



QUALITY MANAGEMENT AND TEACHER PROFESSIONALISM: THE MEDIATING ROLE OF PARENT SATISFACTION IN BUILDING PARENT TRUST

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the effects of quality management practices and teacher professionalism on parent trust, both directly and indirectly through parent satisfaction in public kindergartens in Central Aceh Regency, Indonesia. The study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory cross-sectional design. The population comprised parents or legal guardians of students enrolled in public kindergartens in Central Aceh Regency. A total of 329 respondents were selected using the Krejcie and Morgan sampling approach and proportionate stratified random sampling. Data were collected through a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire comprising 40 indicators. The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The findings indicate that quality management practices have a positive and significant effect on parent trust ($\beta = 0.522$; $p < 0.001$) and parent satisfaction ($\beta = 0.529$; $p < 0.001$). Teacher professionalism also has a positive and significant effect on parent trust ($\beta = 0.334$; $p < 0.001$) and parent satisfaction ($\beta = 0.410$; $p < 0.001$). Furthermore, parent satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on parent trust ($\beta = 0.527$; $p < 0.001$). Parent satisfaction significantly mediates the effects of quality management practices ($\beta = 0.279$; $p < 0.001$) and teacher professionalism ($\beta = 0.216$; $p < 0.001$) on parent trust. The model explains 60.2% of the variance in parent trust. These findings highlight the importance of integrating effective quality management, teacher professionalism, and parent satisfaction to strengthen trust in early childhood education institutions.

Keywords: *Quality Management Practices; Teacher Professionalism; Parent Satisfaction; Parent Trust; Early Childhood Education.*

INTRODUCTION

Early childhood education (ECE) constitutes a critical foundation for children's development and an initial setting in which relationships between families and educational institutions are established. At this stage, educational quality is strongly influenced by the quality of learning processes and the capacity of educational institutions to manage comprehensive educational services. Educational institutions play a central role in coordinating educational services, maintaining communication with parents, ensuring teacher professionalism, and creating service experiences that foster families' sense of security and trust. Unlike at higher levels of education, parents of young children cannot fully observe the educational processes their children experience while at school. Consequently, parents' perceptions of institutional management quality and teacher professionalism become important determinants of their trust in educational institutions. Previous research in early childhood education has demonstrated that service quality and parental satisfaction are closely associated with the continuity of parent-institution relationships, while the quality of teachers' practices is influenced by their professionalism,



working environment, and institutional conditions (Eka Wulandari, Suminar, & Nuzulia, 2024; Fenech & Watt, 2023; Huang, Chen, Ma, & Gao, 2022a)

The importance of this issue becomes particularly evident in the context of kindergarten education in Central Aceh Regency. According to official data from the Ministry of Primary and Secondary Education (Kemendikdasmen), Central Aceh Regency has 79 public kindergartens distributed across 14 sub-districts. This distribution indicates that public kindergarten services have a relatively broad institutional reach throughout the regency. Based on the available student enrollment data from the relevant educational units, approximately 2,250 students constituted the population basis for this study. This context suggests that the quality management of kindergarten education is closely related to parents' or guardians' experiences and perceptions as stakeholders who directly interact with the educational services provided. Therefore, examining quality management practices, teacher professionalism, parent satisfaction, and parent trust is important for understanding how institutional management and teacher professionalism contribute to parental satisfaction and trust in kindergarten institutions in Central Aceh Regency.

From an educational management perspective, institutional quality should not be understood merely in terms of administrative achievement or compliance with formal standards. Rather, quality should be reflected in systematic processes of planning, implementation, control, evaluation, and continuous improvement. Total Quality Management (TQM) emphasizes continuous improvement, the involvement of organizational members, and an orientation toward the needs of customers or stakeholders as fundamental principles of quality management. Parents represent one of the key stakeholders because they entrust the education of their children to schools and are therefore able to evaluate the educational experiences received by both their children and families. A stakeholder-oriented approach combined with continuous improvement can strengthen service quality and enhance users' satisfaction with educational services. Empirical evidence from Indonesia also indicates that educational service quality is strongly associated with user satisfaction and loyalty, particularly when service quality is developed through quality management approaches (Supriyanto et al., 2025; Zubaidah, Murtiyoko, & Ibrahim, 2026).

Within this framework, quality management practices are particularly important because effective quality management at the kindergarten level enables teachers and educational personnel to work in a more systematic, consistent, and responsive manner toward the needs of children and parents. Quality management practices encompass how institutions plan for quality, establish service standards, conduct monitoring and evaluation, involve members of the school community, respond to parental feedback, and implement continuous improvement. Such an approach shifts school management beyond merely completing administrative activities toward creating meaningful educational experiences for service users. Recent studies indicate that TQM implementation can strengthen parental involvement, program evaluation, and user satisfaction. Quantitative evidence has further demonstrated that TQM-based educational service quality contributes to parental satisfaction and can explain substantial variation in parental satisfaction and loyalty (Kaiseroglou, Sfakianaki, & Koemtzi, 2023; Kaiseroglou et al., 2023).

However, effective management systems cannot produce meaningful educational services without adequate teacher professionalism. Kindergarten teachers occupy a



particularly strategic position because their interactions with young children are intensive, personal, and continuous. Teacher professionalism is closely associated with subject knowledge, teaching competence, and pedagogical expertise. The ability to understand children's developmental characteristics, fulfill professional responsibilities, communicate effectively, uphold professional ethics, reflect on instructional practices, and engage in continuous professional development is essential for maintaining educational quality. The quality of teachers' practices cannot be separated from their professional capacity or from the institutional context that supports their professional development. Professional practice among early childhood teachers is influenced by both individual factors and workplace support, while continuous professional development is essential for sustaining the quality of educational services (Liu & Li, 2021; Universiti Pendidikan Sultan Idris et al., 2022)

Teacher professionalism is also closely related to the quality of learning processes and an institution's capacity to provide educational services that are responsive to children's developmental needs. Its importance has increased as teachers are required to adapt to curriculum changes, technological developments, evolving societal expectations, and increasingly diverse student characteristics. Research on professionalism in early childhood education has emphasized continuous competency development, supervision, professional learning communities, and institutional support as important mechanisms for improving educational service quality. Professionalism has also received increasing attention because educational human resource management represents a fundamental component of sustainable institutional quality (Farezhen & Wijayaningsih, 2022; Mila Alvionita & Dea Wanda Milarahma Putri, 2024).

A further issue concerns how the quality of institutional management and teacher professionalism are translated into positive experiences for parents. Parent satisfaction is an important construct because it represents parents' subjective evaluation after comparing their expectations of educational services with their actual experiences. In early childhood education, parental satisfaction may be shaped by the quality of learning, school-family communication, responsiveness to children's needs, service consistency, teacher attention, safety, the learning environment, and the institution's ability to provide reliable information. Research involving parents of young children in Malaysia indicates that service quality is an important determinant of parental satisfaction, while research in Indonesia suggests that ECE service quality is associated with parental satisfaction, which in turn contributes to the sustainability of parents' relationships with educational institutions (Andriana & Supriyanto, 2024; Ismail, Ahmad, Jusoh, Mohd Yusof, & Naim Azli, 2023).

Parental satisfaction is closely associated with the development of parent trust. Trust in educational contexts does not emerge instantaneously; rather, it develops through consistent interactions, perceptions of teacher and institutional competence, transparent communication, fulfillment of service commitments, and parents' confidence that the school prioritizes children's interests. Accordingly, the relationships among quality management practices, teacher professionalism, parent satisfaction, and parent trust have a strong theoretical and empirical basis. Nevertheless, studies examining these four constructs within a single integrated model remain relatively limited, particularly in the context of early childhood education in Indonesia. Previous studies have predominantly examined the relationship between service quality and parental satisfaction or loyalty, while other studies



have focused on teacher professionalism and learning quality. Research on trust in early childhood education has also frequently conceptualized trust as part of parent-school relationships or as a mediator between satisfaction and loyalty. For example, Huang et al. examined parental satisfaction, trust, relationship commitment, and loyalty in kindergarten settings, whereas Wulandari et al. investigated ECE service quality, parental satisfaction, and loyalty. Although these studies provide an important foundation, they do not comprehensively explain how quality management practices and teacher professionalism jointly contribute to parental trust through parental satisfaction (Arslan, Emre, Ulutaş KeskinKiliç, & Özyazıcı, 2022; Hummel, Cohen, & Anders, 2023; Sipayung & Cheng, 2023).

Against this background, the research gap in the present study can be identified in three dimensions. First, a conceptual gap exists because research on quality in early childhood education tends to treat quality management and teacher professionalism as separate dimensions, even though they operate within the same educational service ecosystem. Second, a mechanism gap remains because relatively limited research has examined whether parental satisfaction functions as a mechanism linking quality management practices and teacher professionalism to parent trust. Third, a contextual gap is evident because empirical evidence concerning these relationships remains limited to particular educational settings and geographical contexts, whereas the social, geographical, institutional, and school-family relationship characteristics of Central Aceh Regency represent a distinctive context. Previous studies have established the importance of service quality, teacher professionalism, parental satisfaction, and trust individually or in partial relationships; however, the integration of these four constructs into a single quantitative model within public kindergartens in Central Aceh has received limited empirical attention.

From a state-of-the-art perspective, research in early childhood education over the past five years has increasingly shifted from input-oriented measures of quality toward greater attention to users' experiences, the quality of interactions, educator professionalism, parental satisfaction, and the sustainability of relationships between families and educational institutions. This development is reflected in studies addressing early childhood teacher professionalism, educational service quality, parental satisfaction, and parental trust. The present study also has broader relevance because, although its empirical setting is public kindergarten education, the issue of educational quality is fundamentally connected to institutional management principles that emphasize quality, amanah (trustworthiness), responsibility, service, and stakeholder trust as integral components of educational governance. Research on knowledge management and teacher professionalism emphasizes the importance of continuous knowledge and competency development, while studies of leadership and supervision highlight the need for systematic institutional support to strengthen teachers' competencies and professionalism. These findings reinforce the argument that teacher professionalism cannot be separated from the management system that shapes the organizational environment and the quality of educational services (Idhofi & Febrianti, 2026; Nurmawati, Batubara, Yusdiana, Ismi, & Irwandi, 2026).

On this basis, the present study proposes a novel integrated model that positions quality management practices and teacher professionalism as exogenous variables, parent satisfaction as a mediating mechanism, and parent trust as the outcome variable within the context of public kindergartens in Central Aceh Regency. The novelty of the study does not



merely lie in combining additional variables; rather, it lies in explaining the mechanism through which institutional quality management and human resource quality contribute to the development of parental trust. The proposed model enables the study to determine whether parental trust is established directly through quality management practices and teacher professionalism or whether part of this process operates through parents' satisfaction with the educational services they experience. Accordingly, parents are positioned not merely as recipients of information from schools but as key stakeholders whose experiences and evaluations constitute important indicators of educational governance effectiveness.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to examine the effects of quality management practices and teacher professionalism on parent trust, both directly and indirectly through parent satisfaction, in public kindergartens in Central Aceh Regency. Through this model, the study seeks to contribute theoretically to the development of research on quality management in early childhood education while providing empirical evidence for kindergarten managers and educational policymakers in Central Aceh. More specifically, the findings are expected to inform quality improvement strategies that extend beyond internal institutional processes and place greater emphasis on positive family experiences and parental trust as important foundations for the sustainability of educational institutions

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory cross-sectional survey design to examine the causal-predictive relationships between Quality Management Practices (X_1) and Teacher Professionalism (X_2) and Parent Trust (Y), both directly and indirectly through Parent Satisfaction (Z) as a mediating variable. Data were collected during a single research period using a structured questionnaire administered to parents or primary guardians of children enrolled in public kindergartens in Central Aceh Regency, Aceh Province. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was employed because the research model incorporates multiple latent constructs, direct and indirect relationships, and an analytical objective focused on explaining predictive relationships among the constructs. (Hair, Risher, Sarstedt, & Ringle, 2019; Roemer, Schuberth, & Henseler, 2021).

The unit of analysis in this study was the parent or primary guardian of the child, rather than the school or teacher. Quality Management Practices and Teacher Professionalism were assessed based on parents' experiences and perceptions of the educational services they received or observed, whereas Parent Satisfaction and Parent Trust represented parents' direct evaluations of the educational institutions. Based on the BPS data used as the basis for this study, the number of public kindergartens in Central Aceh Regency was used to define the institutional scope of the study, while the number of children enrolled in public kindergartens served as the basis for determining the parent population. Assuming that each child is represented by one primary parent or guardian, the number of enrolled children was used as a proxy for the size of the parent population.

Table 1. Research Population Data



Component		Unit	Description
Public Kindergartens		79 schools	Coverage of educational institutions
Public Kindergarten Students		2,250 students	Basis for determining the study population
Parents/Primary Guardians		2,250 individuals	Unit of analysis
Respondents		Parents/primary guardians	Questionnaire respondent

The sample size was initially determined using the Krejcie and Morgan approach, as the population size was known. Krejcie and Morgan (1970) developed a procedure for determining an appropriate sample size based on a known population size, using a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Accordingly, the Krejcie and Morgan sampling framework was employed as the initial basis for determining the sample size in this study. (Krejcie & Morgan, 1970)

Krejcie and Morgan Sample Size Formula

$$n = \frac{X^2 \cdot N \cdot P(1 - P)}{d^2(N - 1)X^2 \cdot P(1 - P)}$$

$$n = \frac{3.481(2.250)(0,5)(0,5)}{(0,5)^2(2.250 - 1) + 3,481(0,5)(0,5)}$$

$$n = 329 \text{ parents or primary guardians}$$

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire employing a five-point Likert scale: (1) strongly disagree, (2) disagree, (3) neutral, (4) agree, and (5) strongly agree. The instrument was developed based on the constructs and dimensions specified in the research model. All constructs were specified as reflective constructs, as the indicators were conceptualized as manifestations of their respective underlying latent constructs (Kock & Hadaya, 2018). The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4. The measurement model was evaluated based on outer loadings, Cronbach's alpha, rho_A, composite reliability, average variance extracted (AVE), convergent validity, and discriminant validity. The structural model was subsequently assessed using collinearity statistics (VIF), path coefficients, t-statistics, p-values, confidence intervals, R², f², and the model's predictive capability. This evaluation followed established recommendations for PLS-SEM, which emphasize the joint assessment of construct quality and the predictive capability of the structural model (Hair et al., 2021, 2019; Roemer et al., 2021). The mediating role of Parent Satisfaction was examined using a bootstrapping procedure with 10,000 subsamples and a 95% confidence interval to assess the significance and magnitude of the indirect effects.

Table 2. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Code
		The school has clear quality planning.	QMP1



Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Code
Quality Management Practices (X ₁)	Quality Planning	School programs are developed based on the needs of children and parents.	QMP2
	Quality Assurance	The school maintains consistent service standards.	QMP3
		The school ensures that educational processes are implemented in accordance with established standards.	QMP4
	Quality Control	The school monitors the quality of its services.	QMP5
		The school regularly evaluates program implementation.	QMP6
	Stakeholder Focus	The school takes parents' feedback into consideration.	QMP7
		The school provides opportunities for parents to submit suggestions and complaints.	QMP8
	Continuous Improvement	The school implements improvements based on evaluation results.	QMP9
		The school continuously improves the quality of its educational services.	QMP10
Teacher Professionalism (X ₂)	Pedagogical Competence	Teachers understand children's developmental needs.	TP1
		Teachers use teaching methods appropriate to children's characteristics.	TP2
	Professional Competence	Teachers demonstrate mastery of learning materials and activities.	TP3
		Teachers are able to provide learning experiences appropriate to children's developmental stages.	TP4
	Responsibility	Teachers perform their duties with discipline.	TP5
		Teachers take responsibility for children's development.	TP6
	Communication	Teachers communicate openly with parents.	TP7
		Teachers provide clear information about children's development.	TP8
	Professional Ethics	Teachers treat children fairly and respect individual differences.	TP9



Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Code
Parent Satisfaction (Z)	Continuous Development	Teachers demonstrate professional attitudes and ethical conduct.	TP10
		Teachers make efforts to improve their professional competence.	TP11
		Teachers are open to instructional development and educational innovation.	TP12
	Learning Satisfaction	Parents are satisfied with their children's learning process.	PS1
		Parents are satisfied with the progress achieved by their children.	PS2
	Service Satisfaction	Parents are satisfied with the services provided by the school.	PS3
		Parents are satisfied with the ease of accessing school services.	PS4
	Communication Satisfaction	Parents are satisfied with communication between teachers and families.	PS5
		Parents are satisfied with the information provided by the school.	PS6
	Responsiveness Satisfaction	Parents are satisfied with the school's responsiveness to their needs and complaints.	PS7
		Overall, parents are satisfied with the kindergarten.	PS8
	Expectation Fulfillment	The school service experience meets parents' expectations.	PS9
Parent Trust (Y)	Reliability	Parents trust the school to provide services consistently.	PT1
		The school can be relied upon to fulfill its educational responsibilities.	PT2
	Integrity	The school acts honestly and transparently.	PT3
		The school prioritizes the interests of children.	PT4
	Competence	Parents trust that the teachers and school have adequate capabilities.	PT5
		Parents are confident that the school is capable of addressing their children's educational needs.	PT6



Variable	Dimension	Indicator	Code
	Transparency	The school provides information openly and transparently.	PT7
	Commitment	The school demonstrates commitment to children's development.	PT8
		Parents trust that the school will maintain the quality of its services.	PT9

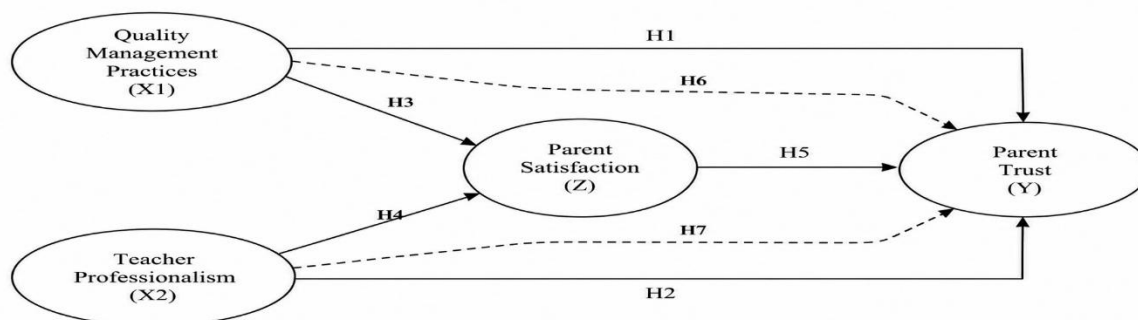


Figure 1. Conceptual Research Model

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Research Characteristics

Table 3. Research Respondents

No.	Districts	Number of Public Kindergartens	Respondent Allocation	Male	Female	Total
1	Linge	8	24	7	17	24
2	Bintang	4	18	5	13	18
3	Pegasing	12	39	12	27	39
4	Bebesen	6	60	18	42	60
5	Silih Nara	8	34	10	24	34
6	Kute Panang	4	14	4	10	14
7	Ketol	7	22	7	15	22
8	Celala	3	12	4	8	12
9	Kebayakan	5	24	7	17	24
10	Laut Tawar	4	27	8	19	27
11	Atu Lintang	3	11	3	8	11
12	Jagong Jeget	6	19	6	13	19
13	Bies	6	14	4	10	14
14	Rusip Antara	3	11	3	8	11
Total	14 Districts	79 TK	329	98	231	329



2. Measurement Model/Outer Loading

a. Convergent Validity

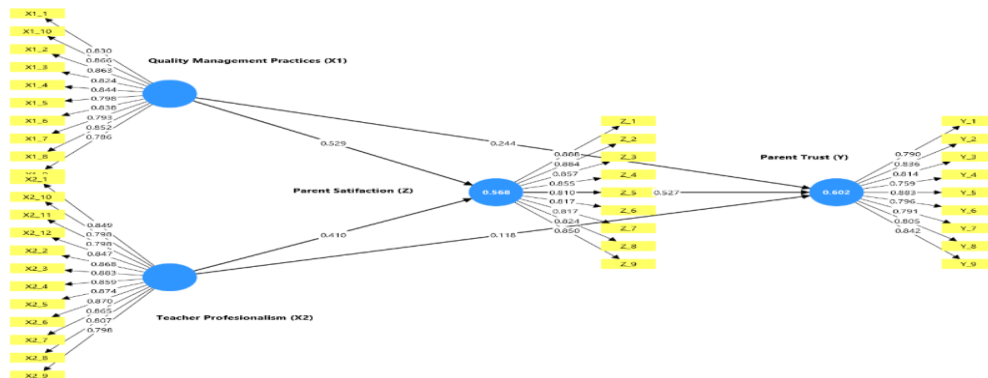


Figure 2. Convergent Validity

The outer loading results indicate that all indicators for quality management practices (X_1), teacher professionalism (X_2), parent satisfaction (Z), and parent trust (Y) achieved outer loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70. For quality management practices (X_1), the outer loading values ranged from 0.786 to 0.864. Teacher professionalism (X_2) showed outer loading values ranging from 0.798 to 0.874, while the indicators of parent satisfaction (Z) ranged from 0.810 to 0.888. Meanwhile, the outer loading values for parent trust (Y) ranged from 0.791 to 0.883.

b. Construct Validity and Reliability

Table 4. Construct Validity and Reliability

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Parent Satisfaction (Z)	0.950	0.950	0.957	0.714
Parent Trust (Y)	0.936	0.938	0.946	0.662
Quality Management Practices (X_1)	0.950	0.951	0.957	0.688
Teacher Profesionalism (X_2)	0.963	0.964	0.967	0.712

The results indicate that all constructs achieved Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values above 0.70, confirming the reliability of all measurement constructs. In addition, the average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50, ranging from 0.662 to 0.714, thereby satisfying the criteria for convergent validity. Overall, these findings indicate that the measurement model demonstrates adequate reliability and convergent validity, supporting its use for subsequent structural model evaluation.

c. Discriminant Validity -Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Table 5. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

	Parent Satisfaction (Z)	Parent Trust (Y)	Quality Management Practices (X1)	Teacher Profesionalism (X2)
Parent Satisfaction (Z)	0.845			
Parent Trust (Y)	0.750	0.814		
Quality Management Practices (X1)	0.643	0.616	0.830	
Teacher Profesionalism (X2)	0.557	0.480	0.279	0.844

The results of the discriminant validity assessment indicate that the diagonal values, representing the square roots of the AVE for each construct, were higher than the correlations between the respective constructs and other constructs. The square-root AVE values were 0.845 for parent satisfaction (Z), 0.814 for parent trust (Y), 0.830 for quality management practices (X₁), and 0.844 for teacher professionalism (X₂). These findings indicate that each construct demonstrates adequate distinctiveness from the other constructs in the research model. Therefore, the discriminant validity of the measurement model was established.

3. Inner Model

a. R Square

Table 6. R²

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Parent Satisfaction (Z)	0.568	0.566
Parent Trust (Y)	0.602	0.598

The R² results indicate that Quality Management Practices (X1) and Teacher Professionalism (X2) jointly explain 56.8% of the variance in Parent Satisfaction (Z). Meanwhile, Quality Management Practices (X1), Teacher Professionalism (X2), and Parent Satisfaction (Z) jointly explain 60.2% of the variance in Parent Trust (Y). The corresponding Adjusted R² values were 0.566 for Parent Satisfaction and 0.598 for Parent Trust, indicating that the explanatory power of the model remains stable after accounting for the number of predictors. Overall, these findings indicate that the structural model provides a substantial level of explanatory power for both endogenous constructs.

b. F Square

Table 7. F²

Parent Satisfaction (Z)	Parent Trust (Y)	Quality Management Practices (X1)	Teacher Profesionalism (X2)
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Parent Satisfaction (Z)		0.301
Parent Trust (Y)		
Quality Management Practices (X ₁)	0.598	0.086
Teacher Professionalism (X ₂)	0.359	0.024

The f^2 results indicate large effects of X₁ on Z (0.598) and X₂ on Z (0.359), and a moderate effect of Z on Y (0.301). Meanwhile, X₁→Y (0.086) and X₂→Y (0.024) show small effects.

c. Q²Predict

Table 8. Q²Predict

	Q ² predict	RMSE	MAE
Parent Satisfaction (Z)	0.562	0.665	0.538
Parent Trust (Y)	0.474	0.729	0.592

The Q²predict values were 0.562 for parent satisfaction (Z) and 0.474 for parent trust (Y), both of which were greater than zero, indicating that the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the endogenous constructs. The relatively low RMSE and MAE values further indicate that the model's prediction errors remained within an acceptable range. Overall, these findings suggest that the structural model demonstrates adequate predictive capability in explaining Parent Satisfaction and Parent Trust.

d. Hypothesis Testing

Table 9. Direct Effect and Indirect Effect Test Results

Hypotheses	Structural Relationships Among Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Description
H1	Quality Management Practices (X ₁) → Parent Trust (Y)	0,522	0,523	0,039	13,493	0,001	Accepted
H2	Teacher Professionalism (X ₂) → Parent Trust (Y)	0,334	0,336	0,044	7,646	0	Accepted
H3	Quality Management Practices (X ₁) → Parent Satisfaction (Z)	0,529	0,529	0,034	15,395	0,001	Accepted



Hypotheses	Structural Relationships Among Variables	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	STDEV	T Statistics	P Values	Description
H4	Teacher Professionalism (X2) → Parent Satisfaction (Z)	0,41	0,412	0,039	10,487	0,001	Accepted
H5	Parent Satisfaction (Z) → Parent Trust (Y)	0,527	0,528	0,052	10,137	0,001	Accepted
H6	Quality Management Practices (X1) → Parent Satisfaction (Z) → Parent Trust (Y)	0,279	0,279	0,035	8,06	0,001	Accepted
H7	Teacher Professionalism (X2) → Parent Satisfaction (Z) → Parent Trust (Y)	0,216	0,217	0,03	7,273	0,001	Accepted

Overall, all seven hypotheses were supported. All hypothesized relationships were positive and statistically significant. Among the direct effects, the strongest relationship was observed for $X1 \rightarrow Z$ ($\beta = 0.529$). For the indirect effects, the effect of $X1 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$ ($\beta = 0.279$) was greater than that of $X2 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$ ($\beta = 0.216$).

1. Quality Management Practices and Parent Satisfaction

The findings indicate that quality management practices (X_1) have a positive and statistically significant effect on parent satisfaction (Z), with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.529$, $t = 15.395$, and $p < 0.001$. The magnitude of this coefficient suggests that parental satisfaction is shaped not only by the educational experiences received by children in the classroom but also by how effectively the school manages the overall educational service experience. When quality planning, service standards, monitoring, evaluation, stakeholder feedback, and continuous improvement are implemented consistently, parents are more likely to perceive the school as well-organized and responsive to their needs. This finding is consistent with Wulandari et al., who reported that the quality of early childhood education services influences parental satisfaction (Eka Wulandari et al., 2024; Ismail et al., 2023), as well as Ismail et al., who identified an association between kindergarten service quality and parental satisfaction.

An important implication of this finding is that quality management in the kindergarten context should not be understood merely as a set of administrative



procedures. Parents may not directly examine school quality documents or internal evaluation instruments; however, they experience the outcomes of quality management through the school's responsiveness to complaints, the consistency and clarity of information, openness in communication, reliability of services, and the institution's willingness to address identified shortcomings. Thus, quality becomes meaningful when it is translated into tangible stakeholder experiences. A stakeholder-oriented approach and continuous improvement constitute important dimensions of Total Quality Management (TQM) in education, while the implementation of integrated quality management can contribute to stakeholder satisfaction in educational institutions.

2. Teacher Professionalism and Parent Satisfaction

Teacher professionalism (X_2) was also found to have a positive and statistically significant effect on parent satisfaction (Z), with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.410$, $t = 10.487$, and $p < 0.001$. This finding indicates that, from the perspective of kindergarten parents, teachers represent one of the most tangible components of their children's educational experience. Teacher professionalism is reflected not only in instructional competence but also in teachers' ability to understand children's developmental needs, communicate effectively with families, provide clear information regarding children's progress, demonstrate responsibility, and maintain professional ethics in interactions with parents. This finding is consistent with Irvine et al. (2024), who position professionalism as an important component of quality improvement in Early Childhood Education and Care (ECEC), and with Zahro et al. (2024), who highlight the importance of teacher professionalism in supporting early childhood development (Irvine et al., 2024; Qoriatul Zahro, Miftahul Nur, Dewi Muthmainnah, Aisyah Azzahra, & Elina Intan Apriliani, 2024).

Teacher professionalism encompasses a broader set of attributes than technical competence alone. Parents evaluate teachers through their everyday interactions and experiences, including whether teachers are accessible, communicate information about children clearly, understand individual characteristics and developmental needs, and demonstrate genuine concern when children encounter difficulties. Research on teacher professionalism in early childhood education similarly indicates that strengthening professional competence is closely associated with the quality of educational practice. In addition, research on professionalism in ECE emphasizes the importance of professional development, reflective practice, collaboration, and teachers' capacity to adapt their practices to children's needs (Yang & Rao, 2023).

3. Quality Management Practices and Parent Trust

The findings further demonstrate that quality management practices (X_1) have a positive and statistically significant effect on Parent Trust (Y), with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.522$, $t = 13.493$, and $p < 0.001$. This coefficient represents one of the strongest structural relationships in the model, indicating that parental trust is closely associated with the school's ability to maintain consistent service quality. Trust is not established solely through the school's reputation; rather, it develops through repeated experiences in which the school demonstrates its ability to deliver services in accordance with its stated commitments. This finding is consistent with Hummel et al. (2023), who found that communication between parents and preschools is associated with the development of



trust, as well as Huang et al. (2022), who identified important relationships among parental satisfaction, trust, and parent–kindergarten relationships.

These findings suggest that trust emerges from governance practices that are experienced by parents rather than merely from institutional promotion or reputation-building efforts. In early childhood education, parents entrust the school with an important part of their children’s developmental process, creating an inherent degree of uncertainty regarding the quality and consistency of educational services. Transparency of information, consistency of procedures, responsiveness to problems, and continuous evaluation can therefore serve as mechanisms through which schools reduce this uncertainty and strengthen parental confidence. Accordingly, the present findings reinforce the view that Total Quality Management (TQM) extends beyond internal operational efficiency to encompass stakeholder expectations and the development of sustainable relationships with parents (Huang, Chen, Ma, & Gao, 2022b; Hummel et al., 2023).

4. Teacher Professionalism and Parent Trust

Teacher professionalism (X_2) has a positive and statistically significant effect on parent trust (Y), with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.334$, $t = 7.646$, and $p < 0.001$. This finding indicates that parents do not necessarily distinguish between teachers’ professional competence and the credibility of the educational institution; rather, their experiences in interacting with teachers constitute an important basis for assessing whether the school can be trusted. Teachers who communicate openly, understand children’s needs, demonstrate ethical conduct, and fulfill their responsibilities provide parents with signals that the best interests of the child are being prioritized. This finding is consistent with Syafril et al. (2020), whose study of teacher professionalism in early childhood education highlights the importance of the quality of teacher–parent interactions and communication in fostering parental trust (Syafril, Kurniawati, Jatmiko, Fiteriani, & Kuswanto, 2020).

5. Parent Satisfaction and Parent Trust

The relationship between parent satisfaction and parent trust was positive and statistically significant, with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.527$, $t = 10.137$, and $p < 0.001$, making it one of the strongest relationships in the structural model. This finding indicates that parental satisfaction is not merely an end-point evaluation of the services received but may also develop into a broader belief that the school will be able to maintain the quality of its educational services over time. The distinction between satisfaction and trust is important in interpreting this relationship. Satisfaction primarily reflects parents’ evaluation of their past and current experiences, whereas trust involves expectations regarding the institution’s future consistency, reliability, and ability to fulfill its commitments. Thus, schools seeking to strengthen parental trust need not only to provide satisfactory services but also to demonstrate their capacity to maintain service quality consistently over time. In the preschool context, trust is also an important component of parent–school partnerships and parental engagement in children’s educational processes.

6. Parent Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable

One of the most important findings of this study concerns the mediating role of parent satisfaction. Quality Management Practices exerted a positive and statistically



significant indirect effect on parent trust through parent satisfaction, with $\beta = 0.279$, $t = 8.060$, and $p < 0.001$. Similarly, teacher professionalism demonstrated a significant indirect effect on parent trust through parent satisfaction, with $\beta = 0.216$, $t = 7.273$, and $p < 0.001$. These findings indicate that improvements in quality management and teacher professionalism influence parental trust not only directly but also through the satisfaction generated by parents' experiences with the school. This pattern highlights the mediating role of Parent Satisfaction in linking the quality of early childhood educational services to parent-institution relationship outcomes. In line with this interpretation, prior research suggests that internal experiential variables can function as mechanisms linking TQM practices to organizational outcomes (Waqas Mahmood, Ismail, & Mohd Norakmar Omar, 2024).

The theoretical contribution of these findings becomes more apparent when the relationships are considered as an integrated process. The results suggest that quality management practices and teacher professionalism function as antecedents of trust, while Parent Satisfaction serves as a relational mechanism through which internal school quality is translated into external parental trust. Accordingly, the relationships can be conceptualized as a sequence of management quality $\rightarrow$ professional service $\rightarrow$ parent satisfaction $\rightarrow$ parent trust, rather than as isolated associations among individual constructs. This perspective provides a more integrated understanding than approaches that examine service quality, satisfaction, or trust independently. In the context of Central Aceh, this mechanism is particularly relevant because school-family relationships operate within a social environment strongly influenced by Gayo cultural values. *Genap mupakat* emphasizes deliberative consensus, *alang tulung* reflects mutual assistance, *gemasih* conveys compassion, *setie* represents loyalty, and *amanah* emphasizes trustworthy responsibility. These values are directly relevant to quality management and trust because both require transparency, accountability, social connectedness, and consistency in institutional behavior. Previous studies of Gayo customary values have likewise identified their close relationship with Islamic moral and spiritual principles (Rishna, 2024; Sukiman, 2014).

From the perspective of Islamic Educational Management, these findings carry implications that extend beyond statistical associations among the study variables. Educational quality management can be understood within the framework of *amanah*, referring to the institution's moral responsibility to safeguard children's rights and development; *ihsan*, reflecting the commitment to providing the best possible service; and *itqan*, referring to the pursuit of professional, orderly, accurate, and continuous performance. Recent conceptualizations of TQM in Islamic education position *ihsan*, *itqan*, and *amanah* as ethical foundations for quality assurance, professionalism, accountability, transparency, and institutional trust (Agustina, Subandi, Fauzan, & Makbuloh, 2026). From this perspective, parental trust is not merely an outcome of educational marketing or a conventional indicator of customer satisfaction; rather, it represents a form of social trust in the institution's fulfillment of its *amanah* in safeguarding children's education. This interpretation reinforces the relevance of the findings to Islamic Educational Management: quality management should not be limited to documentation, accreditation, or compliance with formal standards, but should ultimately generate service experiences that are



meaningfully perceived by families and contribute to broader public trust (Riza & Indra, 2026).

The study further reveals a distinctive pattern in which Quality Management Practices exert a substantial direct effect on Parent Trust ($\beta = 0.522$) as well as an indirect effect through Parent Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.279$). Similarly, Teacher Professionalism has a significant direct effect on Parent Trust ($\beta = 0.334$) and an indirect effect through Parent Satisfaction ($\beta = 0.216$). This pattern indicates that parental trust is shaped by two complementary sources: the quality of the organizational system and the quality of the people who implement that system, while satisfaction functions as the experiential pathway connecting these dimensions to trust. The findings therefore support an integrated understanding of institutional trust in early childhood education, in which organizational quality and interpersonal professionalism jointly shape parents' experiences and subsequent trust.

On this basis, the study's novelty can be articulated as a parent-trust formation mechanism in public kindergartens. The proposed mechanism suggests that parental trust is not merely an outcome of service quality but develops through a process of quality management $\rightarrow$ satisfaction $\rightarrow$ trust, reinforced by teacher professionalism. This model becomes particularly meaningful in the context of public kindergartens in Central Aceh, where contemporary quality management and early childhood teacher professionalism intersect with locally embedded cultural values. Thus, the contribution of this study extends beyond testing relationships among individual constructs to explaining how educational institutions can strengthen family trust through quality service experiences, professional human resources, and values rooted in the local sociocultural context.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that quality management practices and teacher professionalism are important factors in building parent trust in public kindergartens in Central Aceh Regency, both directly and indirectly through Parent Satisfaction. The results show that quality management practices have a positive and statistically significant effect on parent trust ($\beta = 0.522$; $t = 13.493$; $p < 0.001$), while teacher professionalism also has a positive and statistically significant effect on Parent Trust ($\beta = 0.334$; $t = 7.646$; $p < 0.001$). These findings indicate that parental trust is shaped not only by the quality of institutional management but also by teachers' professionalism in carrying out their educational responsibilities. This finding is consistent with previous research emphasizing the importance of teacher-parent relationships, professional competence, communication, and trust in early childhood education.

Furthermore, quality management practices have a positive and statistically significant effect on parent satisfaction ($\beta = 0.529$; $t = 15.395$; $p < 0.001$), while Teacher Professionalism also has a significant effect on parent satisfaction ($\beta = 0.410$; $t = 10.487$; $p < 0.001$). Parent satisfaction, in turn, has a strong positive effect on parent trust ($\beta = 0.527$; $t = 10.137$; $p < 0.001$). The mediation analysis further demonstrates that parent satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between quality management practices and parent trust ($\beta = 0.279$; $t = 8.060$; $p < 0.001$) and between teacher professionalism and parent trust ($\beta = 0.216$; $t = 7.273$; $p < 0.001$). These findings establish parent satisfaction as an important mechanism linking institutional quality management and teacher professionalism to the



development of parental trust. Overall, the model explains 60.2% of the variance in parent trust, indicating that the combined contribution of quality management, teacher professionalism, and parental satisfaction provides substantial explanatory power for parental trust.

From a contextual perspective, the findings highlight the importance of managing public kindergartens in Central Aceh in ways that extend beyond administrative compliance and program implementation to encompass amanah, transparency, deliberative decision-making, service orientation, and family-oriented relationships. From the perspective of Islamic Educational Management, quality management practices and teacher professionalism can be understood as manifestations of amanah and ihsan: educational institutions are responsible for managing education with accountability, while teachers are expected to perform their professional roles with competence, integrity, and concern for the needs of children and parents. Accordingly, Parent Trust should not be viewed merely as an outcome of educational service delivery but as a consequence of quality governance, teacher professionalism, and positive parental experiences throughout their interactions with the educational institution.

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