

Improving Public Service Quality: Optimalization Strategies for Sub-District Government Office in Ambon City

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Abstract: This research focuses on optimizing public service quality provided by the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Government Office in Ambon City. A descriptive approach with qualitative and quantitative analysis techniques was utilized for the study. The study indicates that the uniform treatment of public service reporting is the most dominant factor affecting the optimization of public service quality. To achieve optimal public service quality, it is necessary to prioritize the strengthening and improvement of both qualitative and quantitative aspects of public service optimization at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Government Office. The research findings have implications for improving public services in sub-district government offices by implementing prioritized qualitative and quantitative strategies to achieve optimal public service quality. The study proposes several strategies for improving public service quality in sub-district government offices, aiming to enhance the quality of public services provided.

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INTRODUCTION

Service activities cannot be separated from human life, as services are needed in all aspects of life. The same goes for public services provided by government officials. The provision of public services is the state's effort to fulfill the basic needs and civil rights of every citizen for goods, services, and administrative services provided by public service providers (Azfar et al., 2018; Bertot et al., 2016; Lindgren et al., 2019). The improvement of the quality of public services provided by government agencies is now increasingly emerging, even becoming a demand from the public.

Local governments, in carrying out the monopoly of public services as regulators (rule government), must change their mindset and adjust their performance to the goal of granting regional autonomy, which is to provide and improve services that satisfy the public (Gao et al., 2019; Pratama & Kalalinggi, 2019). To achieve good governance, in providing public services, local governments must also provide broad opportunities for citizens and communities to access public services based on principles of equality, transparency, accountability, justice, and legal certainty.

The provision of quality public services is a fundamental function of the government that ensures citizens can carry out their lives properly (Davis & Rhodes, 2020; Gascó, 2017). Therefore, the government should adopt a customer-driven paradigm that prioritizes the interests of society in providing services to the wider public. This paradigm requires the government to prepare all necessary tools systematically to

fulfill it, from inputs-process-output, making them tangible, reliable, responsive, secure, and empathetic in their implementation (Bertola & Teunissen, 2018). However, the development of the environment is always changing rapidly and sometimes uncertain, which requires clear, concise, and adaptive rules to guide it.

To achieve quality public services, various aspects need to be considered, such as service reliability, human resource development, regional development, satisfaction levels, marketing quality, measuring public services, service excellence, and public service reform (Azfar et al., 2018; Sousa et al., 2019). These aspects are crucial for the government to improve the quality of services provided to the public (van Helden & Uddin, 2016). For instance, service reliability ensures that public services are delivered consistently and efficiently, while human resource development ensures that government employees have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide quality services.

Moreover, the government's commitment to providing quality public services should be based on democratic principles and ethical responsibility (Shim & Faerman, 2017). The government is expected to prioritize service quality and procedures to ensure that citizens' needs and expectations are met (Mandeli, 2016). However, studies have shown that the knowledge of the job field among government employees is still low, which may hinder the government's efforts to improve public services (Kuziemska & Misuraca, 2020). Therefore, the government needs to invest in training and development programs to enhance employees' knowledge and skills to provide quality public services.

As a service provider to the public, the government has a responsibility to ensure that its services are of high quality and meet the needs of the public. In today's era of globalization, the competition for providing quality services has intensified, making it increasingly important for government bureaucrats to ensure that they provide the best possible services to the public (Reddick et al., 2020). However, in reality, complaints related to bureaucracy government services by officials are often heard. Some of the most common issues include slowing down the process of granting permits, finding various excuses, being too busy to respond, and using ambiguous language like "being processed" to slow things down. These problems not only delay services, but also create frustration among the public.

To address these issues, various improvements and corrective measures have been implemented in different regions, including the city of Ambon (Halimatusa'diyah, 2020). For example, the government has established public service standards in accordance with the agreement between government officials and the public. These standards cover the entire service delivery process, including input, process, output, and outcome. By implementing such standards, government officials can ensure that they provide services that are not only of high quality but also meet the needs and expectations of the public. Moreover, these standards help to create a culture of accountability among government officials, which is essential for the provision of quality services.

Despite the implementation of these improvements and corrective measures, there are still challenges that need to be addressed. For instance, the existing human resources in the government sector are relatively insufficient, and there has not been much change

in the cultural background, mindset, and behavior patterns among bureaucrats in the region. These challenges make it difficult to achieve the desired outcomes in the provision of public services. Therefore, it is important for the government to invest in the training and development of its human resources to ensure that they have the necessary skills and knowledge to provide quality services to the public. Additionally, the government should foster a culture of continuous improvement to ensure that its services are always evolving to meet the changing needs of the public.

Based on the above description, ideally, the services provided by the officials of the Teluk Ambon Sub-district Office in Ambon City should be in accordance with the established procedures, including having skilled technicians, providing adequate recording equipment, maximizing internet networks, and providing timely service to the public. In terms of the issuance of e-ID cards, the authority should be delegated to the relevant sub-district office in the process of providing services to the public. This is because, so far, full authority has not been granted in administrative service matters, resulting in public complaints always arising during the process of obtaining documents. This sub-district office also serves the public from four other sub-districts in the city of Ambon in terms of recording e-ID cards, considering that the number of officials in Teluk Ambon Sub-district Office is not proportional to the population in that sub-district.

However, according to the Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), the Teluk Ambon Sub-district Office in Ambon City is a government institution serving public interests. Therefore, this sub-district office as a public organization in the current reform era is not exempt from various demands of the public. Although many positive expectations accompany the implementation of this policy, the reality of public service delivery by government officials in this sub-district has not yet shown good and optimal conditions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study adopts a mixed-method approach, both qualitative and quantitative (Baranik et al., 2018; Morse, 2016). Quantitative data collection is carried out through questionnaires distributed to visitors of the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office. Respondents fill out the questionnaire about their perceptions of the quality of public services provided by the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office. The quantitative data obtained from the questionnaire is analyzed using descriptive statistics to determine the level of satisfaction and perception of respondents regarding the quality of public services at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office.

Qualitative data collection is carried out through in-depth interviews (Sagena et al., 2023), with employees and leaders of the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office. The interviews are conducted to obtain more detailed information about the factors that influence the quality of public services at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office. The qualitative data obtained from the interviews are analyzed using content analysis techniques to find the main themes that emerge from the interviews.

The results of the quantitative and qualitative data analysis are combined to provide a more complete understanding of the quality of public services at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office. Quantitative data is used to provide an overview of respondents'

perceptions of the quality of public services, while qualitative data is used to explain the factors that influence the quality of public services.

The integrated data results are analyzed and interpreted to conclude the factors that influence the quality of public services at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office and provide recommendations for optimizing the quality of public services there.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Based on the results of a study on the optimization of public service quality at the Teluk Ambon Sub-district Office in Ambon City, it appears that the respondents' tangible responses to the availability of computerized administration recording tools were 45% strongly agree and 55% agree. The availability of a comfortable waiting room facility received 40% strongly agree and 60% agree responses. The availability of information for customers in services received 50% strongly agree and 50% agree responses. In terms of empathy, the firm and caring attitude of the sub-district head in providing services received 35% strongly agree and 65% agree responses.

The firm and caring attitude of employees in providing services received 25% strongly agree and 75% agree responses. The community felt comfortable during service delivery, with 35% strongly agree, 50% agree, 5% disagree, 5% somewhat disagree, and 5% strongly disagree. Regarding reliability, the sub-district head had positive expectations in serving the community, with 45% strongly agree, 40% agree, 5% disagree, 5% somewhat disagree, and 5% strongly disagree. The sub-district employees had positive expectations in serving the community, with 50% strongly agree and 50% agree. There was satisfaction from the community regarding the sub-district head's service, with 30% strongly agree, 45% agree, 15% disagree, and 10% somewhat disagree.

There was satisfaction from the community regarding the employees' service, with 25% strongly agree, 50% agree, 15% disagree, and 10% somewhat disagree. In terms of responsiveness, the sub-district head and employees were able to help provide services quickly and accurately, with 25% strongly agree, 50% agree, and 15% disagree. The sub-district head and employees were responsive to customer requests, with 45% strongly agree and 55% agree. The sub-district head and employees were responsive to customer desires, with 50% strongly agree and 50% agree. The sub-district head should be sincere in serving the community, with 40% strongly agree and 60% agree.

The sub-district employees should be sincere in serving the community, with 30% strongly agree and 70% agree. In terms of assurance, the sub-district head provided a time guarantee in serving the community, with 40% strongly agree and 60% agree. The sub-district employees were friendly and polite in serving the community, with 45% strongly agree and 55% agree. This shows that the sub-district officials have optimized their performance in serving the community. From the quantitatively outlined results of the study above, it is evident that the most prominent dimension is physical appearance and assurance, with achievement percentage reaching the highest standard percentage of 100%. This indicates that the optimization of service quality in these two dimensions has produced quality service results and is supported by the other three dimensions of empathy, reliability, and responsiveness, which also achieved high percentage levels,

with the three dimensions falling within the percentage range of 81-100%. This is a result that proves the successful and quantifiable optimization of service quality at the Teluk Ambon Sub-district Office in Ambon City.

Assessment and Decision Making

Assessment in optimizing public services is crucial data information in decision making from a scientific perspective, which is focused on determining certain priorities based on predetermined standards as a fixed certainty that is valuable and grounded in percentile research data (Ioannou et al., 2017; Love & Ahiaga-Dagbui, 2018). Thus, based on the percentile data outlined, assessment and decision making are carried out in determining priorities in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City based on assessments according to the percentage of Capaian Rata-Rata (CRR) and sociometrically according to the Index of Choice Status (ISP), as seen in the table below.

The assessment and decision making based on the table above are elaborated in detail as follows:

1. Optimization of public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City in the form of Tangibles is realized with a CRR of 100%, which is assessed as excellent and has reached the highest percentage limit.
2. Optimization of public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City in the form of Empathy is realized with a CRR of 95%, which is assessed as excellent, and the final decision taken is to strengthen it with an ISP of 0.750, priority II.
3. Optimization of public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City in the form of Reliability with a CRR of 86.25%, which is assessed as excellent, and the final decision taken is to strengthen it with an ISP of 0.622, priority I.
4. Optimization of public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City in the form of Responsiveness with a CRR of 95%, which is assessed as excellent, and the final decision taken is to improve it with an ISP of 0.750, priority II.
5. Optimization of public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City in terms of justice, which is realized with a CRR of 100%, which is assessed as excellent and has reached the highest percentage limit.

From the assessment and decision-making in determining priorities for optimizing public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City, the CRR and ISP values are relatively aligned with the probability of strengthening priorities from the smallest to the largest percentage, but determined based on partial evaluation with a specific focus on ISP values as a basis for decision making in determining priorities for optimizing public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City.

Factors that determine the optimization of the quality of public services

The factors that determine the optimization of the quality of public services, namely socialization, complaints, supervision, and reporting which are a focused part of Teluk Ambon District, Ambon City, are described according to the results of the following study.

Public Service Socialization

In the implementation of public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City, socialization is one of the important things and is carried out in a structured and systematic manner. Socialization notification starts from the RT and RW levels, then

carried out at the village, sub-district, and customary village levels. After that, the location for the socialization is determined. Socialization is carried out in accordance with the program of each relevant agency and involves competent parties.

The socialization process is carried out in accordance with the socialization level in the government hierarchy and is carried out in accordance with the rules (Gecas, 2017). This is aimed at ensuring that socialization can be known, followed, and implemented well by the community. In addition, socialization is also carried out by officers who have been socialized on service standards. This is done so that each village, customary village, and sub-district can socialize to the community every day.

Service standard socialization has reached every village, customary village, and sub-district in Teluk Ambon Sub-District, Ambon City. In the socialization, officers present about free ambulance services, e-ID cards, and others. So that the community can know what services are available in Teluk Ambon Sub-District.

In addition, Teluk Ambon Sub-District also attaches service stickers in villages, sub-districts, customary villages, and in the sub-district about what services they provide to the community. There is also a suggestion box that is opened every Friday to see what suggestions the community has regarding public services. However, unfortunately, the suggestion box is always empty, so further efforts are needed to motivate the community to provide feedback on public services in Teluk Ambon Sub-District.

From interviews with informants, it appears that Teluk Ambon Sub-District has carried out public service standard socialization well. However, it should be remembered that socialization is not a one-way thing, but must be continuously carried out so that the community can continue to get the latest information about public services. Therefore, there is a need for more active efforts to educate the community about the public services available in Teluk Ambon Sub-District.

Handling Complaints in Public Service

Good public service should have a professional attitude and behavior in carrying out their service tasks. This is very important because public service is a service provided by the government to the community (Ricucci & Van Ryzin, 2017; Schwarz et al., 2016). Good public service should also be able to overcome any problems that occur within their service scope. Therefore, every complaint submitted by the community must be considered and responded to properly by the service officers. In Teluk Ambon District, Ambon City, complaints related to services always receive attention and continuous efforts are made to resolve them and respond to the community's complaints according to their demands for needed services.

According to information obtained from an interview with Mrs. E.W., the District Head, on August 4, 2022, complaints related to services in Teluk Ambon District, Ambon City, are always handled quickly and accurately. This is because service officers are directly supervised by the ombudsman and the Mayor, who are very strict and disciplined in serving the community. If there are violations by service officers in the district, village, urban village or neighborhood, and if there are complaints, they must be resolved quickly and accurately. The complaint resolution time is no more than two working hours, so that the service officers are truly optimal in resolving community complaints.

However, there are obstacles in public services in Wayame Village, especially related to the e-ID card printing process at the Civil Registry office. Mr. K.M., the General Secretary of Wayame Village, stated that there are always complaints from the community about delays in printing e-ID cards due to printing problems and a lack of blanks from the central government. The lengthy e-ID card printing process is a problem for the community because they have to wait for months to receive their e-ID cards. Complaints related to this matter are also often received by the district and village/urban village authorities.

The e-ID card delivery procedure is also very lengthy after being printed by the Civil Registry office. Officers will deliver the e-ID cards to the respective village/urban village and hand them over to the local neighbourhood officials, where the officials will distribute them to community members who have e-ID cards. This takes quite a long time, adding to the inconvenience for the community. Nevertheless, the district and village/urban village authorities still receive complaints from the community regarding this issue and strive to resolve it as soon as possible.

Supervision of Public Services

Effective and quality public services are one of the main goals of local governments (Manoharan & Ingrams, 2018). However, there are various issues related to service rights that have not met the expectations of all parties, both from the general public and from the government itself. One effort to address this is by monitoring the implementation of public services. The monitoring has had a positive impact on the employees of Teluk Ambon District, Ambon City in optimizing the services provided to the public, and the public does not experience difficulties in handling their affairs.

There are several factors that affect the optimization of public services in Teluk Ambon District, Ambon City. First, the availability of service human resources in the district who are capable of realizing it well. The number of human resources in the Teluk Ambon District office has met the standards, and training and invitations for the district head have been conducted. However, the district does not have its own website and still uses the city website. In addition, there are malfunctioning typewriters.

Nevertheless, the monitoring of the service process in Teluk Ambon District has resulted in all intended matters running smoothly in accordance with the regulations. This is also supported by educated and trained employee human resources related to the services provided. However, there are still some things that need to be considered by the Ambon City government in optimizing public services in Teluk Ambon District, such as the delegation of authority from the city government to the district and the welfare of employees that is not always taken into account.

Reporting of Public Service Results

Reporting of public service results is structured and hierarchical, starting from the smallest unit such as the Teluk Ambon Sub-district Office. Reporting is done starting from sections reporting to section heads (Kasie) and then continued to the Sub-district head as the highest authority in the Sub-district Office. These reports are summarized and reported periodically to Ambon City. The purpose of this reporting system is to improve

the quality of public services and to strengthen the secretaries and officials in each Work Unit of the Regional Device (SKPD) within the scope of the Ambon City government.

Since 2016, the Ambon City government has implemented a socialization of the People's Online Aspiration and Complaint Service (LAPOR) system to support the creation of quality public services. Reporting is done every week, every month, every quarter, every semester, and every year in the form of the Annual Activity Report (LAKIP). Performance evaluations are also carried out routinely to monitor the quality of public services provided by the officials of the Teluk Ambon Sub-district Government Office.

Reporting and performance evaluations are also carried out at the Village/Urban Village level. Performance evaluations are carried out by the Village Head every month and reported to the Teluk Ambon Sub-district Government Office in Ambon City. There are rewards for good Sub-district Heads and punishments (reprimands and legal sanctions) for Sub-district Heads who have problems according to the level of mistakes made. Although there are no incentives for villages because they have village funds, everyone is responsible for their duties and helps their fellow officials if needed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that the optimization of public service quality at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office in Ambon City can be achieved through the affirmation and strengthening of factors such as tangibles, empathy, reliability, responsiveness, and assurance that have a positive qualitative and quantitative contribution. Factors such as socialization, public complaints, supervision, and reporting of public services also contribute to the optimization of public service quality, with reporting of public services being the most dominant factor.

The research findings have implications for the strengthening of public services both qualitatively and quantitatively in accordance with the priorities set in achieving the optimization of public service quality at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office in Ambon City. The suggestions made are to deepen the understanding of the concept of optimizing public service theory in detail and develop it according to procedural and scientific development demands, which can benefit the operationalization in the optimization process with the results that can be proven for the development of empirical science and assured as scientific facts that can be accountable for their truth and validity. Practical suggestions include using the findings as a reference in designing a systematic and more focused operational framework for optimizing public service quality at the Teluk Ambon Sub-District Office in Ambon City.

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