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# Quality of Basic Education Services in Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi Province

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#### INFO ARTICLE

ABSTRACT

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Keywords: basic education; compulsory education. science; service; teacher. The purpose of this research is to find out what the true picture is of the quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, and what variables impact it. To answer these problems, qualitative approaches with a phenomenological perspective were used. After the research was completed, the quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency did not meet community expectations owing to a lack of management based on elements such as dependability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles. The poor commitment of the local government, particularly the officials of the Donggala Regency Education Office, to completing different areas of establishing the quality of education services is one of the causes influencing it. Furthermore, the community's and business/industry world's lack of involvement has an impact. This study presents a number of suggestions/recommendations that the Donggala Regency government, Donggala Regency Education Office, and stakeholders in the field of basic education development, particularly basic education services, are expected to use to improve the quality of basic education services.





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# INTRODUCTION

Education has been practiced since humans were born (Okfiana & Niswah, 2019). Educational demands are essential societal requirements (Sudjiani et al., 2019). Essential education services are one of the basic necessities of society that the government must meet (Hakim, 2016; Rahayu, 2022). One of the nation's values is equitable education (Mujizatullah, 2018). Every Indonesian citizen has the right to a decent education, hence every citizen is obligated to pursue education in accordance with the mandate of Article 31 of the 1945 Constitution (Wenda, 2022).

Faced with competition in the age of globalization, educational institutions must increase their quality in terms of both education and educational services (Hayati et al., 2021). Aside from the service quality element, educational facilities cannot be overlooked. All components of physical facilities that promote the learning process, both academic and non-academic, are referred to as facilities (Kurbani, 2019). Furthermore, the capacity of educational institutions to generate quality graduates who are competent in their disciplines, as well as the effectiveness of program activities undertaken, should be demonstrated by the quality of educational results perceived by all students (Kusjono & Sudjiani, 2019).

One of the government's initiatives to achieve this is the implementation of a quality 9-year compulsory education policy, which began in 1989 and is projected to be effective countrywide in 2008-2009. The quality of education prioritizes the community as the primary focus of the educational program or result (Fredy et al., 2019). Since 2009, the Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for School-Age Children (AUS) for Elementary Schools (7 years-13 years) and Junior High Schools (13-15 years) has achieved 85%, indicating the effectiveness of the 9-year Compulsory Education Program. In 2021, the nationwide GER for Elementary Schools was 106.20%, while the GER for SMP was 92.8%. The low GER for SMP as compared to GER for SD demonstrates that basic education development still needs to be enhanced, particularly to align the GER for SD and SMP. This demonstrates the effectiveness of educational progress (Itasari, 2020; Pendanaan Pendidikan Dasar Gratis Berkualitas Di Indonesia - Neliti, n.d.).

The following are some intriguing phenomena that reflect the poor quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency: Many school-age children in Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi Province, have yet to experience basic education, both in elementary school (7-12 years old) and junior high school (13-15 years old). The Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for primary education in Donggala Regency is the lowest of the 10 regencies/cities in Central Sulawesi Province. Even on a national scale, this regency ranks fifth out of all regencies/cities in Indonesia.

The Donggala Regency government's commitment to provide basic education funds remains poor. This is evident from the provision of the education budget in the APBD from year to year, which falls well short of expectations as indicated in Law No. 20 yrs. 2003 concerning national education, which requires local governments to provide a minimum of 20% of the entire APBD in each fiscal year. The bureaucratic apparatus's lack of commitment to delivering fundamental schooling services. This is evident from the inadequate quality of basic education services delivered, as indicated in basic education development planning, implementation, and assessment. The provision of educational infrastructure, namely the number of schools, classrooms, and other facilities, is still far from adequate. This, of course, has a significant impact on the quality of basic education services. The availability of instructors is still unequally distributed by location, school, class, and pupils. As a result, the quality of education services would undoubtedly fluctuate among regions, particularly between urban, rural, and distant places. The study problems are created based on the preceding description, namely: what is the true image of the quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency; what variables influence the quality of basic education services in the region?

#### **Service Quality Concept**

The following is how Lawrence Fogli defines service quality: Service quality is a general assessment or attitude toward a specific service; the customer's overall opinion of the company and its services' relative inadequacy or superiority. Service quality is a mental assessment (Fogli, Lawrence, 2006). According to Fogli,



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service quality is a cognitive appraisal of the consumer. Service quality refers to overall judgments or client attitudes toward the services provided. In addition to attitude, service quality is connected to the customer's overall opinion of the service he receives from a service business. Customers can therefore measure an organization's excellence in service quality.

Schneider, et. al (1997) in (Fogli, Lawrence, 2006) the following are my thoughts on service quality: The discrepancy between consumers' expectations of what should happen in a service contact and their perceptions of what actually happens is characterized as service quality. This perspective stresses true service quality, which is the alignment of consumer expectations with the reality of services supplied by service provider companies. This is generated in the mind, and it eventually shapes the impression of the party receiving the service. As a result, service provider firms who want to deliver high-quality services must supply a product that meets client expectations. Customer expectations can be generated from a variety of sources, such as advertising or the "pricing" and amenities given.

Furthermore, service to consumers, particularly in the corporate realm, is sometimes referred to as customer service. This commercial expertise should be used by government organizations, which in this instance serve the community, so that the services offered are of appropriate quality, as is typically demonstrated by various private enterprises (Nurdin, 2018; Ulum, 2018). According to Fogli, customer service is defined as the contact between a customer and a representative of the business, and it is not confined to a specific function or job type inside the firm (Fogli, ed. 2006: 5). Customer service is a two-way street between customers and organizational representatives, who in this case represent the organization. The contact is not confined to one function or activity, but rather to several in line with the organization's sphere of operation. According to Fogli (2006), clients define service quality based on the quality of service they receive. This indicates that customers anticipate their wants and expectations to be satisfied when they contact with parties or service provider companies. If this is the case, it indicates that the services offered are of excellent quality. In this case, the consumer serves as a judge. They judge the quality of service based on their feelings (Saputra, 2016). Some of the essences of these definitions can be taken from some of the above-mentioned conceptions of service quality, including:

- a. In reality, service quality is imperceptible (intangible). The service's excellence can only be felt. Unlike with visible items, such as those that can be touched.
- b. The parties serviced collectively evaluate service quality. The customer's evaluation creates an impression that eventually impacts customer behavior toward the services given.
- c. The relationship between service providers and clients is defined as service quality.
- d. Service quality begins with the demands of the client and concludes with customer satisfaction and favorable impressions of service quality.

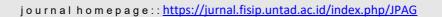
#### The Concept of Service Quality in the Context of Government

Following the emphasis of this research, the government is presented as the party primarily accountable for the execution of community services, which are generally referred to as public services. According to Erwan Agus Purwanto in (Dwiyanto, Agus, 2006) The aim of public services: "The purpose of public services is not only seen as an endeavor to address the needs of individuals in need, but it is also meant to bring larger societal benefits or accomplish the government's political goals." These political objectives will be met if the public services offered to specific individuals or community groups have a large influence on society.

Even though the above image does not explicitly specify the quality dimension, it is implied that the dimension is still visible. One indicator of the quality of government services is if the services delivered have a broad societal impact (Apriyani & Sunarti, 2017). This signifies that the services offered are widely used by the community and produce societal difficulties in particular domains that have been dealt with, at least partially. In line with the times, particularly the needs for the democratic process, the government, particularly the government bureaucracy, must be ready and able to change in order to respond to era-specific events. Instead of being reversed as in the past, the government bureaucracy should seem as a public servant and be served by the community.

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Regarding this AG. Subarno in (Dwiyanto, Agus, 2006) put forward: In this setting, the public bureaucracy must be revitalized in order to offer democratic, efficient, responsive, and non-partisan public services. If the public bureaucracy is unable to offer high-quality public services, the users will desert it. If this is the case, it signifies that the public bureaucracy has failed to fulfill its goal of delivering services to the people. (Ratminto dan Atik Septi Winarsih, 2008) with regard to MENPAN Decree No. 63/2003, public services are distinguished from government administration services. According to him, public services or public services are all sorts of services, both in the form of public goods and public services, that are carried out by government agencies at the center, in the regions, and inside State-Owned Enterprises or State-Owned Enterprises. Regions, in the context of attempts to address community needs as well as the implementation of legislative and regulatory rules. Meanwhile, government administration services or licensing services can be defined as all forms of services that are carried out in principle by central government agencies, in regions, and within the State-Owned Enterprises or Regional-Owned Enterprises environment, both in the context of efforts to meet the needs of the community and in the context of implementing the provisions of laws and regulations - invitation, whose form of service

Furthermore, it is possible to argue that great service cannot just exist. This necessitates careful handling (management). So far, private organizations, such as private enterprises, have attempted to provide their clients with high-quality services. Efforts like this are now being followed by the government. As a public service, the government began to "spoil" the people by providing numerous services that are, in fact, their rights. Nonetheless, a number of hurdles and impediments are perceived to stymie efforts to offer quality services by the government, as they are by commercial companies on a regular basis (Lembaga Administrasi Negara, 2003). The State Administrative Institution of the Republic of Indonesia lists the following issues and impediments in the Book for the Preparation of Public Service Standards:

- a. Contact between customers and service providers
- b. Variation of service
- c. Service officers
- d. Organizational structure
- e. Information
- f. Demand and supply sensitivity
- g. Procedure
- h. Public distrust of service quality

The most significant of the several general impediments mentioned above is that of service people. Whereas service personnel are at the forefront of service efforts, working directly with those being serviced (the community). The fundamental impediment must be overcome for this aim, namely altering the perception and conduct of service people so that they may operate professionally. Of course, additional limits and hurdles must be removed so that everything works together, which can occasionally increase the quality of government services.

#### **Dimensions of Service Quality**

Among the many opinions of experts/researchers regarding the dimensions of service quality, in this study it was chosen to then use the theory that defines and explains the dimensions of service quality according to (Zietahml, Parasuraman A., Berry Leonard L., 1990), for the following reasons:

The hypothesis given by Zetahml et al. is better in accordance with the conditions of the Donggala Regency Government of Central Sulawesi Province, particularly the Education Office, which is the focal point of this study. In this scenario, the Donggala District Education Office in Central Sulawesi Province, together with other Regional Implementing Units (RIU) in the region, work hard to deliver quality services to the community. According to Zeithaml et al., the dimensions that need be created and upgraded on a regular basis to improve the quality of education services in Donggala Regency are several.





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Local government attempts to develop good governance, particularly in the sphere of community services, including basic education services, are consistent with Zeithaml et alphilosophy, .'s which places customers (society) at the center of service quality production. One of the aspirations that must be realized in the framework of education development is the achievement of quality education services for everybody.

Reliability (reliability), responsiveness (responsiveness), assurance (assurance), empathy (empathy), and physical proof are the elements of service quality determined by Zeithaml et al (tangibles). The following description captures the essence of each of these aspects.

- a. Reliability refers to an organization's ability to provide the promised service correctly the first time.
- b. Responsiveness: The desire and capacity of the service provider company to assist consumers and answer to their demands in a timely manner.
- c. Assurance: Regarding staff' expertise and civility, as well as their capacity to instill trust and confidence in those serviced.
- d. Empathy (empathy): A service provider company that understands its clients' concerns and acts in their best interests, provides personal attention to consumers, and has convenient operation hours.
- e. Tangibles: The physical look of the organization's buildings, equipment/equipment, human resources, and communication materials.

#### **Basic Education Services in Indonesia**

Education is one of the decentralized professions, as mentioned in Law No. 23 years. 2014 about Regional Government. The delegation of authority to regions to operate their own governments in accordance with developed local wisdom is based on the notion that regions have unique characteristics that differ from one another. This is an example of variety that should be celebrated (Amirin, 2012). Thus, decentralization of education does not imply limiting the substance of education to being local and regional in character, but may be regarded as giving extensive powers and authority to regions to conduct planning and decision making in addressing educational difficulties. As a result, decentralization of education would inspire local governments to develop independence and self-confidence, which will improve education services for people in the areas (Setyaningsih, 2017).

Decentralization of education, defined as the delegation of power from the center to the regions to oversee education, indicates that education is managed by the regions, in this case one of the districts/cities (Bahtiar, 2008). The decentralization of education management according to Bahtiar (2008), to limit official or central unit influence or intervention in educational matters that should be resolved and executed by local government and the community As a result, it is envisaged that local governments and communities would be empowered to manage education. Basic education is one of the areas of education that must be handled, particularly by district/city administrations. Elementary School Level Education Units and Junior Secondary Level Education Units comprise this fundamental education sector. Meanwhile, the province government oversees other educational institutions such as Vocational High School and Senior High School. Meanwhile, the provincial government's role in higher education is confined to being a supervisor, among other things, regarding the formation and disbandment of higher education and coordination in terms of the admission of higher education lecturers. The quality of basic education implemented by the district/city government, in this case the district/city Education Office, can be seen from how far this agency manages education equivalent to elementary and junior high schools, including SDLB and SMPLB. Therefore, to see the quality of basic education in question, it is necessary to observe the following things:

- a. Gross Enrollment Rate (GER) for Elementary and Junior High Schools
- b. Pure Enrollment Rate (NER) for Elementary and Junior High School
- c. Student-school ratio
- d. Student-to-class ratio
- e. Teacher student ratio
- f. Teacher grade ratio
- g. Teacher ratio per school







# METHOD

The quality of basic education services is the subject of this study. This study is being conducted in Donggala Regency, Central Sulawesi Province. This study employs a qualitative research design using a phenomenological approach. This study is seeking for both primary and secondary data. Primary data was collected through observations and in-depth interviews with a predefined number of respondents. Secondary data is gathered by contacting multiple agencies/parties that supply the data. In the meanwhile, data analysis is carried out by reducing data, providing empirical material, generating conclusions, and performing verification.

# **RESULT AND DISCUSSION**

#### **Quality of Basic Education Services in Donggala Regency**

All parties in Donggala Regency want enough quality basic education services. This is due to the fact that the quality of education services substantially influences the quality of human resources, which ultimately decides how every human being in Donggala Regency may knit their lives together in a better way so that people's welfare can be fulfilled. "That is why the Donggala Regency Government always strives to achieve the quality of education services, especially basic education, which is sought to be better from time to time," says the Head of the Donggala Regency Education Office.<sup>1</sup> Furthermore, Donggala, the District Education Office's Head, stated that in order to achieve the quality of education services, particularly basic education, the local government collaborates with the Central Sulawesi provincial government and the central government in the preparation of education financing. The government collaboration resulted in a practical agreement; since 2007, the Donggala Regency administration has established a free basic education program as a form of execution of the government's 9-year quality compulsory education program, which was begun in 1998.<sup>2</sup>

What the Head of the Donggala Regency Service said delighted the residents of Donggala Regency. That is how the facts on the ground are. The community believes that basic education, including education in elementary school education units (elementary schools and similar) and junior high school education units (equivalent), should be provided for free. Nonetheless, the fact that free education for basic education services has not been followed by appropriate services is readily apparent in the context of this research. According to the informants, in the field of access to basic education, which involves the distribution of learning opportunities as part of basic education services, which is the subject of this research, it has not yet been realized as a service that is perceived properly by the community. The community continues to complain about various challenges, indicating that the quality of education services has not been fulfilled as intended. According to the Donggala District Education Office's Head, "Realizing the quality of education services, particularly in terms of access to basic education (fair distribution of learning chances), it must be realized that it has not entirely pleased the community." However, it must be admitted that the quality of government services is improving from time to time."<sup>3</sup>

The fact that is described is not without appreciation from the community. An education leader in Banawa District, Donggala Regency, said:

We, the community, recognize that the quality of basic education services, particularly access to basic education, is improving. This implies that students in elementary school (7-12 years old) and junior high school (13-15 years old) have the greatest potential to acquire education according to their age. However, such access is still restricted in distant and secluded places. This constraint is caused by a lack of classrooms, inadequate school facilities and infrastructure, the availability of instructors who are insufficient for the number of students and topics, and a variety of other factors. The public is upset because the administration does not appear to be serious about dealing with these issues. The government is preoccupied with political issues that often feel too personal, such as maintaining the existence of government for the next period, the issue of regional expansion,

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> Wawancara dengan Kepala Dinas Pendidikan Kab. Donggala, tanggal 31/5/2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Wawancara dengan Kepala Dinas Pendidikan Kab. Donggala, tanggal 31/5/2022.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> Wawancara dengan Kepala Dinas Kab. Donggala, tanggal 31/5/2022.



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and various other issues, so that things that fulfill basic community needs, such as basic education, appear to be forgotten.<sup>4</sup>

Based on the findings of the field research, this study aimed to analyze the quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency using the service quality theory presented by Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990: 25-26). To judge service quality, he believes there are five crucial factors, which he refers to as dimensions. These characteristics are: dependability, responsiveness, certainty, empathy, and tangibles.

#### Aspect of Reliability

According to Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990), reliability is concerned with how service quality is managed in accordance with the following factors: timeliness, adherence to procedures, equality, which means that employees are treated equally and without discrimination, and employee readiness. The findings indicate that the administration of basic education services in Donggala Regency has not been entirely capable of providing timely services as part of reliability. Similarly, the processes for the different tasks performed tend to make it harder for those served, so that the services supplied appear to pay less attention to the issue of equality. This is owing to the apparatus's lack of preparation in providing services, giving the community the perception that the managers of basic education services are prejudiced. These distinctions may be seen in basic education services in urban, rural, and distant settings.

#### Aspect of Responsiveness

According to Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990), responsiveness is one facet of service quality. To assess this aspect of responsiveness, he believes that several factors must be considered or assessed, including: the speed with which the needs of the community being served are met; ability and agility in problem solving; acceptance of criticism and suggestions from the community served; attentiveness; and ease of access to services. The information supplied is simple to grasp. In terms of responsiveness, the basic education management apparatus has fallen short of the community's expectations. According to the findings of this study, the management apparatus is unable to address the demands of the community in the field of basic education in a timely manner. According to this study, their response or response in fixing community concerns is inadequate. The basic education management apparatus is pleased to accept and absorb criticism, but they are less responsive or empowered to carry it through. Another issue is that they are seen as inept when it comes to paying attention to and giving convenience to the community receiving basic education services.

#### Aspect of Assurance

According to Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990), assurance is a component or feature of service quality that is evaluated by looking at factors like security, legal certainty, trust, dedication to serve, clarity of service instructions, friendliness, and personnel expertise. Several points might be made regarding the assurance. According to this survey, those who receive basic education services feel protected. This implies they may use the facilities and different basic education services without fear of threats, intimidation, or other things that may be interpreted as signs of insecurity. However, it appears that the society is doubting the legal certainty of providing basic schooling services.

This is because the Donggala Regency Education Office, as the party in charge of education services, cannot meet the various promises made by the Donggala Regency Government. As a result, individuals are hesitant to put their faith in the local government, particularly the Donggala District Education Office, to offer basic education services as promised. Communities receiving basic education services believe that the local government, particularly the Donggala District Education services believe that the local government, particularly the Donggala District Education Office, is uncommitted to delivering basic education services. Similarly, given the numerous promises of basic education services that have not been implemented, the community has questioned the clarity of service directions. In the meanwhile, the community reports that

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> Wawancara dengan seorang tokoh pendidikan di Kec. Banawa, tanggal 2/5/2022. Page 136 of 139



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the basic education management personnel are fairly pleasant. Meanwhile, staff understanding in their profession (regarding fundamental education services) is questionable.

#### **Aspect of Empathy**

This study employs Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry's idea of empathy as part of the quality of educational services (1990). Understanding the needs of the community being served; desire (motivation) to help people who need services; suitability of services with the needs of the community being served; desire to follow up on criticism and suggestions; sincerity in doing service without discrimination, according to this concept. Empathy appears to be a feature of basic education service quality that basic education managers, in this case the Donggala District Education Office, were unable to meet. In this scenario, the management apparatus was unable to completely comprehend the community's requirements. Furthermore, they lack the motivation to assist persons in need of basic education services. Furthermore, they frequently deliver services that are not in line with the requirements of the people they serve. Similarly, authorities are less ready to follow up on criticism and ideas, even while they are open to be chastised and offered suggestions. They also appear to continue provide basic schooling services, which the community perceives as discriminatory.

#### **Aspect of Tangibles**

The notion of Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry is used in this study to address physical evidence as part of service quality (1990). Physical evidence, according to these experts, includes various factors, including: the completeness of infrastructure and facilities; employee appearance; strategic position; ease of service facilities; cleanliness of service facilities; and the adequacy of the serving personnel. According to the findings of the research, the management has not fully met the physical proof requirement as part of the quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency. The availability of basic education infrastructure and amenities is uneven among urban, rural, and remote places. Similarly, school infrastructure such as labs, classrooms, and instructor availability have fallen short. The look of the personnel of the Donggala Regency Education Office, on the other hand, was highly impressive to the public. Furthermore, the placement of school facilities in various regions, particularly in distant areas, is still difficult for the community to reach; in certain isolated areas, school facilities and infrastructure (particularly junior high schools) do not yet exist. Meanwhile, there are differences in facility convenience across urban, rural, and distant places. The convenience of service facilities in rural places is still far below expectations. Similarly, in rural regions. Donggala Regency's metropolitan area has enough and nice limayan facilities. Meanwhile, educational buildings such as schools (Elementary Schools and Junior High Schools) are kept clean enough to delight the community. It is often disappointing in terms of the adequacy of education management in schools, particularly among instructors. Teachers accumulate in metropolitan regions, but in rural and distant locations, teacher adequacy remains considerably below expectations. According to the community, the adequacy of personnel at the Education Office and Branch Offices in each sub-district, as well as administrative support staff for education in each school, is sufficient.

#### Factors Affecting the Quality of Basic Education Services in Donggala Kabupaten

At the same time, it addresses the elements influencing the quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency, such as government, community, and business/industrial world issues. According to the study's findings, the Donggala Regency administration appears to have a limited commitment to planning and providing basic education services for the community. By embracing components of education, particularly basic education, the government creates a very good vision and goal, as well as development priorities. However, the vision, purpose, and development priorities are merely in concept and have yet to be realized in reality. The Donggala Regency government appears to be more focused on preparing office facilities and infrastructure (Regent's Office, Regional House of Representatives, and Regional Apparatus Work Units) and purchasing things that can be delayed, such as cars, mobile phones, air conditioners, and the construction of the Donggala City beach, which is dredging the sea, rather than developing the community's basic needs, including basic education. Page 137 of 139



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Furthermore, the community is not encouraged to contribute to the cost of basic education. This is due to the Donggala Regency government's political language, which states "free basic education." Despite the fact that the inhabitants of Donggala Regency have the ability to contribute to the funding of basic education. Because they had not been asked by the local administration, the community did not participate in the financing. As a result, there is inequity. The government also provides education subsidies to those who can afford them. The same is true in business and industry. The municipal government does not assign them a role. Whereas the law requires that every business set aside a percentage of its income to satisfy its social responsibility and preserve the environment.

# CONCLUSION

The quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency has not exceeded community expectations because it lacks the following characteristics: dependability, responsiveness, certainty, empathy, and tangibles. Meanwhile, local government, community, and business/industrial world elements all have an impact on the quality of basic education services in Donggala Regency. Political methods appear to be more influential in the provision of education services by the government and local governments. Because of the political language of "free" basic education, many do not see the necessity to be active in basic education administration, particularly in finance. Similarly, the government and municipal governments are less active in the business/industry sphere, particularly in terms of finance. Local governments do not encourage business and industry to meet their social and environmental duties, such as assisting with basic education. In fact, it is expressly prohibited by law.

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