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The Influence of Communication and Work Environment Through Public Service Quality on the Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients at the Tungkal Ilir District Office, West Tanjung Jabung Regency

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Abstract: This study aims to identify and analyze the influence of communication and work environment on public service quality and the satisfaction of social assistance recipients, both directly and through public service quality as a mediating variable at the Tungkal Ilir District Office. The research objects include communication, work environment, public service quality, and the satisfaction of social assistance recipients, while the research subjects are social assistance recipients in Tungkal Ilir District. The study uses a quantitative approach with primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through surveys using Likert scale-based questionnaires designed according to the research variable indicators, while secondary data were obtained from journals, theses, books, and official documents from the Tungkal Ilir District Office. The analysis uses an interval scale to describe the condition of the variables and examine the influence among variables, providing a comprehensive overview of the role of communication and work environment in improving public service quality and the satisfaction of social assistance recipients. The sample was determined using a specific sampling technique according to the research criteria, and data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS). The results at the Tungkal Ilir District Office, Tanjung Jabung Barat, show that communication, work environment, public service quality, and social assistance recipient satisfaction fall into the categories of very good to very satisfied. Communication has a positive and significant effect on public service quality and recipient satisfaction, both directly and through public service quality, while the work environment only has a significant effect on recipient satisfaction through public service quality. These results emphasize that improving communication and work environment supports better public service quality, thereby increasing the satisfaction of social assistance recipients.

Keywords: Communication, Work Environment, Public Service Quality, Social Assistance Recipient Satisfaction

INTRODUCTION

Public service is one of the main indicators of successful governance, particularly at the local government level, which directly impacts the public. Within a decentralized framework, local governments are required not only to perform administrative functions but also to ensure that the services provided are effective, efficient, transparent, and oriented toward public satisfaction. Quality public service reflects the state's presence in meeting the basic needs of citizens and serves as a benchmark for public trust in the government (Dwiyanto, 2015). Therefore, improving the quality of public service is a strategic agenda that must be supported by adequate organizational governance, human resources, and service systems.

Sub-district offices, as regional government agencies, hold a strategic position as the spearhead of public services at the local level. Tungkal Ilir Sub-district, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, has a significant responsibility in providing social services, particularly social assistance services targeting vulnerable groups. The increasing number of social assistance recipients from year to year indicates that the community's need for these services is growing, thus requiring sub-district officials to work professionally and responsively. Sinambela (2015) emphasized that the quality of public services at the sub-district level is largely determined by the performance of the apparatus and the organization's ability to manage the service process effectively.

One of the key factors influencing the quality of public services is communication. In the context of public services, communication serves not only as a means of conveying information but also as a medium for building understanding, trust, and harmonious relationships between officials and the public. Effective communication enables the public to understand service procedures, their rights and obligations, and reduces the potential for misunderstandings and conflict (Effendy, 2016). Empirically, the intensity of coordination through meetings and outreach at the Tungkal Ilir District Office indicates efforts to strengthen organizational communication. However, increasing the quantity of communication does not necessarily align with its effectiveness and impact on the quality of service perceived by the public.

In addition to communication, the work environment is also a crucial factor in supporting staff performance and the quality of public services. A conducive work environment, both physically and non-physically, will create comfort, increase work motivation, and encourage employee productivity. Robbins and Judge (2017) stated that a good work environment can strengthen positive employee behavior and directly impact the quality of services provided. However, empirical conditions in Tungkal Ilir District indicate that there are still limitations in service facilities and infrastructure, such as a lack of work equipment, inadequate service spaces, and suboptimal supporting facilities. These conditions have the potential to hinder service effectiveness and reduce the public's experience as service recipients.

Communication and the work environment are not inherently independent, but contribute through the quality of public services as an intermediary variable that bridges the relationship with public satisfaction. Public service quality reflects the extent to which services are able to meet public expectations and needs, which can be seen from the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, empathy, and tangibles (Grönroos, 2015; Zeithaml et al., 1985). Data on the achievement of social assistance services in Tungkal Ilir District shows that the realization of services has not been able to fully match the number of applications, so that service quality still fluctuates and tends to be suboptimal. This condition emphasizes the importance of continuous improvement in service quality so that public satisfaction can be consistently increased.

Public satisfaction is the ultimate goal of public service delivery. Satisfied citizens tend to have higher levels of trust in the government and support the sustainability of public service programs. Although the Public Satisfaction Index (PSI) in Tungkal Ilir District during the 2020–2024 period was in the good category, fluctuations in the PSI value indicate that there are aspects of service that still need improvement, particularly related to infrastructure and

complaint mechanisms. This indicates that public satisfaction is not yet fully stable and is still influenced by the quality of service provided.

Based on the conceptual description and empirical conditions, this study is important to comprehensively examine the role of communication and the work environment in improving the quality of public services and their impact on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients. Therefore, this study is directed at analyzing the influence of communication and the work environment through the quality of public services on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients at the Tungkal Ilir District Office, West Tanjung Jabung Regency, in order to provide theoretical and practical contributions to the development of public service management at the sub-district level.

METHOD

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design, aiming to explain causal relationships between variables through empirical hypothesis testing. This approach was chosen because the study focused on measuring communication and work environment variables and their influence on social assistance recipient satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through the quality of public services as a mediating variable (Sugiyono, 2019). The explanatory design allows researchers to systematically and objectively test the relationships between variables based on numerical data.

The population in this study is all recipients of social assistance in Tungkal Ilir District in 2024, which according to official district data is 90 people. Considering the relatively small population and the ability to reach all members of the population, the sampling technique used is saturated sampling, namely the entire population is used as a research sample (Arikunto, 2016). Thus, the number of samples in this study is 90 respondents, so that the results of the study are expected to be able to comprehensively represent the empirical conditions of social assistance recipients.

Data analysis in this study used Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS) with the help of SmartPLS software. The SEM-PLS method was chosen because it is capable of analyzing complex structural relationships, including direct and indirect influences between variables, and is suitable for use in relatively limited sample sizes and data that do not require multivariate normality assumptions (Hair et al., 2019). The analysis stages include evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) through tests of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability, as well as evaluation of the structural model (inner model) through testing path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), and the significance of the influence between variables using a bootstrapping procedure.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

To find out the characteristics of community respondents who received services at the Tungkal Ilir District Office, West Tanjung Jabung Regency based on gender, the following can be seen:

Table 1. Respondent Profile

No	Profile	Frequency (People)	Ratio (%)
1	Gender		
	Man	47	52.22
	Woman	43	47.78
	Amount	90	100
2	Age Group (Years)		
	17 – 30	12	13.33
	31 – 40	18	20
	41 – 50	25	27.78
	51 – 60	5	5.56
	> 60	30	33.33

No	Profile	Frequency (People)	Ratio (%)
	Amount	90	100
3	Education		
	Elementary School	12	13.33
	Junior High School	8	8.89
	Senior High School	51	56.67
	Diploma	2	2.22
	Bachelor	12	13.33
	Master	5	5.56
	Amount	92	100

Source: Questionnaire data processing results (2025)

Description of Research Variables

Based on the survey results, respondents (the public) provided varying perceptions of the statements raised regarding the variables observed in this study: communication, work environment, service quality, and public satisfaction. To understand the descriptive results of the variables observed in this study, they are summarized in the following table.

Table 2. Description of Research Variables

No	Variable	Hypothesis	Result	Decision
1	Communication (X1)	Good	Very Good	Hypothesis Accepted
2	Work Environment (X2)	Good	Very Good	Hypothesis Accepted
3	Service Quality (Y)	Good	Very Good	Hypothesis Accepted
4	Customer Satisfaction (Z)	Satisfied	Very Satisfied	Hypothesis Accepted

Source: Questionnaire data processing results (2025)

Data Analysis Results

Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis is a statistical method often used to analyze complex relationships between variables, particularly in structural models (SEM). PLS is suitable for situations where data do not fully meet the classic SEM assumptions, such as small sample sizes or non-normal data distributions. In PLS, the analysis is conducted through two main stages: the measurement model and the structural model. The results of this study can be seen below:

a. Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

Loading factors are a crucial element in evaluating measurement models. High loading factor values indicate that the indicator effectively measures the latent construct, while lower values indicate potential problems in the model. Proper use and interpretation of loading factors helps ensure the validity and reliability of the measurement instrument or model being developed.

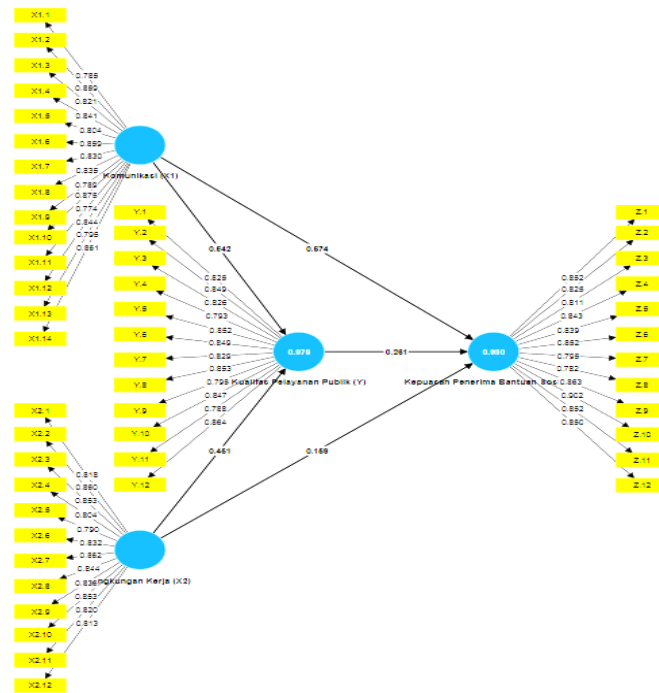


Figure 1. Early Stage Outer Model

Based on Figure 1, which displays the outer loading values from the analysis results using Smart PLS 3 (2025), it can be seen that all indicators in the Communication (X1), Work Environment (X2), Public Service Quality (Y), and Social Assistance Recipient Satisfaction (Z) variables have loading values above 0.7, which means they are very strong in measuring their respective constructs. Outer loading is an indicator of convergent validity, and the ideal value is above 0.70. Therefore, all indicators in this study are declared valid and statistically significant in representing the latent variables studied.

In addition to the outer loading value, based on the results of Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, it can be concluded that all variables in this study, namely Communication (X1), Work Environment (X2), Quality of Public Services (Y), and Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients (Z) show a very high level of reliability. All Composite Reliability values are above the recommended minimum threshold value, which is 0.70, which indicates that the indicators in each construct are very consistent in measuring the variables. This proves that each indicator in the construct has an excellent internal correlation.

b. Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

Structural model testing in SEM-PLS analysis uses SmartPLS.3, namely the coefficient of determination (R^2) to measure how far the model's ability to explain the variance of the dependent variable. Hair et.al. (2017) revealed that the coefficient of determination is a measure of the combined ability of exogenous latent variables to predict the construct of the endogenous variable, that is, the coefficient represents the amount of variance in the endogenous construct explained by all the exogenous constructs associated with it. The R^2 value ranges from 0 to 1, with higher levels indicating a higher level of predictive accuracy. As with multiple regression, the adjusted coefficient of determination (Adjusted R^2) is used as a criterion to avoid bias towards complex models. This criterion is modified according to the number of exogenous variable constructs (Hair et.al., 2017).

1. R-Square

In assessing a model with PLS, we begin by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable (Hair et al., 2017). Table 4.17 shows the results of R-square estimation using SmartPLS 3:

Table 3. R Square Value

	R Square
Service Quality	0,979
Social Assistance Recipient Satisfaction	0,980

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output (2025)

Table 3 shows the results for the R-square value of public service quality at 97.9 percent and social assistance recipient satisfaction at 98 percent. This indicates a strong relationship between communication and the work environment and public service quality. Furthermore, the relationship between communication and the work environment and social assistance recipient satisfaction is also strong.

The inner model evaluation was conducted using bootstrapping tests, which yielded determination coefficients (R-square, Q-square), and hypothesis testing. The results of the inner model evaluation are explained as follows.

2. Q Square

Wiyono (2011), A model is considered to have relevant predictive value if the Q square value is greater than 0 (> 0). The predictive-relevance value is obtained using the following formula. The predictive-relevance value is obtained using the formula:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - R^2) (1 - R^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0,979^2) (1 - 0,980^2)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0,958) (1 - 0,960)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (0,042)(0,040)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - 0,002$$

$$Q^2 = 0,998$$

The result of the Q square calculation in this study is 0.998, meaning that the model in this study is suitable for explaining endogenous variables because the value of $0.997 > 0$.

c. Structural Model Testing

In SEM PLS analysis, the structural value of the model in this study can be seen from the direct effects value, also known as the path coefficient. Next, path coefficients between constructs are measured to determine the significance and strength of the relationship and also to test the hypothesis.

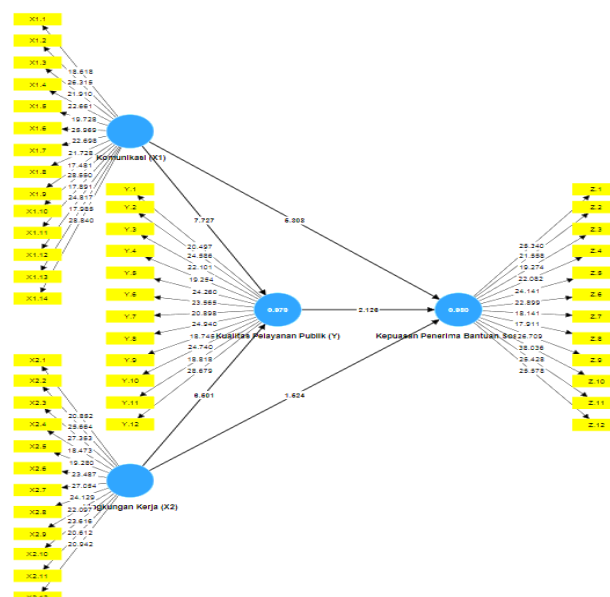


Figure 2. Bootstrapping

To find out the structural model in this research, please see the following table:

Table 4. Path Coefficient

Relationships Between Constructs	Original Sample (O)
Communication (X1) -> Quality of Public Services (Y)	0,542
Work Environment (X2) -> Quality of Public Services (Y)	0,451
Communication (X1) -> Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients (Z)	0,574
Work Environment (X2) -> Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients (Z)	0,159
Quality of Public Services (Y) -> Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients (Z)	0,261
Communication (X1) -> Quality of Public Services (Y) -> Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients (Z)	0,142
Work Environment (X2) -> Quality of Public Services (Y) -> Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients (Z)	0,118

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output (2025)

Based on the results of the patch coefficient analysis in Table 4 above, the following conclusions can be drawn:

- The direct effect of communication on the quality of public services is 0.542, meaning that if communication increases by one unit, the quality of public services can increase by 0.542. This effect is positive.
- The direct effect of the work environment on the quality of public services is 0.451, meaning that if the work environment increases by one unit, the quality of public services can increase by 0.454. This effect is positive.
- The direct effect of communication on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients is 0.574, meaning that if communication increases by one unit, the satisfaction of social assistance recipients can increase by 0.574. This effect is positive.
- The direct effect of the work environment on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients is 0.159, meaning that if the work environment increases by one unit, the satisfaction of social assistance recipients can increase by 0.159. This effect is positive.
- The direct effect of public service quality on social assistance recipient satisfaction is 0.261, meaning that if public service quality increases by one unit, social assistance recipient satisfaction can increase by 0.261. This effect is positive.
- The indirect effect of communication on social assistance recipient satisfaction through public service quality is 0.142, meaning that if communication increases by one unit, social assistance recipient satisfaction can increase indirectly through public service quality by 0.142. This effect is positive.
- The indirect effect of the work environment on social assistance recipient satisfaction through public service quality is 0.118, meaning that if the work environment increases by one unit, social assistance recipient satisfaction can increase indirectly through public service quality by 0.118. This effect is positive.

d. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis testing is a statistical process used to determine whether sample data provide sufficient evidence to reject an initial hypothesis about a population. The goal is to make a decision about the validity of a statement or claim based on the collected data. To comprehensively determine the direct and indirect effects between research variables, the following explanation is provided:

Table 5. Hypothesis Test Result

Construct Relationship	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Hypothesis
Communication (X1) -> Quality of public services (Y)	7,727	0,000	Accepted

Construct Relationship	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Hypothesis
Work environment (X2) -> Quality of public services (Y)	6,501	0,000	Accepted
Communication (X1) -> Satisfaction of social assistance recipients (Z)	5,308	0,000	Accepted
Work environment (X2) -> Satisfaction of social assistance recipients (Z)	1,524	0,128	Accepted
Quality of public services (Y) -> Satisfaction of social assistance recipients (Z)	2,126	0,034	Accepted
Communication (X1) -> Quality of public services (Y) -> Satisfaction of social assistance recipients (Z)	2,070	0,039	Accepted
Work environment (X2) -> Quality of public services (Y) -> Satisfaction of social assistance recipients (Z)	1,981	0,048	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS 3.0 output (2025)

Based on the results of the hypothesis testing carried out as presented in table 5 above, both direct and indirect influences through mediating variables, the statistical value obtained was $T > \text{rule of thumb (1.96)}$ and $P \text{ value} < 0.05 \text{ (5\%)}$, with these results it can be concluded that all hypotheses of direct and indirect influences through mediating variables are accepted.

Discussion

The research results show that, in general, communication, work environment, quality of public services, and satisfaction of social assistance recipients at the Tungkal Ilir District Office are in the good to very good category. This finding indicates that the district government's efforts in managing public services have been running quite optimally, although there are still several aspects that require improvement. This condition aligns with Dwiyanto's (2015) view, which asserts that the quality of public services is a reflection of a public organization's ability to manage resources and service processes effectively.

The Influence of Communication on Public Service Quality

The results of the hypothesis testing indicate that communication has a positive and significant impact on the quality of public services. This finding confirms that effective communication between sub-district officials and the public can improve the clarity of information, the accuracy of procedures, and the smoothness of the service process. Conceptually, communication serves as the primary means of building shared understanding between service providers and recipients, thereby minimizing errors and improving the quality of service interactions (Effendy, 2016).

Empirically, the increased intensity of coordination and meetings at the Tungkal Ilir Sub-district Office reflects efforts to strengthen internal organizational communication. However, this study confirms that communication is not only important in quantity but also in quality and effectiveness in supporting the service process. This finding aligns with research by Hardiansyah (2016), which states that effective organizational communication improves the quality of public services because it aligns the perceptions, attitudes, and actions of service officials.

The Influence of the Work Environment on Public Service Quality

The results of this study indicate that the work environment does not have a significant direct impact on the quality of public services. This finding indicates that although the work environment is an important supporting factor, its presence has not been directly felt by the public in the form of improved service quality. Empirical conditions in Tungkal Ilir District indicate that there are still limitations in work facilities and infrastructure, such as a lack of service facilities and inadequate workspaces, so the work environment's potential to support service quality is not fully optimized.

Theoretically, Robbins and Judge (2017) state that a conducive work environment can improve employee performance and the quality of service output. However, the results of this study indicate that this influence is indirect, meaning that the work environment will only have an impact if accompanied by good service management. This finding aligns with several empirical studies that suggest that the work environment plays a more internal supporting role within the organization than as a factor directly perceived by service users.

The Influence of Communication on Social Assistance Recipient Satisfaction

The analysis shows that communication has a positive and significant effect on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients. This finding confirms that people tend to feel more satisfied when they receive clear, easy-to-understand information delivered in a friendly and responsive manner. Good communication makes people feel valued and cared for, thus creating a positive service experience.

Conceptually, public satisfaction is influenced by their perceptions of the service process and interactions they receive (Zeithaml et al., 1985). In the context of this study, effective communication plays a crucial role in shaping positive public perceptions of social assistance services. These results align with previous research that found that the quality of public official communication has a strong relationship with public satisfaction with government services.

The Influence of the Work Environment on the Satisfaction of Social Assistance Recipients

The results of the study indicate that the work environment does not have a significant direct effect on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients. This finding suggests that the public, as service recipients, values the results and process of service more than the internal conditions of the organization. Although the work environment influences employee comfort and performance, its impact on public satisfaction is not always directly felt.

However, these results do not deny the importance of the work environment, but rather emphasize that the influence of the work environment on public satisfaction is indirect. This aligns with Moenir's (2016) view that public satisfaction is determined more by the perceived quality of service, rather than by the internal conditions of the organization, which are not fully visible to the public.

The Influence of Public Service Quality on Social Assistance Recipient Satisfaction

Research results demonstrate that public service quality has a positive and significant effect on social assistance recipient satisfaction. This finding indicates that the better the quality of service provided, the higher the level of public satisfaction. Service quality, reflected in timeliness, clarity of procedures, staff competence, and the availability of service facilities, are key factors shaping social assistance recipient satisfaction.

Theoretically, Grönroos (2015) and Zeithaml et al. (1985) assert that service quality is a primary determinant of customer satisfaction, including in the context of public services. The empirical findings of this study support this theory by demonstrating that fluctuations in the Public Satisfaction Index (PSI) in Tungkal Ilir District align with the quality of public services provided.

The Mediating Role of Public Service Quality

The results of the indirect effect test indicate that public service quality mediates the influence of communication and the work environment on social assistance recipient satisfaction. Communication was shown to have both direct and indirect effects on satisfaction through public service quality, while the work environment only had a significant effect on satisfaction through public service quality. This finding confirms that public service quality is a key variable bridging internal organizational factors with public perceptions and satisfaction.

Conceptually, this finding reinforces the notion that internal organizational factors, such as communication and the work environment, do not necessarily influence public satisfaction without a tangible improvement in service quality (Dwiyanto, 2015). Therefore, efforts to improve social assistance recipient satisfaction should focus on strengthening public service quality as the primary output of internal organizational processes.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research results and discussion outlined above, it can be concluded that communication and the work environment play a crucial role in improving the quality of public services and the satisfaction of social assistance recipients at the Tungkal Ilir District Office, West Tanjung Jabung Regency. The analysis shows that communication has a positive and significant impact on the quality of public services and the satisfaction of social assistance recipients. This finding confirms that clarity of information, openness, and the ability of officials to communicate effectively are key factors in creating high-quality, community-oriented public services.

Furthermore, the work environment has been shown to have no direct impact on the quality of public services or the satisfaction of social assistance recipients. However, the work environment has an indirect influence on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients through the quality of public services as a mediating variable. This finding suggests that the work environment will only impact public satisfaction if it translates into tangible improvements in service quality that are directly perceived by service recipients.

This study also demonstrates that the quality of public services has a positive and significant impact on the satisfaction of social assistance recipients. The quality of public services acts as a key variable that bridges internal organizational factors with public perceptions and satisfaction. Thus, the quality of public services is a primary determinant in building the satisfaction of social assistance recipients at the sub-district level.

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