints. Students' mental resilience to overcome all obstacles is strengthened. Wang & Neihart, (2015) found that tough conditions can boost mental resilience, as students' stress and difficulty management improves. In this situation, Pesantren alums are better able to overcome challenges than individuals who have never faced them. Goal-setting and patience help pupils overcome challenges. Psychological resilience theory states that responding to stress increases mental resilience (Eardley et al., 2021; Fletcher & Sarkar, 2016). Pesantren values students' mental resilience to limitations.



Figure 1. Integrated Framework of Tolerance Zones in Pesantren Services

Figure 1 shows that the Islamic boarding school-based zone of tolerance is unique and not as black-and-white as the expectations vs. services study. Liljander & Strandvik, (1993) did not stress the tolerance space inside the tolerance range (zone of tolerance) between the intended service (ideal service expected) and the adequate service (minimum service still acceptable). Research demonstrates that Islamic boarding schools' zone of tolerance for services is not primarily

determined by the difference between expectations and service delivery, as in the classical model. Moral principles, cultural constructions, and service users' socioeconomic conditions are integrated. In Islamic boarding schools, internalization of values like sincerity, simplicity, and fairness shapes service standards to be more flexible. Islamic boarding schools teach and live ideals like simplicity, sincerity, and independence, according to Geertz (Geertz, 1972; JC Alexander, 2008). Islamic boarding schools' service constraints are part of moral teaching, not flaws. Sima & Rao found that limited facilities can improve problem-solving and self-confidence in challenging situations (Booth-Ledoux et al., 2020). This study shows that humans respond on manufactured meaning.

The study above validates adanya's uniqueness that pesantren service discrepancies are instructional. In pesantren, service deviations, which are flaws in industry, have purpose and function as unique learning spaces that help pupils absorb ideals. Instead of failures, service variances are learning opportunities. In pesantren, the zone of tolerance in quality management has become a tool for personal growth. Thus, the research shows that Islamic boarding schools have a transformative zone of tolerance that uses service constraints to cultivate character.

Based on the discussion above, the results of this study expand the theory of the zone of tolerance from a classical perspective rooted in the expectation-disconfirmation paradigm to a more contextual and value-based approach. Liljander & Strandvik's study found that the zone of tolerance is a passive range between ideal and minimum service (Liljander & Strandvik, 1993). However, this study's findings posit that the zone of tolerance is active and transformative. Similarly, research findings on the meaning of limitations and their use in the moral education process reinforce Geertz's (1972) view that the system of meaning is an instrument that shapes everyone's understanding of reality. Thus, the zone of tolerance must be understood as a dynamic cultural construct that functions not only as an evaluative mechanism for services but also as a space for value transformation in social, cultural, and educational contexts.

This work contributes to a global paradigm change in service quality and zone of tolerance investigations, which have mostly used Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory and the SERVQUAL model. Mainly, existing research view the zone of tolerance as a buffer between consumer happiness and service faults. The Expectation-Disconfirmation Theory and SERVQUAL models seem to have failed in non-market, value-based contexts like Islamic residential schools. Service constraints are culturally translated as part of value-generating instruction in Islamic boarding schools. Thus, this study suggests a novel perspective that service quality should be judged by an organization's core principles as well as perfection (zero-defect).

CONCLUSION

The Pesantren tolerance zone found a compromise between ideals and reality. The study found that Pesantren's zone of tolerance accommodates service restrictions and influences student satisfaction and adaptation. Pesantren accepts late access, restricted services, insufficient mentorship, and extracurricular activity discrepancies. Service consumers are happy because they accept constraints and incorporate them into student instruction. According to studies, cultural understanding, social status, awareness of limited resources, environmental realities, and patience create Pesantren's zone of tolerance. Students used to inferior facilities will adapt. Economy and class determine pesantren services. Family income and social class affect student and parent expectations. Student and parent interactions emphasize education over service. Limited resources and environmental realities teach students tolerance and resilience. This indicates students can handle hardship. What is allowed improves mental health, independence, adaptation, and student solidarity. This study shows that Pesantren's zone of tolerance reflects many events that might teach students flexibility, autonomy, and other values education promotes.

This study helps explain the zone of tolerance, a region between desired and appropriate service. Thus, Pesantren's tolerance zone is a constrained region for flexibility that improves youngsters' character. This provides a distinct perspective on tolerance, which emphasizes morality

and ethics rather than services and facilities. The study also reveals Pesantren's facility and service limitations that might benefit students. Mental resilience and independence, flexibility, and solidarity improve. The study adds a new dimension to the zone of tolerance idea by showing that inadequacies can shape students' personalities. This study illuminates the zone of tolerance in religious education like Pesantren, which may shape students' personalities.

The study investigates Pesantren's tolerance zone without analyzing students' psychological consequences. Poor facilities, services, and contextual changes or long-term adaptation are psychological impacts. Stress, mental health, and emotional well-being impact kids. These circumstances may hinder Pesantren adaptation. Neither students nor Pesantren have been evaluated for contextual changes or long-term adaptability to environmental, policy, or individual pressures. Long-term adaptation can affect the tolerance zone and student happiness, therefore understanding it without considering it may be incomplete. Thus, future research may examine the tolerance zone's effects on Islamic boarding school students' mental health and social factors including interpersonal ties and social support. Longitudinal studies can also track tolerance zone and student results.

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