



# The Relationship between Service Quality and Public Satisfaction of Service Users at the Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province

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## ABSTRACT

Good and quality public services are one indicator of the government's success in improving public welfare. The Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province, as one of the regional government administrators, plays a crucial role in providing quality public services to the community. However, there are still complaints from the public regarding the quality of services provided, such as unclear procedures, the behavior of individuals seeking profit, and poor service timeliness. This study aims to analyze the relationship between service quality and public satisfaction at the Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province. The research method used is quantitative with a cross-sectional study design, involving 363 respondents who are service users at the Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province. The results showed that the majority of respondents (50.1%) assessed the service quality as "Good", but there were still 49.9% of respondents who assessed the service quality as "Sufficient" or "Poor". Public satisfaction was also polarized, with 52.3% of respondents feeling "Satisfied" and 47.7% feeling "Not Satisfied." A Chi-Square test showed a significant relationship between service quality and public satisfaction ( $p=0.000$ ). This study concluded that service quality plays a crucial role in shaping public satisfaction, but there is still room for improvement in service quality, particularly in enhancing the ability of government officials to provide better services and meet public expectations.

## INTRODUCTION

Bureaucracy is intended to organize and organize work that must be carried out, involving many people, to achieve large-scale administrative tasks (Afrizal et al., 2021). The smoother the work process and the better the supervision, the more successful the work will be. Good supervision will encourage employees to be more diligent in their work and produce good results, especially if they complete their work with enthusiasm (Benawan et al., 2018). An organization or agency always implements programs aimed at achieving a goal. One of the criteria for achieving this goal in an organization or agency is identifying and measuring performance.

Good and high-quality public service is a dream and aspiration sought by all levels of society in every country around the world. Public interest-oriented service, manifested in the implementation of duties and the participation of state officials as public servants, must be accompanied by improvements in quality and performance, which are mandatory requirements for every bureaucrat.

In accordance with one of the objectives of the direction of the national general development policy which is realized in the long-term development (PJP) 2005-2025 and medium-term development (PJM) 2005-2009, namely to improve the welfare of the community in the implementation of development by improving the quality of public services, especially basic services, increasing the capacity of the community to be able to participate in development and supervise the progress of development.

With the enactment of Law No. 23 of 2014 concerning regional government as a revision and addition to Law No. 32 of 2014 which is considered no longer in accordance with the development of circumstances, state administration, and demands for the implementation of regional autonomy. In Law No. 23 of 2014 it is stated that the purpose of granting regional autonomy is to strive to provide improved services and welfare to the community, justice, and equality. In this case, it is an encouragement for existing regional governments to be able to compete in making policies and implementing policies, especially in the direction of providing good and quality public

services with the intention and goal that the community is able to organize in such a way as to participate in the implementation of regional government which in the future aims to improve the welfare of the community itself, because so far the community seems to tend to only be made an object of public policy when the community should be expected to be more the subject in planning and policy making as well as in order to realize a participatory society.

In the implementation and administration of public services, the government has established minimum service standards (SPM), where the future goal is expected to improve the quality of service and service performance. Furthermore, the results of the data that have been obtained are measured in assessing the effectiveness of programs that have been implemented in an agency, namely through the compilation of the public satisfaction index (IKM). The compilation of this public satisfaction index (IKM) is a mandatory requirement for every public agency in an effort to improve the quality of public services. Meanwhile, for the public, the public satisfaction index can be used as a description of the service performance of the relevant agency.

Public administration is the study and practice of how governments plan, organize, manage, and implement public policies to achieve national goals, including the provision of public services. Public services themselves are government activities that meet the basic needs of the community through the provision of administrative services, goods, and social services, with the main principles of legal certainty, procedural clarity, and equality. The two are closely interrelated, where effective public administration will result in excellent public services and fulfill the rights of citizens.

Good service is very important in maintaining service quality because good service can attract public attention, well-managed services are expected to meet public expectations, because the public has a big role in comparing standards for evaluating satisfaction and quality. Public satisfaction is a comparison between public confidence, namely the service itself, which they will receive in the form of service quality in the form of performance. Service involves the public and the government, it is hoped that both will have satisfaction in providing services and receiving services.

The Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province is one of the regional government administrators fully responsible for Senior High Schools (SMA), Vocational High Schools (SMK) and Special Schools (SLB). As referred to in Governor Regulation No. 12 of 2022, the Regional Education Office functions to provide all administrative services in accordance with applicable procedures both to educational devices and to the public in general. As an implementer of public services, the Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province plays a role in the achievements achieved in public services, namely in 2024 North Sulawesi received the first best predicate in the assessment of compliance with the implementation of public service standards, with a score of 98.63. Services provided by the North Sulawesi Provincial Education Office include Teacher Promotion, Certification, Teacher Credit Point Assessment (Integration and Conversion), Retirement Proposals, Leave, Study Permits, Diploma Legalization, Dapodik, School BOS Fund Reconciliation, Scholarships and other services related to the world of Education and teacher careers.

However, the Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province still often receives complaints from the user community in addition to unclear procedures, the behavior of individuals who seek profit, lack of friendliness, and the timeliness of service that greatly affects the quality of service in the eyes of the community, so that the entire administrative process is often delayed and takes too long, resulting in many files or documents that have been submitted for processing experiencing delays. After being re-examined, many files are missing or do not comply with the provisions but due to negligence of employees so that they are not submitted to the document owner to be completed or corrected.

The Education Office as one of the elements of government is not exempt from the basic concept of service that must be carried out quickly and accurately because the increasing needs of the community, requiring employees who play a crucial role as service providers to improve their abilities, knowledge and skills in order to serve the community well. However, when viewed in its implementation, important factors in supporting the implementation of this public service have not worked well, optimally and responsibly.

Seeing some of the problems that have been described, it is considered necessary to conduct research on the Relationship between Service Quality and Public Satisfaction of Service Users at the Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province.

## RESEARCH METHODS

The author conducted the research using a quantitative method with a cross-sectional study design. The researcher used this research design because, as it aligns with its definition, data collection and research are conducted simultaneously. After the data were obtained, the researcher first described both the independent and dependent variables. Afterward, the data were analyzed to determine whether there was a relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The data were then presented and presented by the researcher.

This study has two variables to be studied, namely variable X, the quality of public services, and variable Y, namely public satisfaction, where this study will be conducted at the Regional Education Office of North Sulawesi Province which functions to provide services to the community and employees, especially teachers in North Sulawesi Province. The population in this study was taken from the community who used services at the North Sulawesi Provincial Education Office from June to September 2025. The population in this study amounted to 2831 people. The sampling technique to determine the sample to be used in this study used a non-probability sampling type with a purposive sampling technique. In this study, the researcher used the Slovin formula in calculating the following sample:

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + Ne^2}$$

$n$  = is the sample size to be sought.

$N$  = is the population size.

$e$  = is the margin of error, which is the expected or specified error rate.

Given:  $N = 2831$  people,  $E = 5\% = 0.05$

Based on the calculations above, the sample used for this study was 363 community service users at the North Sulawesi Provincial Education Office.

Therefore, the sample/respondents for this study were 363 people.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire. Data analysis used to determine the relationship between quality and quality was as follows:  $n$  = sample size.

$n$  = population size.

$e$  = margin of error, which is the expected or specified error rate.

Given:  $N$  = 2831 people  $E$  = 5% = 0.05 service and public satisfaction using the chi square test. The data analysis technique uses the SPSS version 22 computer program. Univariate analysis with presentation in the form of frequency distribution. Each variable (service quality and public satisfaction) is described first through a frequency distribution table. Respondent characteristics include gender, age, education level, and length of service. All data from each variable are processed and then analyzed. Meanwhile, bivariate analysis to measure the relationship between the independent variable and the dependent variable is examined bivariately using the Chi Square Test at a significance level of 95% or a value of  $\alpha$  = 0.05. If the value is greater than  $\alpha$  = 0.05,  $H_0$  is accepted, otherwise a value less than  $\alpha$  = 0.05 indicates that  $H_0$  is rejected and  $H_1$  is accepted.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results of the analysis of data collected in the study on the relationship between service quality and public satisfaction. Empirical data were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to 363 respondents and have undergone validation and processing using statistical tools. The discussion begins with a general overview of the respondents' characteristics to provide demographic context for the sample. Next, descriptive statistical analysis is conducted for each research variable. The final section will focus on inferential analysis through hypothesis testing using the Chi-Square test and an in-depth discussion of the research findings.

**Table 1. Respondent Gender**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Man	124	34.2	34.2	34.2

Girl	239	65.8	65.8	100.0
Total	363	100.0	100.0	

Source : processed by the author (2025)

Table 1 above shows a significant difference in the composition of the respondents between men and women. The majority of respondents were women, 239 of whom represented 65.8% of the total sample. Meanwhile, there were 124 male respondents, representing 34.2%.

**Table 2. Respondents Occupations**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
PNS	327	90.1	90.1	90.1
Swasta	24	6.6	6.6	96.7
Wiraswasta	12	3.3	3.3	100.0
Total	363	100.0	100.0	

Source: processed by the author 2025

From the table above, it can be seen that the distribution of respondents based on occupation shows a very high degree of homogeneity. A total of 327 respondents (90.1%) were civil servants (PNS). The other groups had smaller percentages, namely 24 private sector employees (6.6%) and 12 self-employed individuals (3.3%)

**Table 3. Respondents Education**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid SMA Sederaja	22	6.1	6.1	6.1
D1,D2, D3	7	1.9	1.9	8.0
S1,D4	276	76.0	76.0	84.0
S2 dan S3	58	16.0	16.0	100.0
Total	363	100.0	100.0	

Source: processed by the author 2025

Based on the table, respondents' educational backgrounds are classified as high. The data shows that the majority of respondents, 276 people (76.0%), have a bachelor's degree (S1) or diploma (D4). The second largest group is respondents with postgraduate education (S2 and S3), totaling 58 people (16.0%). Combined, 92% of respondents have a higher education. Only a small

proportion (22 people or 6.1%) have a high school or equivalent education and seven people (1.9%) have a diploma (D1, D2, D3). This high level of education indicates that respondents tend to have analytical skills and critical expectations regarding public services.

**Table 4. Service Quality**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Valid Deficient	74	20.4	20.4	20.4
Sufficient	107	29.5	29.5	49.9
Good	182	50.1	50.1	100.0
Total	363	100.0	100.0	

Source: processed by the author 2025

From table 4 above, it can be seen that when respondents were asked to provide an assessment of the quality of service they received, the analysis results showed a positive trend, where half of the total respondents (182 people or 50.1%) assessed the quality of service as "Good". However, it is important to note that almost half of the respondents have not yet rated the service in the best category. A total of 107 respondents (29.5%) rated the quality of service in the "Sufficient" category, and there were 74 respondents (20.4%) who rated the quality of service as "Poor". The accumulation of the "Sufficient" and "Poor" categories which reached 49.9% indicates that there is still significant room for improvement in service quality.

**Table 5. Community Satisfaction**

	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cumulative Percent
Unsatisfied	173	47.7	47.7	47.7
Valid Satisfied	190	52.3	52.3	100.0
Total	363	100.0	100.0	

Source: processed by the author 2025

This table shows the public satisfaction variable measured in two categories: "Not Satisfied" and "Satisfied." The descriptive results indicate a fairly polarized situation. Although the "Satisfied" group of respondents was slightly larger, at 190 (52.3%), the number of respondents who stated "Not Satisfied" was also very substantial, reaching 173 (47.7%). This slight difference between the two groups indicates that the

services provided have not been able to meet the expectations of nearly half of the total respondent population.

To answer the research objectives regarding the relationship between Service Quality and Public Satisfaction, a bivariate analysis was conducted using crosstabulation and the non-parametric Chi-Square statistical test in the table below:

**Table 6. Public Satisfaction with Service Quality \* Public Satisfaction Crosstabulation**

		Community Satisfaction		Total
		Unsatisfied	Satisfied	
Service Quality	Deficient	Count 29	45	74
		% of Total 8.0%	12.4%	20.4%
	Sufficient	Count 68	39	107
		% of Total 18.7%	10.7%	29.5%
	Good	Count 76	106	182
		% of Total 20.9%	29.2%	50.1%
Total		Count 173	190	363
		% of Total 47.7%	52.3%	100.0%

Source: processed by the author 2025

1. The cross-tabulation table provides a detailed overview of the combined distribution of service quality categories and satisfaction levels, as follows:
2. 1. In the group that rated Service Quality as "Poor" (74 people): Interestingly, in this group, more people felt "Satisfied" (45 people, or 12.4% of the total sample) than those who felt "Unsatisfied" (29 people, or 8.0% of the total sample).
3. 2. In the group that rated Service Quality as "Sufficient" (107 people): The majority of this group felt "Unsatisfied," 68 people (18.7% of the total), while only 39 people (10.7% of the total) felt "Satisfied."
4. 3. In the group that rated Service Quality as "Good" (182 people): In line with general theory, the majority of this group felt "Satisfied," 106 people (29.2% of the total). However, there was a fairly large number,

namely 76 people (20.9% of the total), who still felt "Not Satisfied" even though they had rated the service quality as "Good".

**Tabel 6. Chi-Square Tests**

	Value	df	Asymp. Sig. (2-sided)
Pearson Chi-Square	15.502 <sup>a</sup>	2	.000
Likelihood Ratio	15.617	2	.000
Linear-by-Linear Association	.357	1	.550
N of Valid Cases	363		

Source: processed by the author 2025

Table 5 above shows the results of hypothesis testing to determine whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the two variables. The hypotheses tested are:

- H0: There is no relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction.
- Ha: There is a relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction.

The decision-making criteria are: if the probability value is  $<0.05$ , then H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. Based on the SPSS output, the Pearson Chi-Square value was 15.502 with degrees of freedom (df) = 2. The asymptotic significance value was 0.000. Since the Sig. value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ , H0 is rejected and Ha is accepted. This indicates a significant relationship between Service Quality and Customer Satisfaction.

The results of this study indicate that, according to basic marketing and public service theory, there is a significant relationship between perceived service quality and customer (customer) satisfaction. The significance value of 0.000 in the Chi-Square test confirms that these two variables are not independent.

## CONCLUSION

This research successfully confirmed the crucial role of public service quality in shaping public satisfaction within the North Sulawesi Provincial Education Office. Based on the research results and analysis of the data obtained,

the following conclusions were drawn:

First, the service context at this agency faces unique challenges because it operates with a highly educated user base dominated by internal bureaucratic personnel (civil servants). This demographic characteristic creates an environment with high expectations and critical attitudes towards every administrative process.

Second, although service performance is generally assessed positively by a small majority of users, conditions on the ground indicate significant satisfaction polarization. The persistently high level of dissatisfaction indicates that the current service standards categorized as "good" are not yet fully adequate to meet the expectations of all user segments, especially those with higher performance demands.

Third, statistically, there is a significant and inseparable relationship between the quality of service provided and the level of public satisfaction received. However, the phenomenon where a good quality assessment does not automatically guarantee satisfaction suggests that in the education service environment, user satisfaction is a complex construct. It is not only influenced by improvements in the technical aspects of the service but also depends heavily on how well the agency is able to manage and bridge the gap between the actual service provided and the high expectations of its users with a higher education background.

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