The Response of the Participation Rate to Public Islamic Universities: Empirical Evidence from Central Java, Indonesia

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menginvestigasi angka partisipasi kuliah masyarakat Jawa Tengah, Indonesia terhadap Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri (PTKIN) pada periode 2015-2017 baik dari segi persepsi, analisis faktor dan animo masyarakat. Didasari dengan pendekatan *mix methods*, data dikumpulkan melalui angket, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Sejumlah 24.903 orang tua calon mahasiswa yang berada di sekitar lokasi tiga PTKIN di Jawa Tengah menjadi populasi dalam penelitian ini. Teknik sampling yang digunakan ialah *proportionate random sampling* sehingga diperoleh 268 partisipan penelitian sebagai sampel. Hasil penelitian memaparkan bahwa pertama, angka partisipasi masyarakat Jawa Tengah terhadap PTKIN meningkat 16,9% pada 2016, 66,6% pada 2017, dan 67,3% pada 2018. Kedua, rata-rata persepsi masyarakat terhadap PTKIN tercatat baik dengan skor 22,9. Mayoritas masyarakat memiliki pandangan positifnya tentang harmonisasi keilmuan umum dan agama. Ketiga, rata-rata faktor internal dan eksternal mempengaruhi minat masuk PTKIN dengan skor rata-rata 69,7 dengan kriteria cukup baik. Terakhir, animo masyarakat Jawa Tengah terhadap PTKIN mencapai skor 35,5 termasuk dalam kategori cukup tinggi. Penelitian ini menunjukkan bahwa pelayanan PTKIN sudah cukup baik, yang terkait dengan sarana prasarana, tenaga pengajar, dan pelayanan akademik kemahasiswaan. Namun, beberapa masyarakat juga menyatakan perlu perbaikan dan peningkatan seperti media teknologi informasi dan peningkatan kualitas mutu lulusan agar mampu bersaing dengan perguruan tinggi umum.

Kata Kunci: Angka Partisipasi, Animo Masyarakat, Jawa Tengah, Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri

Abstract

The current study aims to investigate the participation rate of people in Central Java, Indonesia to public Islamic universities in the period of 2015-2017, i.e. perceptions, factor analysis, and public interest. Grounded in mixed methods, data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. A total of 24,903 parents of prospective students situated in the areas of three public Islamic universities in Central Java became the research population. Proportionate random sampling was undertaken to yield 268 research participants. Study findings promote that firstly, the participation rate of people in Central Java to the government-funded Islamic universities reached 16.9 in 2016, 66.6 in 2017, and 67.3 in 2018 for percentages. Secondly, the average public perception rate to the public universities under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs was reported at the good criterion well with a score of 22.9. The majority of people demonstrated a positive view of the harmony of science and religious studies. Afterward, the average internal and external factors influence interest in the admission of the Islamic universities with an average score of 69.7 at the good enough level. Lastly, the public interest of Central Java in the universities achieved a score of 35.5 at the quite high criterion. This study also demonstrates that the public Islamic university's services have provided excellent infrastructure, teaching staff, and student academic services. Nonetheless, various improvements are required, e.g. information technology and improvement of quality graduates to compete with other public universities.

Keywords: Participation Rate, Public Interests, Central Java, Public Islamic Universities

INTRODUCTION

Indonesia constitutes one of the countries with the fourth largest human population in the world after China, India and the United States. About 28.51 million Indonesians are still underprivileged/poor. In deciding the poverty rate, quality of human resources is necessary. Human Resources have a major role in the progress of the nation (Makkulasse & Sari, 2018). One of the qualities of human resources is called "intellectual", and the quality of education is the key. The Indonesian government's concrete efforts in improving the quality of education in order that human resources are able to compete in the era of openness and globalization, is the issuance of Law No. 20/2003 concerning the National Education System, Government Regulation of the Republic of Indonesia No. 47/2008 on Compulsory Education, and Presidential Instruction No. 5/2006 on the National Movement for the Acceleration of Completion of Nine Years of Compulsory Education and the Eradication of Illiteracy (Koesoema, 2015). Even nowadays, the government of Indonesia, through the Ministry of Education and Culture, has initiated the 12-year compulsory education which has been promoted

since June 2015 (https://psmk.kemdikbud.go.id). Besides, the intellectual generation is also resulted from college graduates. Higher education is a pillar of agents of change in society in both developed and developing countries, especially in countries that are still underdeveloped. This is due to higher education is an educational institution that is able to supply quality of human resources and can produce innovative thinking products, scientific findings and their dependent, namely technology and art (Fauzi, 2016).

One of the higher education institutions is Islamic universities referring to a part of the Islamic education system that the major role can give a person the ability to lead his life in accordance with Islamic ideals. Islam has enormous challenges related to self-image and the humanitarian crisis that has been played by hardline Muslim preachers. With no exception in the field of education, as part of the Islamic religious system, Islamic education has the responsibility to ensure that the Islamic religious education system is clear and clean from the values of violence. Islamic higher education institutions existing as a part of the Islamic education system which can give a person the ability to lead his life according to Islamic ideals (Uhbiyati, 1999).

Several previous studies have discussed public interest in higher education institutions, most of them were motivated by service quality, campus image or reputation, and promotion (Suharti & Nurhayati, 2017). In addition, another reason taken into consideration was the quality of lectures (Mustika et al., 2019). Public interest in studying is also influenced by the proximity of the place and also the affordability of education fee (Saifuddin et al., 2015: 15). The interest in continuing to study also appears based on the attributes of people's pretention and needs (Nugroho & Cahyono, 2017: 15). Interest shows that there is a desire in making a choice (Kamila, 2018: 3). To maintain and increase public trust, universities, especially State Islamic University, are required to have a positive corporate image (Susanti, 2017: 2).

The convincing arguments trigger this study to focus on the importance of Muslim community in entrusting their children's education to Islamic educational institutions. The present study aims to examine the participation rate of people in Central Java to public Islamic universities in 2015-2017 in terms of their perception, factor analysis, and interest. Framed in mix methods, this study focused on three government-funded Islamic universities in Central Java. Proportionate random sampling proposed by Isaac & Michael (Sugiyono, 2008) for an error of 10% was adopted to

obtain 268 samples as research participants. Data were analyzed using descriptive qualitative data analysis and quantitative data analysis.

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION IN CENTRAL JAVA TO GOVERNMENT-FUNDED ISLAMIC UNIVERSITIES UNIVERSITY DURING 2015-2017

Public Islamic universities in Indonesia are under the supervision of the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Academically and technically, the development of the government-funded Islamic higher education institutions is undertaken by the Ministry of Research, Technology, and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia, while it is functionally carried out by the Ministry of Religious Affairs. Currently, the Public Islamic universities in Indonesia consist of three types, i.e. State Islamic University (UIN), State Islamic Institute, and State Islamic College (STAIN).

The existence of Islamic higher education institutions is basically driven by two main factors. The internal factor, is that in Indonesia's public universities, including the Technical College in Bandung in 1920, the Law College in Jakarta in 1920, and the Medical College in Jakarta in 1927 (Mudyahardjo, 2006). Meanwhile, the external factor deals with the response to the community's need to realize religious life in the country and the influx of ideas for renewing Islamic thought into Indonesia (Daulay, 2007: 119).

In reality, community participation in attending Islamic higher education institutions was gradually increasing, evidenced by a geographical map of the region where the majority of Central Java and its surroundings were inhabited by Muslim communities. There was a basis that inspired the spirit or motivation of their participation in learning at public Islamic universities. One of the bases of community participation in attending education at the Islamic Religious Higher Education level is religion (Kisbiyanto, 2016: 328). This religious basis came directly from the teachings of Islam in its guidelines: the Qur'an and Hadith. Zuhairini (1983: 23) explained that in this case the religion originating from the teachings of Islam, namely the Qur'an and Hadith is the main capital of spiritual motivation that encourages certain communities to participate in improving the quality of Islamic education, public Islamic universities.

The challenges of public Islamic universities in the future are very real in the millennial era and the era of corruption. Not only how to conduct proper university

management, but there must be new innovations to develop the role of universities as educational institutions for education personnel.

The rapid development of public Islamic universities affected the increase in public interest in joining Islamic higher education institutions. Through the research of the participation rate of the community in learning Islamic education at public Islamic universities, it means that public interest and trust in State Islamic University also increased. From this study, data on college participation of the people of Central Java from 2015-2017 were research from the number of applicants entering public Islamic universities from the *Seleksi Prestasi Akademik Nasional Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Islam Negeri* (SPAN-PTKIN), the national entrance test for public Islamic universities based on student academic achievement recommended by senior secondary schools.

Documented from three public Islamic universities, data on the increase in community college participation from year to year were obtained. The increase from 2015 to 2016 was 16.9% from 5,348 to 6,253. In 2017, the increase was even higher, which was 66.6% from 6,253 to 10,415 and most recently this year, in 2018 the increase also continued, which was 67.3% from 10,415 to 17,428. That increase number showed that there was a great desire of Central Java community to send their children to continue studying in the State Islamic University. That number has not represented the entire Central Java community due to the research limitations. The sample was only three out of six public Islamic universities in Central Java, Indonesia.

Each public Islamic university has its own dynamic. Some of them fluctuated from year to year. In 2016, the number of applicants at Islamic university A increased of 27.1%, yet in 2017 it decreased of 26.9%. Then again, it increased of 28.3% in 2018. In that year, Islamic university A successfully became the top three of public Islamic universities that received the most applications at SPAN-PTKIN.

Islamic university A got 3.908 prospective students through SPAN-PTKIN in this year. Meanwhile, the quota was only around 680 students. In contrast to the number of applicants in 2018, Islamic university A only yielded around 1.045 applicants through SPAN-PTKIN in 2017. Meanwhile, the quota was 596 students. The increase number of applicants in Islamic university A brought it to be the third rank. The high number of applicants cannot be separated from the increasing public trust in Islamic university A.

The percentage of applicants in the Islamic university B had been increasing by three years. In 2016, the increase was 41.3% from 1.373 to 1.940. Then, in 2017 it also increased of 37.6% from 1.940 to 2.670. In 2018 it increased of 29.9% from 2.670 to 3.467. It proved that the number of applicants have been increasing by three years. It was not surprising that nowadays there are 7807 from total of active students in Islamic university B from various areas located in the surrounding in coastal area of Central Java in majority and an overseas country. It was a great achievement; however Islamic university B still needs to compete with other public Islamic universities in Indonesia.

The percentage of applicants in Islamic university C improved 18.7% in 2016, from 2.004 into 2.378. There was a significant increasing in 2017. It increased of 181.7% from 2.378 to 6.700. In 2018, Islamic university C was ranked the most wanted public Islamic higher education institution. Islamic university C was in the first choice, there were 1.952 enthusiasts. The second choice was 2.165 enthusiasts. The total number of enthusiasts on the *Ujian Masuk Perguruan Tinggi Keagamaan Negeri* (UM-PTKIN), the national entrance exam for public Islamic universities was 4.177. Meanwhile, there were 6.700 enthusiasts on the SPAN-PTKIN. Therefore, that the total prospective students on both paths were 10.817 applicants (Documentation from mass media).

From the explanation above, it can be declared that public trust in public Islamic universities is currently getting higher. Public Islamic universities are no longer as a last choice for people after not being accepted in public higher education institutions. The public participation rate for public Islamic universities in the research will be more deeply examined in three focus discussions, i.e. public perceptions of public Islamic universities, factors affecting public interest in public Islamic universities, and public interest of Central Java, Indonesia in public Islamic universities.

Public Perceptions of Public Islamic Universities

Community participation in following the development process of public Islamic universities or the participation/involvement of a person or community who lives in an area both emotionally and physically, causing significant changes to the educational institution is indicated by an increase in the number of desire (Hill & Wie, 2013; Jimenez, 2018). Perception is a process of organizing, interpreting the stimulus received

by an organism or individual so that it becomes something meaningful, and is an activity that is integrated within the individual (Walgito, 2004: 70). In a psychological perspective, perception is a process of interpreting the information received by human senses (Munoz, 2016); eye in seeing pictures and reading, ears in listening to sound or auditive information and so on (Suharman, 2005: 23). Perception is "the consciousness of particular material things present to sense", indicating awareness of special material objects that are present in the world of understanding (Harun et al., 2019; Johnes & Tone, 2016; Kusumastuti & Idrus, 2017).

Attitude is an action as a result (product) of the socialization process, where a person shows a reaction in accordance with the stimulus he receives (Mar'at, 1981: 9). According to Mar'at, in this attitude there is an assessment factor, because it is the value that causes consistency in the organization of one's behavior (Mar'at, 1981: 17). The shallow-depth and bluntness of this judgment will be greatly influenced by the knowledge that a person has when someone is exposed to an object (Suharman, 2005: 23). Furthermore, "need" is the urge to fulfill something as a result of the motivation that accompanies it. One of the motivations that trigger the needs is the idealization factor, namely the fulfillment of expectations of ideal self-actualization (Abraham Maslow, 1993: 31), especially in the face of a future that tends to change (Abraham Maslow, 1993: 23-25). In the concept of ideas like this, individuals who desire to succeed have competence and control over the effects of their environment (Koeswara, 1991: 6). Thus the notion of "perception" raised in this research is the ability to see an object based on an assessment in the form of a developing impression and idealization in the form of an emerging idea.

The data disclosed are related to "perceptions" in this study is the ability of the people of Central Java to see an object based on an assessment in the form of a developing impression and idealization in the form of an emerging idea. From the results of a questionnaire distributed to the parents of students studied at Islamic university A, Islamic university B, and Islamic university C as the results of community perceptions of public Islamic universities in Central Java, Indonesia can be described in Figure 1.
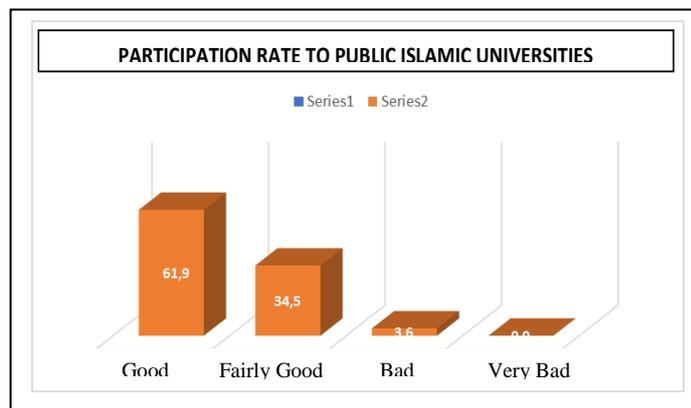
Figure 1. Community Perceptions of Public Islamic Universities in Central Java

Figure 1 illustrates that the majority of people in Central Java had a good perceptions of public Islamic universities with an average score of 22.9. From 268 samples, there is 61.9% of the community had a good perception of public Islamic universities, 34.5% of the community had a fairly good perception of public Islamic universities and 3.6% of the community had a poor perception of public Islamic universities.

The results of this study were also strengthened through interviews with the people in Central Java exposing their perception of the education at the public Islamic universities. It can be seen from various aspects. Those aspects are impression and assessment aspects as well as aspirations and expectations aspects.

> In my point of view, public Islamic universities are good. They are a great place to study the values of Islamic education, to shape the character with a scientific insight based on religion to become Muslim intellectuals (S, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

This was also confirmed by MR's interview. He explained that:

> Public Islamic universities are good, a campus to study Islam, especially Islamic university C, a well-known university in the city, providing good quality education that is very affordable for the community (MR, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

It can be stated that people in Central Java has a good impression and responses toward public Islamic universities. They support and recommend their children to study at public Islamic universities. The scientific integration between

religious knowledge and general science is largely a source of public attraction toward public Islamic universities.

Factors influencing the interest of the people of Central Java in public Islamic universities involved internal and external factors. Interest is a tendency to stay in one subject or someone's behavior to feel attracted to a certain field and feel happy to be involved in that field (Djaali, 2011: 122; Slameto, 2003: 57; WS. Winkel, 1991: 25). The factors that greatly affect the level of demand for higher education or interest in higher education include the influence of cultural traditions, gender, social status, parental education, and number of family members. People due to poverty cannot continue their education will be in the group of people who have dropped out of school or are uneducated who in the end find it very difficult to get a formal job.

From the explanation above, to meet the needs of the community, educational institutions should have clear views and objectives which are implemented with dynamic, innovative and creative programs supported by professionalism and high dedication from the person in charge of the educational institution. At least, there are three things that people consider in choosing an educational institution. Those include aspirations or pictures of future life, religious values, and social status. The more educated a society is, the more factors that are taken into consideration in choosing an educational institution and conversely the more common a society is, the simpler the consideration of choices in an educational institution is.

The results of tracing a questionnaire on the participation of the people of Central Java, in the part of the factors that influence their interest in entering public Islamic universities are shown in Figure 2.
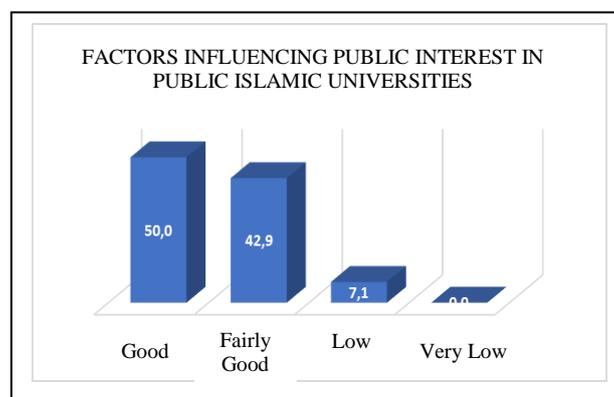

Figure 2. Factors Influencing Participation Rate on Public Islamic Universities

Figure 2 shows that the majority of internal and external factors influence people's interest in state Islamic universities: 50% of them are in good category, 42.9% are in fairly good category, and 7.1% are in low category with the average of 69.7, or in quite good category. The results of this research were also strengthened through researcher interviews with several Central Java communities. In this case, the parents of students who educated their children at public Islamic universities or the surrounding communities who live in the state Islamic universities area of Central Java. Factors that influence the interest of the people of Central Java towards state Islamic universities are called internal and external factors. Internal factors include internal motivation, ideals and expectations while external factors include family, school and community environment.

Family factors are very dominant in influencing the interest in public Islamic universities which can be concluded into several factors, i.e. family economics where most state that studying at state Islamic universities is cheaper than at other state universities, geographical location which the location close to home tends to be one of the aspects in considering the choice of higher education, gender that especially girls tend to be directed to study close to home, and parents' education, parents with higher education are more selective in choosing universities.

Central Java Communities' Interest in Public Islamic Universities

Seeing the development of public Islamic universities today, it is found the large number of enthusiasts who have registered at public Islamic universities, either through the National Academic Achievement Selection (SPAN-PTKIN), the National Entrance Examination for Public Islamic Universities (UM-PTKIN), and the independent examination (UM) held by each university. Of the three routes, public Islamic universities enthusiasts are getting better and bigger. The rapid development of public Islamic universities as well as the increasing public interest in participating in higher education at public Islamic universities is a unique case and reflects the growing trust of the community to public Islamic universities. Parents have started to see public Islamic universities as an alternative to study and enroll their children in Islamic studies colleges, including in this research about the public interest in Central Java toward

public Islamic universities in Central Java. Public interest in public Islamic universities is quite large even though the capacity provided is limited (Rahman, 2016: 90).

Public interest in public Islamic universities includes strong interest, motivation and positive view of state Islamic university so that they are able to make decisions in choosing state Islamic university as the best choice. Interests can encourage someone to do or choose something (Sofanudin, 2012: 97). Things that affect public interest in state Islamic university can be influenced by feelings of pleasure towards public Islamic universities, (2) attention/positive attitude toward government-funded Islamic universities, and (3) public Islamic universities activities/services. Quality of service or good service to customers or students is also one of the determinants of interest and added value for students in choosing higher education institutions (Marlius & Ananda, 2020: 194).

Simanjuntak (2000: 69) said that education is an important factor in the development of human resources. Education not only increases knowledge, but also improves work skills, thereby increasing work productivity. Education is seen as an investment whose rewards can be obtained several years later in the form of increased work results or income. Education has the task of preparing human resources for development. The pace of development is always pursued in tune with the demands of the times. The essence of development rests on and originates in humans. Construction solely bears the scope of material or physical development in the form of buildings, bridges and others.

Tracing the results of the questionnaire showed that the public interest in Central Java for public Islamic universities can be described in Figure 3.
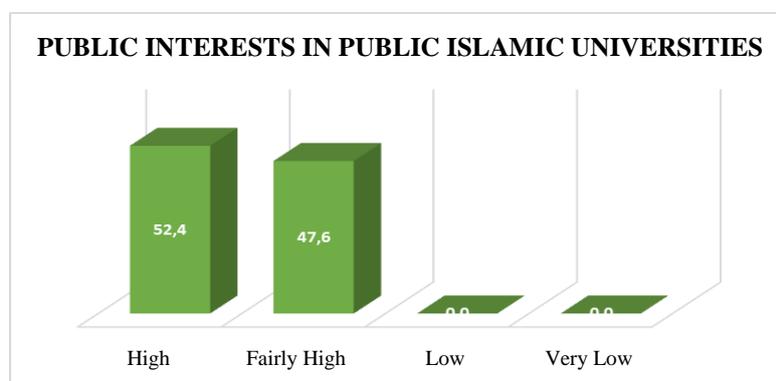

Figure 3. Public Interests of Central Java in Public Islamic Universities

Figure 3 portrays that the Central Java communities' in public Islamic universities is high (52.4%), and quite high (47.6%). This interest is seen from feelings of pleasure toward public Islamic universities, attention/positive attitude toward public Islamic universities, and public Islamic universities activities/services.

Feelings of pleasure towards public Islamic universities are also related to their perception of public Islamic universities as expressed by R, 57 year old man from a sub-district located near Islamic university B.

> I am glad that my son studies at public Islamic universities because they learn both science and religion. It gives the big impact to students' character building. Although public Islamic universities are not the first choice, I suggest my son to choose public Islamic universities (R, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

That is in line with K, 56 year old man from regency located near Islamic university B.

> I am glad that my daughter studies in public Islamic universities because she learns Islamic studies for her knowledge more useful for the world and after (K, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

From the various explanations of the opinion above, it can be suggested that parents as stakeholders and the community of education users are glad to be able to support their children from school to university and state Islamic university is also one of those who are interested in considering their decision to a higher level of education.

> I am the alumnus of Islamic university A in the department of Islamic education. The rapid development of this university which nowadays transformed into IAIN (State Institute for Islamic Studies), I am optimistic that the development and quality of public Islamic universities right now is getting better and has the similar quality with state universities. Many of the public Islamic universities graduates become teachers, education practitioners both public and private, banks, community extension workers and many have become community leaders such as *kiai* (Islamic clerics) and village officials and many others. In my opinion, it depends on the seriousness and interest of each student to develop all their potential (T, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

Similar with R 57 year old man from a sub-district located near Islamic university B who has a daughter studies in Islamic university B.

> I am sure that state Islamic university has the good prospect, similar with the other universities, but it depends on the willingness and seriousness of each student (R, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

From some of the opinions of the students' parents above, most of them have a positive attitude on public Islamic universities. This can be seen through the views of the parents of students who think that the prospects for public Islamic universities in the future are not inferior to public universities in Indonesia.

Public Islamic universities services are closely related to providing satisfaction to customers, service with good quality can provide good satisfaction for customers, namely stakeholders, parents of students, users of graduates and students themselves as subjects to education.

A parent of students, RA, 50 year old man from a sub-district located near Islamic university B, stated his viewpoint.

> In my opinion, facilities in state Islamic university is quite good, but the service is not quite good, and the lecturers' human resources is not quite good too and need to be developed both from quantity and quality (RA, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

AC, 66 years old from a regency located near Islamic university B stated that:

> Related to the state Islamic university service, I think facilities is adequate appropriate with the learning process' need while the human resources is good in quantity and quality. There is great hope that public Islamic universities will be more advanced in the future and it is hoped that in the future it will open new faculties in the field of science such as medicine, pharmacy, midwifery so that it is equal to other public universities (AC, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

MZ, 62 year old woman from a sub-district near Islamic university A shared her experience.

> Excellent services in public Islamic universities are quite good in the availability of facilities, students' service, and lecturers' human resources. However, it needs to improve the quality in technology and graduates' quality (MZ, In-depth Interview, Researchers' Translation).

From several views of the community (parents of students), it can be depicted that public Islamic universities services are quite good, namely infrastructure, teaching staff, student academic services. However, some people also state that improvements and improvements are needed, including information technology media and the quality improvement of graduates in order to be able to compete with other state universities. In addition, the community also hopes that state Islamic university will also open non-

Islamic studies study programs, e.g. medicine, pharmacy, midwifery, so that they can compete with other public universities in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

The present study highlights that the development of public Islamic universities in Central Java, Indonesia cannot be separated from the role and participation of the community. The parameter of the participation rate can be noticed from the public interest in attending education as evidenced by the increase in quantity. It indicates that communities, particularly parents of prospective students, play a pivotal role in taking into account of users of these educational services. Public participation rate to Islamic higher education institutions demonstrates the tendency that studying at public Islamic universities is deemed very important for their children to incorporate with Islamic values. This vein emerges from the parents' point of views sharing their lived experience of their children studying in Islamic boarding schools or *madrasas* (Islamic schools). They are also motivated by the existence of numerous scholars in the realm of Islamic education performing their roles in society.

In response to the empirical evidence, this study recommends parties managing public Islamic universities to reinforce excellent services and quality of education so that people are interested in making their children study at managing. Government-funded Islamic universities are expected to be able to meet the needs of stakeholders, specifically for graduate users, by improving the quality of graduates' quality and competence of graduates in accordance with field demands, including the ICT-literate generation. Likewise, student services are necessary to achieve stakeholder satisfaction, fulfillment of adequate facilities, excellent service and fulfillment of human resources and teaching staff as well as adequate student needs. The results of this study are of concern for all parties, particularly managers of higher education. Further studies relating to this theme with larger population and other educational institutions are invited to undertake for contributing to more novel insights.

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