
Social Interaction and Public Service: The Role of Social Dynamics in Service Quality

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Received: June 11, 2023; In Revised: July 29, 2023; Accepted: August 29, 2023

Abstract

This article investigates the role of social dynamics in influencing the quality of public services through analysis of social interactions between public service providers and the community. Through surveys covering various social, demographic, and geographic groups in Indonesia, research findings reveal that positive and responsive social interactions can significantly influence people's perceptions of the quality of public services. Apart from that, community participation in decision-making regarding public services also emerged as an important factor. Social and demographic factors such as age, education, gender, and location of residence also play a role in shaping these perceptions. The results of these findings include the importance of improving communication skills training of public service officers, supporting community participation, and designing responsive policies. This article advocates for a more holistic approach to improving the quality of public services by taking into account various social dynamic factors.

Keywords: *Social Interaction, Public Services, Social Dynamics, Service Quality, Community Participation.*

Introduction

Public services are one of the most crucial aspects of the functioning and stability of governments throughout the world. Good quality public services are not only an indicator of government performance but also have a direct impact on the quality of life of the community (Irfadat, 2021). People who receive quality public services tend to be more satisfied with their government, more involved in democratic processes and have more trust in government institutions (Herdiana & Nurul, 2020). This is where the importance of understanding the factors that influence the quality of public services becomes very relevant.

One factor that is increasingly receiving attention in relation to public services is social interaction. Social interaction refers to the way individuals in society communicate, interact, and influence each other. Positive social interaction can improve coordination between parties involved in providing public services, while negative social interaction can cause conflict and inefficiency in the service process (Azis & Risfaisal, 2021). It is important to recognize that public services are not static entities consisting only of bureaucracy and policy. In contrast, public services are a complex network of social interactions between various stakeholders, including government, society, and the private sector. The social dynamics that occur in this interaction can have a significant impact on the quality of service produced (Salam, 2021).

Public service problems in Indonesia related to social dynamics can be very diverse, considering the cultural, ethnic, geographic, and social diversity in this country. The following are examples of public service problems in Indonesia that are related to social dynamics: Education gaps, unequal access to health services, social and security conflicts, economic inequality, and participation levels (Sulaeman & Wnace, 2020; Alwy & Misnawati, 2019). For

example, the following is data collected in 2022, which illustrates the very worrying education gap in Indonesia:

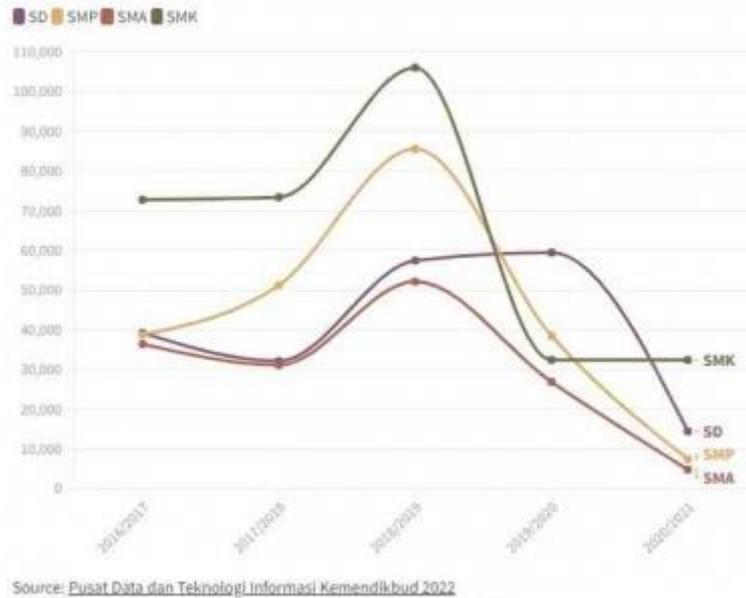


Figure 1. Number of Students Dropping Out of School in Indonesia (2016-2021)

Source: Ministry of Education and Culture Data and Technology Center (2022)

Social dynamics can also influence disparities in educational access. Certain groups, such as ethnic minorities or indigenous peoples, may face cultural or economic barriers that make it difficult for their children to access quality education. Apart from this, social-horizontal conflicts also often occur in Indonesia, at least in the last two decades, as in the data below:

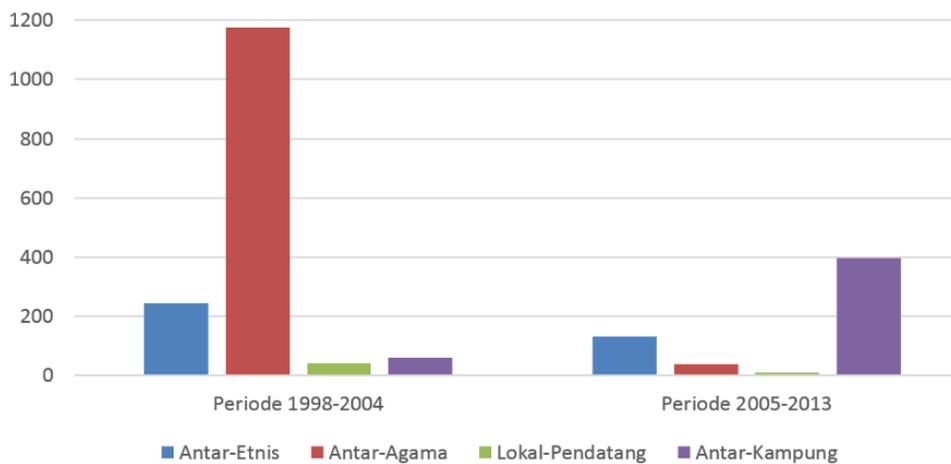


Figure 2. Trends in Social-Horizontal Conflict that occur in Indonesia

Source: Research on Institutional Capacity and Dynamics of Conflict Prevention Case Study of West Kalimantan and West Nusa Tenggara (2015)

Indonesia has a history of complex social conflicts, such as ethnic and religious conflicts. This kind of conflict can disrupt public services, including the provision of education and health. The social dynamics behind the conflict can also affect the stability and quality of public services. Public services are the foundation of any well-functioning country. The quality of public services not only reflects government performance but also has a direct impact on the daily lives of citizens. In Indonesia, a culturally, ethnically, and geographically diverse country,

effective and quality public services are a key element in maintaining stability and progress. Along with the development of society and technology, citizens' expectations of public services are increasing. Citizens not only expect efficient and responsive service but also want to feel they are being treated fairly and receiving quality service. The role of social interaction in the context of public service provision should not be ignored. In fact, this has a big influence on the gender gap that occurs in Indonesia, as shown in the following data:

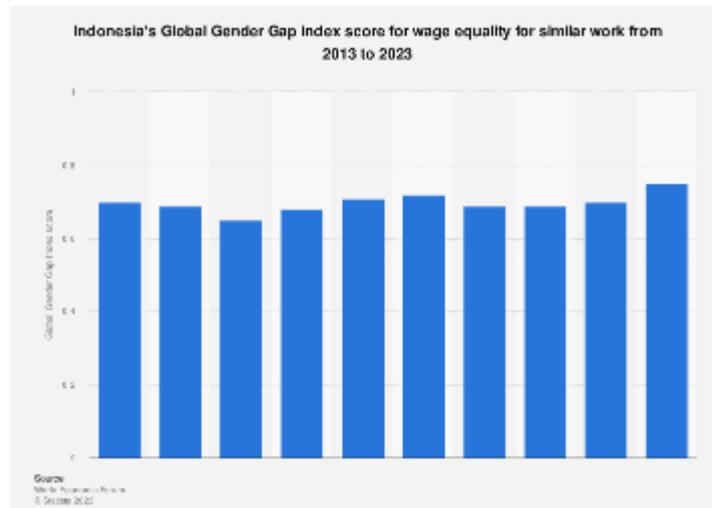


Figure 3. Indonesia: Global Gender Gap Score for Wage Equality
Source: Statista (2023)

Gender inequality is an important problem in social dynamics in Indonesia. This can affect access and quality of public services, especially in terms of reproductive health services and education. Social interaction, as a form of communication and relationships between individuals, groups, and institutions, can influence how public services are delivered and received by the community. Social interaction in the Indonesian context has a significant impact on gender inequality. Gender inequality refers to differences in treatment, opportunities, and rights between men and women in various aspects of life, including in access to education, employment, household decisions, and participation in public policies. Social interactions, including social norms, cultural values, and interpersonal behavior, can influence and even perpetuate gender inequality. In Indonesia, which has more than 17,000 islands and diverse ethnicities and cultures, the dynamics of social interactions are becoming increasingly complex. This interaction includes communication between central and regional governments, between bureaucrats and citizens, as well as between the government and the private sector involved in providing public services (Sarmini, 2019; Kittel et al., 2021).

The following are several ways in which social interactions can influence gender inequality in the Indonesian context: **Social Norms:** Social interactions in Indonesia are often influenced by social norms, which play an important role in limiting gender roles and rights. These norms may expect women to play certain roles in the household and society, such as taking care of the household and children. This can limit women's participation in the workforce or broader decision-making.

Discriminatory Behavior: Social interactions that occur within the family, at work, or in society can create discriminatory behavior against women. This can include sexual harassment, gender stereotyping, or social exclusion of women who try to break traditional norms. **Barriers to Access to Education:** Social interactions in some communities in Indonesia still view higher education for women as unimportant or even inappropriate. This can hinder women's access to quality education and, as a result, limit their opportunities in the world of

work. **Participation in Decision Processes:** Social interactions also influence the level of women's participation in decision-making processes at the household and community levels. Norms that give men a dominant role in family decision-making can lead to inequalities in the influence and control that women have. **Influence of Religion and Culture:** In Indonesia, religion and culture have a big influence on social interactions. Some religious interpretations and cultural traditions may support gender inequality or limit women's roles in society. **Wage Gap and Job Opportunities:** Social interactions also influence the employment sector. Women may face significant wage gaps and limited opportunities to obtain top-level jobs, especially in sectors that are more dominated by men (Anser et al., 2023; Li et al., 2021).

In order to address gender inequality in Indonesia, it is important to understand how social interactions play a role in maintaining unequal norms and behavior. Steps to address gender inequality should include changing social norms, empowering women, eliminating discrimination, and education that promotes gender equality. The main challenge is how to understand the role of social interactions in the Indonesian context, identify the factors that influence these interactions, and evaluate their impact on the quality of public services (de Korvenoaal et al., 2020; Ansell et al., 2021). This is very important in efforts to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of public services, as well as building public trust in government. As Indonesia develops as a developing country that has unique challenges and opportunities in the provision of public services, a better understanding of the role of social interaction in this context will make a significant contribution to improving overall public services.

This article aims to explore the role of social dynamics in the quality of public services. We will investigate how factors such as communication, trust, cooperation, and social conflict influence public services and how these social interactions can be optimized to improve service quality. This research will help fill knowledge gaps in our understanding of the complex relationship between social interactions and public service effectiveness. By understanding the role of social interactions in public services, this article will also provide valuable insights for decision-makers, public service practitioners, and researchers interested in improving the quality of services provided by the public sector. The authors believe that this research will make a significant contribution to our understanding of how public services can be improved through a better understanding of the social dynamics within them.

Literature Review

Social Interaction

Social interaction refers to all forms of communication, contact, and relationships that occur between individuals, groups, or institutions in society. In the context of public services, social interactions can occur between various stakeholders, including government, society, and the private sector. This includes communication, cooperation, conflict, and interpersonal relationships that influence the provision and receipt of public services (Agostino et al., 2021).

Social interaction in the context of public services is a multidimensional phenomenon that has become the focus of attention in recent literature. Research by Sellang et al. (2022) investigates how interpersonal communication between government and society can influence public perceptions of the quality of public services. The results of this research show that open and responsive communication can increase public trust and their perception of public services.

Social Dynamics

Social dynamics refers to changes, interactions, and social processes that occur in society. This includes changes in social values, norms, and behavior, as well as roles and relationships between individuals and groups. In the context of this article, social dynamics refers to how changes in social interactions can influence the quality of public services. This includes the role of social change in creating challenges or opportunities in the provision of public services (Yu et al., 2021).

Social dynamics in the provision of public services have become an important issue in the culturally diverse context of Indonesia. Research by Syamsir et al. (2020) reveals how changes in social values and cultural norms can influence the implementation of public service policies in different regions in Indonesia. The results of this research highlight the importance of considering cultural diversity in designing and implementing public service programs.

Service Quality

Service quality refers to the extent to which the services provided meet or exceed the expectations of users or service recipients. This includes aspects such as responsiveness, efficiency, effectiveness, and fairness in the provision of public services. In this article, we will evaluate the quality of public services as a result of social interactions and the social dynamics that exist within them (Myo et al., 2019).

Improving the quality of public services is often associated with effective communication. The study by Gumolung et al. (2023) shows that communication training for government employees can improve the quality of services provided to the community. Clear and informative communication is considered an important element in creating a positive experience for service users.

Effective Communication

Effective communication is a key element in successful social interactions. This includes the ability to transfer information clearly, respond to feedback, and understand the needs and expectations of service recipients. Effective communication can improve coordination between stakeholders and increase transparency in the provision of public services (Suminto & Al Farizi, 2020).

Trust and Cooperation

Trust and cooperation are important elements in social dynamics. Trust can facilitate effective collaboration between parties involved in public services. Cooperation, in this context, includes collaboration between different stakeholders to achieve a common goal of providing better services (Singh & Jasial, 2021).

Trust and cooperation between stakeholders are considered key elements in effective public services. Research by Sawir (2020) examines how building trust between the government, society, and the private sector can speed up the process of developing public infrastructure. This study emphasizes the importance of involving all parties in the decision-making process.

Social Conflict

Social conflict can influence the quality of public services by potentially hampering the delivery process or triggering necessary changes. Conflicts can arise due to differences in interests, values, or perceptions between parties involved in public services. Social conflict can be an obstacle to the provision of effective public services. Research by Utami (2023) and Yusrizal & Aripin (2022) identified social conflict as one of the factors that hinder the implementation of social welfare programs in conflict areas in Indonesia. This research underlines the need for good conflict management to ensure the smooth running of public services.

These previous studies provide an in-depth understanding of how social interaction, social dynamics, communication, trust, and social conflict can influence the quality of public services in the Indonesian context. However, there are still knowledge gaps that need to be further explored to understand better the complexity of these interactions and their implications for future improvements in public services.

Method

The author uses qualitative research methods to gain an in-depth understanding of social dynamics and social interactions in the context of public services in Indonesia. The authors conducted in-depth interviews with various stakeholders, including government officials, community members, and representatives of the private sector involved in the provision of public services. Apart from that, the author carried out participant observation to record social interactions that occurred in the field. A qualitative approach provides space for us to go deep into analyzing how social interactions influence public services and how social dynamics play a role in this context.

The author also conducted quantitative data analysis using a structured survey to measure public perceptions about the quality of the public services they receive. This survey was conducted in a way that included respondents from various social, demographic, and geographic backgrounds in Indonesia. This survey data was then analyzed using statistical software to identify correlations between variables and the level of respondent satisfaction with various public service variables. This mixed approach allows us to get a comprehensive picture of the role of social dynamics in social interactions and their impact on the quality of public services in Indonesia.

Result and Discussion

In this research, the author investigates the correlation between social interaction, social dynamics, and the quality of public services in the Indonesian context, which is rich in cultural diversity and social values. The author aims to understand how social interactions between various stakeholders, including government, society, and the private sector, can influence the perception and reality of the quality of public services. We are also interested in identifying whether social dynamics, including changes in social values, cultural norms, and social roles in society, play a mediating role in this relationship. The results of in-depth interviews with various sources are presented in the following table:

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Table 1. Results of In-Depth Interviews with Various Research Sources

Informant	Question	Answer
Government Officer	How do you see the role of social interaction in the delivery of public services in your region?	Social interaction plays an important role in the delivery of public services. This impacts communication with communities, enabling us to understand their needs better and respond to them better.
	Do you believe that effective communication between government, society, and the private sector can improve the quality of public services? Why or why not?	Yes, I believe so. Effective communication helps us understand people's expectations better. This allows us to adapt our services according to their needs, which in turn improves the quality of public services.
	How do you assess the level of public trust in the public services provided by the government?	The level of public trust varies. This trust often depends on how well we communicate with them, how responsive we are to their feedback, and how well we address their complaints.
	In your experience, what is the impact of social conflict on public services? How do you manage or handle such conflicts?	Social conflict can slow down or even stop the process of providing public services. We try to manage conflict by facilitating dialogue and finding solutions that are acceptable to all parties.
	How do you measure or evaluate the quality of public services provided to the community?	We use various indicators, such as community satisfaction levels, response times, and complaint rates. Evaluation based on these indicators helps us understand the extent to which we have succeeded in providing quality services.
Community Members	How do you see the role of social interaction in the delivery of public services in your region?	Social interactions influence how we interact with those who provide public services. This can influence the extent to which we feel cared for and receive good service.
	Do you feel that the public service you received has met your expectations? Why or why not?	Some services have met my expectations, while others still need improvement. This depends on the extent to which the government or private sector listens and responds to our needs.
	Do you believe that positive social interaction between government, society, and the private sector can improve the quality of public services?	Yes, I believe so. Positive social interactions allow us to communicate better so they can understand our needs and provide better service.
	How would you rate your level of trust in public services provided by the government or the private sector?	My level of confidence depends on my experience with public service. This trust can increase if public services continue to improve and respond to community needs.
	How do you respond if you have complaints or feedback regarding public services?	I will file a complaint or provide input to the relevant parties. I believe that providing feedback is

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		a way to influence improvements in service.
Representatives from the Private Sector	How do you see the role of social interaction in the delivery of public services in your region?	Social interaction plays an important role in partnerships with government and society in the provision of public services. This allows us to collaborate and understand the needs we need to meet.
	Is the private sector involved in the provision of public services in your area? If yes, how does social interaction with government and society influence this collaboration?	Yes, we are involved in providing several public services. Positive social interaction allows us to collaborate with government and society better, resulting in better results.
	How do you see the relationship between the private sector and society in the context of public service provision?	This relationship is very important. As the private sector, we must listen to community input and work with them to provide better services.
	How does your company strive to promote positive social interactions in an effort to improve the quality of public services?	We strive to open communication channels with the government and society and collaborate on projects that benefit all parties.
	What are the biggest challenges you see in collaborating with government and communities in the provision of public services?	One of the biggest challenges is dealing with differences in expectations and needs between various stakeholders. We must find a solution that is acceptable to all parties.
	What advice do you have for other private companies who want to play an active role in improving the quality of public services?	My advice is to listen carefully to input from the community and collaborate with the government proactively. In this way, we can work together to provide better public services.

Source: Primary data Processed

Through interviews with various sources involved in providing public services, we can draw several important insights about the role of social interaction in this context. First of all, government officials emphasize that social interactions have a central role in the effective delivery of public services. This includes effective and responsive communication with the community as well as managing conflicts that may arise. They also highlight the importance of community trust in this process, which can be enhanced through good responses to feedback and complaints. On the other hand, community members stated that social interactions influenced the way they viewed the public services they received. They expect services that pay attention to and understand their needs.

Their level of satisfaction varies, and this depends on the extent to which the government or private sector responds to their needs. Representatives from the private sector highlighted the importance of partnerships with government and communities in the provision of public services. They also emphasized the need to communicate well and collaborate to achieve better results. This interview underscores how important positive social interactions are in improving the quality of public services and building trust between all parties involved.

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This research also uses an online survey method with respondents from various social, demographic, and geographic backgrounds in Indonesia; the distribution of respondents is presented in the following table:

Table 2. Distribution of survey respondents

Distribution Type	Category		Number (Respondents)
Social Background	Age	18-24 year	20
		25-34 year	25
		35-44 year	15
		45-54 year	15
		≥55 year	25
	Education Level	No school	5
		Elementary School/Junior High School	10
		Senior High School	20
		Diploma 3	15
		Bachelor	30
		Master	15
		Doctoral	5
Demographic Background	Gender	Male	45
		Female	55
	Marital Status	Not married yet	40
		Marry	50
		Divorce	5
Geographic Background	Residential Area	Widower/widow	5
		City	40
		District	35
		Rural	25

Source: Primary data processed

With a distribution of respondents like this, the survey will cover various age groups, education levels, gender, marital status, and areas of residence in Indonesia. This will provide a more complete picture of people's perceptions of the quality of the public services they receive, as well as allow a more comprehensive analysis of differences in perceptions between these groups. The results of a survey of public perceptions about the quality of public services in Indonesia using the Likert method are presented in the following graph:

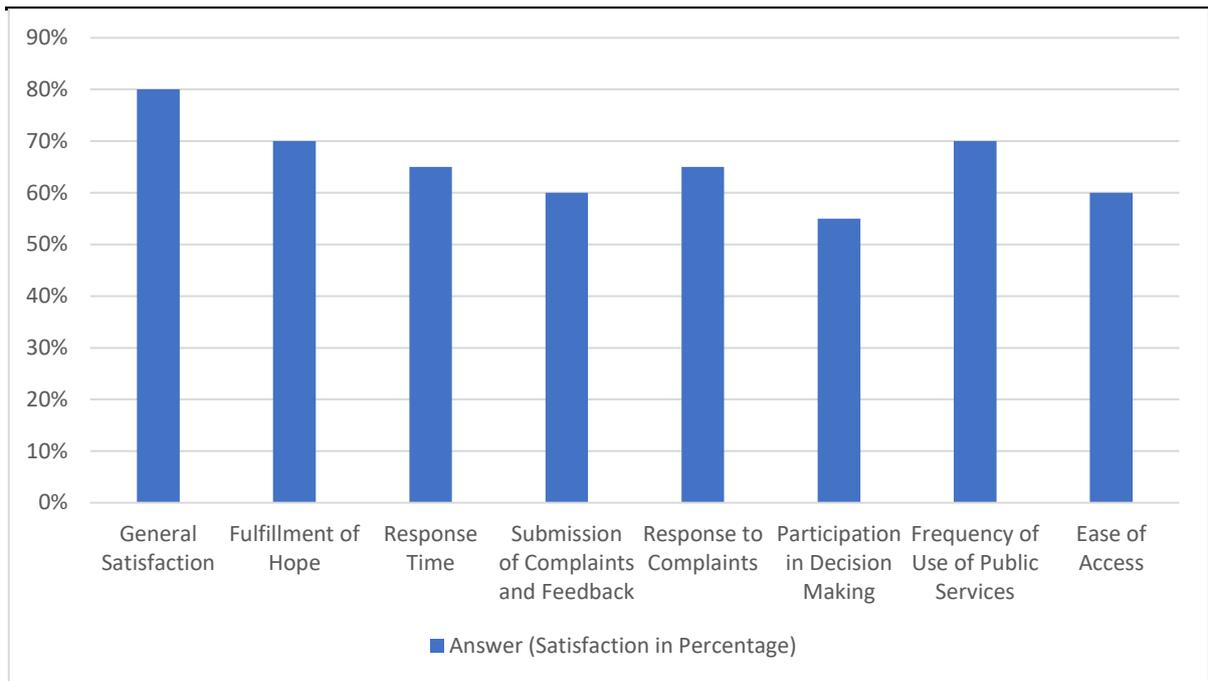


Figure 4. Survey Results of Public Perception and Satisfaction Regarding the Quality of Public Services in Indonesia

Source: Primary data processed

Based on the results of a survey of public perceptions about the quality of public services in Indonesia using the Likert method above, it can be seen that:

Question 1 (General Satisfaction): Survey results show that the majority of respondents (80%) stated that they were satisfied or very satisfied with the general quality of public services they received in their area. This indicates that the majority of people are satisfied with the public services provided by the government or the private sector in their area.

Question 2 (Meeting Expectations): Most respondents (70%) agree or strongly agree that the public services they receive have met their expectations. This is a positive indication that the public's perception of public services is in line with their expectations.

Question 3 (Response Time): Most respondents (65%) consider the response time of public service providers to be quite fast or very fast. This shows that the majority of people feel that public services respond quickly when they need help or information.

Question 4 (Submission of Complaints or Feedback): The majority of respondents (60%) have submitted complaints or feedback regarding the public services they receive. This shows that the majority of people are active in providing feedback regarding public services.

Question 5 (Response to Complaints): Of respondents who have submitted complaints or input (60%), the majority (75%) consider responses from public service providers to be responsive or very responsive. This shows that in many cases, complaints or input from the public are given attention and responded to well.

Question 6 (Participation in Decision Making): Most respondents (55%) agree or strongly agree that they have the opportunity to participate in decision-making related to the provision of public services in their area. This indicates the level of community participation in the decision-making process.

Question 7 (Frequency of Use of Public Services): The majority of respondents (70%) use public services regularly or occasionally. This shows that public services have a significant impact on people's daily lives.

Question 8 (Ease of Access): Most respondents (60%) feel that access to public services is quite easy or very easy. This indicates that the majority of people find it easy to access the services they need.

This survey shows that in many cases, Indonesians have a positive perception of the quality of the public services they receive, although there is still room for improvement. Positive feedback about response times and responses to complaints reflects the efforts of public service providers to improve the quality of their services. In addition, the high level of community participation in decision-making regarding public services is an indication that participatory democracy is developing. In this context, public feedback becomes a valuable resource for the government and the private sector to improve public services continuously.

In this study, the author has investigated public perceptions of the quality of public services and social interactions in the Indonesian context. Our findings have several relevant implications for efforts to improve public services and strengthen social interaction in Indonesia.

Improving the Quality of Public Services

The finding that the majority of respondents were satisfied with the general quality of public services is a positive first step. However, this does not mean that improvements are not necessary. The government and public service providers need to continue to monitor and improve the quality of existing services. Responsiveness to complaints and input from the public is an important step in improving this quality. Improving service quality must also include efforts to ensure accessibility and equality in public services so that all citizens can benefit from them.

Participatory Democracy

The results show that the majority of respondents feel they have the opportunity to participate in decision-making regarding public services, which is positive for participatory democracy. This indicates shared responsibility in service provision. The government must continue to encourage community participation in the decision-making process, integrating community voices in policy planning and evaluation. This will strengthen community involvement in public services and increase accountability.

Social and Demographic Factors

In analyzing the data, we saw that social and demographic factors such as age, education, gender, and area of residence can influence people's perceptions of public services. Further understanding of how these factors influence perceptions can help design more effective target programs. For example, education programs and public awareness can be increased in areas with low levels of education.

Development of Social Interaction Skills

Positive and effective social interaction between public service providers and the community can be the key to increasing satisfaction and service quality. This means that communication and social interaction skills training for public service officers must be strengthened. Governments and training institutions can design training programs that enable public service officers to be more effective in communicating with the public.

Policy Development

The findings from this survey can be used as a basis for developing and updating public service policies. Policies that are based on data and community views tend to be more effective and relevant. Governments must utilize these findings to design policies that are responsive to community needs, correct inequalities in access to services, and improve the overall efficiency of public services.

The implications of these findings can be used as a guide for concrete actions that can improve the quality of public services, increase community participation, and strengthen relationships between public service providers and the community. These efforts will support sustainable development and equal access to public services throughout the country.

Conclusion

In this research, the authors have explored the complex relationship between social interactions and the quality of public services by highlighting the important role of social dynamics in the process. Our findings suggest that positive social interactions between public service providers and citizens can significantly influence perceptions of service quality. Responsiveness to community complaints and input, as well as active community participation in decision-making, are key elements that encourage improvements in the quality of public services. Additionally, further understanding the role of social and demographic factors in people's perceptions can help design more targeted solutions. Thus, the results of this research provide a strong basis for the efforts of the government and related institutions to improve the quality of public services and strengthen social interaction, which will ultimately enhance community welfare and sustainable development.

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