

## **Enhancing Public Satisfaction Through Optimization of Service Quality, Complaint Handling, and Interpersonal Communication: A Case Study of Cepogo District Office, Boyolali Regency**

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### **ABSTRACT**

*This study aims to analyze the influence of public services, complaint handling, and interpersonal communication on community satisfaction at the Cepogo District Office, Boyolali Regency. Using quantitative methods, this study involves collecting data through questionnaires, observations, and interviews. The results of this study clearly show that the quality of public services, handling complaints, and interpersonal communication have a positive and significant impact on community satisfaction. The quality of public services is the main factor; The better the service provided by the staff, the higher the level of satisfaction felt by the community. In addition, effective complaint handling has proven crucial in increasing satisfaction. Finally, the ability of staff to establish good interpersonal communication with the community contributes significantly to increased overall satisfaction. Quantitatively, the value of the determination coefficient of 69% of the variation in public satisfaction can be explained by the quality of public services, handling of complaints, and interpersonal communication. Meanwhile, the remaining 31% were influenced by other factors outside of this research model.*

**Keywords:** *Quality Of Public Services, Complaint Handling and Interpersonal Communication to Public Satisfaction.*

### **ABSTRAK**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh pelayanan publik, penanganan pengaduan, dan komunikasi interpersonal terhadap kepuasan masyarakat di Kantor Kecamatan Cepogo, Kabupaten Boyolali. Dengan menggunakan metode kuantitatif, penelitian ini melibatkan pengumpulan data melalui kuesioner, observasi, dan wawancara. Hasil penelitian ini jelas menunjukkan bahwa kualitas pelayanan publik, penanganan pengaduan, dan komunikasi interpersonal berdampak positif dan signifikan terhadap kepuasan masyarakat. Kualitas pelayanan publik adalah faktor utama; Semakin baik pelayanan yang diberikan oleh staf, semakin tinggi tingkat kepuasan yang dirasakan oleh masyarakat. Selain itu, penanganan pengaduan yang efektif terbukti penting dalam meningkatkan kepuasan. Akhirnya, kemampuan staf untuk membangun komunikasi interpersonal yang baik dengan masyarakat berkontribusi secara signifikan terhadap peningkatan kepuasan secara keseluruhan. Secara kuantitatif, nilai koefisien penentuan sebesar 69% dari variasi kepuasan publik dapat dijelaskan dengan kualitas pelayanan publik, penanganan pengaduan, dan komunikasi interpersonal. Sementara itu, 31% sisanya dipengaruhi oleh faktor lain di luar model penelitian ini.

**Kata Kunci:** Kualitas Pelayanan Publik, Penanganan Pengaduan dan Komunikasi Interpersonal untuk Kepuasan Publik.

## INTRODUCTION

All community service organizations now have a responsibility to ensure that their clients are happy with the care they get (Nurjanah & Rainanto, 2021). Service is an action or activity provided by an agency to the community in the form of services (Nurdin, 2019). Agencies or organizations in general are involved in public administration as a means to realize community welfare by solving various community problems (Bryson, 2018). In addition, the community is given the opportunity to obtain the best administrative services from the government, as they have contributed assets through levies, taxes, and other levies (Ridwan & Sudrajat, 2020). In state or private institutions, the services they provide to the community are currently lacking. An example of this phenomenon is *pungli*, where poor people are unable to get fast services from those who have higher costs. The quality and quality of service must continue to be improved so that the expected goals can be achieved.

Service is one of the determinants of the character of services provided by a government (Kurfali et al., 2017). Community satisfaction is greatly influenced by quality (Eslami et al., 2019). The central and regional governments must prioritize public services, because if public services stagnate, the impact will be very detrimental to almost all sectors, leading to a pandemic or congestion (Manyathi et al., 2021). Therefore, effective planning and the determination of government service standards to the community must be carried out consistently in accordance with the authority given by the central and regional governments in organizing the government sector. This service condition is the result of the unilateral implementation of service policies by the government, which is made possible by the ineffective socialization of service policies to the community. In addition, the public and the public are not invited to discuss service issues. Discussions on service policies, including pricing, standard operating procedures, and service periods, are conducted unilaterally. This means that the community is only considered as an object of service and is subject to the standards of government apparatus. As a result, it is not uncommon for people to often submit demands for change to government officials regarding the public services they provide.

Conflicting results from earlier studies only serve to widen the chasm between theory and practice. Public satisfaction is positively and significantly impacted by the quality of public services, as stated by Firmansyah and Rosy (2021). Consistent with that, studies conducted by Alfionita and Gunawan (2020) demonstrate that community happiness is positively and significantly impacted by service quality. On the other hand, Lumempow et al. (2023) found that public satisfaction is unaffected by service quality, which is in stark contrast to our findings.

Good complaint management is a strategy to improve services and maintain positive relationships with the community (Cambra-Fierro et al., 2015). Organizations will experience significant improvements in service quality as a result of effective complaint management, except for the cost savings that must be incurred

(Morgeson III et al., 2020). An organization's operational costs are the intended reductions, which are intended to address issues such as errors, avoidable complaints, negligence, inefficient systems, and under-supervised personnel (Millani et al., 2019). A proactive complaint management mechanism, as emphasized by Ulum (2018), is essential to prevent potential dissatisfaction. Continuous improvement of service quality and mitigation of adverse impacts on public satisfaction can be achieved by public organizations through the identification and resolution of potential sources of problems before complaints arise. As a result, effective complaint management is not just a reaction to a problem; but it is also an important component of initiatives to improve the quality of public services and maintain public satisfaction.

When it comes to dealing with complaints and public satisfaction, the discrepancy between earlier studies and current practices is a sign of the distance between the two. Khoiri & Adityawarman (2021) and Anjelina & Masruchin (2023) are just two of many studies that have proven time and time again that how complaints are handled significantly affects public satisfaction. On the other hand, Salmah et al. (2023) found no substantial impact of complaint management on public satisfaction, which contradicts our findings. These differences in results highlight the complexity of the relationship between complaint handling and public satisfaction, and underscore the need for further research to understand the factors that might lead to such inconsistencies.

Human Resource Management is required for government services. Human Resources is a priority for government agencies to improve the quality of services (Ocampo et al., 2019). After undergoing special training, government employees provide public services expertly. Government personnel include administrative, technical, and information service officers. Government personnel and community service award recipients will interact. Their information processes are interrelated. Communication permeates life, especially public services. Employees need interpersonal communication skills to do their jobs. Service communication involves government staff and the public. The interaction between officers and the community determines this implementation. This involves officers and the community in building awareness and context during the provision of public services (Adriyani, 2018; Wijaya et al., 2019). Effective police-community communication is an interactive process that builds trust and beneficial relationships. Officers who can communicate clearly, easily, and relevantly with the community improve service efficiency and prevent misunderstandings.

The inconsistency of various results of previous research is also evidence of the gap between theory and reality. Interpersonal interaction significantly and positively affects public contentment, according to studies done by Budiyanto and Hamdiah (2024). Anjelina & Haq et al. (2023) back this view with their research showing that public satisfaction is significantly and positively impacted by interpersonal interaction. This study's findings contradict those of Imbang et al.

(2022), who failed to detect a correlation between interpersonal interaction and public satisfaction.

## **THEORETICAL FOUNDATIONS**

### **Quality of Public Services**

Several studies have described public service quality as an ever-changing condition that is evaluated in real time and is associated with the goods, services, people, procedures, and surroundings involved in the execution of public organization services (Wibisono & Achsa, 2020). Tjiptono (2017) defines the quality of public services as the overall activities, benefits, or level of satisfaction of government organizations or other public service providers. These qualities are assessed by comparing the public's perception of the services they receive with the services they expect from the attributes of public interest services. In addition to physical quality and reliability, these characteristics include the government's obligations to the community, legal clarity and justice in services, and empathy and understanding of the diverse needs of citizens. Thus, a good public service is when public opinion of the service meets or exceeds expectations, which benefits the community and builds trust in state administrators (Lanin & Hermanto, 2019). According to Pratama and Djawoto (2020), the satisfaction of the general public is determined by the extent to which their expectations are met. In order to meet or beyond expectations, service quality is centered on catering to the community's wants and wishes.

Satisfaction is causally and closely related to the quality of public services (Kant & Jaiswal, 2017). To serve the public well is to ensure their high level of pleasure. When the service satisfies or surpasses public expectations in areas such as procedural ease, speed, officer ease, information clarity, and service results, the public is satisfied. Satisfaction will increase public trust in public sector organizers and government entities. The poor quality of public services causes dissatisfaction. Firmansyah & Rosy (2021) and Alfionita & Gunawan (2020) found that the quality of public services increases public satisfaction. The above description yields the first hypothesis:

### **H1: The Quality of Public Services Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Public Satisfaction**

### **Complaint Handling**

Lay et al. (2018) describe complaint handling as an organization's ability to prevent public complaints, resolve them before they escalate, and communicate solutions openly. Public dissatisfaction with public services may lead to the processing of complaints. Ignoring this will undermine public trust in public organizations. Lay et al. (2018) found that the public trusts public bodies that handle complaints well. As such, effective public complaint resolution methods must be

available and proactive to foresee and resolve public issues before they arise. Dissatisfaction or disappointment can be expressed as a complaint, according to Putri (2020).

Community satisfaction is positively correlated with good handling of complaints. Responding to and resolving public service complaints in a timely, fair, and satisfactory manner can have a major impact on public satisfaction. Lay et al. (2018) even said that organizations that manage complaints well will gain public loyalty. This illustrates that effective complaint management involves handling problems and developing public trust. Response- and solution-oriented complaint handling shows the community that community organizations care about their experiences and want to make improvements. A transparent and participatory approach to complaint management that makes the community feel heard and participate in seeking answers will increase satisfaction and appreciation. Khoiri & Adityawarman (2021) and Anjelina & Masruchin (2023) found that handling complaints increases community satisfaction. The above description yields a second hypothesis:

## **H2: Community Satisfaction Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Community Satisfaction**

### **Interpersonal Communication**

Communication plays a crucial role in individual participation to achieve common goals. According to Wang (2009), humans always need interaction, which then forms interpersonal or interpersonal communication. Interpersonal communication is one of the most frequent forms of interaction. For example, communication between service workers and the community can create a harmonious relationship. Also, because it takes the shape of a discussion, interpersonal communication is great at influencing people's beliefs, attitudes, and actions (Hargie, 2021). Therefore, competence in interpersonal communication has a great influence on the success of message delivery, because the interaction that occurs directly will have a direct impact on social relationships.

Effective interpersonal communication between service workers and the community as service recipients is an important foundation in creating a positive and satisfying service experience. People who get police services are more likely to be appreciative and understanding when officers are polite, sympathetic, and willing to listen to their concerns. Good communication builds bridges of trust, reduces the potential for misunderstandings, and ensures that the information needed is conveyed effectively (Kabanda & Barrena-Martinez, 2025). Conversely, poor interpersonal communication can be a major source of public dissatisfaction. Officers who act indifferent, do not listen well, provide ambiguous information, or even act disrespectfully can leave a deep negative impression on service recipients. This not only lowers the level of satisfaction with these interactions, but can also damage the overall image of public service agencies. According to studies done by Haq et al.

(2023) and Hamdiah & Budiyanoto (2024), interpersonal communication significantly and positively affects community satisfaction. The third hypothesis is developed from the description given above:

### **H3: Interpersonal Communication Has a Positive and Significant Effect on Community Satisfaction**

#### **Community Satisfaction**

The term "satisfaction" is defined by Rofiah and Wahyuni (2017) as the range of feelings experienced by a person as a result of comparing the actual product's performance or outcomes to their expectations. Although this definition was originally intended for consumer satisfaction with the product, the concept has strong relevance and can be broadly applied to understand public satisfaction with public services. The community as the recipient of the service will evaluate the performance of the service they receive, for example, speed, convenience, friendliness compared to their expectations of the standard of service they should get. Thus, public satisfaction is an important indicator that reflects the effectiveness and quality of public service delivery (Van de Walle, 2017). An attempt to give something acceptable or satisfactory is defined by Maramis et al. (2018) as satisfaction. Quality service is the only way to obtain community satisfaction. The public often assesses the quality of services directly from service providers, which are usually the government. To satisfy the community and increase satisfaction, improving the service quality system is important (Brinkerhoff et al., 2018).

#### **RESEARCH METHODS**

This quantitative research examines the influence of three independent variables on bound variables. This survey involved an unspecified number of participants who visited the Cepogo District Office, Boyolali Regency. This study uses an axial sampling technique. Sanusi (2014) defines the axial sampling technique as taking respondents as random samples, for example 100 people who visited the Cepogo District Office, Boyolali Regency. This study collected primary data through a survey. Before data analysis, research instruments are tested to ensure their validity and reliability. To further guarantee the regression model's qualification, a classical assumption test was executed, which comprised normalcy, linearity, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity. Finally, a hypothesis test was carried out to answer the research questions.

#### **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

##### **Data Quality Test**

##### **Validity Test**

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To ensure the validity of the questionnaire for each of these variables, validity testing was carried out. Here is a rundown of all the validity tests that were run for this study:

**Table 1. Validity Test**

Variable	R Count
Quality of public services	0,790
	0,782
	0,835
	0,766
	0,869
Complaint handling	0,685
	0,771
	0,800
	0,742
	0,500
Interpersonal communication	0,707
	0,735
	0,818
	0,739
	0,690
Community satisfaction	0,785
	0,771
	0,721
	0,694
	0,811

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

Each question item has an r-value larger than 0.197, as seen in the table. That being the case, it follows that every single item on this survey is legitimate.

## Reliability Test

Research on the effects of service quality, customer service, interpersonal communication, and community participation factors should be carried out with great precision to guarantee consistency or lack of bias.

**Table 2. Reliability Test Results**

Variable	Alpha
Quality of public services	0,866
Complaint handling	0,744
Interpersonal communication	0,786
Community satisfaction	0,806

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

The reliability test revealed that all of the research variables—public satisfaction, handling, interpersonal communication, and quality of public services—had an Alpha Cronbach value more than 0.60. Since this number is higher than the

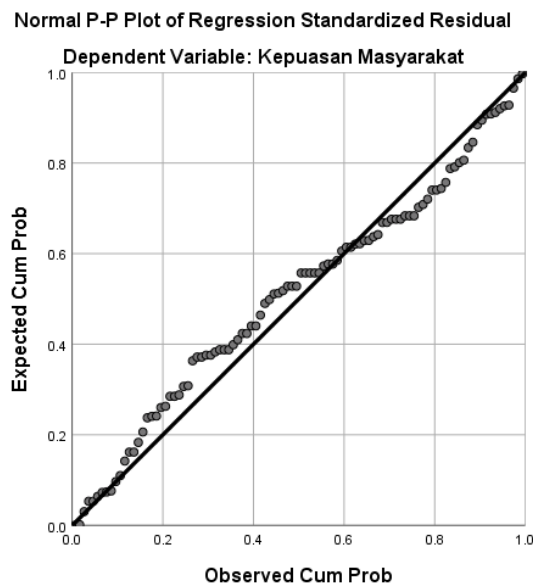


necessary fundamental value ( $> 0.60$ ), we can say that these variables are trustworthy and consistent with one another.

## Classic Assumption Test

### Normality Test

Looking at how the data points are distributed on the graph allows us to check if the data is normal. If the data points in a graph converge or squeeze around the diagonal line, we say that the data is regularly distributed. On the flip side, data is said to not follow a normal distribution if its points diverge from the diagonal.



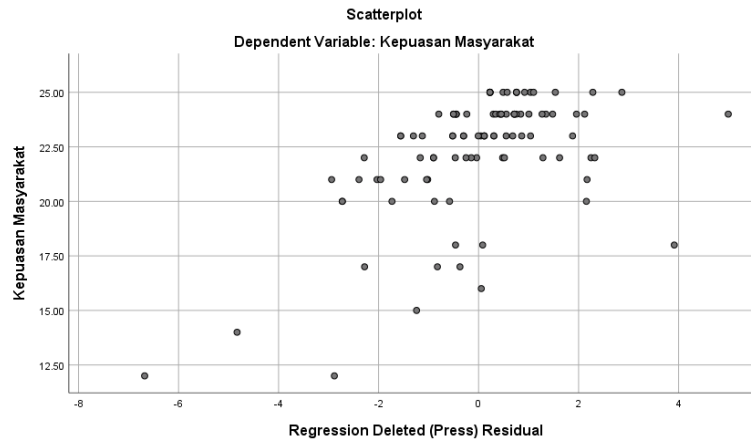
**Figure 1. Normality Chart Test**

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

The test results show that the data (dots) are distributed according to the diagonal axis of the graph. Therefore, the data is considered to be distributed normally.

### Heteroscedasticity Test

In a regression model, this test is used to determine if the residual variance is unequal from one observation to another. The condition known as homoscedasticity is met when the residual variance remains constant. Heteroscedasticity describes a situation where it differs.



**Figure 2. Heteroscedasticity Graph Test**

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

Based on calculations, it is known that the distribution of data does not form a certain pattern so that heteroscedasticity does not occur.

### Multicollinearity Test

To identify signs of multicollinearity, this test measures the strength of the relationship between the study's independent variables and its collinearity level.

**Table 3. Multicollinearity Test**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		
Quality of public services	0.360	2.776
Complaint handling	0.386	2.593
Interpersonal communication	0.409	2.446

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

The regression model does not exhibit any signs of multicollinearity, as seen in Table 3. The fact that these three variables interpersonal communication, quality of public services, and handling of complaints have a tolerance level greater than 0.10 makes this clear. In addition, the VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) value for the three variables is also less than 10. These indicators clearly show the absence of a strong linear relationship between independent variables, so that the regression results can be considered valid and unbiased due to multicollinearity.

### Model Feasibility Test

This study's regression model's viability is evaluated using the F test, also known as the model feasibility test. To establish the significance of the F-test, a significance level of 5%, or 0.05, is used.

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**Table 4. Model Feasibility Test**

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	531.000	3	177.000	74.526	0.000
Residual	228.000	96	2.375		
Total	759.000	99			

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

Based on the table above, the F test yields 74,526 with a significance of 0.000. The regression model of this study is adequate to test the hypothesis because the significance value is less than 0.05.

### Coefficient of Determination (R Square)

The R<sup>2</sup> value was examined in this study using multiple linear regression tests. The impact of effective interpersonal communication, complaint management, and service quality on public satisfaction is investigated in this test.

**Table 5. Determination Test**

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square
0.836	0.700	0.690

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

Quality of public services, complaint handling, and interpersonal contact accounted for 69% of the variation in public satisfaction, as shown by the adjusted R Square of 0.690. Other factors, which were not included in this study, accounted for the remaining 31%.

### Multiple Regression Analysis

This analysis examines the simultaneous impact of three main factors service quality, complaint handling, and interpersonal communication on community satisfaction. To measure the combined influence of these independent variables, we used the multiple linear regression method. This approach allows us to understand the extent to which these three factors simultaneously affect the perception of satisfaction among people.

**Table 6. Multiple Regression Test**

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	2.628	1.327	
Quality of public services	0.290	0.088	0.309
Complaint handling	0.339	0.088	0.347
Interpersonal communication	0.257	0.084	0.268

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

A multiple regression equation model has been effectively constructed, according to the multiple linear regression analysis findings shown in Table 5. This model is a mathematical representation of the relationship between independent variables and dependent variables; the model of the equation is as follows:

$$Y = 2,628 + 0,309X_1 + 0,347X_2 + 0,268X_3 + e$$

The positive constant indicates that the independent variables (quality of public services, complaint management, and interpersonal communication) are constant, resulting in positive values for the public satisfaction variables. Positive value is indicated by the excellence of public services. Indicates that the value of the regression coefficient is positive, which implies that public satisfaction will increase with each improvement in the quality of service. Complaint management shows favorable results. Indicates that the value of the regression coefficient is positive, which implies that public satisfaction will increase with each improvement in complaint management. Interpersonal communication is beneficial. It shows that the value of the regression coefficient is positive, implying that improved interpersonal communication will result in increased public satisfaction.

### Hypothesis Test (t-Test)

Statistical tests show the extent to which independent variables contribute to the explanation of the variation of dependent variables (Ghozali, 2013). The t-test was used in this study to evaluate part of the impact of service quality, complaint management, and interpersonal communication on public satisfaction.

**Table 7. Partial Impact Significance Test**

Model	t	Sig.
(Constant)	1.980	0.051
Quality of public services	3.316	0.001
Complaint handling	3.851	0.000
Interpersonal communication	3.058	0.003

Source: Questionnaire results processed 2025

Based on statistical studies, the hypothesis of the three variables has a positive and significant effect on public satisfaction. H1 which states that the quality of public services increases public satisfaction is accepted. The t-value of 3.316 is greater than the table t-value of 1.657 and the significance level of 0.00 is smaller than 0.05. The second hypothesis (H2) that the handling of complaints can increase public satisfaction is also accepted. Strong statistical significance ( $p < 0.05$ ) is indicated by a t-value of 3.851 which exceeds the table t-value of 1.657 with a significance level of 0.00. The third hypothesis (H3) that interpersonal communication can increase public

satisfaction is also accepted. A t-value of 3.058 which exceeded the table t-value of 1.657 and a significance level of 0.00 showed a significant influence ( $p < 0.05$ ). These findings show that strengthening public services, handling complaints, and interpersonal communication will increase public satisfaction.

## **Discussion**

### **1. The effect of public service quality on public satisfaction**

The results of the public service quality test show a strong positive influence on community satisfaction. This study confirms the findings of Firmansyah & Rosy (2021) and Alfionita & Gunawan (2020) which stated that the quality of public services can increase community satisfaction. The influence between the quality of public services and public satisfaction is a very close and causal relationship. The quality of good public services directly contributes to a high level of public satisfaction. When the public receives services that are appropriate or even exceed their expectations in various aspects such as the ease of procedures, speed, friendliness of the officers, clarity of information, and satisfactory service results, then they will feel satisfied. This satisfaction will then build public trust in public service providers and increase the positive image of government agencies. On the contrary, the poor quality of public services will result in public dissatisfaction.

### **2. The effect of handling complaints on community satisfaction**

Based on the test results, handling complaints can increase public satisfaction. This study confirms the findings of Khoiri & Adityawarman (2021) and Anjelina & Masruchin (2023) who stated that handling complaints can increase community satisfaction. Effective complaint handling has a positive and significant correlation with community satisfaction. When people complain about public services, a prompt, fair, and satisfactory response to the problem will greatly affect their overall level of satisfaction. In other words, the better an agency is at handling complaints, the higher the satisfaction felt by the community. Lay et al., (2018) even stated that people tend to be loyal to organizations that can handle complaints well. This shows that effective complaint handling is not only about fixing existing problems, but also building and maintaining public trust. Responsive and solutive complaint handling sends a signal to the public that public organizations care about their experiences and are committed to making improvements. A transparent and participatory complaint handling process, where the community feels listened to and involved in finding solutions, will increase the sense of appreciation and ultimately increase satisfaction. Based on research conducted by Khoiri & Adityawarman (2021) and Anjelina & Masruchin (2023) the handling of complaints has a positive and significant effect on community satisfaction.

### **3. The effect of interpersonal communication on community satisfaction**

Based on the test results, interpersonal communication has a strong positive influence on community satisfaction. This study confirms the findings of Hamdiah & Budiyanto (2024) and Haq et al. (2023) who stated that interpersonal contact increases community satisfaction. Effective interpersonal communication between service workers and the community as service recipients is an important foundation in creating a positive and satisfying service experience. When officers are able to communicate clearly, friendly, empathetic, and responsive to the needs and complaints of the community, this will increase the sense of appreciation and understanding by service recipients. Good communication builds bridges of trust, reduces the potential for misunderstandings, and ensures that the information needed is conveyed effectively. Conversely, poor interpersonal communication can be a major source of public dissatisfaction. Officers who act indifferent, do not listen well, provide ambiguous information, or even act disrespectfully can leave a deep negative impression on service recipients. This not only lowers the level of satisfaction with these interactions, but can also damage the overall image of public service agencies.

## **CONCLUSION**

Based on the results of the research and discussion, public satisfaction is significantly influenced by the quality of public services, management of public complaints, and workload. Based on the findings that the quality of public services, complaint handling, and workload significantly affect public satisfaction, the implications of this study are very clear for policymakers and practitioners. These results show that to improve public satisfaction, the government and service provider organizations need to focus on improving the quality of services provided, ensuring staff have high complaint handling, and managing workloads to remain optimal and not burdensome. Investing in staff training to improve competence and service ethos, developing incentive systems that encourage motivation, and restructuring work procedures for efficiency and reducing unnecessary workload will be crucial steps.

## **SUGGESTION**

The results of this study confirm the importance of community satisfaction. Actively participate in surveys or feedback forums related to public services. Constructive feedback is invaluable to drive improvement. Be specific about which aspects of service quality need to be improved, how service providers' complaint handling affects interactions and whether their workload appears to affect the speed or quality of service received. Thus, you contribute directly to the overall increase in community satisfaction.

Based on research findings that show that the quality of public services, handling complaints, and workload significantly affect community satisfaction, there are several suggestions that can be given for further academic development. First,

future research may deepen the analysis of the specific mechanisms by which each of these variables affects satisfaction. For example, for the quality of public services, research can identify which quality dimensions are the most dominant in shaping satisfaction, or how the interaction between these dimensions is made. Second, related to handling complaints, further studies can explore the types of motivation (intrinsic vs. extrinsic) that are most effective in increasing community satisfaction, as well as organizational factors that can drive this motivation. Third, regarding workload, future research could investigate optimal workload levels and identify how excessive or overly light workloads affect staff performance and ultimately community satisfaction. In addition, comparative research between different public service sectors or between regions can provide richer insights into the generalization of these findings. Finally, it is recommended to apply qualitative research methods to understand the perceptions and experiences of the community and staff in more depth, which can complement quantitative findings and provide a richer context for theory development.

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