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The Influence of Leadership Style on Public Service at the Teluk Ambon District Office, Ambon City

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| Article Information | Abstract |
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| <p>Vol: 3 No : 3 2026 Pages : 1-6</p> <p>Keywords: Leadership Style Public Service District Office</p> | <p><i>This study examines the influence of leadership style on public service at the Teluk Ambon District Office, Ambon City. The research was motivated by practical service problems at the district level, including uneven implementation of frontliner service procedures, varying employee discipline, and weak coordination among organizational units. A quantitative survey design was applied to test the causal relationship between leadership style and public service quality. Data were collected from 50 respondents consisting of 24 district employees and 26 community service users through structured questionnaires supported by observation, interviews, and documentation. Leadership style was measured through decision-making ability, motivational ability, subordinate control, and emotional control, whereas public service quality was measured using the SERVQUAL dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The data were processed using IBM SPSS with validity, reliability, normality, simple linear regression, t-test, and coefficient of determination procedures. The findings show that all questionnaire items were valid and reliable. The regression model produced a positive coefficient, a standardized beta of 0.906, and an R Square value of 0.820, indicating that leadership style explained 82.0% of the variation in public service quality. The novelty of this study lies in its focus on district-level public service governance in an archipelagic urban context, where leadership is not only administrative but also coordinative and adaptive. The study implies that stronger leadership supervision, staff arrangement, and service discipline are necessary to improve the consistency of public service delivery.</i></p> |

Abstrak

Kantor Distrik Penelitian ini mengkaji pengaruh gaya kepemimpinan terhadap pelayanan publik di Kantor Distrik Teluk Ambon, Kota Ambon. Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh masalah-masalah pelayanan praktis di tingkat distrik, termasuk penerapan prosedur pelayanan di garis depan yang tidak merata, tingkat kedisiplinan pegawai yang bervariasi, serta koordinasi yang lemah di antara unit-unit organisasi. Desain survei kuantitatif diterapkan untuk menguji hubungan sebab-akibat antara gaya kepemimpinan dan kualitas pelayanan publik. Data dikumpulkan dari 50 responden yang terdiri dari 24 pegawai kabupaten dan 26 pengguna layanan masyarakat melalui kuesioner terstruktur yang didukung oleh observasi, wawancara, dan dokumentasi. Gaya kepemimpinan diukur melalui kemampuan pengambilan keputusan, kemampuan memotivasi, pengendalian bawahan, dan pengendalian emosi, sedangkan kualitas pelayanan publik diukur menggunakan dimensi SERVQUAL, yaitu tangibles, keandalan, responsivitas, jaminan, dan empati. Data diolah menggunakan IBM SPSS dengan prosedur validitas, reliabilitas, normalitas, regresi linier sederhana, uji-t, dan koefisien determinasi. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa semua item kuesioner valid dan reliabel. Model regresi menghasilkan koefisien positif, beta terstandarisasi sebesar 0,906, dan nilai R Kuadrat sebesar 0,820, yang menunjukkan bahwa gaya kepemimpinan menjelaskan 82,0% variasi dalam kualitas pelayanan publik. Keunikan penelitian ini terletak pada fokusnya pada tata kelola pelayanan publik di tingkat kabupaten dalam konteks perkotaan kepulauan, di mana kepemimpinan tidak hanya bersifat administratif, tetapi juga koordinatif dan adaptif. Penelitian ini menyimpulkan bahwa pengawasan kepemimpinan yang lebih ketat, penataan tenaga kerja, dan disiplin pelayanan sangat diperlukan untuk meningkatkan konsistensi dalam penyampaian pelayanan publik.

Kata Kunci : Gaya Kepemimpinan, Pelayanan Publik, Kantor Distrik

INTRODUCTION

Public service is one of the most visible obligations of government because it directly connects state institutions with the needs, expectations, and rights of citizens. At the local level, service delivery is not merely an administrative routine; it represents the quality of government presence in society. Law Number 25 of 2009 defines public service as a set of activities intended to fulfill the service needs of citizens and residents in the form of goods, services, and/or administrative services provided by public service organizers. In this sense, public service quality is closely related to institutional discipline, procedural clarity, responsiveness, and the capacity of public officials to translate formal rules into practical service behavior.

The district office has a strategic position in the Indonesian local government system because it functions as the closest administrative unit between the municipal government and the community. The Teluk Ambon District Office performs various administrative and governmental services, including general administration, coordination of village and urban village governance, public order affairs, development coordination, and public facilities management. The existence of this office is important because many citizens experience government performance through everyday interactions with district-level officers rather than through higher-level policy institutions.

The empirical background of this study shows that public service at the Teluk Ambon District Office has not been fully optimal. Several problems can be identified, such as inconsistent application of frontliner standard operating procedures, variations in employee discipline, weak coordination among sections, and limitations in the availability of personnel at the public service unit at certain times. The Ambon Mayor Regulation Number 5 of 2017 concerning Frontliner Standard Operating Procedures requires service officers to welcome citizens politely, identify service needs, check document completeness, provide clear explanations, and close service interactions with courtesy. However, the existence of formal standards does not automatically guarantee consistent implementation when leadership supervision, staff coordination, and organizational control are weak.

Leadership style is therefore an important explanatory variable in understanding service performance. Leadership style refers to the pattern of behavior used by a leader to influence subordinates, direct work processes, build communication, and ensure that organizational goals are achieved. Thoha (2016) emphasizes that leadership style shapes how leaders interact with subordinates, while Rivai (2004) explains it as a set of characteristics used by leaders to influence followers so that organizational targets can be achieved. In a public organization, the effectiveness of leadership is not only seen from formal authority but also from the ability to make decisions, motivate staff, control work behavior, and manage emotions when facing public complaints.

The theoretical basis of this study combines leadership style indicators with the SERVQUAL perspective on public service quality. Kartono (2019) identifies leadership style through decision-making ability, motivational ability, subordinate control, and emotional control. Meanwhile, Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) explain service quality through tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. These two conceptual foundations are relevant because public service quality in a district office depends on both managerial direction and the direct behavior of service officers in dealing with citizens.

Previous studies also show that leadership has an important role in public service improvement. Armisa, Sahetapy, and Pattimukay (2024) found that sub-district head leadership was positively related to public service at the Leihitu Sub-District Office. Bahrudin (2025) similarly demonstrated that leadership style and service quality affected public satisfaction in an urban administrative context. Susilo (2016) further explained that democratic leadership and work motivation can strengthen employee responsibility and service performance. Nevertheless, research that specifically examines leadership style and public service at the Teluk Ambon District Office remains limited, especially in relation to the specific operational problems of frontliner discipline, staff availability, and coordination across organizational sections.

Based on this gap, this study aims to analyze the influence of leadership style on public service at the Teluk Ambon District Office, Ambon City. The central research question is whether leadership style has a positive and significant effect on public service quality. The study contributes to public

administration scholarship by showing how leadership functions at the district level, where public service is shaped not only by regulations but also by everyday supervision, coordination, and organizational discipline.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative approach with a survey method. The design was descriptive and causal: descriptive because it described respondents' perceptions of leadership style and public service quality, and causal because it tested the influence of leadership style as the independent variable on public service as the dependent variable. Quantitative research was considered appropriate because the relationship between variables could be measured through numerical data and analyzed statistically (Creswell, 2018; Sugiyono, 2019).

The research was conducted at the Teluk Ambon District Office, located on Jl. Ir. M. Putuhena, RT 004/RW 03, Ambon, Maluku. The location was selected because the office has a direct role in providing public administrative services and coordinating governmental functions at the district level. The population consisted of district employees and community members who received public services. The sample consisted of 50 respondents, comprising 24 employees and 26 community service users. Respondents were selected through accidental sampling and purposive sampling, considering their direct relevance to the implementation and experience of public service at the district office.

Data were collected through questionnaires, observation, interviews, and documentation. The questionnaire used a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Leadership style was measured using four indicators: decision-making ability, motivational ability, ability to control subordinates, and emotional control. Public service quality was measured through five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Observation was used to understand the real service process, while interviews and documentation were used to support the interpretation of quantitative findings.

The data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 31.0. The analysis stages included validity testing using Pearson Product Moment correlation, reliability testing using Cronbach Alpha, descriptive statistics, normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov procedure, simple linear regression, t-test, and coefficient of determination. The regression model was expressed as $Y = a + bX$, where Y represents public service, X represents leadership style, a is the constant, and b is the regression coefficient. The hypothesis was accepted when the significance value was lower than 0.05 at the 95% confidence level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The respondent profile shows that the data were obtained from both internal service providers and external service users. This composition is important because it allows the study to capture public service from two perspectives: the organizational perspective of employees and the experiential perspective of citizens who receive services. The respondent characteristics are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

| Category | Classification | Frequency | Percentage |
|-----------------|-------------------------|-----------|------------|
| Gender | Male | 32 | 64% |
| Gender | Female | 18 | 36% |
| Age | 17-20 years | 12 | 24% |
| Age | 20-30 years | 10 | 20% |
| Age | 30-40 years | 6 | 12% |
| Age | 40-50 years | 13 | 26% |
| Age | 50-60 years | 9 | 18% |
| Respondent type | District employees | 24 | 48% |
| Respondent type | Community service users | 26 | 52% |
| Total | | 50 | 100% |

Source: Primary data processed from the thesis dataset, 2026.

Table 1 indicates that male respondents were dominant at 64%, while female respondents represented 36%. In terms of age, the largest group was 40-50 years old at 26%, followed by 17-20 years old at 24%. The respondent type was relatively balanced, with 48% employees and 52% community service users. This balance strengthens the interpretation because the analysis does not rely solely on internal organizational perceptions but also includes citizens who directly experience public services.

Before testing the hypothesis, the quality of the research instrument was examined. The validity test used an r-table value of 0.278 based on 50 respondents and a 5% significance level. All leadership style items had calculated r values above the r-table, ranging from 0.787 to 0.918. All public service items were also valid, with calculated r values ranging from 0.757 to 0.879. Reliability testing showed that both variables obtained Cronbach Alpha values of 0.961, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.70. The normality test also supported regression analysis because the Asymp. Sig. value was 0.200, which is greater than 0.05. The summary of instrument and assumption testing is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Summary of Instrument and Assumption Testing

| Test | Indicator/Variable | Result | Interpretation |
|-------------|----------------------|----------------------------------|----------------------|
| Validity | Leadership style (X) | r = 0.787-0.918; r-table = 0.278 | All items valid |
| Validity | Public service (Y) | r = 0.757-0.879; r-table = 0.278 | All items valid |
| Reliability | Leadership style (X) | Cronbach Alpha = 0.961 | Reliable |
| Reliability | Public service (Y) | Cronbach Alpha = 0.961 | Reliable |
| Normality | Regression residual | Asymp. Sig. = 0.200 | Normally distributed |

Source: IBM SPSS output processed from the thesis dataset, 2026.

The descriptive results show that respondents generally gave positive assessments to leadership style and public service. In the leadership variable, the highest mean score appeared in two items: the leader provides clear direction and motivation to employees, and the leader communicates politely and does not easily become angry, both with a mean of 4.04. The lowest leadership mean was found in the item related to appreciation for employees with good performance, with a mean of 3.74. This pattern indicates that the leadership practice was perceived as strong in direction and emotional control, but still needed improvement in reward and appreciation mechanisms.

In the public service variable, the highest mean scores were found in the items related to employees ability to explain service procedures and equal attention to citizens without discrimination, both with a mean of 4.04. The lowest mean was found in the clarity of service procedure information, with a mean of 3.78. These findings suggest that interpersonal service behavior was relatively positive, yet the availability and clarity of written or visual service information still required improvement. This is important because public service quality is not only determined by officer friendliness but also by procedural transparency and ease of access to information.

The simple linear regression test was used to identify the effect of leadership style on public service. The regression results show a positive relationship between the two variables. The constant value was 6.005, while the regression coefficient for leadership style was 1.223. This means that an increase in leadership style score is followed by an increase in public service quality score. The standardized beta value was 0.906, indicating a very strong relationship. The t value for leadership style was 14.785 with a significance value lower than 0.001, confirming that the influence was statistically significant. The R Square value was 0.820, meaning that 82.0% of the variation in public service could be explained by leadership style, while the remaining 18.0% was explained by other factors outside the model.

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression and Coefficient of Determination

| Variable/Model | B | Std. Error | Beta/R | t | Sig. | R Square |
|----------------|-------|------------|--------|-------|-------|----------|
| Constant | 6.005 | 3.629 | - | 1.655 | 0.104 | - |

| | | | | | | |
|------------------------------------|-------|-------|-----------|--------|--------|---------------------------|
| Leadership style -> Public service | 1.223 | 0.083 | 0.906 | 14.785 | <0.001 | 0.820 |
| Model summary | - | - | R = 0.906 | - | - | Adjusted R Square = 0.816 |

Source: Recalculated from the thesis tabulation and SPSS output, 2026.

These results confirm the hypothesis that leadership style has a positive and significant influence on public service at the Teluk Ambon District Office. The finding is theoretically consistent with the view that leadership style shapes employee discipline, work coordination, and service behavior (Thoha, 2016; Rivai, 2004). In the district office context, the leader does not merely occupy a formal structural position; the leader functions as a decision maker, coordinator, motivator, and controller of the daily service process. When leadership is able to provide direction, maintain communication, and supervise work standards, public service becomes more orderly and responsive.

The strength of the relationship is also supported by the empirical reality of the Teluk Ambon District Office. The public service process involves several sections with different functions, including general service, government affairs, public order, village and urban village development, and public facilities. Without effective leadership coordination, each section may work separately and service continuity may be disrupted. The high beta and R Square values therefore indicate that leadership is a dominant organizational factor in shaping service quality. This does not mean that leadership is the only factor, but it shows that leadership provides the managerial framework through which employees understand tasks, follow procedures, and respond to community needs.

The finding also strengthens previous studies. Armisa et al. (2024) reported that sub-district head leadership had a positive relationship with public service, while Bahrudin (2025) showed that leadership style and service quality influenced public satisfaction. The present study extends these findings by showing that leadership influence is especially important where operational service problems remain visible, such as inconsistent frontliner SOP implementation, delayed service hours, uneven employee discipline, and occasional absence of staff in the public service unit. These operational constraints reveal that leadership effectiveness must be translated into practical supervision and staff arrangement, not only into general motivation or formal instruction.

From the SERVQUAL perspective, leadership style affects public service through several dimensions. First, in the tangibles dimension, leadership is needed to ensure the availability of service facilities, information boards, clean waiting spaces, and orderly service counters. Second, in the reliability dimension, leadership influences whether services are delivered according to procedures and time commitments. Third, in the responsiveness dimension, leadership shapes how quickly officers respond to community needs and complaints. Fourth, in the assurance dimension, leaders are responsible for strengthening employee competence and ensuring citizens feel safe when processing documents. Fifth, in the empathy dimension, leadership contributes to the development of fair, patient, and non-discriminatory service behavior.

The novelty of this study lies in its district-level focus within an archipelagic urban setting. Many discussions of public service quality focus on broad government systems, but this study demonstrates that everyday service quality at the district office depends strongly on leadership practice at the frontline of local governance. In areas such as Teluk Ambon, where administrative services are connected with coastal settlements, mobility challenges, and diverse community needs, leadership must be adaptive, coordinative, and service-oriented. Therefore, improving public service requires not only new regulations but also stronger internal managerial control, staff discipline, procedural transparency, and continuous evaluation of service units.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that leadership style has a positive and significant influence on public service at the Teluk Ambon District Office, Ambon City. The research instrument was valid and reliable, and the data met the normality assumption for regression analysis. The regression result shows that leadership style strongly affects public service, as indicated by a standardized beta of 0.906 and an R Square value

of 0.820. This means that better leadership practices are followed by better public service quality. Leadership contributes through the ability to make decisions, motivate employees, control subordinate performance, and manage emotions in service situations. Nevertheless, the study also shows that service improvement still requires practical strengthening, particularly in the consistent application of frontliner SOPs, employee discipline, availability of service staff, coordination across organizational sections, and clarity of service information. The main implication is that district-level public service reform must place leadership supervision and organizational control at the center of service quality improvement.

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