

Strategies for Improving the Quality of Public Services in High School Schools in Minahasa District

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze strategies for improving the quality of public services by Educators and Education Personnel (PTK) in Senior High Schools in Minahasa Regency. This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive type. The research location was conducted in three schools, namely SMA Negeri 2 Tompaso, SMA Negeri 2 Langowan, and SMA Negeri 2 Tondano. Data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation, with data analysis techniques using the Miles and Huberman interactive model that includes data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The results of the study indicate that the service mechanism in schools has basically been running quite well and is structured, but there are still obstacles in implementation, such as dependence on the principal for document approval, lack of completeness of files from the community, and suboptimal socialization of procedures. This study indicates that the quality of public services in high schools in Minahasa Regency is suboptimal, requiring improvement strategies through improving service mechanisms, strengthening facilities and infrastructure, and enhancing the competence and professionalism of PTK.

INTRODUCTION

Education in Indonesia is inseparable from the goals of education itself, as stipulated in the 1945 Constitution. To realize national education, this must be reflected in Government Regulation Number 4 of 2022 concerning National Education Standards.

The improvement of service quality strategies is required by state apparatus, as public servants responsible for delivering optimal services toward good governance, in responding to the challenges and opportunities brought by the globalization era. Quality public services are consistently demanded by the community from Educators and Education Personnel (PTK), and these services must be implemented in a transparent and accountable manner. The principles of professionalism and ethics, including accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, integrity, neutrality, and fairness for all service recipients, form the basis of public service as a profession. Service is the primary duty of state apparatus as servants of the state and public servants. This duty is clearly outlined in the fourth paragraph of the preamble to the 1945 Constitution, which encompasses four aspects of the apparatus' primary service to the public, as follows: Protecting the entire nation and all of Indonesia's homeland; advancing the general welfare and developing the nation's intellectual life.

Broad implications, particularly in increasing the level of public trust in schools, will result from improved school performance. A crisis of public trust in schools has often been caused by poor school performance. Complex service strategies are frequently implemented by Educators and Education Personnel (PTK) when serving the public. As a result, the quality of public services provided is greatly affected.

In general, a positive impact on the school itself will be created through the provision of good services by schools. Greater trust will be given by the public, and stronger public support for the school will also be generated. The wider community expects the best possible services to be provided by schools.

The public is served by Educators and Education Personnel (PTK) as part of their essential role. They are established not to serve themselves, but to provide services for society. In other words, schools function as public service providers. One form of the State apparatus's function as a public servant, in addition to serving the state, is reflected through public services delivered by schools .

A series of activities conducted by the public bureaucracy to fulfill the needs of citizens who require various administrative services can be defined as public service. According to the Republic of Indonesia Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, public service is described as an activity or a series of activities carried out to fulfill service needs in accordance with statutory regulations for every citizen and resident, covering goods, services, and administrative services provided by public service providers.

In general, public service can be defined as a series of activities carried out by schools to meet the needs of all citizens who require various types of services, such as diploma processing, scholarships, providing students with the best education, providing information transparency to the public, handling student violations, managing teacher administration, etc. (Marzuki, 2006:52). Every

citizen can never avoid interacting with the government bureaucracy. At the same time, schools, as part of the government bureaucracy, are the only organizations with the legitimacy to enforce various regulations and policies that affect the community and every citizen. Therefore, the services provided by the government bureaucracy, in this case schools, demand a high level of responsibility.

A strong orientation toward power in the implementation of public services has caused the school bureaucracy to increasingly move away from its mission of delivering services to the public. The bureaucracy and its PTK (Public Service Institutions) are more often positioned as authorities rather than as servants of the community. As a consequence, the aspirations and interests of the community are often neglected by the school bureaucracy in the delivery of public services. The deterioration of the public service system has also been influenced by the growth of a paternalistic culture, in which political and bureaucratic interests are placed as the dominant factors in public service delivery. Feelings of injustice frequently arise within communities because they perceive that they are treated unfairly by the public bureaucracy.

Based on initial observations conducted by researchers at high schools in Minahasa Regency, real problems in public service processes, particularly teachers frequently being late and absent from class, managing student transfers, student diplomas, in-class learning, and handling student violations, are perceived as still lacking and not effectively managed, resulting in areas of public aspirations and interests remaining untouched. Public services in schools are still perceived as slow, and the outcomes of these services are often considered unable to meet, or even far from meeting, public expectations. Many educators and education personnel (PTK) still do not perform their duties in accordance with public expectations. This problem stems from a lack of discipline and a sense of responsibility among educators and education personnel (PTK), which results in suboptimal administrative services. They often make unnecessary mistakes, such as failing to strictly adhere to work hour regulations. Furthermore, the service system is lacking, sometimes neglecting school activities due to procrastination, slowness in work, and some educators and education personnel (PTK) sitting around chatting with each other during work hours.

Improvements in school performance are expected by various groups because transparent, accountable, efficient, and community-oriented school services have not yet been fully experienced by many people. To overcome this issue, greater responsiveness and accountability must be demonstrated by schools in order to provide excellent services and fulfill community satisfaction. Therefore, the quality of work and the dedication of educators and education personnel (PTK) as public servants must be enhanced so that the services delivered can be optimally received and satisfy the community.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Services

A crucial element in governance is represented by public services. Public services are commonly understood as services delivered by the government. All forms of goods and services provided by the government are categorized as public services (Dwyanto, 2015). Furthermore, it is explained by Dwyanto that previous literature states, "what government does is public service." This view indicates that an essential role in the provision of public services is held by the government.

Public services can be briefly defined as services provided by the government to its citizens, either directly or indirectly (i.e., through financing the provision of services provided by the private sector) (Fadhilla, 2012).

Strategy

The word "strategy" has a meaning related to things like victory, survival, or fighting spirit. This means it relates to the ability of an institution or organization to face pressures from within and outside (Lestari, 2015).

According to Anwar Arifin in his book, "Communication Strategy," a strategy is essentially the sum of all conditional decisions about actions to be taken to achieve a goal. Therefore, formulating a communication strategy means taking into account the conditions and situations (space and time) currently being faced and likely to be faced in the future to achieve effectiveness. (Suryadi 2018).

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive approach. This approach was chosen because it focuses on understanding the meaning behind phenomena in depth, thus yielding a comprehensive and natural analysis. The research took place at three schools: SMA Negeri 2 Tompas, SMA Negeri 2 Langowan, and SMA Negeri 2 Tondano. The focus of the research was strategies to improve the quality of public services at SMA Minahasa, specifically regarding teacher punctuality in class. Sub-foci included empathy, procedural limitations, clarity, minimization, and transparency.

The research data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through interviews with informants, while secondary data came from documents and information available at the research sites. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique combined with incidental sampling. The research instrument in this qualitative study was the researcher herself (human instrument), who played a role in collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data through observation, interviews, and documentation.

Data collection techniques were carried out using three main methods: observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observations focused on aspects of space, actors, and activities. Data analysis used the Miles and Huberman interactive model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. The analysis process was carried out continuously from the beginning to the end of the study.

Data validity was tested using four criteria: credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Credibility testing was conducted through extended observation, persistence, triangulation, negative case analysis, and the use of reference materials. Transferability testing relates to the applicability of research results, dependability testing to the consistency of the research, and confirmability testing to the objectivity of the research results.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The strategy for improving the quality of public services at SMA Negeri 2 Langowan, Minahasa Regency, based on interviews, involved three strategies:

Service Mechanism

Based on research findings obtained through interviews with various informants, the service mechanism at SMA Negeri 2 Langowan has generally been operating quite well and is structured. Visitors to the school are immediately greeted by the on-duty staff, then directed to the administration section, followed by data verification, and finally approved by the principal. This service flow is openly displayed on the school information board for access by all residents.

This aligns with the principle of public service proposed by Marzuki (2006:52), which states that good public service includes open information to the public, including transparent and easy-to-understand administrative processes. Clear and well-socialized mechanisms are a crucial component in achieving excellent service quality.

However, several obstacles were encountered in its implementation that hampered the smooth operation of the service mechanism. First, incomplete required documents from residents requesting certificates, such as the absence of family cards or data inconsistencies with the central system. Second, service completion times become uncertain when the principal is absent, as document approval requires the principal's signature. Third, community members are still found to be disobeying applicable administrative procedures.

This situation indicates that although the service mechanism has been systematically developed and aligns with Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), its implementation still needs to be strengthened with a strategy to delegate document signing authority to ensure services are not interrupted when the principal is absent. Furthermore, public awareness of administrative requirements needs to be improved to minimize technical obstacles in the field. One commendable aspect is that all administrative services at SMA Negeri 2 Langowan are free of charge, in accordance with government instructions, so that the community does not experience a financial burden in accessing services.

Facilities and Infrastructure

Research results indicate that the facilities and infrastructure available at SMA Negeri 2 Langowan meet the basic standards required to support public service delivery. These facilities include parking, a waiting room, seating, a service desk, computers, laptops, printers, and a Wi-Fi network. In addition to

face-to-face services, the school also provides online services, providing easy access for those unable to come to school in person.

The availability of adequate facilities and infrastructure is a crucial factor in determining the quality of public services. As stated by the principal in an interview, the school consistently prioritizes the completeness of its facilities to ensure the service process runs smoothly without unnecessary technical obstacles. This principle aligns with the concept of good governance, which emphasizes efficiency and effectiveness in public service delivery.

However, there are still deficiencies in the quantity of facilities, particularly the limited seating in the waiting room. This means that during peak service times, such as when processing recommendation letters for scholarship disbursements, some people are forced to stand or wait outside. This situation undoubtedly impacts the comfort of the public during the service process. In addition, external factors such as power outages and unstable internet connections also pose obstacles that can disrupt smooth service delivery at any time. Given the reliance of service processes on digital devices, schools need to consider backup solutions such as generators or data backup systems to anticipate such technical disruptions.

Regarding service provider discipline, the principal emphasized that discipline is a serious concern, especially since teachers receive certification allowances that require them to carry out their duties professionally. The implementation of a service culture based on smiles, greetings, and salutations has also begun among staff, reflecting efforts to improve service quality in terms of attitudes and behavior.

Competence of Public Service Providers

The competence of staff is one of the most crucial dimensions in determining the quality of public services. Based on research, the competency of staff at SMA Negeri 2 Langowan is generally adequate, reflected in their ability to follow service procedures according to standard operating procedures (SOPs), respond quickly to community needs, and act as problem solvers when encountering issues during the service process.

The principal emphasized in interviews that each staff member is taught not to be carried away by the situation when facing problems, but rather to be able to master the situation and become a problem solver. This attitude reflects the institution's commitment to building a responsive service culture oriented toward customer satisfaction, as mandated by Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services.

However, several critical points require attention. First, service completion times are still relative and highly dependent on the presence of the principal, so there is no standardized and measurable time standard. Second, when service demand volumes are high, staff acknowledge that not all customers can be served optimally and some are missed. This situation indicates the need for additional human resource capacity or a more systematic division of tasks during peak hours.

Third, competency gaps remain in the public's understanding of service procedures. The lack of public awareness of procedures indirectly burdens officers with basic questions that could be addressed through more effective information channels. Therefore, improving officer competency needs to be balanced with a more proactive public communication strategy.

Regarding complaints handling, both the principal and the PTK stated that all public input and complaints are always welcomed and evaluated. The school has also provided a complaint channel, both directly through the school's desk and online through a comments and suggestions page. This feedback mechanism is a positive step in the ongoing effort to improve service quality.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that the performance of public service providers in processing Certificates at Senior High Schools in Minahasa Regency has not yet been considered optimal. This condition can be identified through the following aspects:

1. Service Mechanism

Public services can generally be regarded as fairly optimal. This is supported by the availability of information boards or announcements explaining the processing procedures and the requirements that must be fulfilled. Nevertheless, insufficient attention is still given by some members of the public, particularly regarding the required documents and procedures.

2. Facilities and Infrastructure

The facilities and infrastructure utilized in delivering services and preparing the required documents are still considered inadequate, especially in terms of capacity.

3. Competence of Service Providers

The competence possessed by service providers still needs to be improved in order to support more effective and efficient public services.

The recommendations in this research include:

1. Service Mechanism, such as: It is recommended that every member of the public visiting the school be provided with information on the necessary documents; There should be outreach to those who are less than compliant with the importance of administrative procedures; There should be additional vacant positions to ensure uninterrupted service delivery.
2. Facilities and Infrastructure, such as: Generators should be provided at schools to prevent delays in service; Additional laptops/computers and printers.
3. Competence of Service Providers, such as: Senior high schools in Minahasa Regency must continue to coordinate with each other to ensure the public adheres to administrative procedures; If any obstacles or factors, internal or external, are encountered during the service process, these should be communicated to the public, including the completion time and the obstacles encountered, to avoid miscommunication between the public and staff.

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