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Internal Personnel Service Quality and Employee Performance in a Local Government Inspectorate: Evidence from Indonesia

[1]Nuryani, [2]Bonaventura Ngarawula,[3]RoosWidjajani
[1,2,3]*Universitas Merdeka Malang, Indonesia*

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Abstract
Internal employee services are an important form of organizational support in helping employees carry out their duties effectively, particularly in regional government supervisory institutions that demand accuracy, professionalism, and accountability. This study aims to analyze the quality of internal employee services and describe the pattern of their relationship with employee performance at the West Kutai Regency Inspectorate. The study used a descriptive quantitative approach with a case study design. Data were collected through a closed-ended questionnaire using a five-point Likert scale from 10 respondents from various positions and organizational functions. The quality of employee services was evaluated using the SERVQUAL perspective, particularly on the dimensions of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, while employee performance encompassed work quality, work quantity, responsibility, work discipline, and cooperation. The analysis was conducted using descriptive statistics in the form of frequencies, percentages, and trends of respondents' answers. The results showed that employee services were generally perceived positively. Reliability and empathy were the strongest aspects, while responsiveness and assurance still showed room for improvement. Employee performance also received a very positive assessment. The findings indicate a descriptive correlation between perceptions of internal service quality and perceptions of employee performance, but this cannot be interpreted as a causal relationship. This study confirms the relevance of SERVQUAL in evaluating internal employee services and demonstrates the importance of strengthening responsiveness, procedural certainty, and communication consistency in supporting the organizational function of local government oversight.

Keywords:internal personnel service quality, SERVQUAL, employee performance, personnel services, regional government inspectorate.

I. Introduction

Internal personnel services are a crucial part of public organization governance because they determine how effectively employees receive administrative support to carry out their duties. This becomes even more crucial in regional government oversight institutions that demand high levels of accuracy, professionalism, and accountability. At the West Kutai Regency Inspectorate, approximately 28% of personnel administration services are delayed, while approximately 27.7% of employees have not achieved their annual performance targets. These conditions indicate a real problem in internal service support for employee performance achievement.

Conceptually, the quality of employee service can be analyzed using the SERVQUAL approach, which encompasses tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy (Parasuraman et al., 1988). This framework is not only relevant for assessing service to external users but can also be applied to the public sector and internal organizational services (Wisniewski, 1996; Shetty et al., 2022). In the context of employee service, reliable, responsive service, procedural certainty, and attention to employee needs can create administrative conditions that better support work performance.

Previous research has shown that internal service quality is related to various employee outcomes. Abdullah et al. (2021) found a link between internal service quality and employee job satisfaction, commitment, well-being, and performance. Lin et al. (2021) demonstrated a relationship between internal service quality and employee service behavior, while Mo et al. (2021) emphasized the importance of internal service quality in shaping employee responses to the organization. Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024) also demonstrated that internal service quality plays a role in explaining employee performance. In the public sector, employee performance has been widely studied through the perspectives of motivation, leadership, and performance management and appraisal systems (Asif & Rathore, 2021; Backhaus & Vogel, 2022; Barbieri et al., 2023).

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However, research gaps remain. Studies on internal service quality have been primarily conducted in the healthcare, hospitality, service, and banking sectors, while the context of personnel services in local governments remains relatively limited (Abdullah et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2021; Wu et al., 2021). Furthermore, research on public sector employee performance often emphasizes leadership, motivation, competence, or performance appraisal systems rather than internal service quality (Backhaus & Vogel, 2022; Lee & Robertson, 2025). Furthermore, studies specifically exploring internal personnel service quality within the context of local government oversight institutions are still limited, despite the Inspectorate's work characteristics requiring accurate, timely, and reliable administrative support (Sumanti, 2020).

Based on these gaps, the novelty of this research lies in the application of the SERVQUAL-based internal personnel service quality concept in the context of local government inspectorates and its placement alongside employee performance as an organizational outcome. This research positions employees as users of internal organizational services and assesses the quality of personnel services through the aspects of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Thus, the research contribution is primarily contextual and empirical, namely expanding the evidence of the application of internal service quality in the bureaucratic environment of local government supervision in Indonesia.

This study aims to analyze the quality of internal employee services and describe its relationship to employee performance in local government inspectorates in Indonesia. Specifically, this study evaluates aspects of reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy, and identifies service aspects that are relatively strong and those that still need improvement. The results are expected to strengthen the understanding of internal services as a form of organizational support for apparatus performance and provide an empirical basis for improving the quality of employee services in local government.

II. Literature Review

2.1 Internal Personnel Service Quality

Internal service quality describes an organization's ability to provide services that support the needs of employees as internal users. In public organizations, this service includes administrative accuracy, information clarity, procedural certainty, response speed, and attention to employee needs. The SERVQUAL approach developed by Parasuraman et al. (1988) remains relevant as a conceptual basis because it assesses service quality through the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. SERVQUAL has also been extended to the public sector and various service organizations, demonstrating that user perceptions of service quality can be used to evaluate service effectiveness (Wisniewski, 1996; Shetty et al., 2022; Butkus et al., 2023).

In the context of employee services, the primary focus lies on service aspects directly experienced by employees. Reliability relates to the accuracy and consistency of service, responsiveness to the speed of responding to administrative needs, assurance to competence and procedural certainty, and empathy to attention to individual employee needs. These aspects are important because quality internal service can reduce administrative barriers and create more supportive working conditions. Abdullah et al. (2021) showed that internal service quality is related to employee job satisfaction, commitment, well-being, and performance. Similar findings are also seen in studies by Lin et al. (2021), Mo et al. (2021), and Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024), which identify internal service quality as a crucial factor in shaping employee responses and work outcomes.

2.2 Employee Performance in Public Organizations

Employee performance is the work results achieved by individuals in carrying out the tasks and responsibilities assigned by the organization. Mangkunegara (2017) explains that performance is reflected in the quality and quantity of work output, while Robbins and Judge (2017) emphasize that performance is influenced by individual abilities, motivation, and the organizational environment. In the public sector, performance has specific characteristics because employees work within a bureaucratic framework, formal procedures, accountability, and a public service orientation.

Public sector literature shows that employee performance is largely explained by factors such as public service motivation, leadership, competence, and performance appraisal systems. Asif and Rathore (2021) highlight various behavioral factors that influence the performance of public sector organizations, while Fan et al. (2022) demonstrate the relationship between public service motivation and individual job performance. Backhaus and Vogel (2022) emphasize the role of leadership, while Barbieri et al. (2023) and Lee and Robertson (2025) demonstrate the importance of

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performance appraisal and management systems in public organizations. In the Indonesian context, Hairudin (2025) and Hidayat et al. (2025) also demonstrate the importance of individual and organizational factors in explaining civil servant performance. These findings suggest that employee performance is determined not only by individual capacity but also by the quality of support provided by the organization.

2.3 Linking Internal Personnel Service Quality and Employee Performance

The quality of employee service can be understood as a form of organizational support that has the potential to create more conducive working conditions for employees. Appropriate, fast, clear, and reliable service can reduce administrative burdens, increase process certainty, and allow employees to focus more on carrying out their core tasks. Conversely, slow or inconsistent internal service can increase administrative barriers and disrupt work effectiveness. In this context, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy are important aspects in explaining how employees assess an organization's internal service support.

Several empirical studies provide evidence for this link. Abdullah et al. (2021) demonstrated that internal service quality is related to performance through working conditions and employee well-being. Lin et al. (2021) found a relationship between internal service quality and employee service behavior, while Mo et al. (2021) demonstrated that internal service quality plays a role in shaping employee responses to the organization. Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024) also found that internal service quality is related to employee performance. However, most of this evidence comes from the healthcare, hospitality, and service sectors, so its application in government oversight bureaucratic environments is still relatively limited.

Based on the literature synthesis, the quality of employee service can be viewed as a form of internal organizational support that has the potential to create working conditions that are more conducive to employee performance. In the context of local government inspectorates, the need for reliable, responsive, certain, and attentive service to employee needs is becoming increasingly important because the implementation of the supervisory function demands high accuracy, timeliness, and professionalism. Therefore, this study uses the SERVQUAL perspective to evaluate the quality of employee service and illustrate its relationship with employee performance in local government inspectorates in Indonesia. The conceptual relationship between the two constructs is then formulated in the research framework as shown in Figure 1.

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Study
Source: Developed by the authors based on Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Mangkunegara (2017).

III. Method

3.1 Research Design and Setting

This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a case study design to evaluate the quality of internal personnel services and illustrate its relationship to employee performance. This approach was used because the data were obtained through structured instruments and analyzed in numerical form to describe respondents' perceptions without estimating cause-and-effect relationships (Creswell & Creswell, 2017). The study was conducted at the Regional Inspectorate of West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. This organization was chosen because it carries out the internal oversight function of the local government while also providing personnel administration services that support the implementation of employee duties.

3.2 Population and Respondents

The study population consisted of 130 employees of the West Kutai Regency Inspectorate. The data analyzed in this study were obtained from 10 respondents representing various positions and organizational functions. Respondent characteristics and codes are presented in Table 1.

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Table 1. Characteristics and Codes of Respondents

Respondent Category	Respondent Code	n
Regional Inspector	RI-01	1
Inspectorate Secretary	IS-01	1
Auditors	AU-01–AU-02	2
Civil Servants (ASN)	CS-01–CS-02	2
Administrative Staff	AS-01–AS-04	4
Total		**10**

Source: Authors' compilation based on research data (2026).

Due to the relatively limited number of respondents, the research results are positioned as descriptive and contextual evidence and are not intended to make statistical generalizations to the entire population or other government organizations.

3.3 Measurement Instrument

Primary data were collected using a closed-ended questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). The instrument consisted of 25 items developed based on the SERVQUAL perspective to measure internal personnel service quality and the concept of employee performance to measure employee performance. The operationalization of the variables, dimensions, indicators, and number of measurement items are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Measurement of Study Variables

Variable	Dimension	Operational Indicators
Internal Personnel Service Quality	Tangibles	Adequacy of service facilities; completeness of administrative facilities; convenience of the service environment
	Reliability	Service accuracy; administrative accuracy; service consistency
	Responsiveness	Service speed; staff responsiveness; ease of obtaining information
	Assurance	Staff competence; certainty of service procedures; trust in service
	Empathy	Service friendliness; attention to employee needs; concern for employee problems
Employee Performance	Work Quality	Work accuracy; quality of work results
	Work Quantity	Ability to complete work; work productivity
	Responsibility	Responsibility for assigned duties; timely task completion
	Work Discipline	Compliance with organizational rules; punctuality
	Teamwork	Ability to work in teams; communication among employees

Source: Developed by the authors based on Parasuraman et al. (1988) and Mangkunegara (2017).

The service quality instrument refers to Parasuraman et al. (1988), while the employee performance measurement is adapted from Mangkunegara (2017). In this article's empirical reporting, the interpretation of service quality is primarily directed at the dimensions available for separate analysis.

3.4 Data Collection Procedure and Data Analysis

Questionnaires were used as the primary source of data, while organizational documentation was used to obtain supporting information regarding organizational characteristics and personnel administration. After collection, the data were checked for completeness, coded according to the measurement scale, and tabulated for analysis.

The data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically frequencies, percentages, and trends in respondents' responses. The analysis was used to describe the quality of personnel service and employee performance and to identify aspects that are relatively strong and those that still require improvement. The relationship between internal personnel service quality and employee performance was interpreted descriptively based on the respondents' response patterns. Due to the limited number of respondents, this study did not use regression, t-tests, or causal estimation. Therefore, the results are interpreted as descriptive evidence of

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perceived linkage, not as evidence of statistical influence or causality.

IV. Results

4.1 Overall Assessment of Internal Personnel Service Quality

The analysis results show that internal employee services generally received positive assessments from respondents. Seventy percent of respondents strongly agreed with the overall employee services, and 30% agreed with the overall employee services. There were no responses in the undecided, disagree, or strongly disagree categories. The distribution of assessments of the quality of employee services and employee performance is summarized in Table 3.

Table 3. Descriptive Assessment of Internal Personnel Service Quality and Employee Performance

Construct/Dimension	Strongly Agree (%)	Agree (%)	Undecided (%)
Overall Personnel Service	70	30	0
Reliability	80	20	0
Responsiveness	70	20	10
Assurance	70	20	10
Empathy	80	20	0
Employee Performance	90	10	0

Note: No responses were recorded in the disagree or strongly disagree categories.
Source: Authors' calculation based on research data (2026).
The data shows that all aspects measured tend to receive positive responses, although there are variations in several service dimensions.

4.2 Assessment of SERVQUAL Dimensions

At the dimension level, reliability and empathy received the highest ratings. Each dimension received 80% strongly agree responses and 20% agree responses. This pattern indicates that service reliability and attention to employee needs are the aspects of internal service that most consistently receive positive ratings.
Meanwhile, responsiveness and assurance showed greater variation in assessments. For both dimensions, 10% of respondents still chose the undecided category. This finding indicates that response speed, information delivery, procedural certainty, and service clarity are not perceived uniformly by all respondents.
Descriptively, the results place reliability and empathy as the relatively strongest service aspects, while responsiveness and assurance are aspects that still have room for improvement.

4.3 Employee Performance

Employee performance received the highest rating compared to other aspects. Ninety percent of respondents strongly agreed, and 10% agreed, with no neutral or negative responses. These results indicate that respondents generally have a very positive perception of employee performance. This assessment reflects aspects of work quality, work quantity, responsibility, discipline, and cooperation, as operationalized in the research instrument. Because the data is based on respondents' perceptions, these results reflect perceived employee performance, not an objective measure of organizational performance.

4.4 Descriptive Pattern of Internal Personnel Service Quality and Employee Performance

Overall, positive assessments of employee services coincided with high ratings of employee performance. Of all the tabulated assessment categories, 76.67% were strongly agree, 20.00% were agree, and only 3.33% were undecided. No disagree or strongly disagree responses were found.
This pattern indicates a descriptive alignment between perceptions of the quality of internal employee services and perceptions of employee performance. However, these results cannot be used to establish a statistical influence or causal relationship because the study did not conduct correlation, regression, or inferential testing. Therefore, the findings in this section are positioned as a descriptive pattern based on respondents' perceptions in the context of the West Kutai Regency Inspectorate.

V. Discussion

5.1 Internal Personnel Service Quality as Organizational Support

Research findings indicate that the quality of internal employee services is perceived positively and goes hand in hand with high perceptions of employee performance. This finding indicates that employee services serve not only as an

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administrative activity but also as a form of organizational support that can help employees carry out their duties more orderly and efficiently. Abdullah et al. (2021) showed that internal service quality is related to employee job satisfaction, commitment, well-being, and performance, while Aydemir and Kıpçak (2024) also identified internal service quality as a relevant factor for employee performance. The findings of Lin et al. (2021) and Mo et al. (2021) further confirm that the quality of internal support can shape employee responses and behaviors toward the organization. In the context of local government inspectorates, orderly and reliable employee services can reduce administrative barriers, allowing employees more space to focus on their supervisory functions. Consequently, improving employee services should be positioned as part of strengthening organizational support for the apparatus, rather than simply as an administrative improvement.

5.2 Reliability and Empathy as Relative Strengths

Reliability and empathy emerged as the strongest aspects of employee service quality. This indicates that service consistency, administrative accuracy, and attention to employee needs are the elements most appreciated by internal service users. This finding aligns with the SERVQUAL framework, which places reliability and empathy as crucial components in shaping service quality perceptions (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Edlins (2021) also emphasized that empathy is relevant in public administration because service is determined not only by procedures but also by the organization's ability to understand the needs of service users. In the context of a supervisory organization, reliability is crucial because employee activities depend on the assurance of accurate documents, information, and administrative processes, while empathy can strengthen the organization's sense of support for employees. Consequently, consistent, employee-oriented service quality must be maintained as the primary standard in internal service delivery.

5.3 Responsiveness and Assurance as Relative Areas for Improvement

Compared to other dimensions, responsiveness and assurance showed slightly greater variation in perceptions, and therefore can be viewed as relative areas for improvement, rather than service weaknesses. This means that a small proportion of respondents still do not fully perceive uniformity in response speed, information clarity, procedural certainty, and trust in the service process. Sangpikul (2023) shows that assurance relates not only to officer competence but also to the certainty and trust felt by service users. Meanwhile, studies on public service quality confirm that responsiveness is important because users assess service quality based on the organization's ability to respond quickly and appropriately (Butkus et al., 2023; Shetty et al., 2022). In personnel services, delays in information or unclear procedures can increase the administrative burden even if service quality is generally assessed as good. Therefore, the practical implication is the need to strengthen service time standards, clarity of administrative flows, access to information, and consistency of communication to employees.

5.4 Descriptive Pattern between Internal Personnel Service Quality and Employee Performance

The research findings demonstrate a descriptive alignment between perceptions of internal employee service quality and perceptions of employee performance. This pattern does not prove a causal relationship, but suggests that positive internal service support emerges in the context of organizations that also have high perceived performance. Public sector literature indicates that employee performance is an outcome influenced by various factors, including public service motivation, leadership, performance management systems, competence, and organizational support (Asif & Rathore, 2021; Backhaus & Vogel, 2022; Barbieri et al., 2023; Lee & Robertson, 2025). Therefore, employee service quality should be understood as one component of the organizational environment that supports performance, not as the sole determinant. This explanation is important because performance in this study was measured based on respondents' perceptions, not objective indicators such as target achievement, actual productivity, or performance evaluation results. Consequently, improving internal service should be integrated with strengthening competence, performance management systems, and other organizational support.

5.5 Theoretical and Practical Implications

Theoretically, this study strengthens contextual evidence regarding the relevance of SERVQUAL for evaluating internal employee services in local government oversight organizations. The research contribution lies not in creating new dimensions of SERVQUAL, but rather in its application to understanding employees as internal service users in a bureaucratic oversight environment. These

findings complement previous studies that have primarily applied service quality to the hospitality, healthcare, banking, and external public service sectors (Abdullah et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2021; Shetty et al., 2022; Aydemir & Kıpçak, 2024).

Practically, the research results show that service improvement strategies do not need to be directed equally across all dimensions. Reliability and empathy can be maintained as service strengths, while improvements can be focused more on responsiveness and assurance. For regional government inspectorates, improvement measures can be directed at standardizing service times, simplifying procedural information, ensuring administrative flows, and strengthening communication between service officers and employees. This approach can help make personnel services more consistent as an internal support system for the implementation of oversight functions.

VI. Conclusion

This study shows that the quality of internal employee services at the West Kutai Regency Inspectorate is generally perceived positively. Reliability and empathy emerged as the strongest aspects, while responsiveness and assurance still showed room for improvement. At the same time, employee performance also received a very positive assessment. These findings indicate a descriptive alignment between perceptions of internal service quality and perceptions of employee performance, although it cannot be interpreted as a causal relationship. Academically, this study provides contextual and empirical contributions by strengthening the relevance of SERVQUAL for evaluating employee services when employees are positioned as internal service users in local government oversight organizations.

Practically, the research results indicate that service improvements do not need to be implemented uniformly across all dimensions. Reliability and empathy should be maintained as strengths, while improvements can be focused more on responsiveness and assurance through accelerated responses, clarity of information, certainty of procedures, and consistency of communication. Thus, personnel services can be positioned as part of an organization's internal support system, supporting the implementation of oversight functions.

This study has limitations in the number of respondents (10), the study location is limited to one organization, the dominance of perception-based data, and the lack of inferential analysis and objective performance indicators. Furthermore, the empirical interpretation focuses separately on reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. Future research is recommended to involve a larger sample size and include several local government organizations, integrate all dimensions of SERVQUAL, including tangibles, and use objective performance indicators. With an adequate sample size, future research can also apply inferential analysis such as correlation, regression, or structural equation modeling to more robustly test the relationship between internal employee service quality and employee performance.

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