

UPPER CLASS SOCIETY'S PERCEPTION OF MADRASAH AS A CHILDREN'S EDUCATION PLACE AT MTS ISLAMIYAH BUMI AGUNG LEMPUING

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Abstract: This research explores the perceptions of upper-class society towards Madrasah as a place for children's education, focusing on Madrasah Tsanawiyah Islamiyah Bumi Agung in Indonesia. The study aims to identify factors influencing their decisions and how Madrasah can enhance their appeal. Using a qualitative descriptive method, data was collected through interviews with parents from the upper class whose children attend the Madrasah. Secondary data was gathered through literature studies. Thematic analysis was used to identify patterns and themes in the data. The findings reveal that several factors influence the perception of upper-class society towards Madrasah. These include the quality of education, educational facilities, reputation and accreditation, the learning environment, educational costs, extracurricular programs, and socio-cultural factors. Despite public schools offering advantages in educational quality and facilities, upper-class families choose Madrasah for reasons related to religious education, moral values, social environment, and family traditions. Madrasah that maintain and improve these aspects are more likely to attract upper-class students.

Keywords: Perception; Upper Class Society; Madrasah.

INTRODUCTION

Madrasah as Islamic religious-based educational institutions have a long history in the education system in Indonesia (Ulum 2012). Its main function is to provide religious education as well as general knowledge to students. Since Indonesia was not independent until the modern era, Madrasah have played a role in forming a generation that has strong academic knowledge as well as moral and spiritual qualities (Asha 2020). Along with the times, there has been a change in people's perception of Madrasah, including among the upper classes.

Upper class Society, who typically have more access to educational options, are often more selective in choosing educational institutions for their children (Alizamar dan Couto 2016). Several factors influence their decisions, namely; quality of education, facilities, environment and reputation of the educational institution (Zakia, Adisti, dan Asmarani 2022). In the context of changing perceptions, it is important to explore how Madrasah are perceived by the upper classes and what they consider in choosing or not choosing Madrasah as a place for their children's education.

Public perception in choosing education for children is based on the

quality of educational institutions. The quality of education is the main focus. Upper class society which is usually characterized as having a lot of wealth, high power, and high education wants education that does not only focus on religious aspects but is also able to provide high academic standards (Mukmin 2018). They often compare the curriculum and teaching methods at Madrasah with public or international schools that are considered to be of better quality. Therefore, the quality of the curriculum, teaching methods, as well as the qualifications and competence of teachers in Madrasah are important factors in their perceptions. The facilities provided by Madrasah also play a significant role in shaping the perception of upper class society. Educational facilities such as laboratories, libraries, sports facilities and modern educational technology are considered important to support an effective teaching and learning process (Sumarandak, Tungka, dan Egam 2021). Upper class people tend to choose educational institutions that can offer complete and modern facilities to support their children's academic and extracurricular development (Manstead 2018).

Furthermore, the reputation of the Madrasah becomes a determining factor in the perception of upper class society. They also rely on the school's reputation in deciding educational options. National and international accreditation, student achievements, feedback from graduates and students' parents are references in assessing the reputation of Madrasah. Madrasah that have a good reputation and are widely recognized tend to be more sought after by the upper classes of society. Another factor is the learning

environment and school culture (Barroso 2013). The learning environment and culture also influence the views of upper class society. Upper class people usually want an environment that is safe, conducive and supports the development of children's character and potential. then, social interaction in the school environment, with fellow students, teachers and staff, is also an important consideration. Madrasah that are able to provide a learning environment that is inclusive, tolerant and based on high moral values tend to be more accepted by the upper classes.

In previous research by Toyyibah entitled analysis of factors considered by parents in choosing a school, it was stated that the factors of location, quality of education, service and accreditation had a big influence on parents' decision making in choosing a school (Thoyyibah dan Adhimah 2022). The most dominant factor influencing parents' decision making in choosing a school is the service factor where good service is considered a presentation of the good quality of the institution. Apart from that, the location factor is also a concern for parents when choosing their child's school.

However, it is not yet known specifically how upper class families choose their children's schools and how they perceive Madrasah. Pre-research conducted found that upper class families in choosing Madrasah as a place for their children's education are more focused on understanding the importance of adequate general and religious education considering the current modern conditions of moral degradation and difficulty in supervising children when parents are busy working.

This research aims to explore the perceptions of upper class society towards Madrasah as a place for children's education at Madrasah Tsanawiyah Islamiyah Bumi Agung. By understanding these perceptions, it is hoped that we can find the main factors that influence their decisions and how Madrasah can increase their appeal among the upper classes of society. The results of this research will provide useful insights for madrasa managers and educational policy makers in developing strategies to improve the quality and reputation of Madrasah so that they are more competitive and in line with the expectations of upper class society.

In the end, Madrasah will become the main choice for the middle class, lower class and upper class, strengthening their role in the national education system, and contributing to forming a young generation with character, knowledge and good morals.

METHODS

This research uses a qualitative descriptive method to explore and analyze in depth about the object (Abdussamad 2021). It is the perception of upper class society towards Madrasah as a place for children's education, located at MTs Islamiyah Bumi Agung.

Primary data was collected through interviews involving parents from upper class circles whose children attended MTs Islamiyah Bumi Agung. Interviews were conducted to gain an in-depth understanding of the factors that influence perceptions and how they perceive Madrasah as a place for children's education. then secondary data is obtained through literature studies, reports and documentation relevant to the research topic (Kusumastuti dan Khoiron 2019).

Data analysis was carried out using a thematic approach, identifying main patterns and themes that emerged from the data collected. The results of this analysis will be used to provide insight into upper class society's perceptions of Madrasah and provide relevant recommendations for madrasa managers and education policy makers.

RESULT

Factors that influence the upper class community's perception of Madrasah as a place for children's education

Several factors were found to influence the upper class community's perception of Madrasah as a place for children's education, namely; educational quality, educational facilities, reputation and accreditation, learning environment, educational costs, non-class activities, and socio-cultural factors. In detail these factors can be explained as follows:

Education quality

Upper class society pays great attention to the quality of education provided by Madrasah. They consider that an integrated curriculum between religious and general knowledge is very important (S, MM, FK, MK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024). However, there are growing concerns about whether Madrasah can provide academic standards equivalent to mainstream or international schools. Upper-class parents tend to choose Madrasah that have a good reputation for student academic performance and modern teaching methods.

Educational Facilities

The facilities available at Madrasah are an important factor for upper class people entrusting their children's education to schools. Upper class people choose Madrasah that have complete and modern facilities, such as science laboratories, adequate libraries, sports facilities and the latest educational technology. Limited facilities are often the main reason why some of them hesitate to choose a madrasa as a place for their children's education (S, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Reputation and Accreditation

The reputation and accreditation of Madrasah influence the perception of upper class society. Madrasah that have superior national accreditation and are known to have successful alumni tend to be more popular. Among the evidence of this is that many of the children who study at these Madrasah are recommended by alumni with the stimulant of A accreditation. A good reputation is a guarantee for parents that their children will receive a quality education (MM, FK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Learning Environment

A safe, comfortable and conducive learning environment is also an important consideration. Upper class people choose a school environment that supports the development of their children's character, including discipline, ethics and morals. Madrasah that are able to create an inclusive and tolerant environment receive more value from them. This activity can be seen directly in madrasa activities in the morning when students enter class, teaching and learning activities, and other

joint activities (S and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Cost of education

Even though the upper class has better financial capabilities, education costs are still a factor to consider. They tend to compare the cost of education at Madrasah with other schools and consider the value obtained from the educational investment. Their reason for choosing a madrasa in the context of costs for them is something that is commercial in nature by looking at the benefits that can be obtained by children, even though the costs are high, if the benefits obtained are commensurate then it can still be a priority for them. Scholarship programs or educational assistance can increase their interest in Madrasah (S, MM, FK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Extracurricular Programs

The extracurricular programs offered by Madrasah also influence the perception of upper class society. They want a Madrasah that not only focuses on academic aspects but also provides various extracurricular activities that can develop children's talents and interests, such as sports, arts and social activities. Extracurricular activities that provide additional knowledge and develop children's potential are an attraction in themselves, Madrasah that seem busy with these activities are attractive to the upper class of society (HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Social and Cultural Influences

Social and cultural influences around the Madrasah also influence the perception of upper class society. Madrasah that are located in a social

environment that is considered positive and have a strong school culture in religious and moral values receive more appreciation (S, MM, FK, MK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

From the results of this research, it can be concluded that to attract the interest of the upper class, Madrasah need to improve the quality of education, complete facilities, maintain reputation and accreditation, create a conducive learning environment, offer competitive tuition fees, and provide a variety of extracurricular programs. Improvements in these areas are expected to increase the attractiveness of Madrasah as the main choice for education for children from the upper class.

Upper Class Society's Perception of Madrasah as a Place for Children's Education

This research identifies the reasons why upper class people choose Madrasah as a place for their children's education compared to public schools. Based on the data obtained, several main reasons were found that prompted this decision:

Religious Education

One of the main reasons upper class people choose Madrasah is to ensure their children receive an in-depth and comprehensive Islamic religious education (S, MM, FK, MK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

They consider that the religious education provided in Madrasah is more structured and intensive compared to public schools. Parents from this group value a curriculum that integrates religious values with general education, which is

considered important for forming children's character and morals.

Moral and Ethical Values

Upper class society believes that Madrasah are able to instill strong moral and ethical values in their children. A religious Madrasah environment is considered to help shape good behavior, discipline and attitudes in accordance with Islamic teachings. They feel that Madrasah focus more on developing students' character and morals compared to public schools (S, MM, FK, MK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Religious Communities and Environments

Madrasah offer a learning environment surrounded by strong religious values, which are considered positive by the upper classes of society. They want their children to grow up in a community that supports daily religious practices and interact with friends who share the same background values. This gives parents a sense of comfort and security regarding their child's social environment (MM and MK, Personal Communication, 2024).

Quality of Religious Teaching

Upper-class people who choose Madrasah often pay attention to the quality of religious teaching at these institutions. They appreciate the existence of teachers who are competent and experienced in teaching Islamic religious knowledge. Madrasah that have qualified teachers in the religious and general fields are considered more capable of providing comprehensive and balanced education (MM, Personal Communication, 2024).

Formation of Islamic Identity

Upper-class parents choose Madrasah to help their children develop a strong Muslim identity. They believe that Madrasah can provide a solid foundation in understanding religion and daily religious practices, which will become an integral part of their identity as individuals (FK, MM, and MK, Personal Communication, 2024).

Religion-Based Extracurricular

Madrasah often offer a variety of extracurricular programs that focus on religious development, such as Quran memorization, da'wah activities, and additional religious studies. These programs are considered to provide significant added value to children's education, which is not always available in public schools (S and MK, Personal Communication, 2024).

Family Influence and Tradition

Some upper-class families have a long tradition of sending their children to Madrasah. The influence of the extended family and family traditions can play an important role in this decision. They feel that continuing this tradition is a way to maintain family and religious values that have been passed down from generation to generation (S, MM, FK, MK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Learning Environment

Upper class people also appreciate the learning environment in Madrasah, which is often more focused and calm than that of public schools. Smaller student numbers and a more personalized teaching approach are thought to provide better learning opportunities for children (S,

MM, FK, MK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

The results of this research show that although public schools offer various advantages in terms of educational quality and facilities, upper class people who choose Madrasah as a place for their children's education do so for reasons related to religious education, moral values, social environment, and traditions. family. Madrasah that are able to maintain and improve the quality of education and a learning environment that supports these values will continue to be an attractive choice for the upper classes of society.

DISCUSSION

Perception is a process that is preceded by sensing, the process of receiving a stimulus by an individual through the sense organs or can be called a sensory process. The stimulus is transmitted through the perception process (Chen, Li, dan Wei 2019). This process includes sensing. After the information is received by the sensory organs, the information is processed and interpreted into a perfect perception (Demuth 2013). Perception is also defined as the meaning we attribute based on past experiences and the stimuli we receive through the five senses (sight, hearing, taste, etc.) (Grondin 2016).

Perception factors according to Gibson (1989) can be divided into three main categories: internal factors, external factors, and object characteristics (Alizamar dan Couto 2016). Applying this theory to the factors that influence the upper class society's perception of Madrasah as a place for children's education, we can classify them as follows:

Internal factors

Internal factors are individual characteristics that influence their perceptions, including needs, experiences, and expectations (Zakia dkk. 2022). The internal factors of upper class society in choosing a madrasa as a place for children's education include:

Quality of Education. The needs and expectations of upper class society for high academic standards. *Cost of Education.* Expectations and considerations regarding the value of an educational investment. *Reputation and Accreditation.* Experience and expectations regarding achievements and formal recognition from the Madrasah.

External Factors

External factors are environmental elements that influence individual perceptions, including the information received and the social environment (Demuth 2013) (Grondin 2016). The following are external factors in the perception of upper class society in choosing a madrasa as a place for children's education, including; *Educational Facilities.* Immediately visible environmental elements such as laboratories, libraries, and educational technology. *Learning Environment.* Physical and social conditions at school that influence comfort and safety. *Extracurricular Program.* Information and activities offered by the Madrasah that support the development of children's talents and interests. *Social and Cultural Factors.* The social environment and cultural values that exist around the Madrasah.

Object Characteristics

Object characteristics are the nature and quality of the perceived object, in this case the madrasa as an educational institution (Chen dkk. 2019). It includes; quality of education, reputation and accreditation, educational facilities, learning environment, and extracurricular programs.

The following is a table that classifies the factors that influence upper class society's perception of Madrasah as a place for children's education based on Gibson's (1989) theory:

Tabel 1
Classifies The Factors

Categorie	Factor
Internal	- Education quality
	- Cost of education
	- Reputation and Accreditation
External	- Educational Facilities
	- Learning Environment
	- Extracurricular Programs
	- Social and Cultural Factors
Object characteristics	- Education quality
	- Reputation and Accreditation
	- Educational Facilities
	- Learning Environment

The perception that emerges among upper class Society in choosing Madrasah for children's education refers to the strong reasons that in-depth religious education at Madrasah is considered to be more structured and intensive, helping to shape children's character and morals through a curriculum that integrates religious values with general education (S,

MM, FK, MK, and HS, Personal Communication, 2024).

Madrasah are able to instill strong moral and ethical values in a religious environment that supports the formation of good behavior, discipline and attitudes according to Islamic teachings. In accordance with the general aim of Madrasah, namely to develop the potential of students to become human beings who believe in and are devoted to God Almighty, have noble character, are healthy, knowledgeable, capable, creative, independent, and become democratic and responsible citizens (Afandi 2019). In addition, Madrasah offer a religious community and environment, providing a sense of comfort and security for parents as their children grow up in a community that supports daily religious practices and interact with friends who share the same background values. The learning environment in a madrasah, surrounded by strong religious values, reflects the integration of formal education and religious education. In this context, education in a madrasah focuses not only on academic aspects but also on the development of students' character and spirituality based on Islamic teachings. The curriculum in madrasahs usually combines general subjects such as mathematics, science, and language with religious subjects such as Quranic exegesis, fiqh, hadith, and ethics, designed to provide a balance between worldly knowledge and spiritual knowledge. Besides formal lessons, madrasahs also hold routine religious activities such as congregational prayers, Quran recitation, dhikr, and collective prayers, which become part of students' daily lives. The formation of noble character is also greatly

emphasized, with values such as honesty, simplicity, social care, and respect being taught and practiced in everyday life. Teachers in madrasahs act as role models in terms of behavior and worship, setting a good example for students in applying religious values. The physical and social environment in madrasahs is usually designed to support religious-themed learning, including the use of religious symbols, polite language, and controlled interactions. For example, every day students in madrasahs are required to perform Dhuha and Dhuhr prayers in congregation at the madrasah mosque, instilling discipline in worship and a sense of togetherness. Many madrasahs have tahfidz programs where students are encouraged to memorize the Quran, and students routinely attend religious study sessions led by teachers that discuss various aspects of Islamic teachings. Madrasahs also often conduct social service activities such as providing aid to orphans, helping the poor, and community cleaning efforts, and celebrate major Islamic holidays with various activities involving students, teachers, and the surrounding community.

The learning environment in a madrasah surrounded by strong religious values aims to shape students who are not only intellectually smart but also have strong faith and noble character, ready to face modern world challenges while adhering to religious teachings (Afandi 2019).

The quality of religious teaching in Madrasah is also taken seriously, with the presence of teachers who are competent and experienced in teaching Islamic religious knowledge, so that they are considered capable of providing

comprehensive and balanced education. Comprehensive and balanced education is an educational approach that encompasses various aspects of student development holistically, including intellectual, emotional, social, physical, and spiritual dimensions (Sari, Nurhidayati, dan Dumiyati 2023). The goal of this education is to ensure that students receive broad and deep learning and are prepared to face various life challenges with balanced abilities. This education includes a rich and varied curriculum, teaching social and emotional skills, providing physical education programs, helping develop moral and spiritual values, and encouraging self-expression through arts and creative activities (Kosim 2007). Its implementation can be seen in schools with integrated curricula, diverse extracurricular programs, holistic learning approaches, supportive learning environments, and parental and community involvement. Comprehensive and balanced education aims to shape individuals who are not only academically smart but also have good emotional, social, physical, and spiritual well-being, thus ready to face life's challenges and contribute positively to society.

The formation of a strong Islamic identity is another important reason, where parents believe that Madrasah can provide a solid foundation in understanding religion and daily religious practices. Strengthening the identity as a strong Muslim is important for various reasons related to the spiritual, social, and moral aspects of an individual's life (Nurhasnawati 2015). This identity provides a deeper understanding of Islamic teachings, enabling individuals to better adhere to religious commands and apply

Islamic values in their daily lives. Additionally, a strong identity helps in the formation of a character that is honest, fair, and compassionate, which is crucial in social interactions and community life (Suyanto 2016). A Muslim with a strong identity tends to be more resilient in facing various life challenges because they have clear guidance based on Islamic principles. This identity also encourages positive contributions to society, motivating individuals to engage in social activities, help others, and be good role models. Furthermore, a strong identity helps create harmony and unity among Muslims, allowing the community to work together better and face challenges with stronger solidarity. Ultimately, an identity as a strong Muslim provides inner peace and spiritual satisfaction, bringing peace and happiness to an individual's life through closeness to the Creator.

The faith-based extracurricular programs offered by Madrasah, such as memorizing the Koran and da'wah activities, provide significant added value to children's education, which is not always available in public schools.

Strong family influence and traditions also encourage upper-class families to continue the tradition of sending their children to Madrasah as a way of maintaining family and religious values (Sidiq 2018). Lastly, the more focused and calm learning environment with fewer students and a more personalized teaching approach in Madrasah is appreciated as it provides better learning opportunities for children.

CONCLUSIONS

Perception is a complex process that begins with the sensory reception of

stimuli, followed by the transmission and interpretation of these stimuli to form a complete perception. This process is influenced by past experiences and the information received through the senses. According to Gibson (1989), the factors influencing perception can be divided into internal factors, external factors, and object characteristics. Applying this framework to the factors that influence the upper class society's perception of Madrasah as a place for children's education, we can classify them as follows:

Internal Factors. These include individual characteristics such as needs, experiences, and expectations. For upper class society, internal factors in choosing a Madrasah include the quality of education, the cost of education, and the reputation and accreditation of the Madrasah.

External Factors. These are environmental elements that influence perception, such as the information received and the social environment. For Madrasah, these factors include educational facilities, the learning environment, extracurricular programs, and social and cultural factors.

Object Characteristics. These refer to the inherent qualities of the object being perceived. For Madrasah, this includes the quality of education, reputation and accreditation, educational facilities, and the learning environment.

In summary, the perception of upper class society in choosing Madrasah for their children's education is driven by several key factors. The structured and intensive religious education at Madrasah helps in shaping children's character and morals through a curriculum that integrates religious and general education. Madrasah

are also valued for their ability to instill strong moral and ethical values in a supportive religious environment. Additionally, the presence of competent and experienced teachers in Madrasah is seen as essential for providing comprehensive and balanced education. The formation of a strong Islamic identity, supported by faith-based extracurricular programs, adds significant value to children's education. Strong family influence and traditions, along with a focused and personalized learning environment, further enhance the attractiveness of Madrasah as a preferred educational institution for upper class families.

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