

Citizen Participation in Improving the Quality of Public Services (Study Public Perception and Aspiration on Education Service Quality in Klaten Regency of Central Java)

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Abstract: Basic education service is a compulsory service that should be organized by local government. Basic education service involves the organization of elementary and junior high school. This research describes citizen participation in improving the quality of education. Citizen participation is indicated by people's perceptions and aspirations on the quality of basic education. This research was conducted through a survey method. The result of research showed that the public perception of the quality of Junior High School education is better than that of Elementary School education. Based on the aspirations of the citizen, the service indicators that need to be given the most attention are library facilities, school facilities and teacher quality. The perceptions and aspirations of the citizen towards education can be used as material for the Klaten Government Regency study in designing education policies.

Keywords: Citizen participation, Perception, Aspiration, education, service quality

I. INTRODUCTION

Government compulsorily gives service to its citizens. Decentralization system applied in Indonesia requires the local government to implement some compulsory services. Considering the Law Number of 23 of 2014 about Local Government, one of compulsory services the local government should implement is primary education service. Education is the most important factor to create smart and dignified mankind. Improved education and evenly distributed professionalism for all populations are the main characteristics of the present community and economy (Neagu, 2014). Education also underlies the achievement of Indonesia State's objective as included into the Preamble of 1945 Constitution (*Pembukaan UUD 1945*), to educate the nation's life.

Education service provided should be consistent with the people's need. Service should be provided comprehensively without discrimination. Public service should be accessible to all society classes. Denhardt and Denhardt (2003) suggested that the actual owner of public interest is community. Similarly, Dwiyanto (2008) states that the main

objective of public service is to meet the user citizens' need in order to get expected and satisfactory service. Therefore, public administrator or government should focus its attention to the responsibility of catering on and empowering the citizens through public organization management and public policy implementation.

The screening of public perception and aspiration on education service is very desirable as the attempt of providing service according to the people's need. Public perception on service can be used to assess service quality because community (people) is the owner of service. Service quality is understood as the balance of satisfaction and expectations in the mutual relationship between customers and the organization addressing their needs (Zeithaml, V., Berry, L. and Parasuraman, A. 1996; Concepción et al., 2019). Perception is defined as an individual's process of responding to phenomenon. Perception is acquired through direct experience with object and information from many other sources (Sumarwan 2004).

The dimensions of service quality measurement are suggested by Owlia and Aspinwall (1996). Mishra, S. (2017) proposes six dimensions of quality in education: tangibility, competency, attitude, content, delivery, and reliability. Zineldin (2017) proposes five targets of school service quality measurement: firstly, the quality related to the compatibility of curriculum and learning content to the recent development. Secondly, the process quality is related to instructors' method and appearance in delivering learning material. Thirdly, infrastructure quality is the fundamental element in providing education service. Fourthly, it is interaction and communication quality. Fifthly, atmosphere quality concerns belief, safety, high projection, and position reflecting the institution wholly. The pattern of interaction between component and regulation and order standardization is internalized as a permanent culture supporting the creation of academic atmosphere in a good teaching learning process.

Cardona and Bravo (2012) propose six dimensions of school quality measurement: (1) learning content as described in the structure of curriculum; (2) teaching-learning process, and teacher's teaching activity; (3) teaching infrastructure; (4) education information and communication system; (5) school experience and school life; and (6) positioning and school image. This research employed the indicator of service quality based on Parasuraman, Zaitaml and Berry's (1984) involving five targets of the measurement of public perception on education service in two education service units in Klaten Regency. The five targets of research are: (1) school tuition burden; (2) school quality; (3) teacher quality; (4) school infrastructure and environment; and (5) school library facilities.

This research measures not only the public's perception but also the public's aspiration on the five targets of research. Aspiration on the need for basic education is the form of public participation in determining education policy. Citizen participation in the context of public administration is defined as an interaction between citizens and public administrator, citizen's direct participation in public policy decision, public service providing, and process of improving quality (Callahan, 2007).

The policy requiring public participation compulsorily has gotten broad attention in planning and policy making now (Rollason *et al.*, 2018). In many parts of the world there is a growing demand for participation in public policy decision making (Rios *et al.*, 2008). Public participation is very important as it can improve the decision consensus (Bond *et al.*, 2004; Alexander *et al.*, 2016; Zhou, Hou, Yang, Chong, & Moon, 2019). Public participation has been an important component in legitimizing, democratizing, and improving the quality of political decision in the form of organized government democratically (Rios, Kersten, Grimaizquierdo, & Burstein, 2008; Vogt & Haas, 2015; Lourenço & Costa, 2007). This participation should have begun from the bottom level in the state embracing decentralization as the attempt of improving performance and maintaining the public's trust in the implementation of public service (Suebvises, 2018). For that reasons, public administrator should be aware that decision making without public participation will not be effective (Vogt and Haas, 2015).

II. METHOD

This evaluative research on education service policy conducted in Klaten Regency was intended to find out public perception and aspiration. The sample of research consisted of households having children who are attending education in Elementary and or Junior High Schools regardless social economic status. The numbers of Elementary and Junior High School household are 133, respectively. Thus, the total number of sample used in this study is 266. The sampling technique employed was random sampling one by taking the distribution of subdistrict-based area into account. Klaten regency consists of 26 sub district. About 6 survey location points wereset out

in every sub district. Technique of collecting data was conducted using *face to face* interview with mixed opened and closed- ended instrument.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Primary education service becomes the regency government's responsibility, as mentioned in the RI's Law Number 23 of 2014 about Local Government. The primary education service intended here includes Elementary and Junior High School education. In providing service, the government does not stand alone, but it also functions to develop community's ability and creativity for the sake of collective advance. It is in line with Asmawi (2012) stating that modern government is essentially the empowerment and the service to community. Meanwhile, Ndraha (2003) suggested that government has two basic functions: primary or service function and secondary or empowerment function. It means that government should involve community in providing service. Public participation in organizing public service can be the assessment or evaluation on the service quality. This assessment is expected to be the material of study in evaluating and improving the subsequent service. Evaluation on public service quality plays a very important role in dealing with the public's expectation on ever increasing the service for the better wellbeing (Ocampo *et al.*, 2018). The result of research on public perception on the quality of elementary school's service in Klaten Regency is presented in table 1.

Table 1. Perceived Indicators of Elementary School's Service Quality

Indicator of Elementary School's Service	Positive Perception Grade		Area needing attention
	%	Category	
Tuition burden	100	Very good	-
Perceived school quality	83	Good	Delanggu, Pedan, Tulung
Perceived teacher quality	74	Fairly good	Ceper, Delanggu, Gantiwarno
School building and environment facility Sekolah	78	Fairly good	Bayat, Ceper, Delanggu, Jatinom, Kemalang
Library facility	63	Fair	Bayat, Ceper, Delanggu, Gantiwarno, Jatinom, Juwiring, Kalikotes, Kemalang, Pedan, Prambanan, Wonosari

Source: Primary Data, 2019

Considering table 1, the first indicator about education cost shows that 100 household respondents state that the tuition of elementary school students is considered as reasonable. It indicates that there is no cost-related constraint to enroll the children in Elementary School for the people in Klaten Regency. The second indicator concerning the quality of school shows that majority or 83% people consider that the

quality of Elementary School where their children study has been good, 15% consider ordinary, and 2% consider poor. Sub districts needing attention in improving the quality of Elementary School are Delanggu, Pedan, and Tulung.

The third indicator is the quality of Elementary School teachers indicating the good result. Majority or 75% people consider that the quality of teachers in the elementary school where their children study has been qualified, 21% ordinary, and 2% poor, with the rest of 4% answer “do not know”. The sub districts needing attention in improving the quality of Elementary School teachers are Ceper, Delanggu, and Gantiwarno. The fourth indicator is school infrastructure and environment of Elementary School in Klaten Regency showing the good result. Majority or 78% people consider that the building facilities and school environment of Elementary School where their children study has been good, 20% consider ordinary, and 2% consider poor. Sub districts needing attention in improving infrastructure are Bayat, Ceper, Delanggu, Jatinom, and Kemalang.

The fifth indicator is library facilities showing the good result. Majority or 63% people consider that the Elementary School where their children study has had good library facility, 32% consider ordinary, and 5% consider poor. Sub districts needing attention in improving infrastructure are Bayat, Ceper, Delanggu, Gantiwarno, Jatinom, Juwiring, Kalikotes, Kemalang, Pedan, Prambanan, and Wonosari.

The survey on primary education service quality is also conducted on Junior High School. Table 2 shows public perception on the service quality of Junior High School education.

Table2. Perceived Indicator of Junior High School Service Quality

No	Indicator Of Junior High School's Service	Positive Grade	
		%	CATEGORY
1	Tuition burden	98	VERY GOOD
2	Perceived school quality	92	VERY GOOD
3	Perceived teacher quality	86	GOOD
4	School building and environment facility	86	GOOD
	Sekolah		
5	Library facility	65	FAIR

Source: primary data, 2019

Considering table 2, the first indicator concerning the quality of Junior High School education shows very good result. Majority or 98% households with children studying in Junior High School feel that the tuition of Junior High School is still reasonable. Only 2% respondents consider that the tuition of Junior High School is incriminating. The second indicator, the school's quality, shows very good result. Majority or 92% people consider that the quality of Junior High School where their children study has been good, and 8% consider ordinary. The third indicator, the quality of Junior High School teachers, shows the good result. Majority or 86% people

consider that the quality of teachers in the elementary school where their children study has been qualified, and 13% ordinary. The fourth indicator, building facility and environment, shows the good result. Majority or 86% people consider that the building facilities and school environment of Junior High School where their children study has been good, and 18% consider ordinary. The fifth indicator, library facilities, shows the good result. Majority or 65% people consider that the library facility where their children study has had good library facility, 34% consider ordinary, and 5% consider poor.

Service quality of Elementary School and Junior High School in Klaten Regency shows the good result. The comparison of service quality between Elementary School and Junior High School can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Data of Comparison of Perceived Service Quality between Elementary School and Junior High School

Indicator of School Service	Positive Perception Grade of Junior High School		Positive Perception Grade of Elementary School	
	%	Category	Category	%
Tuition burden	98	Very Good	Very good	100
Perceived school quality	92	Very Good	Good	83
Perceived teacher quality	86	Good	Fairly good	74
School building and environment facility	86	Good	Fairly good	78
Sekolah	65	Fair	Fair	63

Source: Primary Source, 2019

Considering table 3, education service of Junior High School has better result compared with that of Elementary School. The data indicates that library facility should get primary attention because the attention given so far is still inadequate. Teacher quality and building facility at Elementary School level should be improved as well. It is in line with the study conducted by (Yousapronpaiboon, 2014) study finding that the highest gap of service quality is related to tangibles or facility dimension.

The improvement of education quality should be conducted continuously according to the people's need. Public participation in administration should reflect people's opinion and need that should be catered on by government (Suebvises, 2018). Local policy making affects very significantly the citizens' life (Lourenço and Costa, 2007). For that reason, topdown perspectives should change into local participation and integration (Stenseke, 2009). To screen the people's opinion and need for primary education, the author conducted aspiration screening on local people. The local people intended here are households with children who are attending primary education. This local public participation is not the inhibitor but the determinant of policy (Rollason *et al.*, 2018). Public participation in this aspiration and perception include

local people's experience, opinion, knowledge, and social assessment on the service given (Milligan et al., 2009).

Considering the result of survey on the service quality of primary education, people say that books should be provided for free and teacher quality should be improved. Public aspiration on the improvement of primary education quality is presented comprehensively in table 4.

Table 4. Public Aspiration to improve the Service Quality of Primary Education

Public Aspiration	Number	
	N	%
Improving building infrastructure and school environment	19	17%
Providing learning instruments of intra and extra learning	14	12%
Providing book for free for students	28	25%
Improving teacher quality	27	24%
Removal of tuition fee	18	16%
Others	1	1%
Has been good	5	4%
Not knowing/not answering	1	1%
Total	113	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2019

Considering the data shown in table 4, the need for free books and improved teacher quality becomes the largest public aspiration, 25% and 25%. Other needs wanted by people are improved building facility and school environment (17%) and tuition fee removal (16%, and available extra-and intra-learning instruments.

This aspiration about the need for primary education service in Klaten Regency is the form of public participation in determining education policy. This public participation will of course improve the quality of policy and the people's support to the policy (Lourenço and Costa, 2007). Public participation can also improve social justice and democracy, compensate government's authority, identify the project problem, and ensure consistent hearing, and consider the public's apprehension and aspiration (Krek, Janez, Losito, Bruno, Ridley, Rebecca and Hoskins, 2012). This result of survey on public perception and aspiration on education service quality should be responded positively by stakeholders immediately. It is because the stakeholders' response to the people's request becomes an important factor in the improvement of service quality (Ocampo et al., 2018). This reciprocity between people and government needs much attention in the attempt of improving the performance of public sector (Suebvises, 2018).

IV. CONCLUSION

The objective of research is to give input the policy makers concerning public perception and aspiration on education service. Considering the five indicators used to

assess public perception on education quality, it can be seen that school facility, library facility, and teacher facility should be the focus of attention primarily in improving the quality of primary education in Klaten Regency. Citizen also state that they need free books and improved quality of elementary school teachers in Klaten Regency.

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