



Analysis Of Public Service Quality Using the SERVQUAL Model At The Majalengka Regency Department Of Population And Civil Registration

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Abstract

Background. The quality of population administration services is a critical determinant of public trust and effective governance, particularly in the issuance of birth and death certificates, which serve as essential legal documents. Despite improvements in Indonesia's public service performance, disparities in service quality remain evident at the local government level.

Aims. This study aims to analyze the quality of birth and death certificate services at the Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office using the SERVQUAL framework. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, with data collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis. Informants included service officers, service users, and village-level administrative representatives. Data were analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model through data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing, while credibility was enhanced through source and method triangulation.

Result. The findings indicate that service quality generally falls within the good to fairly good categories across the five SERVQUAL dimensions. Reliability and assurance emerged as the strongest dimensions, supported by standardized operating procedures, competent personnel, electronic verification, and digital signature systems that ensure service accuracy and legal certainty. In contrast, tangibles, responsiveness, and empathy remain constrained by limited physical facilities, high service demand, technical disruptions, and human resource capacity during peak service periods.

Conclusion. The study demonstrates that institutionalized service systems contribute to more consistent service quality than dimensions that rely primarily on individual staff performance.

Implication. These findings extend the application of SERVQUAL as a qualitative analytical framework in public administration and provide practical recommendations for strengthening infrastructure, human resource capacity, and interagency coordination to improve the consistency and sustainability of civil registration services.

Keywords: Public Service Quality; SERVQUAL; Population Administration; Civil Registration; Birth and Death Certificate.



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INTRODUCTION

Public service is a vital instrument through which the state fulfills citizens' rights, as mandated by Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services, which requires legal certainty, professionalism, transparency, accountability, timeliness, and accessibility. These normative standards correspond closely to the five SERVQUAL dimensions, making the model a suitable framework for evaluating how such principles are implemented in practice.

Improving public service quality remains a national bureaucratic reform priority: the 2024 Public Service Index reached 4.02 ("A – Very Good"), up from 3.93 the previous year. However, this national improvement masks regional disparities, particularly in population administration and civil registration services that directly affect citizens' legal rights.

Under Law No. 24 of 2013, local governments, through their Population and Civil Registration Offices, are responsible for issuing birth and death certificates, both of which carry significant legal weight in establishing an individual's civil status. At the regional level, the Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office has shown positive aggregate performance in public satisfaction surveys, but these figures do not necessarily capture the specific experience of birth and death certificate applicant services that differ markedly in urgency and emotional sensitivity, particularly death certificates, which often involve grieving applicants.

This study, therefore, examines birth and death certificate services through all five SERVQUAL dimensions, aiming to contribute theoretically by linking Law No. 25/2009's normative principles to a SERVQUAL-based analysis, and practically by providing an evaluative basis for the Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office to improve these services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Service Quality and the SERVQUAL Model

The government is said to have quality public service if it can meet citizens' needs fairly. (Sinambela, 2014) As cited in Hidayati et al (2019), Dwiyanto (2006) explains that the ability or capacity can be measured by the indicators of productivity, responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability, which are aligned with good governance and societal trust. The quality of service is influenced by the system, mechanism, and regulation as well as human resources' capacity. According to Wiharset, Employees' competence, integrity and

communication will affect the subjective assessment of the quality of their services by the public.

Tjiptono (2017) identifies five dimensions comprising overall service quality: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, later formalized by Parasuraman et al. (1988) into the SERVQUAL model, which measures quality as the gap between users' expectations and their actual perceptions of service. In this study, SERVQUAL was applied not as a numerical measurement but as a qualitative analytical framework, comparing applicable service standards (regulatory and internal) against the public's experience, based on interviews, observation, and documentation data.

Applied to birth and death certificate services, tangibles relate to facility conditions and staff appearance; reliability concerns accuracy and consistency in certificate issuance; responsiveness reflects staff readiness in handling requests, including sensitive cases such as delayed birth or death reporting; and assurance relates to staff competence and trustworthiness, particularly significant in death certificate services, which often involve situations of grief (Indrawati, 2022). These dimensions are interdependent: adequate facilities mean little without responsive staff, while procedural reliability must be paired with empathy—especially for applicants processing death certificates while mourning.

SERVQUAL's relevance to public services lies precisely in its capacity to identify this expectation–perception gap (Rifqi Handayani & Astuti, 2023). Empirical studies confirm reliability and responsiveness as the most common sources of quality gaps in government services, driven by inconsistent service delivery and slow response to public needs (Wanda & Nurcahyo, 2021; Tri Nugraha et al., 2024). Beyond evaluation, SERVQUAL also functions as a managerial framework: agencies are encouraged to focus not only on physical service aspects but also on the quality of official–public interactions (Widodo & Eprilianto, 2024), consistent with UNDP principles of transparency, accountability, and citizen-focused service (Kusuma & Suflani, 2019).

Relevant Previous Research

Three studies serve as the framing of this analysis. Kamumu et al. (2024) in their study, measured the service quality of Disdukcapil Boalemo Regency. The average service quality in all divisions is in the good category. This indicates that there are still barriers to the speed of issuing documents. The two most noteworthy factors that are still expected are reliability and

responsiveness of government officials. The study explains that service reliability is an important factor in the supply of population services.

The quality of eKTP services at the Disdukcapil West Bandung Regency was researched by Prihantoro et al. (2024). The community gives Assurance and Empathy the highest mean value. The community gives the highest score to women who are most courteous and friendly in providing information. By contrast, respondents give the lowest score to technical errors as well as computer update ineffectiveness.

Collectively, these studies confirm that civil registration service quality is context-dependent, shaped by organizational capacity, resources, and local community characteristics, with each study highlighting different dimensions as most critical. Building on these findings, this study offers a more comprehensive analysis by examining all five SERVQUAL dimensions concurrently at the Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office, using a qualitative descriptive approach to capture both public and official perspectives.

METHOD

Research Approach

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to gain an in-depth understanding of service quality and public perceptions at the Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office. Rather than testing hypotheses, the analysis focuses on interpreting the interaction process between officials and the public and the factors shaping service quality, with the researcher serving as the key instrument in data collection and interpretation.

Research Location and Time

Research was conducted in the Office of Population and Civil Registration of Majalengka Regency. The building is at KH. Jalan. Abdul Halim, Majalengka Kulon, Majalengka, West Java 364. The study takes place from November to December 2025. It is chosen with the authority of a direct administration population service. The Family Card, e-ktip, birth certificate, and death certificate are also included. On top of that, the community always complains.

Data Sources

The research used two types of data: primary and secondary. The primary data utilized observational techniques along with in-depth interviews with disengaged officials who handled services, service users, and parties at the village level in the service. The authors purposively sampled the informants based on considerations that they have knowledge and experience

(Sugiyono, 2017). The study uses secondary data from administrative documents of Disdukcapil such as SOPs, service reports, statistical data, and other reference documents in the form of laws and regulations, namely Law No.25/2009.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through semistructured interviews (guided by the five SERVQUAL dimensions but conducted flexibly), direct observation of service interactions and facility conditions, and documentation review of SOPs, service reports, and satisfaction survey results. These three techniques enabled triangulation of sources and methods, ensuring findings were not based on a single data type.

Data Analysis

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles & Huberman (1994), comprising data reduction (classifying findings by SERVQUAL dimension), data presentation (structured descriptive analysis across the five dimensions), and conclusion drawing, verified continuously by comparing information across sources.

Table 1. Operationalization of the SERVQUAL concept

Dimension	Indicator	Focus of Interview Questions
Tangible	Physical facilities, staff appearance	Facility availability, waiting area comfort
Reliability	Timeliness, SOP compliance	Process consistency, document accuracy
Responsiveness	Speed and responsiveness	Complaint and inquiry handling
Assurance	Comprehension, sense of security	Trust in officials, document legality
Empathy	Individual attention	Staff attitudes toward special needs

Data Validity

Data validity was strengthened through triangulation, comparing information across Disdukcapil officials, service users, and village-level parties (source triangulation), and confirming interview findings against direct observation and official documents (methodological triangulation) in line with Moleong's (2011) criteria of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability.

DISCUSSION

Overview of the Research Site

The Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office is a regional agency responsible for population administration and civil registration services, including Family Cards, eKTP, birth certificates, and death certificates. Following institutional restructuring between 2004 and 2019, population and civil registration affairs were consolidated into a single organization to strengthen service effectiveness at the local level. The agency's vision, "To provide excellent service that brings happiness to the community," reflects a service orientation extending beyond administrative compliance to citizens' overall experience, supported by a mission focused on improving service systems, strengthening human resources, developing service innovations, and providing adequate facilities. Services related to birth and death certificates fall under the Civil Registration Service Division, which plans, implements, monitors, and evaluates the registration of vital events, coordinated through a subunit responsible for document management, data verification, and service reporting.

Table 2. Summary of Findings by Dimension

Dimensions	Key Findings	Category
Tangible	Adequate facilities, but limited waiting space during peak hours	Fairly Good
Reliability	In accordance with SOPs and regulations	Good
Responsiveness	Responsive, but affected by workload	Fairly Good
Assurance	Public confidence is high	Good
Empathy	Humanistic, but situational	Fairly Good

Tangibles

Community and Disdukcapil perspectives on physical evidence differ somewhat in emphasis. The public views facilities as adequate and comfortable, noting the breastfeeding room, children's play area, and free drinking water: "the facilities are quite complete... So it's quite comfortable." However, this comfort is situational. During peak hours, the waiting area

becomes cramped: “When it’s crowded, the waiting room feels cramped... Especially since the building is quite old.”

Internally, Disdukcapil staff acknowledge that core facilities, computers, printers, network, and service applications are functional, supported by a clear queuing workflow, but capacity is limited relative to demand: “When there are a lot of applications, we get a bit overwhelmed,” with aging equipment slowing digital service delivery. The public perceives staff appearance positively, describing them as “neat and wear uniforms... professional and organized.”

Overall, tangible aspects meet basic public expectations but lack the capacity to absorb demand spikes- a gap in scalability rather than in facility existence itself.

Reliability

Services generally follow the established SOP timeline of one business day after document completion. The public considers service relatively fast and procedure-compliant, though consistency is affected by variation in submission timing, administrative errors requiring correction, resource limitations during demand surges, and incomplete applicant documentation. From a SERVQUAL perspective, this indicates that the service system itself functions well, but consistency requires improved accuracy and resource support rather than procedural redesign.

Responsiveness

Staff is perceived as responsive in explaining requirements and procedures: “If you ask a staff member, they usually explain right away.” Complaints are handled directly at the counter, though response quality declines during peak periods due to staffing limits: “When it’s busy, sometimes you have to wait because there aren’t enough staff members.”

Internally, Disdukcapil communicates through multiple channels in person, WhatsApp, social media, and village governments and handles complaints transparently, including explaining central system disruptions to the public. However, responsiveness remains constrained by limited staff during application surges, interagency coordination gaps (occasional delays in village-level document submission), and technical disruptions. This indicates that the primary weakness lies not in the communication strategy but in human resource capacity to absorb demand fluctuations.

Assurance

The assurance dimension is strong: the public expresses confidence in staff competence, service courtesy, and data security. This is institutionally supported by staff understanding of regulations and SOPs, regular training, restricted-access data security, and multilevel document verification with electronic signatures. From a SERVQUAL perspective, assurance strengthens not only individual trust but institutional legitimacy, making it, alongside reliability, one of the service's core strengths, since it depends on systemic safeguards rather than individual staff conditions.

Empathy

Empathy is generally positive: applicants report being treated politely and having documents processed without unnecessary complication: "they didn't make things difficult and explained everything clearly." However, empathy noticeably declines during heavy queues: "When it's crowded, the staff sometimes seem more indifferent." Internally, staff describe a deliberate humanistic approach for sensitive cases, particularly death certificates: "People applying for death certificates are usually grieving, so we try to speak politely and softly." Staff also adapt language (including local dialect) for clarity and coordinate with village governments to ease access for residents in remote areas. Unlike assurance, empathy's strength rests on individual staff discretion rather than institutional mechanisms, making it more vulnerable to workload fluctuations, as reflected in the decline of interaction quality during peak periods.

Across the five SERVQUAL dimensions, a consistent pattern emerges: gaps in service quality are not evenly distributed but concentrated in dimensions dependent on individual staff capacity and situational conditions, while dimensions anchored in institutional systems remain comparatively stable. The tangible dimension illustrates this clearly. The gap lies not in the absence of facilities but in their inability to scale with demand fluctuations, echoing Pandriansyah & Sigiro's (2024) finding in Empat Lawang Regency that adequate facilities under normal conditions do not guarantee stable quality perception under high load. Physical evidence, as Tjiptono (2017) suggests, must therefore be evaluated across varying service conditions rather than ideal ones alone. Similarly, reliability's overall strength masks the fact that processing time variation stems from external factors- submission timing and document completeness- rather than unclear procedures, supporting Dwiyanto's (2006) argument that bureaucratic reliability cannot be measured by SOP compliance alone but by consistency amid

varying inputs. Kamumu et al. (2024) found comparable patterns at Boalemo's Disdukcapil, where technical and workload constraints, not procedural design, drove reliability inconsistencies, suggesting that improvement efforts should target workload management rather than SOP revision.

Responsiveness reveals a similar structural gap: communication channels are already multichannel and well-organized, yet handling capacity remains tied to staff numbers. This aligns with Wanda & Nurcahyo's (2021) observation that public official responsiveness depends more on organizational capacity than individual willingness, meaning that strengthening this dimension requires structural investment, not merely service-level adjustments. By contrast, assurance stands out as the dimension least affected by workload fluctuation, its strength rooted in systemic investment- multitiered verification, electronic signatures, and integration with the national population database- rather than individual staff competence alone. This mirrors Prihantoro et al.'s (2024) identification of assurance as civil registration services' primary strength, and supports Dwiyanto's (2006) view that bureaucratic legitimacy is strongest when legal certainty and data security are systematically guaranteed.

Empathy, however, exhibits the opposite pattern: its strength stems from individual staff discretion rather than institutionalized mechanisms, making it more easily compromised under workload pressure, evident in the decline of interaction quality during peak periods. This supports Tjiptono's (2017) view that empathy depends heavily on personal interaction, though it also diverges from Prihantoro et al. (2024), where empathy remained comparatively stable in eKTP services, suggesting that the emotional sensitivity of death certificate services demands a distinct, higher capacity for empathy than more routine administrative services.

Based on what we've seen, the dimensions institutionalized through systems and regulation reliability and assurance remain relatively stable even where workers or service pressure are not. While those dimensions that depend on individual ability and motivation tangibles, responsiveness, and empathy still remain more susceptible to workload fluctuation. This generally agrees with previous research (Pandriansyah & Sigiyo, 2024 on tangibles; Kamumu et al., 2024 on reliability), which, although they take on different emphases, all point towards the notion that gaps in quality of public service more often relate to structural and organizational capacity limitations rather than breaches of regulations. The same institutionalizing process that has been seen for reliability and assurance, for example, standardized workload management procedures, will likely be required to strengthen tangibles,

responsiveness, and empathy so that service quality in these dimensions will no longer depend on the conditions of field workers.

CONCLUSION

This study finds that the quality of birth and death certificate services at the Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office generally falls into the “fairly good” to “good” categories across the five SERVQUAL dimensions. Reliability and assurance emerge as the strongest dimensions, anchored in institutional systems, SOP compliance, staff competence, and electronic verification and signature mechanisms that remain stable regardless of workload fluctuations. Tangibles, responsiveness, and empathy, by contrast, remain vulnerable to demand spikes, technical disruptions, and interagency coordination gaps, as their strength depends more heavily on individual staff capacity and situational conditions than on institutionalized systems. These findings confirm that public trust in the legal validity of civil registration documents is well established, yet the overall service experience still requires strengthened human resources and infrastructure to sustain consistent quality, particularly during periods of high application volume. Theoretically, this study affirms the relevance of SERVQUAL as a qualitative analytical framework for identifying patterns of institutional strength and vulnerability in civil registration services. Practically, its findings are intended to serve as evaluative input for the Majalengka Regency Population and Civil Registration Office, particularly in strengthening staff capacity, service facilities, and interagency coordination to ensure consistent service quality over the long term.

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