

## Enhancing Service Quality in Study Permit Applications for Civil Servants: A Case Study of the Personnel Development Division at Regional Civil Service Agency Bandar Lampung

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### Abstract

*This study evaluates the quality of services provided by the Personnel Development Division of the Regional Civil Service Agency in Bandar Lampung, with a specific focus on the process of obtaining study permits for civil servants. The research examines key dimensions of service quality, including ease of service, responsiveness, competency, courtesy, credibility, communication, and mutual understanding. Findings reveal that although the service process was functional, it faced several challenges. Inconsistent adherence to established protocols, limited dissemination of procedural information, and understaffing led to delays and inefficiencies. Staff competency was also found to be misaligned with job requirements, and while courtesy and credibility were generally upheld, issues of miscommunication and procedural bypassing persisted. Recommendations include improving staff training, enhancing communication strategies, and increasing socialization efforts to promote better mutual understanding between staff and PNS. These improvements would help streamline the study permit process and elevate service quality.*

**Keywords:** Service Quality; Study Permits; Civil Servants; Regional Civil Service Agency; Public Service

### Introduction

Public service quality is one of the most critical factors in achieving organizational goals and fulfilling governmental duties. In particular, the effectiveness of civil servant performance plays a pivotal role in delivering optimal services to the public (Hayat & Artisa, 2019; Sang, 2023; Thusi et al., 2023). However, declining discipline, ethics, and moral standards among civil servants pose significant challenges to public service efficiency, potentially threatening the nation's unity and overall development (Q. Chen, 2023; Perdana et al., 2024; Vebryna et al., 2023). Civil servants, as key agents of the government, are tasked with upholding their roles as public and state servants, ensuring they maintain the integrity and reputation of the workforce (Barusman et al., 2024; Triono et al., 2022; Zhang, 2022). Yet, in practice, many civil servants remain unaware of their responsibilities, leading to inefficiencies and dissatisfaction among the public (Benedicto & Caelian, 2020).

The importance of improving public services, particularly in the context of civil

servants' responsibilities, extends to all areas of governance, including the Regional Civil Service Agency in Bandar Lampung. Specifically, the service quality in managing study permits for civil servants has become a point of concern, with numerous complaints arising from delayed processing times, lack of adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), and inadequate communication regarding study permit requirements (Kamarulazi et al., 2018; Syam et al., 2021; Wawointana et al., 2019).

Several challenges have been identified in the study permit service at the Regional Civil Service Agency of Bandar Lampung. These include limited office facilities, insufficient employee numbers, inconsistent SOP application, and low awareness among civil servants regarding the necessity of obtaining study permits promptly. These issues collectively highlight a gap in the literature on service quality in public administration, particularly regarding civil servant study permits. This research aims to analyze the quality of study permit services provided to civil servants in Bandar Lampung and identify the factors that support or hinder service quality improvement. By addressing these gaps, this study contributes to a better understanding of how public service quality can be enhanced through improved internal processes and employee engagement.

## **Materials and Methods**

This research employs a qualitative design using descriptive analysis to explore and assess the quality of study permit services provided to civil servants at the Regional Civil Service Agency of Bandar Lampung. The qualitative approach was chosen to provide a detailed understanding of service quality issues from the perspectives of both civil servants and service providers (Akib & Ihsan, 2017; Hidayat & Pamungkas, 2019; Kamarulazi et al., 2018). Data collection was conducted through in-depth interviews and observations, allowing for the exploration of real-life experiences and perceptions of service quality.

The research relied on direct information from key informants involved in the study permit process, including civil servants and relevant agency personnel. This approach enabled the researcher to gain insights into the procedural challenges and identify gaps between policy implementation and actual service delivery. The use of qualitative methods also allowed for an adaptive, close interaction with the informants, ensuring that the data gathered reflected the true nature of the service quality concerns (Dema et al., 2021; Ginting et al., 2021; Sang, 2023). By fostering a trusting relationship with informants, the researcher was able to obtain more accurate and detailed information, which was essential for a comprehensive analysis of the study permit service (Ming et al., 2018; Renyaan & Ilham, 2023; Yunita et al., 2024).

## **Results and Discussion**

The study evaluated the quality of services provided by the Personnel Development Division of the Regional Civil Service Agency in Bandar Lampung, particularly in relation to obtaining study permits for civil servants. The research focused on several key dimensions of service quality: ease of service, responsiveness, competency, courtesy, credibility, communication, and mutual understanding.

The service process at Regional Civil Service Agency Bandar Lampung, though functional, exhibited several shortcomings that hindered its optimal execution. One significant issue was the inconsistent adherence to established protocols by civil servants applying for study permits, leading to delays. Despite staff efforts to guide applicants, these attempts were often unsuccessful due to a lack of clear communication and insufficient dissemination of information regarding the procedures. This created confusion among PNS, making it difficult for them to follow the necessary steps, which contributed to inefficiencies in service delivery.

In terms of responsiveness, while staff were attentive to individual cases, they were often overwhelmed by a heavy workload, largely caused by understaffing. This imbalance resulted in extended wait times, reducing the overall effectiveness of the service. Although the service was quick once the PNS received attention, the delays caused by a backlog of requests highlighted the need for increased staffing or a more efficient system for managing the flow of applications. Addressing this issue would ensure that PNS are not only served promptly but also that staff are able to maintain responsiveness without compromising the quality of service provided.

Competency was another area of concern in the study permit application process. The evaluation of staff revealed that while employees were assigned roles based on their capabilities, there was often a mismatch between their formal qualifications and the specific job requirements. This gap in expertise led to inefficiencies in handling requests, as staff lacked the necessary skills to process applications smoothly. Enhancing the competency of staff through professional development and specialized training would be crucial in improving the quality of service. Employees who are better equipped with relevant knowledge and skills can more efficiently manage requests, reducing processing times and errors.

In terms of courtesy, staff generally adhered to proper organizational etiquette, including respectful interactions with clients and maintaining appropriate professional attire. Such professionalism is essential for building trust and upholding service standards. However, courtesy alone was insufficient in addressing the underlying inefficiencies in service delivery. While respectful behavior is important, it must be complemented by effective and timely service to ensure that PNS are fully satisfied with the assistance they receive.

Credibility was another key dimension in the evaluation of the service. Staff members were seen as credible due to their training and their ability to manage study permit applications. However, challenges arose when PNS sought special services that fell outside the scope of standard procedures. These requests put additional pressure on staff and led to occasional delays and miscommunication. Maintaining credibility requires strict adherence to established rules and procedures, ensuring that all requests are processed fairly and without favoritism.

Communication played a crucial role in the overall service process, both in terms of vertical communication between leadership and staff, and horizontal communication among staff members and with PNS. Clear and direct communication helped ensure that correct procedures were followed, minimizing the likelihood of errors. However, the study revealed that some PNS were still unclear about the

requirements for study permits, indicating a need for improved communication strategies. Enhancing the clarity and accessibility of information would help reduce misunderstandings and ensure that PNS are better informed about the process.

Finally, mutual understanding between the service providers and PNS was identified as essential for effective service delivery. While staff generally adhered to regulations, some PNS lacked awareness of the necessary procedures, leading to friction as they occasionally sought to bypass established rules. This gap in understanding highlights the need for more robust socialization efforts to educate PNS about the importance of following the proper procedures. By fostering a better mutual understanding through clearer communication and education, the overall service quality could be significantly enhanced, reducing the likelihood of rule violations and ensuring smoother interactions between staff and PNS.

## **Discussion**

The findings reveal several key areas where service quality at the Regional Civil Service Agency (BKD) Bandar Lampung can be improved, consistent with previous studies on public service delivery (Kamarulazi et al., 2018; Syam et al., 2021; Wawointana et al., 2019). The ease of service was often obstructed by unclear communication and insufficient staff preparedness, issues that have similarly been observed in other public institutions (H. Chen & Wu, 2023; Vebryna et al., 2023). To overcome this, more effective information dissemination and stricter adherence to Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are essential (Hayat & Artisa, 2019).

Responsiveness emerged as another significant issue, as high workloads and a shortage of personnel created delays in service. This bottleneck is consistent with the findings of (Benedicto & Caelian, 2020), where limited human resources negatively impacted service efficiency. Addressing this challenge may require an increase in staffing or the implementation of an improved system for handling study permit requests, ensuring that civil servants (PNS) receive timely service without compromising overall quality (Sang, 2023).

The competency of staff is critical to reducing errors and delays in processing study permits. As (Thusi et al., 2023) highlighted, a mismatch between staff qualifications and job requirements can lead to inefficiencies. BKD Bandar Lampung could benefit from ongoing professional development and specialized training for its employees, ensuring they possess the requisite knowledge and skills to handle study permit applications effectively (Triono et al., 2022; Zhang, 2022).

While courtesy and professionalism were generally upheld by the staff, efficiency must also be prioritized to ensure overall client satisfaction. Maintaining the credibility of civil servants requires strict adherence to SOPs, even when facing special requests from PNS, as noted by (Vebryna et al., 2023).

Lastly, improved communication—both internally among staff and externally with PNS—is essential for reducing misunderstandings and ensuring all parties are well-informed of study permit requirements. A more effective socialization of procedures would minimize the likelihood of rule deviations and further enhance service quality, consistent with the observations of (Syam et al., 2021; Wawointana et

al., 2019). By addressing these areas, BKD Bandar Lampung can significantly improve the quality of its study permit services, contributing to a more efficient and satisfactory public service experience.

## Conclusion

The findings from this study indicate that the quality of service in processing study permits for PNS at BKD Bandar Lampung is functional but requires significant improvements to reach optimal levels. The key challenges lie in insufficient staffing, inconsistent adherence to procedures by PNS, and gaps in communication. Addressing these issues through increased staffing, better training for employees, and clearer communication of rules and procedures could significantly enhance service quality.

This study moves the understanding of public service delivery forward by highlighting the practical challenges in ensuring compliance with administrative protocols. Future research could explore the impact of digital solutions, such as an online application system, to further streamline the process and reduce delays. Additionally, a more in-depth examination of employee training programs and their alignment with service requirements could offer valuable insights into improving service competency and responsiveness.

By addressing these gaps, BKD Bandar Lampung can improve the overall efficiency and satisfaction levels of the PNS they serve, contributing to a more effective and transparent public service system.

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