PUBLICUS: Jurnal Administrasi Publik

Explaining Public Service Quality at the Village Level: Administrative Capacity, Transparency, Digitalization, and Citizen Participation

Zulfachry[1*], Zul Rachmat[2]

[1]Public Administration Study Program, Faculty of Social Sciences, Puangrimaggalatung University, Indonesia
[2]Informatics Management Study Program, Amika Soppeng College of Management and Computer Science, Indonesia
*Correspondence E-Mail: zulfachri25@gmail.com

Abstract

Public service quality at the village level is a key indicator of governance effectiveness, citizen satisfaction, and institutional legitimacy, particularly in decentralized administrative systems. In Indonesia, village governments act as the frontline of public administration, delivering essential services such as population administration, civil registration, and community development facilitation. Despite decentralization reforms and increased fiscal authority, variations in service quality across rural villages remain a persistent challenge. This study investigates the determinants of public service quality in Goarie Village, Soppeng Regency, South Sulawesi. It examines the influence of human resource capacity, transparency and accountability of village fund management, digital administration implementation, and community participation. A quantitative explanatory approach was applied using a cross-sectional survey design. Data were collected from 120 residents who had accessed village administrative services within the previous twelve months. Structured questionnaires were used to capture citizens' perceptions, and the data were analyzed through descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression analysis. The results suggest that governance and administrative factors play a significant role in shaping perceived public service quality. Human resource capacity and community participation emerged as the most influential determinants, emphasizing the importance of administrative competence and citizen engagement. Transparency and accountability also contributed positively, while digital administration showed a supportive but comparatively moderate effect. These findings highlight the multidimensional nature of village-level service quality and the need for integrated governance strategies.

Keywords: Public Service Quality, Village Governance, Human Resource Capacity, Transparency and Accountability, Community Participation, Rural Public Administration.

INTRODUCTION

Public service quality remains a central concern in public administration, as it reflects government performance, institutional effectiveness, and public trust. High-quality public services are widely recognized as fundamental to democratic governance because they shape citizens' daily interactions with the state and influence perceptions of legitimacy and accountability (Osborne, 2021; Van de Walle

& Bouckaert, 2022). In decentralized governance systems, the responsibility for delivering public services increasingly shifts to local administrative units, making service quality at the grassroots level a critical determinant of governance success (Ansell & Torfing, 2021).

In Indonesia, village governments represent the lowest yet most strategic tier of public administration. Villages function as the primary interface between citizens and the state, particularly in rural areas where access to higher-level government institutions may be limited. Village administrations are responsible for delivering essential services, including civil registration, population administration, social assistance facilitation, and development planning. Since the implementation of decentralization and village autonomy policies, villages have been granted expanded authority and fiscal resources, accompanied by heightened expectations regarding governance performance and service delivery outcomes (Wahyudi & Purnomo, 2020; Warna et al., 2024).

Despite policy reforms aimed at strengthening local governance, disparities in public service quality persist across rural villages. Empirical studies suggest that variations in service quality are influenced by administrative capacity, governance practices, technological readiness, and citizen engagement (Kim & Park, 2022; Lapuente & Van de Walle, 2020). Rural administrations frequently face structural constraints such as limited human resource competencies, inadequate infrastructure, and uneven adoption of digital systems. These challenges often result in procedural delays, inconsistent service standards, and reduced citizen satisfaction (Tummers & Bekkers, 2018).

Public service quality is commonly conceptualized as the degree to which services meet or exceed citizens' expectations in terms of reliability, responsiveness, accessibility, fairness, and transparency. Contemporary public administration literature increasingly emphasizes a citizen-centered perspective, arguing that service quality should be evaluated through users' perceptions rather than solely administrative metrics (Osborne et al., 2016; Osborne, 2021). This perspective is particularly relevant at the village level, where service encounters are direct, personalized, and embedded in everyday governance interactions.

One of the most widely acknowledged determinants of public service quality is human resource capacity. The competence, professionalism, and ethical conduct of public officials significantly shape service effectiveness. Frontline bureaucrats influence not only procedural outcomes but also citizens' perceptions of fairness, responsiveness, and institutional credibility (Moynihan & Pandey, 2020). In village governments, where administrative staff often operate with limited specialization and training, individual competencies become a decisive factor in determining service performance (Rajamemang et al., 2025). Research indicates that deficiencies in administrative skills and service orientation can negatively affect citizen satisfaction and trust (Kim & Park, 2022).

In addition to administrative capacity, transparency and accountability have emerged as critical governance principles affecting service quality. Transparency enhances citizens' access to information regarding decision-making processes and resource allocation, while accountability ensures that public officials are answerable for their actions (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020). In the Indonesian village governance context, transparency and accountability are particularly salient due to the substantial allocation of village funds. Effective and transparent financial management practices can strengthen public trust and improve citizens' evaluations of governance and service delivery (Warna et al., 2024). Conversely, weak governance mechanisms may erode trust and negatively influence perceived service quality (Porumbescu, 2017).

The expansion of digital administration and e-government initiatives represents another transformative trend in public service delivery. Digital technologies are expected to enhance efficiency, reduce administrative burdens, and improve accessibility (Mergel et al., 2019). However, evidence suggests that the impact of digitalization is contingent upon contextual factors such as infrastructure availability, digital literacy, and organizational readiness (Wirtz & Daiser, 2018; Meijer & Bolívar, 2016). In rural areas, limited connectivity and unequal technological capacity may constrain the effectiveness of digital service innovations (Meijer et al., 2017). Consequently, digital administration often functions as a complementary rather than dominant determinant of service quality in village contexts.

Equally important is community participation, which has gained increasing attention within collaborative and participatory governance frameworks. Participation enables citizens to engage in

decision-making processes, express service needs, and contribute to governance outcomes (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Nabatchi et al., 2017). Participatory mechanisms can enhance service relevance, strengthen accountability, and improve institutional legitimacy (Fung, 2020). Empirical studies demonstrate that higher levels of citizen participation are associated with improved perceptions of service quality, particularly in local governance settings (Cepiku et al., 2020; Sicilia et al., 2019). At the village level, participation is frequently institutionalized through consultative forums and development planning meetings, reinforcing the relational dimension of governance.

Although scholarly attention to public service quality has expanded considerably, several research gaps remain. First, much of the literature focuses on national or urban governance contexts, with relatively limited empirical evidence from rural village administrations (OECD, 2021). Second, existing studies often examine determinants such as administrative capacity, governance transparency, or digitalization independently rather than through an integrated analytical framework (De Vries et al., 2018). Third, contextual diversity across villages necessitates localized investigations to capture governance dynamics specific to rural environments (Kim & Park, 2022).

This study addresses these gaps by examining the determinants of public service quality in Goarie Village, Soppeng Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The research adopts a multidimensional perspective by analyzing the influence of human resource capacity, transparency and accountability of village fund management, digital administration implementation, and community participation. By focusing on citizens' perceptions, the study aligns with citizen-centered service quality frameworks that emphasize experiential evaluations of governance performance (Osborne, 2021).

The contribution of this research is threefold. Empirically, it provides quantitative evidence from a rural Indonesian village context that remains underrepresented in international public administration discourse. Theoretically, it integrates key determinants of service quality into a unified analytical model, reinforcing the relevance of multidimensional governance perspectives. Practically, the findings are expected to inform village administrators and policymakers in designing strategies to enhance service quality through strengthened administrative capacity, improved governance transparency, effective digital support, and inclusive participatory mechanisms.

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a quantitative explanatory research design to examine the determinants of public service quality at the village level. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables systematic measurement of relationships among variables and allows hypothesis testing through statistical analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The explanatory design was considered appropriate as the study aimed to analyze causal relationships between governance-related factors and perceived public service quality rather than merely describing phenomena (Field, 2020).

A cross-sectional survey design was applied, where data were collected at a single point in time. Cross-sectional surveys are widely used in public administration research to assess citizen perceptions, organizational performance, and governance outcomes efficiently (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2022).

Research Location

The research was conducted in Goarie Village, Soppeng Regency, South Sulawesi, Indonesia. The village was selected purposively as it represents a typical rural administrative unit responsible for delivering population administration services, facilitating development programs, and managing village funds under Indonesia's decentralization framework. Rural village governments provide an important empirical setting for studying service quality due to their direct interaction with citizens and relatively constrained institutional capacity (Wahyudi & Purnomo, 2020).

Population and Sample

The population consisted of residents of Goarie Village who had accessed village administrative services within the previous twelve months. Service users were chosen as the target population because

citizen-centered public service research emphasizes that users' experiences provide the most valid basis for evaluating service quality (Osborne, 2021).

The sample was determined using purposive sampling, with the following criteria:
1. Registered residents of Goarie Village
2. Aged 17 years or older
3. Had direct interaction with the village administrative services

A total of 120 respondents were included in the study. This sample size is considered adequate for multiple regression analysis and consistent with quantitative standards in social science research (Hair et al., 2022).

Research Variables and Operational Definitions

This study examined one dependent variable and four independent variables.
1. Public Service Quality (Dependent Variable)
   Public service quality was defined as citizens' perceptions of how well village services met their expectations in terms of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and accessibility. The measurement framework was adapted from public service logic and citizen satisfaction literature (Osborne et al., 2016; Osborne, 2021).
2. Human Resource Capacity
   Human resource capacity refers to the competence, professionalism, administrative skills, and ethical conduct of village officials in delivering services. Prior research highlights that frontline bureaucrats significantly shape service effectiveness and citizen satisfaction (Moynihan & Pandey, 2020; Rajamemang et al., 2025).
3. Transparency and Accountability of Village Fund Management
   Transparency and accountability were defined as the extent to which village financial management processes are open, accessible, and subject to public oversight. Governance literature emphasizes that transparency enhances trust and perceived fairness (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020; Porumbescu, 2017).
4. Digital Administration Implementation
   Digital administration refers to the utilization of digital technologies to support administrative services, including efficiency, ease of access, and procedural simplification. Studies on digital transformation highlight its role in improving service delivery while acknowledging contextual constraints (Mergel et al., 2019; Wirtz & Daiser, 2018).
5. Community Participation
   Community participation refers to citizen involvement in governance processes such as decision-making, consultation, and evaluation of services. Participatory governance research links citizen engagement with improved service relevance and legitimacy (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Fung, 2020).

Data Collection Technique

Primary data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed directly to respondents. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree (1) to strongly agree (5). Likert scales are widely used in governance and service quality studies to capture perceptions, attitudes, and evaluative judgments (Field, 2020).

Prior to full deployment, the instrument was pilot-tested to assess clarity, wording, and contextual relevance. Feedback from the pilot test was used to refine questionnaire items (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Validity testing was conducted using item–total correlation analysis to ensure that each measurement item adequately represented its construct. Items exceeding the acceptable correlation threshold were retained (Hair et al., 2022).

Reliability testing employed Cronbach's Alpha to assess internal consistency. Alpha values above 0.70 were considered acceptable, indicating reliable measurement instruments (Field, 2020).

Data Analysis Technique

Data analysis was performed using statistical software and consisted of several stages:

1. Descriptive Statistics

   Descriptive analysis was conducted to summarize respondent characteristics and variable distributions (Field, 2020).

2. Classical Assumption Tests

   To ensure the suitability of regression analysis, classical assumptions were tested:
   - Normality Test – To assess residual distribution
   - Multicollinearity Test – Using tolerance and VIF values
   - Heteroscedasticity Test – To examine residual variance

   These tests are essential to avoid biased regression estimates (Hair et al., 2022).

3. Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

   Multiple regression analysis was applied to examine the simultaneous and partial effects of human resource capacity, transparency and accountability, digital administration, and community participation on public service quality. Regression analysis is widely applied in public administration research to test explanatory models involving governance determinants (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2022).

   Statistical significance was evaluated at the 0.05 level.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered to ethical principles in social research. Participation was voluntary, respondents were informed about the study's purpose, and anonymity and confidentiality were maintained. Ethical research practices are critical in perception-based governance studies to ensure data integrity and respondent protection (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

The results section presents the empirical findings derived from the statistical analysis conducted in this study. It begins with a description of respondents' demographic characteristics, followed by descriptive statistics of the research variables. Subsequent analyses include instrument validity and reliability testing, classical assumption tests, and multiple linear regression results. These findings provide quantitative evidence regarding the relationships between human resource capacity, transparency and accountability, digital administration, community participation, and public service quality in Goarie Village.

Characteristics of Respondents

This study analyzed responses from 120 residents of Goarie Village who had accessed village administrative services within the last twelve months. Understanding respondent characteristics is essential, as demographic attributes such as age, gender, and educational attainment often influence citizens' perceptions of public service quality (Kim & Park, 2022).

The gender distribution was relatively balanced, with 51.7% male and 48.3% female respondents, suggesting equitable access to village services across genders. This balance indicates that administrative services are utilized broadly within the community rather than dominated by a particular gender group.

In terms of age, the majority of respondents belonged to the productive age categories. Citizens aged 26–35 years (35.0%) formed the largest group, followed by those aged 36–45 years (31.7%). Younger respondents aged 17–25 years represented 15.0%, while respondents above 45 years accounted for 18.3%. This pattern reflects the reality that economically active citizens more frequently require administrative documents, permits, and certifications (Osborne, 2021).

Educational attainment showed that senior high school graduates (43.3%) constituted the largest proportion, followed by junior high school graduates (28.3%), higher education graduates (16.7%), and

primary school graduates (11.7%). This distribution is consistent with typical rural demographic profiles in Indonesia (Wahyudi & Purnomo, 2020).

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	62	51.7
	Female	58	48.3
Age	17–25 years	18	15.0
	26–35 years	42	35.0
	36–45 years	38	31.7
	>45 years	22	18.3
Education	Primary school	14	11.7
	Junior high school	34	28.3
	Senior high school	52	43.3
	Higher education	20	16.7

Source: Research Results, 2025.

The demographic profile suggests that perceptions of public service quality primarily reflect the experiences of citizens actively engaged in administrative and socio-economic activities. Prior studies indicate that individuals in productive age groups tend to evaluate service efficiency and responsiveness more critically (Kim & Park, 2022).

Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables
Descriptive statistical analysis was conducted to assess respondents' general perceptions of public service quality and its determinants. Mean scores and standard deviations provide insight into central tendencies and response variability (Field, 2020).

The results indicate that public service quality in Goarie Village was perceived positively, with a mean score of 3.79, exceeding the midpoint of the Likert scale. This finding suggests that respondents generally evaluated village administrative services as satisfactory.

Among the independent variables, human resource capacity (Mean = 3.86) and community participation (Mean = 3.83) recorded the highest mean values. These results imply that respondents perceived village officials as relatively competent and acknowledged opportunities for citizen involvement in governance processes.

Transparency and accountability (Mean = 3.64) also received favorable evaluations, though slightly lower than administrative and participatory dimensions. Meanwhile, digital administration (Mean = 3.49) had the lowest mean score among the variables, indicating more varied perceptions of digital service effectiveness.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics of Variables

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Public Service Quality	3.79	0.53
Human Resource Capacity	3.86	0.48
Transparency and Accountability	3.64	0.57
Digital Administration	3.49	0.60

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Community Participation	3.83	0.51

Source: Research Results, 2025.

The relatively higher mean scores for human resource capacity and participation align with studies suggesting that interpersonal interactions and inclusive governance practices strongly shape service evaluations in rural contexts (Osborne, 2021; Sicilia et al., 2019).

The comparatively lower mean for digital administration suggests that while digital systems are present, they may not yet be fully optimized or universally accessible. This observation is consistent with research indicating that digital transformation in rural areas is often constrained by infrastructure and digital literacy gaps (Mergel et al., 2019).

Instrument Validity and Reliability Results

Prior to hypothesis testing, the measurement instrument underwent validity and reliability assessment to ensure data quality (Hair et al., 2022).

Construct validity was evaluated through item–total correlation analysis. All measurement items exceeded the acceptable threshold, indicating that each item appropriately represented its underlying construct.

Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha revealed strong internal consistency across variables. Alpha coefficients ranged from 0.79 to 0.87, exceeding the recommended minimum of 0.70 (Field, 2020).

Table 3. Reliabilitiy Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha
Public Service Quality	0.87
Human Resource Capacity	0.83
Transparency and Accountability	0.81
Digital Administration	0.79
Community Participation	0.85

Source: Research Results, 2025.

These results confirm that the measurement instrument was statistically reliable and suitable for regression analysis. High reliability coefficients indicate that respondents' answers were consistent across items measuring the same constructs (Hair et al., 2022).

Classical Assumption Test Results

To ensure the appropriateness of multiple linear regression analysis, classical assumptions were tested (Field, 2020).

- Normality Test: Residuals were normally distributed.
- Multicollinearity Test: Tolerance values > 0.10 and VIF < 10 indicated no multicollinearity.
- Heteroscedasticity Test: No systematic residual variance patterns were observed.

These findings confirm that the regression model met statistical assumptions and that coefficient estimates could be interpreted reliably (Hair et al., 2022).

Regression Model Results

Multiple linear regression analysis was conducted to evaluate the combined effect of the independent variables on public service quality.

The regression model produced an R Square (R²) of 0.621, indicating that 62.1% of the variance in public service quality was explained by human resource capacity, transparency & accountability, digital administration, and community participation.

Table 4. Regression Model Summary

R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
0.788	0.621	0.607	0.33

Source: Research Results, 2025.

The relatively high explanatory power suggests that public service quality at the village level is strongly influenced by governance-related factors. This finding supports multidimensional governance models emphasizing the interaction of administrative, institutional, technological, and participatory determinants (Ansell & Torfing, 2021).

Partial Effects of Independent Variables

Regression coefficient analysis revealed that all independent variables had positive and statistically significant effects on public service quality.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

Variable	B	Std. Error	t-value	Sig.
Constant	0.806	0.28	2.88	0.005
Human Resource Capacity	0.318	0.07	4.54	0.000
Transparency and Accountability	0.291	0.08	3.61	0.001
Digital Administration	0.172	0.06	2.87	0.005
Community Participation	0.341	0.07	4.92	0.000

Source: Research Results, 2025.

Human resource capacity demonstrated a strong positive effect (B = 0.318, p < 0.001). This result indicates that higher perceived competence and professionalism of village officials significantly improved citizens' evaluations of service quality. This finding is consistent with public administration literature emphasizing the central role of frontline bureaucrats in shaping service effectiveness and satisfaction (Moynihan & Pandey, 2020). In rural village contexts, where administrative interactions are highly interpersonal, official competence becomes particularly critical (Rajamemang et al., 2025).

Transparency and accountability also showed a significant positive effect (B = 0.291, p = 0.001). Respondents who perceived village fund management as transparent and accountable tended to evaluate service quality more favorably. This result supports governance theories linking transparency to trust, legitimacy, and perceived fairness (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020). Citizens' service evaluations appear influenced not only by direct interactions but also by broader governance practices (Porumbescu, 2017).

Digital administration had a positive but comparatively weaker effect (B = 0.172, p = 0.005). While digital systems contributed to improved service quality perceptions, their impact was less pronounced than human resource and participation factors. This finding aligns with research indicating that digitalization in rural areas often functions as an enabling mechanism rather than a dominant determinant due to infrastructure and literacy constraints (Mergel et al., 2019; Wirtz & Daiser, 2018).

Community participation emerged as the strongest predictor (B = 0.341, p < 0.001). Citizens who perceived higher involvement in village governance reported better service quality evaluations. This result strongly supports participatory governance frameworks, which argue that citizen engagement enhances service relevance, accountability, and legitimacy (Ansell & Torfing, 2021; Fung, 2020). Participation appears to foster alignment between services and community needs (Sicilia et al., 2019).

Discussion

This discussion section interprets the empirical findings in relation to existing theories and prior studies in public administration and governance literature. The analysis focuses on explaining how each determinant influences public service quality within the context of rural village governance. The findings are critically examined to highlight theoretical implications, contextual relevance, and practical significance. Through this interpretation, the study aims to situate the results within broader debates on administrative capacity, good governance, digital transformation, and citizen participation.

Human Resource Capacity and Public Service Quality

The findings demonstrate that human resource capacity has a strong and statistically significant influence on public service quality in Goarie Village. This result reinforces the core proposition in public administration literature that the competence, professionalism, and service orientation of frontline officials are fundamental determinants of service effectiveness (Moynihan & Pandey, 2020). At the village level, where administrative encounters are direct and personalized, citizens' evaluations of service quality are closely tied to their experiences with village staff.

The strong regression coefficient observed in this study suggests that citizens prioritize accuracy, responsiveness, and clarity of communication in administrative services. This aligns with citizen-centered service frameworks emphasizing that public service quality is experienced relationally rather than procedurally (Osborne, 2021). When village officials demonstrate competence and professionalism, citizens are more likely to perceive services as reliable and trustworthy.

This finding is consistent with empirical studies indicating that administrative capacity significantly shapes citizen satisfaction in decentralized governance systems (Kim & Park, 2022). In rural contexts, where bureaucratic specialization is often limited, individual competencies play an even more decisive role (Rajamemang et al., 2025). The results therefore highlight the critical importance of continuous training, skills development, and ethical reinforcement for village officials.

Transparency, Accountability, and Perceived Service Quality

The study reveals that transparency and accountability of village fund management significantly affect public service quality perceptions. This finding confirms that citizens evaluate service quality not solely through direct service encounters but also through broader governance practices. Transparency serves as an institutional signal of integrity, fairness, and openness, which enhances trust in government institutions (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020).

In Goarie Village, respondents who perceived village financial management as transparent and accountable tended to report higher satisfaction with public services. This supports prior research linking governance transparency with institutional legitimacy and citizen trust (Porumbescu, 2017). When citizens believe that public resources are managed responsibly, they are more inclined to evaluate government performance positively, including service delivery.

The findings align with studies emphasizing that accountability mechanisms strengthen perceptions of procedural justice and fairness (Van de Walle & Bouckaert, 2022). Particularly in Indonesia, where village governments manage substantial fiscal transfers, transparency and accountability are crucial for sustaining public confidence (Warna et al., 2024). Weak governance practices may generate skepticism that negatively influences service quality perceptions even when services are technically adequate.

Thus, this study underscores that good governance is inseparable from service quality. Administrative performance and governance integrity function interactively in shaping citizens' evaluations.

Digital Administration and Service Quality Improvement

The results indicate that digital administration implementation has a positive yet comparatively weaker effect on public service quality. This finding reflects the nuanced reality of digital transformation in rural governance contexts. While digital technologies are expected to improve efficiency, accessibility, and procedural simplification, their impact is often moderated by infrastructural and socio-technical constraints (Mergel et al., 2019).

In Goarie Village, digital tools appear to contribute to service improvement but have not yet become dominant determinants of perceived quality. This observation aligns with research suggesting that digitalization in rural areas is constrained by limited connectivity, uneven digital literacy, and partial organizational readiness (Wirtz & Daiser, 2018). Consequently, digital administration functions more as a complementary support mechanism rather than a transformative driver.

The findings are consistent with studies arguing that technological innovations do not automatically produce improved citizen satisfaction unless supported by institutional capacity and user readiness (Meijer et al., 2017). In many village administrations, hybrid service models—combining face-to-face interactions with digital support—remain more effective than fully digital systems (Meijer & Bolívar, 2016).

This study therefore suggests that digital transformation strategies at the village level should prioritize:

- Infrastructure development
- Digital literacy programs
- Integration with existing administrative workflows

Without these supporting conditions, digital systems may produce only modest improvements in service quality.

Community Participation as a Dominant Determinant

One of the most significant findings of this study is that community participation emerged as the strongest predictor of public service quality. This result strongly supports participatory and collaborative governance theories, which emphasize citizen involvement as a central mechanism for improving public sector outcomes (Ansell & Torfing, 2021).

Higher levels of perceived participation were associated with better evaluations of village services. This finding suggests that citizens value opportunities to engage in governance processes, express service needs, and contribute to decision-making. Participation enhances perceptions of service relevance, fairness, and legitimacy (Fung, 2020).

The results are consistent with empirical studies demonstrating that participatory governance practices positively influence citizen satisfaction and trust (Cepiku et al., 2020). At the village level, participation often occurs through development planning meetings, consultative forums, and informal deliberative mechanisms. These interactions strengthen the relational dimension of governance and foster alignment between policies and community priorities (Sicilia et al., 2019).

Importantly, participation may also function as a mediating mechanism that amplifies the effects of other determinants. For example:

- Competent officials are more effective when citizens actively engage
- Transparent governance is more meaningful when citizens monitor processes
- Digital tools are more impactful when citizens are digitally literate

Thus, participation appears not only as an independent determinant but also as a reinforcing governance mechanism.

Integrated Governance Perspective on Service Quality

The combined results of this study indicate that public service quality in Goarie Village is best understood through an integrated governance framework. Rather than being driven by a single dominant factor, service quality emerges from the interaction of:

- Administrative capacity
- Governance integrity
- Technological support
- Citizen engagement

This conclusion aligns with contemporary public service logic, which conceptualizes value creation as co-produced through interactions between institutions and citizens (Osborne et al., 2016; Osborne, 2021).

The relatively high explanatory power of the regression model (R^2 = 0.621) confirms that these governance dimensions collectively shape citizens' service evaluations. This supports arguments that fragmented or isolated reforms are less effective than holistic governance strategies (De Vries et al., 2018).

For rural village administrations, this implies that improving service quality requires:

1. Strengthening human resource competencies
2. Institutionalizing transparency and accountability mechanisms
3. Expanding inclusive participation channels
4. Gradually optimizing digital administration

These elements must be developed synergistically rather than independently.

Implications for Rural Public Administration

The findings offer important implications for village governance policy and practice.

First, human resource development should remain a priority. Training programs focusing on administrative skills, digital competencies, and ethical standards can directly enhance service quality (Rajamemang et al., 2025).

Second, governance reforms should emphasize transparency and accountability. Public disclosure mechanisms, participatory budgeting, and accessible financial reporting can strengthen trust and legitimacy (Grimmelikhuijsen et al., 2020).

Third, participation mechanisms must be inclusive and meaningful. Tokenistic participation may not yield improvements in perceived quality. Instead, villages should foster deliberative engagement and feedback systems (Fung, 2020).

Fourth, digital transformation strategies should be adaptive to rural contexts. Overemphasis on technological solutions without addressing structural constraints may produce limited outcomes (Mergel et al., 2019).

Theoretical Contribution

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to public administration literature by empirically validating a multidimensional model of public service quality at the village level. While prior research has extensively examined service quality in urban or national contexts, empirical studies focusing on rural village administrations remain limited (OECD, 2021).

The findings reinforce three theoretical propositions:

1. Service quality is relational and perception-based (Osborne, 2021)
2. Administrative capacity remains foundational (Moynihan & Pandey, 2020)
3. Participation enhances governance legitimacy and effectiveness (Ansell & Torfing, 2021)

CONCLUSION

Conclusion

This study concludes that public service quality at the village level is fundamentally shaped by the institutional capacity and governance dynamics embedded within local administrative practices. Public services in rural governance settings cannot be understood solely through procedural efficiency or regulatory compliance, but rather through the interaction between administrative competence, governance integrity, technological adaptation, and citizen engagement. Village governments operate as the closest representation of the state in citizens' everyday lives, making service quality an essential dimension of public trust, legitimacy, and governance effectiveness.

The findings reinforce the relevance of citizen-centered public administration perspectives, which emphasize that service quality is socially constructed through users' experiences and perceptions. In village governance contexts, where administrative encounters are direct and relational, both institutional performance and governance behavior contribute to how services are evaluated. Public service quality therefore emerges not merely as an operational outcome but as a reflection of how governance structures function in practice.

The study also highlights the importance of adopting a multidimensional governance framework in analyzing service quality. Administrative capacity, accountability mechanisms, participatory processes, and digital support systems represent interconnected components rather than isolated determinants.

Improvements in service delivery require coherence among these governance elements to ensure sustainability and legitimacy. Fragmented reforms or single-focus interventions may produce limited or temporary effects if not supported by broader institutional alignment.

From a theoretical standpoint, this research contributes to the public administration literature by providing empirical evidence from a rural village setting, an area that remains underrepresented in governance and service quality studies. The study strengthens arguments for integrated governance approaches in decentralized systems and underscores the continuing significance of relational governance at the grassroots level.

Recommendation

Based on the study's conclusions, several strategic recommendations are proposed to enhance public service quality in village governance contexts.

First, village governments should prioritize continuous human resource development. Capacity-building initiatives must extend beyond technical administrative training to include communication skills, ethical standards, problem-solving abilities, and adaptive competencies. Strengthening the professionalism and service orientation of village officials is critical for sustaining citizen trust and improving administrative effectiveness.

Second, governance reforms should reinforce transparency and accountability mechanisms, particularly in village fund management. Institutionalizing accessible financial reporting systems, community oversight forums, and routine public disclosure practices can strengthen perceptions of fairness and legitimacy. Transparency should be embedded as a governance culture rather than treated as a compliance requirement.

Third, village administrations should expand and deepen community participation mechanisms. Participation should be inclusive, deliberative, and meaningful, enabling citizens to contribute to decision-making, service evaluation, and development planning. Strengthening feedback channels and collaborative forums can foster mutual trust and improve service responsiveness to local needs.

Fourth, digital administration initiatives should be implemented gradually and contextually. Policymakers must ensure that digital transformation is supported by adequate infrastructure, user-friendly platforms, and digital literacy programs. Technology adoption should complement, rather than replace, human-centered service interactions, particularly in rural areas with uneven technological access.

Fifth, policymakers at the district and regional levels should provide institutional support and supervision to village governments. This includes facilitating training programs, strengthening monitoring systems, improving intergovernmental coordination, and ensuring equitable resource allocation. Village service quality improvements require systemic support across governance levels.

Last, future research is encouraged to adopt comparative and longitudinal approaches. Examining multiple villages across regions and tracking governance and service quality changes over time would enrich understanding of contextual variations and causal dynamics. Incorporating qualitative insights may also deepen interpretation of citizen experiences and institutional behavior.

REFERENCES

Ansell, C., & Torfing, J. (2021). *Public governance as co-creation: A strategy for revitalizing the public sector*. Cambridge University Press.

Cepiku, D., Marsilio, M., & Sicilia, M. (2020). The co-production of public services: Management and governance implications. *Public Management Review, 22*(8), 1107–1128.

Creswell, J. W., & Creswell, J. D. (2023). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (6th ed.). Sage Publications.

De Vries, H., Tummers, L., & Bekkers, V. (2018). The diffusion and adoption of public sector innovations: A meta-synthesis. *Public Administration Review, 78*(2), 146–158.

Field, A. (2020). *Discovering statistics using IBM SPSS statistics* (5th ed.). Sage Publications.

Fung, A. (2020). Varieties of participation in complex governance. *Public Administration Review, 80*(4), 585–595.

Grimmelikhuijsen, S., Porumbescu, G., Hong, B., & Im, T. (2020). The effect of transparency on trust in government: A cross-national comparative experiment. *Public Administration Review, 80*(3), 433–447.

Hair, J. F., Hult, G. T. M., Ringle, C. M., & Sarstedt, M. (2022). *A primer on partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM)* (3rd ed.). Sage Publications.

Kim, S., & Park, H. (2022). Determinants of citizen satisfaction with local public services in decentralized governance systems. *Local Government Studies, 48*(6), 1045–1064.

Lapuente, V., & Van de Walle, S. (2020). The effects of new public management on public service quality. *Public Administration, 98*(3), 607–626.

Meijer, A., & Bolívar, M. P. R. (2016). Governing the smart city: A review of the literature on smart urban governance. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 82*(2), 392–408.

Meijer, A., Curtin, D., & Hillebrandt, M. (2017). Open government: Connecting vision and voice. *International Review of Administrative Sciences, 83*(1), 4–22.

Mergel, I., Edelmann, N., & Haug, N. (2019). Defining digital transformation: Results from expert interviews. *Government Information Quarterly, 36*(4), 101385.

Moynihan, D. P., & Pandey, S. K. (2020). The role of organizations in fostering public service motivation. *Public Administration Review, 80*(1), 12–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13101

OECD. (2021). *Government at a glance 2021*. OECD Publishing.

Osborne, S. P. (2021). *Public service logic: Creating value for public service users, citizens, and society*. Routledge.

Osborne, S. P., Radnor, Z., & Nasi, G. (2016). A new theory for public service management? Toward a (public) service-dominant approach. *Public Management Review, 18*(5), 639–661.

Porumbescu, G. (2017). Linking transparency to trust in government and voice. *Public Administration Review, 77*(6), 829–839.

Rajamemang, A. S., Prasojo, E., & Kurniawan, T. (2025). Human resource capacity and public service quality in decentralized local government. *Public Organization Review, 25*(2), 289–305.

Sicilia, M., Guarini, E., Sancino, A., Andreani, M., & Ruffini, R. (2019). Public services management and co-production in multi-level governance settings. *Public Management Review, 21*(2), 247–267.

Tummers, L., & Bekkers, V. (2018). Policy implementation, street-level bureaucracy, and service quality. *Public Management Review, 20*(4), 509–528.

Van de Walle, S., & Bouckaert, G. (2022). Public service performance and trust in government: The problem of causality. *International Journal of Public Administration, 45*(1), 1–13.

Wahyudi, A., & Purnomo, E. P. (2020). Village governance and public accountability in Indonesia. *Journal of Asian Public Policy, 13*(3), 320–337.

Warna, D., Hamzani, A. I., & Rusmita, S. A. (2024). Transparency and accountability of village fund management and public trust in local government. *Journal of Asian Public Policy, 17*(2), 210–225.

Wirtz, B. W., & Daiser, P. (2018). E-government strategy process instruments. *Public Management Review, 20*(3), 364–387.