

## Implementation of Servant Leadership and Its Impact on Service Quality

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### Abstract

*This study aims to examine the impact of the implementation of servant leadership on service quality at the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency. It used a quantitative approach and descriptive statistics analysis. The sample was all employees and service users (communities) at Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency. The data were collected through observations, questionnaires, and documentation. The results show that the servant leadership has not been properly implemented causing slow, less assured, and less responsive services at Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency.*

### Keywords

leadership; servant leadership; service; service quality



## I. Introduction

The Regional Autonomy Policy through Law Number 22 of 1999 concerning Regional Government amended by Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government and then amended by Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government sets District/City as the center of the autonomy in Indonesia. This policy is intended to bring the government closer to the community, one of which is the provision of public services. Concerning public services, in accordance with Article 1 Paragraph (1) of Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, public service is defined as an activity or series of activities to meet the needs of goods, services, and/or administrative services provided by public service providers for each individual in accordance with the applicable law.

This study concerns public services in Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency (DUKCAPIL). This agency focuses on public services ranging from population administration, health, education, and others. It is in line with the 1945 Constitution which has mandated the state to fulfill the basic needs of each citizen. Therefore, the fulfillment of public services has been regulated by the government to meet the basic needs and welfare of the community. As a public institution, Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency are required to provide good performance in terms of accountability, responsiveness, service orientation, efficiency, service friendliness, and service facilities as regulated in the law to meet community needs.

In Indonesia, public services aim to meet people's needs. It is not easy to realize it considering the field condition. The performance of government bureaucratic services does not change significantly after the reform and even some bureaucratic officials still show low accountability and less responsiveness and efficiency in providing public services (Ramdhani, 2015). The civil registration service in this country still roots in the Dutch colonial rule or less transparency to the public in general (Scott, 2002). The low performance of the government bureaucracy in providing public services can at least be observed from the high number of service cases reported in the mass media (Dwiyanto, 2006). In general, this

country does not have specific institutions that can seriously deal with citizen complaints regarding unfair or inefficient public services (Kristiansen et al., 2009).

The public sector is under pressure to demonstrate customer-oriented service and continuous performance improvement (Ramseook-Munhurrin, Lukea-Bhiwajee, & Naidoo, 2010). Service quality has been conceptualized as the difference between perceived service performance and expected service level (Donthu & Yoo, 1998). Customers value services by comparing the perceived services and the expected services (Berry, Zeithaml, & Parasuraman, 1990; Donthu & Yoo, 1998; Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1994). This statement creates a gap in services, particularly related to quality. Customers understand that the perceived services are the result of the utilization of the available resource or technical quality (Kang & James, 2004). This study was conducted at Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency. The services provided by this agency are very broad including administrative services starting from birth to death. Thus, this agency has to provide maximum service in accordance with the community's expectations.

Indeed, the community may have different expectations regarding public service. Hence, the agency has to provide quality service to produce a similar perception of the service from the community. A service provider or in this case, Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency needs to consider many aspects, including reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and physical appearance. They become a measure for the community as service users so that maintaining and improving the quality of services in DUKCAPIL are important. Providing consistently good quality service is not easy (Zeithaml, Berry, & Parasuraman, 1988).

The high expectations of the community require DUKCAPIL to move and act. It can be realized by leaders who support the service performance of the subordinates. Servant leadership emphasizes personal integrity and serving others, including employees, customers, and society (Liden, Wayne, Zhao, & Henderson, 2008). Servant leaders encourage, motivate, inspire, and encourage their employees to achieve service excellence (Koyuncu, J. Burke, Astakhova, Eren, & Cetin, 2014). They teach employees appropriate ways to provide better service and guide them with their behavior. Servant leaders lead their employees by serving. Thus, their employees can provide better service to customers. Servant leadership affects employee performance and contributes to organizational performance (Kusluvan & Eren, 2008).

The description above shows that the quality of service can be felt by the service users of the community so that the service provider needs to consider and support it. This study aims to examine the impact of the implementation of servant leadership on service quality in the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency. In other words, this study evaluates the quality of service at the public office that implements servant leadership.

## **II. Review of Literature**

### **2.1 Servant Leadership**

Servant leadership is a popular concept in the list of leadership styles (Russell & Stone, 2002). It becomes a new research field for leadership scholars (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Even, it has received attention in the popular news media, but limited empirical research exists to support the theory (Farling, Stone, & Winston, 1999). Servant leadership is based on the premise that to bring out the best in the employees, leaders rely on one-on-one communication to understand the skills, needs, wants, goals, and potential of those individuals (Liden et al., 2008).

The concept of servant leadership as formulated by Robert Greenleaf (1977) in the modern era, has received high attention in the contemporary leadership field (Stone, Russell, & Patterson, 2004). Leadership remains a relatively mysterious concept even though it has been studied for decades (Gupta, McDaniel, & Herath, 2005). From traits to behavioral theories, nothing fully explains the types of leaders and the nature of their leadership interactions (Melchar & Bosco, 2010). Specifically, leadership is identified as a key success of service companies due to the importance of cooperation, learning, and customer relationships in this setting (Douglas & Fredendall, 2004; Gupta et al., 2005; Moreno, Morales, & Montes, 2005; Politis, 2003).

Servant leadership emphasizes personal integrity and serving others, including employees, customers, and society (Liden et al., 2008). Servant leaders encourage, motivate, inspire, and enable their employees to achieve service excellence (Koyuncu et al., 2014). They teach them appropriate ways to provide better service and guide them with their behavior. Servant leaders lead their employees by serving to enable their followers to provide better service to customers. Servant leadership affects employee performance and contributes to organizational performance (Kusluvan & Eren, 2008).

According to Greenleaf, leadership must meet the needs of others (Stone et al., 2004). Servant leadership focuses on forming strong long-term relationships with employees (Liden et al., 2008). Servant leadership shows promise as a way to build trust with employees, customers, and the community. Servant leaders play service roles in the organization beyond self-interest (Van Dierendonck, 2011).

## 2.2 Service Quality

Service quality is widely seen as a cognitive evaluation of the performance of a service or service provider thus far (Brady & Cronin Jr, 2001). Service quality research focuses on cognitive dimensions and quality factors or attributes associated with service offers in defining, conceptualizing, and measuring service quality (Edvardsson, 2005). The key to remaining competitive and surviving in the market is the firm's ability to provide products and service tailored to meet the needs of its customers (Kusumadewi, 2019). Defining service quality factors in public services requires special attention to the specific nature of services (Armistead & Pettigrew, 2008). Identifying the relative importance of one factor over another can be complex because different stakeholders might make judgments on service quality and also reconcile individual and collective needs. There is wide debate about the extent to which targeting and the audit and inspection approaches lead to improved quality of public services (Bouckaert & Peters 2002; Boyne, Day & Walker, 2002; van Thiel & Leeuw, 2002). If resources are limited, concentration on certain targets can lead to poor performance in others (Armistead & Pettigrew, 2008). Satisfaction becomes an expectation after a purchase and becomes the basis for fulfillment before reaching customer participation. (Fadhillah, A. et al. 2021).

Commonly, it occurs when the focus on increasing inputs and reducing costs results in rushed, fragmented, or incomplete service provision. In a complex policy environment, it can also lead to undesirable consequences which then need to be addressed as a result of initial and successive interventions (Jessop, 2000). This phenomenon can lead to a blurring of the initial focus for services and inevitable for inefficient and ineffective service deliveries. Physical quality relates to real aspects of services (Kang & James, 2004). Service experiences can generate cognitive and emotional responses resulting in forming the basis for perceived service quality (Edvardsson, 2005). Positive emotions can lead to positive word of mouth, while negative emotions can lead to complaints. The result shows that customer loyalty can be formed from the commitment of the management of business organizations to provide the best for consumers, especially related to product quality, competitive prices, and satisfying services (Fortunata, 2020).

## 2.3 Relationship between Servant Leadership and Service Quality

Servant leaders play service roles in the organization beyond self-interest (Van Dierendonck, 2011). Leaders who are committed to service quality will show visible leadership to ensure employee acceptance of service quality initiatives (Ahmed & Parasuraman, 1994). Providing excellent service requires a certain style of leadership called servant leadership because servant leaders can inspire and motivate the employees (Berry, Parasuraman, & Zeithaml, 1994). They believe in individuals' capacity; view their roles as guidelines and standards of excellence; provide tools and freedom to do; invest a lot of personal energy in training; and challenge, inspire, and of course listen to their employees. Quality service covers a function of leadership, good internal communication, and team performance (Fletcher, 1999). Teamwork, employee research, and servant leadership are important factors in an organization's emotional readiness to provide quality service (Berry et al., 1994). Without motivating vision, direction, inspiration, and support, direct investment in improving services (for example, technology, systems, training, and research) will not provide more benefits. The literature shows that leadership has a positive impact on service quality as evidenced by the findings of this study in which there is a strong positive linear correlation between leadership practices and service quality (Schalkwyk, Davis, & Pellissier, 2013).

## III. Research Methods

This study used a quantitative approach and descriptive statistics analysis. The sample was employees and service users (community) at Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency. Data were collected through observations, questionnaires, and documentation. The questionnaire used a Likert scale with categories of strongly agree to strongly disagree. This study used two variables consisting of servant leadership and service quality. Both variables have dimensions that have been tested through measures of servant leadership that have been developed and validated (Liden et al., 2008) and service quality (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics based on the mean value.

## IV. Discussion

### 4.1 Results

This study presents the results of descriptive statistics from the SPSS program including validity, reliability, and regression.

#### a. Results of Validity and Reliability

**Table 1.** Item-Total Statistics of Servant Leadership Variable

	Scale Mean if Item Deleted	Scale Variance if Item Deleted	Corrected Item-Total Correlation	Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted
Q01	104.4333	305.013	.403	.936
Q02	103.5333	310.947	.644	.933
Q03	103.6333	314.447	.429	.934
Q04	103.5000	319.569	.370	.935
Q05	103.4000	310.800	.481	.934
Q06	103.6667	291.471	.823	.929
Q07	103.4333	290.323	.759	.930
Q08	103.8333	289.730	.772	.930

Q09	102.8333	321.040	.324	.935
Q10	102.7667	321.909	.321	.935
Q011	102.9667	311.206	.571	.933
Q12	103.3333	293.540	.677	.931
Q13	103.0000	310.621	.683	.932
Q14	103.2667	317.582	.387	.935
Q15	103.1333	319.430	.437	.935
Q16	104.5333	309.292	.306	.938
Q17	103.8667	287.361	.862	.928
Q18	103.8667	289.154	.837	.929
Q19	103.5667	293.013	.795	.930
Q20	102.9667	320.309	.338	.935
Q21	103.6667	304.161	.557	.933
Q22	103.9000	307.817	.425	.935
Q23	104.5000	291.707	.679	.931
Q24	103.0667	308.961	.724	.932
Q25	102.9000	306.369	.611	.932
Q26	102.8333	313.109	.556	.933
Q27	103.3333	310.920	.475	.934
Q28	103.3667	290.723	.733	.930

Source: Result of Descriptive Statistics Using SPSS, 2020.

The table above showed that all items in the questionnaire were considered valid and reliable as they met the predetermined requirement. The result of the service quality variable can be seen below.

**Table 2.** Item-Total Statistics of Service Quality Variable

	<b>Scale Mean if Item Deleted</b>	<b>Scale Variance if Item Deleted</b>	<b>Corrected Item-Total Correlation</b>	<b>Cronbach's Alpha if Item Deleted</b>
Q29	60.3000	77.252	.640	.904
Q30	60.7000	72.493	.585	.903
Q31	60.7000	71.872	.556	.905
Q32	60.3333	76.437	.741	.902
Q33	61.1000	71.334	.454	.912
Q34	61.2667	65.789	.802	.895
Q35	60.4667	76.051	.397	.909
Q36	60.5000	75.983	.767	.901
Q37	61.2000	67.890	.751	.897
Q38	60.5667	75.289	.714	.901
Q39	60.6667	77.609	.444	.907
Q40	61.0000	70.000	.649	.901
Q41	61.0000	70.828	.672	.900
Q42	60.8667	74.189	.647	.901
Q43	60.3000	77.528	.608	.904
Q44	60.5333	76.878	.816	.902

Source: Result of Descriptive Statistics Using SPSS, 2020.



The results of validity and reliability testing of the service quality variable presented in the table above indicate that all items were considered valid and reliable because they met the specified requirement. The validity is seen from the Corrected Item-Total Correlation which is  $> 0.3$ , while the reliability is seen from Cronbach's Alpha  $> 0.7$ .

### b. Results of Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics testing aims to describe the characteristics of the variables. The respondent's responses and perceptions are seen from the mean value. The results of descriptive statistics testing can be seen in the following table.

<b>Item</b>	<b>Statements</b>	<b>N</b>	<b>Mean</b>
Q01	I will ask for help from my leader if I have personal problems	30	<b>2.8667</b>
Q02	My leader cares about my well-being	30	3.7667
Q03	My leader needs time to talk to me privately	30	3.6667
Q04	My leader can recognize when I'm down without asking me	30	3.8000
Q05	My leader emphasized the importance of giving back to the institution	30	3.9000
Q06	My leader is always interested in helping people in this institution	30	3.6333
Q07	My leader is involved in institutional activities	30	3.8667
Q08	My leader encourages me to be a volunteer in this institution	30	3.4667
Q09	My leader can tell if there is a problem	30	<b>4.4667</b>
Q10	My leaders can effectively think about complex problems	30	4.5333
Q11	My leaders have a thorough understanding of this institution and its goals	30	4.3333
Q12	My leaders can solve work problems with new or creative ideas	30	3.9667
Q13	My leader gives me the responsibility to make important decisions about my job	30	4.3000
Q14	The leader encourages me to handle important job decisions by myself	30	4.0333
Q15	My leader gives me the freedom to handle difficult situations in the way I feel is best	30	4.1667
Q16	When I have to make important decisions at work, I don't need to consult my leader first	30	<b>2.7667</b>
Q17	My leader prioritize my career development	30	3.4333
Q18	My leader is interested in ensuring that I achieve my career goals	30	3.4333
Q19	My leader provides me with work experience that allows me to develop new skills.	30	3.7333
Q20	My leader wants to know about my career goals	30	4.3333
Q21	My leader seems to care more about my success than his own success	30	3.6333
Q22	My leader puts my best interests before his own	30	3.4000
Q23	My leader sacrifices his own interests to meet my needs	30	<b>2.8000</b>
Q24	My leader did what he could to make my job easier	30	4.2333
Q25	My leader has high ethical standards	30	4.4000
Q26	My leader is always honest	30	<b>4.4667</b>
Q27	My leader will not compromise ethical principles to achieve success	30	3.9667
Q28	My leader values honesty more than profit	30	3.9333

Source: Results of Statistics Descriptive Using SPSS, 2020

Table 3 shows that Q09 and Q26 have the highest mean values of 4.46 meaning that leaders in the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency always know whether there are any problems in their work environment. However, the mean values of Q16, Q23, and Q1 indicate that leaders in this agency always ask employees to consult with them in making decisions; they are not fully ready to sacrifice for the sake of their subordinates; and they are less helpful regarding their subordinates' problems.

Then, the results of the descriptive statistics of the service quality variable are presented in the following table:

**Table 4.** Results of Descriptive Statistics of Service Quality Variable

Item	Statements	N	Mean
Q29	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency have the ability to provide services to the community	30	<b>4.4667</b>
Q30	Services of Population and Civil Registration Agency are reliable	30	4.0667
Q31	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency provide accurate services	30	4.0667
Q32	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency are willing to help the community	30	4.4333
Q33	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency are responsive	30	<b>3.6667</b>
Q34	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency provide fast services	30	<b>3.5000</b>
Q35	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency have sufficient knowledge of services	30	4.3000
Q36	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency provide services politely	30	4.2667
Q37	Services of Population and Civil Registration Agency are assured	30	<b>3.5667</b>
Q38	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency show their full attention in serving the community	30	4.2000
Q39	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency provides special attention to services	30	4.1000
Q40	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency feel show empathy to the community	30	<b>3.7667</b>
Q41	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency have a good physical appearance	30	<b>3.7667</b>
Q42	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency use sufficient equipment	30	<b>3.9000</b>
Q43	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency wear uniform in providing services	30	<b>4.4667</b>
Q44	Employees of Population and Civil Registration Agency are supported by communication devices in providing services	30	4.2333

Source: Results of Statistics Descriptive Using SPSS, 2020.

The results of the descriptive statistics presented in the table above show that the service quality variable is highly determined by Q29 and Q43. Indeed, all employees wear a uniform in providing services to the community, but they show slow, less responsive, and less assured services as showed by items Q34, Q37, and Q33.

## 4.2 Discussion

Both public and private services experienced a critical period in the 1990s. Public sector organizations or local governments, in particular, did not respond to pressure to continuously improve their services (Donnelly, Wisniewski, Dalrymple, & Curry, 1995). It makes the community perceive negative images of public services. Therefore, the government is required to improve service quality.

Quality service can be achieved with a commitment from the service provider. In this case, the service provider is the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency. The services provided to the community include all the needs of population administration. The results of this study indicate that the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency still show some weaknesses in providing public services. It is evidenced by the results of the descriptive analysis that employees still provide slow, less assured, and less responsive services.

The results of the descriptive analysis of the quality of the Population and Civil Registration Agency show that the employee are less responsive. Therefore, it makes the community considers that the services provided by this agency are less assured. It means that there is no guarantee of quality service. However, the strengths of the services in this agency cover the employee's ability to provide services to the community and even all of the employees wear uniforms during working hours. It indicates that this agency considers physical appearance important in providing services.

Besides, the results of this study also reveal the problem of leadership in the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency concerning the leaders' behavior in supporting the provision of quality services. This study focuses on servant leadership. Servant leadership in this study is intended as leadership behavior in providing services, both to employees and to services for the community. The results indicate that leader in this agency concern and follow developments in their work environment. This means that the leader actively pays attention to employees' problems both general and personal.

Moreover, leaders in Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency always ask their employees to consult with them in making decisions. They do not make sacrifices to fulfill the interests of their employees and they are less helpful when their employees experience personal problems. These results indicate that leaders are very selective in giving authority to subordinates to make decisions. They expect that all decisions must be consulted with them. It can be concluded that the leaders in Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency have not shown the character of services of servant leadership as they do not give freedom to subordinates in decision making and do not help them in dealing with personal problems.

This condition highly affects the services to the community. Leadership behavior that does not support subordinates in providing services can affect the service provided by employees to the community. It can be observed from the community's complaint of slow, less assured, and less responsive services provided. These conditions can be improved through servant leadership. Servant leadership emphasizes service character, but it has not been seen in the leader in this agency. It means leadership can affect the quality of service provided by employees. Servant leadership also emphasizes personal integrity and serving others, including employees, customers, and society (Liden et al., 2008). Servant leadership has an impact on employee performance and it contributes to organizational performance (Kusluvan & Eren, 2008). Servant leaders encourage, motivate, inspire, and enable their employees to achieve service excellence (Koyuncu et al., 2014). They teach employees proper ways to provide better service and guide them with their behavior. Servant leaders play service roles in the organization beyond self-interest (Van Dierendonck, 2011).



Based on the elaboration above, the results of this study indicate that the quality of services provided by the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency is less optimal because it still receives complaints from the public. This is an impact of the leadership roles, especially the character of servant leadership in which leaders do not support the subordinates, especially in decision making and problem-solving. This study has proven that leaders' supports in service delivery affect the quality of services provided by employees, especially in government institutions.

## V. Conclusion

Based on the results of the study, it can be concluded that the Morowali Population and Civil Registration Agency still provides slow, less assured, and less responsive services to the community. It means that the service quality of employees in providing population administration services is not optimal. It can be caused by a leadership style that has not shown servant leadership character, especially attention to subordinates' personal issues and trust in subordinates in making strategic decisions related to task implementation. This condition hampers the acceleration in providing effective services to the community.

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