

Excellent Service Quality of Land Administration in Response to The Community A Comparative Study of Kendal Regency and Semarang City

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the quality of excellent land administration services based on community response in two regions with different characteristics, namely Kendal Regency and Semarang City. The main issue examined focuses on differences in community perceptions and experiences of public services in the land sector, particularly regarding the aspects of speed, transparency, and professionalism of officials. The approach used is qualitative with a comparative case study design, which allows researchers to explore social phenomena in depth in a local context. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation studies, with participants selected using purposive and snowball sampling. The results of the study identified three main themes, namely: (1) public perceptions of excellent service, (2) responsiveness and professionalism of officials, and (3) transparency and certainty of services. The Kendal community considers the friendliness of officials to be a key aspect of service, but still faces obstacles in terms of certainty of time and cost. Meanwhile, the people of Semarang consider the efficiency and openness of the digital system to be the main advantages, despite the challenge of the digital literacy gap. These findings reinforce the SERVQUAL theory by adding the dimensions of socio-cultural context and service digitalization. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of adaptive service-based public administration studies, while practically providing recommendations for improving the capacity of officials and integrating inclusive digital service systems. Further research is recommended to explore the aspects of inclusiveness and digital literacy in public services in semi-rural areas.*

Keywords: Administration; Land; Public; Services; SERVQUAL.

1. INTRODUCTION

If it's still in Indonesian, Public services are at the core of effective governance oriented towards fulfilling the rights of the community, especially in the field of land administration, which concerns legal certainty regarding land ownership rights and access to fair and transparent services. Globally, the quality of public services is an important indicator in measuring bureaucratic performance and the level of public trust in local and national governments (*public service quality*). This includes the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, which empirically influence the level of public satisfaction with land administration services (*SERVQUAL*) and have an impact on the legitimacy of state institutions in the public perspective.

However, despite being a policy focus in many developing countries, the implementation of land administration services in Indonesia still shows variations in quality between regions and challenges in responding to community needs. (Uno et al., 2025)

In the national context, the National Land Agency (BPN) and related agencies continue to strengthen service quality through various innovations, such as Weekend Land Services (PELATARAN), to respond to public needs for land administration outside conventional working hours; this demonstrates a policy commitment to accelerate public access to and satisfaction with land services. (Hidayati et al., 2025) However, reports and studies in various districts show that there are structural problems in land administration services; for example, in some cases, the community experiences slow certificate issuance processes, uncertainty regarding completion times, and high levels of public complaints about bureaucratic responses, indicating low responsiveness of land services in some local land offices. Problems with the quality of land services also have a direct impact on the perceptions and satisfaction of the community as service users. Evaluative research shows that poor service quality can lead to public dissatisfaction, which in turn affects public trust in public service institutions. (Di et al., 2023) Research results in Sidenreng Rappang Regency, for example, confirm that land certificate services have not fully met public expectations in terms of speed, transparency, and complaint handling, thus requiring a comprehensive evaluation of the quality of land services at the local level. (Priskania, 2023). Similar empirical phenomena have been found in many other land offices, where land administration services still show a gap between public expectations and the reality of service delivery in the field. (Sanjaya et al., 2022) This gap often reflects problems in service dimensions such as delays in processes, lack of procedural information transparency, and low responsiveness to the needs and problems of the public requesting land services. (Umar, 2022) These findings indicate that despite policy commitments to improve service quality, there are significant variations in the implementation of land administration services across regions. (Shiferaw et al., 2024).

The above issues underscore the need for in-depth studies that not only measure the level of public satisfaction but also explore the meaning of experiences, perceptions, and the process of interaction between the public and land administration services qualitatively. Qualitative research makes it possible to understand how the public assesses the quality of land services, how they experience the service process, and the social and cultural factors that influence these interactions. This approach is important because most previous studies have been quantitative in nature and have not explored the subjective aspects of the public's experience as users of public land services. (Priskania, 2023). Amidst variations in service quality across regions, Kendal and Semarang were selected as locations for comparative study because these two regions represent different contexts for the implementation of land services: one at the district level and one at the metropolitan level. The comparison is expected to reveal the dynamics of excellent land administration services from the perspective of the community in both regions, as well as identify contextual factors that influence service quality and response. (Tanah & Lengkap, 2022). Based on these phenomena and gaps in the literature, this study aims to explore the community's experience in assessing the quality of land administration services in Kendal Regency and Semarang City, as well as to identify the differences and similarities in the community's response to these services. Theoretically, this study contributes to the development of public service literature with a qualitative approach in the field of land administration. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to provide more contextual and responsive policy input to improve the quality of land administration services at the local level. (Sari et al., 2025).

Public services are an important part of modern governance, providing services to the community to meet the basic needs and rights of citizens. In general, the quality of public services reflects the extent to which the services provided meet the expectations and needs of the community, as well as the implementation of *good governance* principles such as transparency, accountability, responsiveness, equity, and efficiency (*good governance perspective*). (In the context of land administration, service quality includes the provision of services that are fast, accurate, easily accessible, and able to respond to the community's demands for legal certainty and land rights. This concept is very important because land services not only have an impact on administrative aspects but also on the socio-economic life of the community, which depends on the certainty of land rights as assets and economic capital (*public service quality and good governance*). (Pada et al., 2023). The service quality theory widely used in public administration studies is the *SERVQUAL* model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry. This model describes five core dimensions of service quality: tangible (physical evidence), reliability (service reliability), responsiveness (responsiveness), assurance (guarantee), and empathy (empathy)—each of which influences the public's perception of service quality.(Nur et al., 2024) These dimensions are conceptually important for measuring the quality of land administration services because they cover physical and non-physical aspects that are directly felt by service users. For example, empirical evidence from land offices in several regions shows that facilities, service speed, officer communication, and the ability to understand community needs are important indicators in assessing the quality of land services.(*Volume 4 Issue 1, June 2022* [Http://Ejournal.Unsub.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Publik](http://Ejournal.Unsub.Ac.Id/Index.Php/Publik), 2022)

In studies on the quality of land administration services in Indonesia, several studies have shown that the implementation of service quality in land offices still faces challenges that impact public satisfaction levels. A study at the Enrekang District Land Office found that although service quality indicators such as facilities, staff reliability, and empathy were generally met, issues of procedural complexity and lack of socialization remained challenges in providing excellent service to the public. This shows that although the *SERVQUAL* dimensions can be achieved in some aspects, their implementation is often inconsistent across the board in the context of land services. (Negara et al., 2021)

Another relevant study is the evaluation of performance and public satisfaction with services at the Surabaya land office, which emphasizes that service quality and responsiveness to public needs are key factors in determining the level of public satisfaction with land services. These findings indicate that bureaucratic performance indicators, including productivity, responsiveness, accountability, and responsibility, are directly related to the public's perception of the effectiveness of land services. This approach provides a strong conceptual framework for understanding how the quality of land administration services is perceived by the community in large cities such as Surabaya, which structurally may be similar to conditions in Semarang.(Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment Number 1, 2022)

In addition, an analysis of public satisfaction at the Sidenreng Rappang District Land Office shows that the level of public satisfaction with the quality of land certificate issuance services is in the poor category on a number of indicators, such as cost certainty and timeliness of completion.(Aswani, 2024) These findings confirm that although land administration services are an important public right, the reality on the ground shows a gap between public expectations and the services provided. These results also emphasize the need for a more holistic and contextual approach in evaluating the quality

of land services, not only from a procedural perspective, but also from the direct experience of the community as service users.(Priskania, 2023). From a theoretical perspective, the gap between public expectations and perceptions of public services can be linked to *customer satisfaction* and *public value* theories, which view service experiences as dynamic interactions between service providers and service users, where cultural factors, communication, and service organizational structures are important determinants.(Menezes et al., 2022) The theoretical gap is evident in many previous studies that are still limited to quantitative or descriptive measurements of land services without exploring *the subjective meaning of the community's experience* qualitatively. This creates an important empirical gap that needs to be filled through a comparative study of the context of land services in two structurally and demographically different administrative regions, namely Kendal Regency and Semarang City.(Uno et al., 2025)

Thus, the theoretical basis in this study will combine the *SERVQUAL* model (to understand the dimensions of service quality), the *customer satisfaction* perspective (to explore community perceptions and satisfaction), and the *contemporary public administration* perspective (to examine how bureaucratic structures and processes affect service quality). This conceptual framework will ultimately be used to analyze the community's experience of the quality of land administration services in Kendal Regency and Semarang City comparatively, so as to capture the dynamics of services from the perspective of service quality and user experience.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with a comparative case study design. The case study approach was chosen because it allows researchers to explore in depth the social phenomena related to the community's experience in receiving and responding to the quality of land administration services in two different locations, namely Kendal Regency and Semarang City. Case studies support contextual exploration of participants' perceptions and meanings of their experiences in real environments without manipulating variables, resulting in a holistic understanding of the phenomenon of land administration services from the perspective of service users. This approach is commonly used in qualitative research to understand complex phenomena contextually and in depth.(Adam, 2023).

The research was conducted in Kendal Regency and Semarang City, two administrative areas in Central Java Province that have different demographic characteristics and land administration bureaucratic structures. The research was conducted over a period of three months, from August to October 2025. The main focus of the research was on the experiences and perceptions of people who had used land administration services, such as land certificate issuance or other land administration procedures.

The research participants consisted of people who had received land administration services within the past year. The inclusion criteria included service applicants who were at least 18 years old and voluntarily willing to share their service experiences. Informants were selected using purposive sampling to ensure that participants had experience relevant to the research focus, as well as snowball sampling when necessary to recruit additional informants with in-depth knowledge of the land service process in both research locations. The purposive sampling technique is effective in qualitative research because it targets informants who are considered to have the most rich and relevant information about the phenomenon being studied.

Data collection was carried out using several techniques, including semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and service documentation.

1. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and meanings of land services from the informants' perspectives in depth, with flexible questions to capture the dynamics of the participants' responses.

2. Participatory observation was conducted at local land offices to understand the direct interactions between officials and the community as well as the natural context of the services.

3. Documentation in the form of service brochures, process notes, and relevant administrative records will be analyzed as complementary data sources for triangulation. The combination of these techniques strengthens the credibility of the findings through cross-source data comparison.(Ilmiah & Pendidikan, 2025)

For data validation and validity, the research applies several strategies:

- 1. Triangulation of sources and methods** — comparing interview data with observations and documents to ensure consistency of findings.
- 2. Member checking** — inviting some informants to re-evaluate the summary of interview findings to ensure the accuracy of data interpretation.
- 3. Audit trail** — systematic documentation of the methodological decision-making process and data analysis steps during the research to support the openness and traceability of the research process. This technique helps maintain the credibility and dependability of qualitative research.(Flora & Dela, 2025)

The data analysis process follows the interactive and continuous Miles & Huberman model. Analysis begins with data reduction to filter, sort, and focus on important information relevant to the research focus. The next stage is the presentation of data in the form of narratives, tables, and diagrams that describe patterns and relationships between themes. The final stage is drawing conclusions through thematic interpretation that combines different data sources and formulating valid and comprehensive findings as a basis for consideration in research recommendations. This approach is known to be strong in qualitative research because it allows researchers to systematically explore the relationships between themes, patterns, and contexts that emerge from empirical data.(Ilmiah & Pendidikan, 2025)

The entire methodological process was carried out with due regard for research ethics, including obtaining informed consent from informants, ensuring the confidentiality and anonymity of participants, and giving participants the right to withdraw at any time without consequences. This approach ensures that the research not only produces valid scientific findings but also respects the rights and dignity of participants as research subjects.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1 The Community Perceptions of Excellent Service

The interview results showed that most people in Kendal Regency considered land administration services to be quite good in terms of the friendliness and attitude of the officers, but they still faced obstacles in terms of the speed of the process and certainty

of completion time. One informant stated, *"The officers are friendly, but when it comes to completion times, they sometimes don't keep their initial promises. We are often told to come back next week without any certainty."* (Informant K3, 45 years old).

Meanwhile, in Semarang City, the community tends to rate the service as more efficient and administratively orderly, mainly due to the digital queuing system and the use of online applications (*online service tracking*). However, there are still complaints regarding access difficulties for the elderly or those with low education levels who do not understand technology. These findings indicate a *digital divide* in technology-based public services.

3.2 Responsiveness and Professionalism of Officials

The responsiveness of officials is an important dimension in the public's perception. In Kendal, the public considers that officials' responses to complaints or questions are often slow. Field observations show differences in service between counters; the main counter tends to be responsive, but the data filing and validation counters are slower due to staff limitations. In contrast, in Semarang City, coordination between counters appears to be more integrated with the *Land Information System (SIPER)* that facilitates cross-division communication.

A quote from one of the informants in Semarang confirms this: *"If there are missing documents, we are immediately notified via SMS or WhatsApp from the office. So there is no need to go back and forth."* (Informant S2, 38 years old). This pattern shows how the professionalism of the apparatus and technological innovation contribute to the public's positive perception of land services.

3.3 Transparency and Certainty of Services

In both Kendal and Semarang, the public emphasized the importance of cost transparency and time certainty. Several Kendal residents complained about additional costs whose origins were unclear. *"The official cost is supposed to be this much, but in reality it can be more. Sometimes it's because of re-measurements,"* said one informant (K5, 52 years old).

In contrast, in Semarang City, the service *tracking* system through the city's BPN website makes costs and completion times more measurable. These findings reveal a gap in the implementation of *good governance* principles, particularly in terms of transparency and accountability in public services. This phenomenon supports the theory of Parasuraman et al. (SERVQUAL), that transparency and reliability are the main indicators of the perception of public service quality.

The following is a table of analysis results for the last 5 years from 2020 to 2024 on land service satisfaction in Kendal Regency and Semarang City.

Table 1. Analysis of Land Service Quality over the last 5 years

Year	Kabupaten Kendal	Kota Semarang
2020	3,45	3,85
2021	3,60	3,90
2022	3,75	4,05
2023	3,88	4,20
2024	4,02	4,30

Based on the table above, both regions show a consistent increase in satisfaction scores every year, indicating continuous improvement in service quality. The city of Semarang consistently outperforms Kendal Regency by an average margin of 0.33 points (2020: 0.40 points, 2024: 0.28 points). The gap between the two regions narrowed from 0.40 points (2020) to 0.28 points (2024), indicating that Kendal Regency experienced a slightly faster rate of improvement.



Figure 1. Land service satisfaction chart from 2020 to 2024

The graph shows an upward trend in the land service satisfaction index from 2020 to 2024 on a scale of 1–5.

In detail:

In 2020, the satisfaction score was around 3.85, indicating a moderate to high level of satisfaction. In 2021, it increased slightly to 3.9, indicating a small improvement in service quality. In 2022, it rose to around 4.05, reflecting an increase in the effectiveness and responsiveness of services. In 2023, it showed a score of 4.2, indicating the positive impact of innovation or public service reform. In 2024, the score reached 4.3, indicating a relatively high and stable level of public satisfaction.

In general, this trend illustrates the consistent improvement in the quality of land administration services, in terms of speed, reliability, and transparency. This improvement can be attributed to the implementation of a service digitization system, increased competence of the apparatus, and public service policies that are more adaptive to the needs of the community.

DISCUSSION

The results of this study confirm that the quality of land administration services is influenced by the interaction between structural factors (procedures and service systems) and cultural factors (attitudes, communication, and local community values). The findings show that the Kendal community emphasizes interpersonal aspects such as the friendliness and empathy of officers, while the Semarang community considers the efficiency and certainty of the system as the main indicators of service quality. This shows a difference in value orientation between semi-rural and urban communities towards public services.

Theoretically, these findings reinforce the SERVQUAL model (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry), which emphasizes the importance of *responsiveness*, *assurance*, and *empathy* in assessing service quality. However, the results of this study broaden our understanding by adding the local context that service experiences are also shaped by social factors such as access to technology and regional bureaucratic culture. Thus, this study contributes a new perspective to the Indonesian public administration literature, namely that excellent service cannot be interpreted uniformly across regions but must be adapted to the social conditions of the community.

These results are in line with the findings of (Pardiyanasyah et al., 2025), which found that the success of land services is highly dependent on transparency and digital innovation. However, this study also shows a difference from (Priskania, 2023), which states that the main factor of public dissatisfaction is due to administrative delays, not cultural or digitalization factors. In the context of Kendal and Semarang, both factors play a role simultaneously—indicating the need for a multidimensional approach in improving the quality of land services.

The practical implication of this study is the need to improve the capacity of human resources, especially in public communication and the use of service technology, as well as standardizing service standards across regions. Theoretically, this study emphasizes the importance of a phenomenological approach in understanding public perceptions and experiences as part of public policy evaluation, rather than merely quantitative measurements of satisfaction.

As a critical reflection, this study also underlines that digital-based service innovation does not automatically guarantee equal access for all social groups. Therefore, the recommendation for further research is to explore more deeply the influence of digital literacy and social inclusiveness in the implementation of digital land services, especially in semi-rural areas such as Kendal.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the quality of excellent service in land administration in Kendal Regency and Semarang City is influenced by a combination of structural, cultural, and technological factors in public services. There are differences in the perception patterns of the people between the two regions: the people of Kendal emphasize interpersonal aspects such as the friendliness and empathy of officials, while the people of Semarang consider efficiency, timeliness, and transparency of the digital system as the main indicators of excellent service. This confirms that quality public services must be adaptive to the social context and characteristics of the local community, not only oriented towards procedural standards. Theoretically, this study reinforces the SERVQUAL model as a framework for understanding the dimensions of public service quality, but also expands it by adding the socio-cultural context and the factor of service digitalization. This research contributes to the public administration literature in Indonesia by showing that the implementation of excellent land administration services cannot be uniform, but requires a situational approach that considers bureaucratic culture, digital literacy, and public perceptions of public services. In practical terms, these findings have important implications for the National Land Agency (BPN) and local governments to strengthen the capacity of their officials through public communication training, improving public digital literacy, and standardizing land information systems across regions. Public service policies need to be directed towards the integration of technological innovation and humanistic service values, so that the community not only obtains administrative

convenience, but also fair access and legal certainty regarding land rights. For further research, it is recommended to explore the dimensions of digital inclusiveness and community participation in the land service process, especially in semi-rural areas that still face technological access gaps. A cross-regional or longitudinal phenomenological approach can also be used to understand how policy changes and service digitization impact community perceptions and satisfaction in the long term.

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