(REVIEW ARTICLE)

Evaluating land certification services quality: Insights from bone Bolango regency's public service performance

Mega Putri Sari *, Asna Aneta and Muchtar Ahmad

Postgraduate, State University of Gorontalo, Indonesia.

Abstract

This study examines the quality of land certification services at the Bone Bolango Land Office, focusing on land rights transfer processes. The research aims to assess service delivery using the SERVQUAL framework, evaluating five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The study addresses persistent inefficiencies, including delays, procedural complexity, and public dissatisfaction, while proposing actionable solutions to improve service quality. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed, integrating data from interviews, observations, and document analysis. The data were analyzed using an interactive model to identify patterns and discrepancies in service delivery. This methodology enabled an in-depth exploration of user experiences and systemic challenges. Findings reveal strengths in staff responsiveness and infrastructure adequacy, though issues in reliability and assurance, such as frequent delays and reliance on intermediaries, significantly hinder service effectiveness. Empathy and responsiveness were moderately satisfactory but constrained by understaffing and procedural bottlenecks. Recommendations include infrastructure upgrades, digital integration, staff training, and the establishment of formal feedback mechanisms to enhance service efficiency and user satisfaction. This study contributes to public service reform by offering region-specific insights into improving land administration services. The findings highlight the importance of tailored solutions and provide a foundation for future research on digital innovations and comparative analyses in land service delivery.

Keyword: Public Service Quality; Land Administration Efficiency; SERVQUAL in Regional Governance; Public service

1. Introduction

Public service delivery is a fundamental responsibility of governments worldwide, aimed at meeting societal needs and ensuring equitable access to essential resources. High-quality public services enhance government credibility, promote citizen trust, and contribute to socio-economic development. Conversely, inefficiencies in public service provision can lead to dissatisfaction, distrust, and stagnation across economic, political, social, and cultural dimensions. In Indonesia, public service quality remains a persistent challenge, evidenced by bureaucratic inefficiencies, prolonged procedures, and limited responsiveness. Subekti (2022) highlighted that Indonesia's bureaucratic processes often appear excessively convoluted and inefficient, deterring citizen satisfaction. Such systemic issues underscore the critical need for reforms that align with the principles of good governance to address the growing demand for transparent, efficient, and responsive public services (Widanti, 2022). In this context, land administration services, a key domain of public service, play a vital role in ensuring legal certainty, facilitating infrastructure development, and promoting socio-economic equity.

The significance of land services extends beyond administrative efficiency. Effective land administration supports natural resource management, urban and rural planning, and economic development. The Ministry of Agrarian Affairs

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* Corresponding author: Mega Putri Sari

and Spatial Planning/National Land Agency (ATR/BPN) serves as the principal institution overseeing land administration in Indonesia. Through its local offices, the ATR/BPN ensures services such as land registration, certification, boundary determination, and dispute resolution. However, these services frequently fall short of citizen expectations due to delays, high costs, and procedural complexity. For instance, reports from Ombudsman and local governments highlight repeated public grievances concerning prolonged processing times, excessive fees, and lack of transparency. Such inefficiencies impede investment, infrastructure projects, and public trust, necessitating a critical examination of service delivery mechanisms to address these systemic shortcomings.

The primary research problem addressed in this study is the persistent inefficiency and dissatisfaction associated with land certification services in Bone Bolango Regency. Despite existing regulations, such as ATR/BPN Regulation No. 1 of 2010 on Land Service Standards, significant discrepancies exist between prescribed service standards and actual performance. Observations reveal that citizens often rely on intermediaries to navigate complex procedures, exacerbating costs and delays. Moreover, inadequate staffing and a lack of integrated data systems further hinder service efficiency. This study investigates these issues by evaluating the quality of land services through a structured framework encompassing tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These dimensions, as outlined by Zeithaml et al. (1990), offer a comprehensive lens to assess service quality and identify actionable areas for improvement.

Existing literature provides valuable insights into the challenges and solutions related to land service quality. Studies by Putra (2023) and Paningkat (2020) reveal that public dissatisfaction often stems from physical inadequacies, such as insufficient waiting areas and poor infrastructure, as well as systemic issues like outdated data systems and procedural bottlenecks. Furthermore, Parasuraman et al.'s SERVQUAL model has been widely adopted to evaluate public service quality, emphasizing the importance of responsiveness and empathy in addressing public concerns. These findings suggest that enhancing infrastructure, simplifying procedures, and fostering empathetic interactions are pivotal to improving land services. However, these studies also highlight a critical gap in the contextual adaptation of these frameworks to regional challenges, such as those in Bone Bolango Regency.

While general solutions, including digitization and process streamlining, are proposed across studies, region-specific analyses remain scarce. For instance, the application of online queue systems and electronic land registration has proven effective in urban settings but faces challenges in rural areas with limited digital literacy and infrastructure (Shandy, 2017). Additionally, the integration of community feedback mechanisms into service delivery processes remains underexplored. By addressing these gaps, this study contributes to the broader discourse on public service reform and its practical implications for regional development.

A focused examination of previous studies indicates that public dissatisfaction with land services in Bone Bolango is compounded by socio-economic factors and administrative inefficiencies. Despite the enactment of ATR/BPN Regulation No. 1 of 2010, local implementation often deviates from stipulated standards due to resource constraints and procedural complexities. This study builds on the work of Rohaeni and Marwa (2018), which emphasized the critical role of tangible infrastructure and empathetic service delivery in fostering citizen trust. However, while their research addressed urban contexts, this study seeks to bridge the gap by exploring these dimensions in the rural setting of Bone Bolango Regency.

The present study seeks to evaluate the quality of land certification services in Bone Bolango Regency by focusing on service delivery mechanisms for land title transfers due to sale transactions. This focus addresses a frequently contested area of service provision that attracts significant public grievances. By employing the SERVQUAL dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—this research identifies specific shortcomings and proposes tailored recommendations. The study contributes to the literature by offering a region-specific analysis that incorporates citizen feedback, highlighting practical interventions to enhance service quality and align with good governance principles. The findings aim to inform policymakers and practitioners in designing responsive, efficient, and citizen-centric land services.

2. Methodology

This study employs a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the quality of land certification services at the Bone Bolango Land Office, with a specific focus on land rights transfer processes. Qualitative research is particularly suitable for examining complex social phenomena, as it enables an in-depth exploration of behaviors, perceptions, and interactions (Miles & Huberman, 1994). The descriptive design provides a systematic framework for understanding service quality dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—within the context of public land services.

The research was conducted at the Bone Bolango Land Office, a key administrative institution responsible for land services in the region. Data collection occurred between 2021 and 2023, encompassing both field observations and retrospective analyses of service performance. This time frame was chosen to capture longitudinal trends and identify recurring challenges in service delivery.

Primary data were collected through in-depth interviews and direct observations. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including service users, administrative staff, and stakeholders involved in land rights transfer processes. These interviews aimed to capture firsthand experiences and insights into service quality. The selection of informants followed purposive sampling criteria, ensuring representation from various demographic and professional groups.

Secondary data were gathered from official documents, reports, and archival records from the Bone Bolango Land Office. These sources included procedural guidelines, performance metrics, and complaint logs, which provided context and corroborative evidence for the primary data.

The data collection methods employed in this study included interviews, observations, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted using both structured and semi-structured formats, allowing for detailed responses while providing flexibility for follow-up questions. The interview guide was meticulously developed based on the SERVQUAL framework to ensure alignment with the study's objectives. Additionally, non-participant observations were carried out at service counters to assess tangible aspects such as infrastructure adequacy and employee performance. These observations offered valuable insights into real-time interactions between service providers and recipients, highlighting operational dynamics and service delivery challenges. Document analysis further complemented the data collection process by reviewing relevant records to understand procedural compliance, service timelines, and resource allocation. This triangulated approach ensured a comprehensive understanding of the service quality dimensions under investigation.

Data analysis employed an interactive model, as proposed by Miles and Huberman (1994). This model involves iterative stages of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing to ensure rigor and coherence in the analysis. Thematic coding was applied to identify patterns and relationships across the five SERVQUAL dimensions. Particular attention was given to identifying discrepancies between service standards and actual delivery practices.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the findings, the study incorporated triangulation across data sources and methods. Triangulation enhanced the credibility of the conclusions by cross-verifying information obtained from interviews, observations, and document reviews. Additionally, peer debriefing and member checks were conducted to minimize researcher bias and validate interpretations.

Ethical protocols were adhered to throughout the research process. Informed consent was obtained from all interview participants, ensuring voluntary participation and confidentiality. Permission was also secured from the Bone Bolango Land Office for data access and field observations. The research adhered to ethical guidelines for qualitative studies, safeguarding the rights and privacy of all stakeholders involved.

The study focuses on the land rights transfer services at the Bone Bolango Land Office, specifically examining service quality dimensions as experienced by users and observed in institutional practices. While the findings provide valuable insights, they may not be generalizable to other regions or types of land services. Future research could expand the scope by including comparative analyses across multiple land offices or exploring the integration of digital systems in service delivery.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Overview of Land Certification Services in Bone Bolango Regency

The Bone Bolango Land Office plays a pivotal role in land administration, offering services including land registration, data maintenance, and rights transfer. These services are essential for ensuring legal certainty, facilitating economic development, and supporting infrastructure projects. However, public feedback and internal assessments reveal substantial discrepancies between service standards and actual delivery. This section evaluates the results of the study, structured around the five SERVQUAL dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—to provide a comprehensive analysis of the quality of land certification services.

3.2. Tangibles: Physical Evidence of Service Quality

The tangible aspects of service quality encompass the adequacy of physical infrastructure, equipment, and communication materials. Observations at the Bone Bolango Land Office revealed that while the office building is structurally sound and capable of accommodating service users, several facilities require improvement. For instance, the waiting area, though functional, lacks sufficient seating capacity during peak hours, causing discomfort to visitors. Additionally, limited parking space and inadequate signage were identified as barriers to accessibility.

Document reviews corroborate these findings, highlighting that insufficient infrastructure has been a recurring issue in annual service performance evaluations. For example, Putra (2023) emphasized that tangible deficiencies, such as poorly maintained facilities, negatively impact the overall user experience. Addressing these issues through targeted investments in infrastructure and facility upgrades is critical to enhancing user satisfaction.

3.3. Reliability: Consistency and Accuracy in Service Delivery

Reliability pertains to the ability of the service provider to deliver consistent and accurate outcomes. The study found mixed results in this dimension. While certain services, such as electronic land title verification (HT EL), adhered to stipulated timelines, others, including rights transfer processes, frequently exceeded the standard operating procedure (SOP) deadlines outlined in ATR/BPN Regulation No. 1 of 2010.

Data from the Bone Bolango Land Office indicate that 36% of rights transfer applications were delayed beyond the prescribed five-day processing period between 2021 and 2023. Interviews with staff and users attributed these delays to a combination of factors, including understaffing, procedural bottlenecks, and incomplete documentation submissions by applicants. These findings align with Paningkat (2020), who noted that reliability in land services is often compromised by organizational inefficiencies and a lack of integrated data systems.

To address reliability challenges, the introduction of standardized workflows and enhanced staff training is recommended. Additionally, integrating digital systems to streamline document verification and processing could significantly improve service consistency.

3.4. Responsiveness: Promptness in Addressing User Needs

Responsiveness reflects the willingness and ability of service providers to address user needs promptly. Interviews and observations revealed that frontline staff exhibited a commendable degree of responsiveness, particularly in handling routine inquiries and guiding applicants through procedures. However, responsiveness diminished when dealing with complex cases, such as land disputes or irregular documentation.

The lack of a formalized feedback mechanism further hampers the responsiveness dimension. Service users reported difficulties in escalating unresolved issues due to unclear escalation protocols and limited communication channels. These findings are consistent with Rohaeni and Marwa (2018), who emphasized the critical role of responsiveness in building trust and satisfaction in public services.

Introducing an integrated feedback system, coupled with periodic training in conflict resolution, can enhance responsiveness. Such measures would not only improve service delivery but also foster a more user-centric approach to addressing grievances.

3.5. Assurance: Building Confidence Through Expertise and Reliability

Assurance relates to the competence, courtesy, and trustworthiness of service providers. The study found that staff at the Bone Bolango Land Office demonstrated adequate technical expertise, particularly in routine tasks such as data maintenance and certification issuance. However, instances of inconsistent communication and delayed responses to inquiries were reported, undermining user confidence.

The office's reliance on intermediaries, such as notaries or village officials, for documentation processing was a notable concern. While intermediaries facilitate access for some users, their involvement often introduces additional costs and risks of miscommunication. This reliance indicates a need for greater self-sufficiency among service users, as well as more robust internal communication protocols.

Investing in continuous professional development and establishing clear communication guidelines can enhance assurance. As noted by Parasuraman et al. (1988), trust and confidence are critical components of service quality, necessitating ongoing efforts to maintain professional standards.

3.6. Empathy: Personalized Attention to User Needs

Empathy encompasses the capacity to provide individualized attention and demonstrate understanding of user circumstances. Observations revealed that frontline staff generally displayed courteous and respectful behavior, contributing positively to the user experience. However, limitations in staff availability and high workloads often hinder personalized service delivery.

Service users expressed a desire for greater flexibility in accommodating unique circumstances, such as expedited processing for urgent applications. These sentiments are consistent with findings from Dewi and Suparno (2022), who highlighted the importance of empathy in fostering satisfaction and loyalty in public services.

Addressing staffing shortages and promoting a culture of empathy through targeted training programs can significantly improve this dimension. Additionally, adopting flexible policies for urgent cases would further align services with user expectations.

3.7. Challenges in Implementing Service Standards

Despite the existence of comprehensive service standards under ATR/BPN Regulation No. 1 of 2010, their implementation at the Bone Bolango Land Office remains inconsistent. Key challenges include insufficient staff numbers relative to workload demands, limited integration of digital tools, and inadequate inter-agency coordination.

The study identified a lack of real-time data sharing between the Bone Bolango Land Office and other government agencies as a significant barrier to efficient service delivery. This limitation often results in redundant verifications and prolonged processing times. Paningkat (2020) emphasized that integrated data systems are crucial for overcoming such challenges, underscoring the need for coordinated efforts to modernize land administration processes.

Recommendations for Service Improvement

Based on the findings, the following recommendations are proposed to enhance the quality of land certification services:

- Infrastructure Development: Upgrade physical facilities, including waiting areas and parking spaces, to improve accessibility and comfort for service users.
- Digital Integration: Implement electronic systems for document verification and tracking to streamline workflows and reduce delays.
- Capacity Building: Provide regular training for staff to enhance technical skills, communication abilities, and conflict resolution capabilities.
- Feedback Mechanisms: Establish formal channels for user feedback and grievance redressal to promote transparency and responsiveness.
- Inter-Agency Coordination: Develop integrated data systems to facilitate seamless collaboration between the land office and other relevant agencies.

3.8. Bridging the Research Gap

While existing studies have explored various dimensions of service quality, this study uniquely focuses on the specific challenges faced in Bone Bolango Regency. By applying the SERVQUAL framework in a regional context, the research provides actionable insights for addressing both structural and procedural inefficiencies. The findings contribute to the broader discourse on public service reform, highlighting the importance of tailored solutions to meet local needs.

4. Conclusion

This study evaluated the quality of land certification services at the Bone Bolango Land Office using the SERVQUAL framework, focusing on five dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The findings highlight notable strengths, such as the courteous behavior of staff and the structural adequacy of office facilities. However, significant weaknesses persist, particularly in reliability and assurance, where delays, understaffing, and reliance on intermediaries undermine service effectiveness. Responsiveness and empathy were moderately satisfactory but constrained by limited staff availability and procedural bottlenecks.

The study underscores the critical need for infrastructure upgrades, enhanced staff training, and the integration of digital tools to streamline service delivery and improve reliability. Establishing clear feedback mechanisms and

fostering inter-agency data integration are also vital to addressing systemic inefficiencies. These recommendations aim to align land services with public expectations, fostering trust and satisfaction.

This research contributes to the broader discourse on public service reform by providing a region-specific analysis and actionable insights for improving land administration services. Future research could explore the effectiveness of digital innovations in rural contexts or comparative analyses across multiple land offices, thereby broadening the understanding of public service delivery challenges and solutions.

Compliance with ethical standards

Disclosure of conflict of interest

No conflict of interest to be disclosed.

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