

## Research Article

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# Academic Service Quality of Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University

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**Abstract:** *Academic services are a critical form of public service in higher education because their quality directly supports the continuity of academic administration and the learning process. This study aims to examine and analyze the quality of academic services provided by Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) serving as educational administrative staff at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University, using the five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The study employed a qualitative descriptive approach. Eleven informants participated, consisting of the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, PPPK educational staff, students, and lecturers. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and documentation and strengthened through triangulation. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that the overall quality of academic services was fairly good but had not reached an optimal level. Tangibles were supported by computers, printers, internet access, service rooms, and digital systems, although facility maintenance and network stability require improvement. Reliability was supported by adherence to duties and procedures, while delays occurred because of coordination, document verification, incomplete requirements, and system disruptions. Responsiveness, assurance, and empathy were also fairly good, but service speed, completion-time certainty, competency updating, and consistency during peak workloads require strengthening.*

**Keywords:** *academic service quality; academic services; PPPK; educational administrative staff; SERVQUAL.*

## Introduction

Higher education institutions are expected to provide academic administration that is accessible, accurate, timely, professional, and responsive to the needs of students and lecturers. Academic services are not merely supporting administrative activities; they constitute an essential part of the institutional environment in which teaching, learning, assessment, graduation, and academic information management take place. When administrative services function effectively, students and lecturers can complete academic procedures with greater certainty and fewer unnecessary interruptions. Conversely, delays, inaccurate information, unclear procedures, unstable digital systems, or unresponsive personnel may create additional administrative burdens and can affect users' experience of the institution. For this reason, service quality is an important dimension of public-sector performance in higher education.

Academic service quality is closely related to the capacity of educational administrative personnel. These employees interact directly with users and translate institutional policies, procedures, and information systems into day-to-day services. Their work may include processing study plans and study results, academic correspondence, examination schedules, lecture administration, grade input, graduation administration, and academic data management. Such activities require not only technical competence but also accuracy, consistency, communication skills, responsiveness, and an understanding of users' needs.

The quality of service therefore depends on the interaction between human resources, organizational procedures, facilities, technology, and coordination across administrative units.

The position of educational administrative staff is particularly important in a public university because academic administration is part of a broader public service system. Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services emphasizes the importance of professional, transparent, accountable, accurate, and timely services. In the context of the State Civil Apparatus, Government Employees with Work Agreements (Pegawai Pemerintah dengan Perjanjian Kerja or PPPK) are part of the public workforce and perform duties within the institutional framework established by government regulations. Their presence in higher education expands the diversity of employment arrangements within administrative units while maintaining the requirement that services be delivered according to duties, authority, procedures, and applicable standards.

The Faculty of Social and Political Sciences (FISIP), Tadulako University, provides academic services through educational administrative personnel at faculty and study-program levels. The research setting involved a substantial service workload. The faculty was supported by ten academic operators serving 938 students across several study programs. This ratio creates a practical challenge because administrative personnel must handle routine services while responding to different individual needs, deadlines, and academic conditions. The complexity increases when services require verification of data or documents, coordination with other units, or access to academic information systems.

Preliminary observations reported in the study identified several service problems. These included delays in study-plan registration, academic clearance, correspondence, grade input, examination scheduling, and graduation administration. Users also reported concerns about the length of service completion, response speed, and the absence of clear completion-time certainty for some services. These conditions do not necessarily indicate that employees are unwilling or unable to serve users. Instead, they suggest that service quality may be influenced by a combination of employee performance, administrative procedures, workload, inter-unit coordination, technological infrastructure, and the completeness of user documents.

The SERVQUAL framework developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry provides a useful conceptual structure for examining these conditions. Its five dimensions—tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy—allow service quality to be examined from complementary perspectives. Tangibles concern the physical and technological resources supporting service delivery. Reliability concerns the ability to provide accurate and consistent services in accordance with procedures. Responsiveness concerns willingness and speed in assisting users. Assurance relates to employee competence, courtesy, knowledge, and the ability to create confidence. Empathy concerns attention, understanding, fairness, and individualized care. Applying these dimensions to academic services makes it possible to connect observable administrative practices with the experience of service users.

Previous literature included in the study indicates that service quality in educational administration is associated with users' perceptions of service performance and satisfaction. Research on academic administration has highlighted the importance of service quality, information quality, and system quality in shaping users' experiences. Studies of educational staff performance also emphasize the role of employee competence and administrative capability in supporting institutional services. These findings reinforce the relevance of examining academic services not only through formal procedures but also through the quality of interaction between service providers and users.

The present study focuses specifically on PPPK educational administrative personnel at FISIP Tadulako University. This focus is important because the quality of academic service is ultimately experienced through concrete interactions at service points, while the employment status of personnel provides an institutional context for understanding responsibilities, competence, and accountability. The study does not assume that PPPK status itself determines service quality. Rather, it examines how services are actually delivered and what factors support or constrain quality across the five SERVQUAL dimensions.

Based on this background, the research question is: how is the quality of academic services provided by PPPK educational administrative personnel at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University, when examined through the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy? The objective is to describe and analyze academic service quality across these five dimensions and to identify practical aspects that still require improvement. The study is expected to contribute an empirically grounded understanding of academic administrative services and to provide a basis for improving facilities, coordination, service procedures, employee competence, and user-oriented service practices.

The importance of this research also lies in its practical institutional focus. Broad discussions of service quality may identify general standards, but faculty-level administration has specific operational characteristics that can only be understood through direct observation of service interactions. The present study therefore examines how the five dimensions appear in everyday academic administration and how organizational conditions shape employees' ability to meet users' needs. By focusing on actual service practices, the study provides a basis for identifying improvements that are relevant to the faculty's administrative context rather than relying only on abstract service standards. It also clarifies that improving quality requires attention to both employee behavior and the systems within which employees work.

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## Literature Review

### Public Administration and Academic Services

Public administration provides a conceptual foundation for understanding academic services as an institutional activity oriented toward the fulfillment of public needs. In public organizations, administration involves planning, organizing, implementation, coordination, supervision, and evaluation directed toward organizational objectives and public interests. Atmosudirdjo and other administrative scholars cited in the original study emphasize the organizational and managerial dimensions of administration. Pasolong (2013) similarly places public administration within the process of managing public affairs, while Santosa (2009) connects public administration with governance principles and the effective delivery of public services. In a university, these principles are reflected in the way academic administrative units organize personnel, procedures, information, facilities, and accountability mechanisms to support students and lecturers.

Public service refers to activities undertaken by public institutions to fulfill the rights and needs of service users. Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services establishes a normative context in which services should be professional, transparent, accountable, and timely. Moenir (2010) explains public service management in relation to the organization of service activities and the interaction between service providers and users. Ratminto and Winarsih (2013) similarly emphasize service management as a process requiring appropriate standards, human resources, procedures, and mechanisms for handling users' needs. Within higher education, academic administration can therefore be understood as a specialized form of public service in which administrative personnel support the fulfillment of students' and lecturers' academic rights and needs.

### Academic Service Quality in Higher Education

Academic services include administrative activities that enable educational processes to operate smoothly. The original study identifies study-plan registration, study-result administration, academic correspondence, examination schedules, lecture administration, grade input, graduation administration, and academic data management. Daryanto (2005) places educational administration within the broader management of educational processes, while studies cited in the source relate academic administrative

service quality to users' satisfaction. Mirza (2023), for example, examined academic administrative service quality and student satisfaction, while Suardika and Indriani (2023) discussed academic administrative services in relation to student satisfaction. These studies support the importance of administrative performance in the higher education service experience.

Service quality refers to the extent to which an organization provides services that meet users' needs and expected standards. Tjiptono (2005) discusses service quality in relation to service delivery and user satisfaction, while Yamit (2004) emphasizes quality management in products and services. Lovelock (1992) views service management as involving operations and human resources, highlighting the organizational and employee dimensions of service quality. Hardiansyah (2011) associates public service quality with reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and adequate facilities. These perspectives indicate that service quality includes not only the final administrative outcome but also process, communication, infrastructure, and user treatment.

### **SERVQUAL as a Framework for Measuring Service Quality**

The SERVQUAL model developed by Parasuraman, Zeithaml, and Berry provides the main analytical framework for this study. The model conceptualizes service quality through five dimensions. First, tangibles refer to physical facilities, equipment, communication materials, technology, and the appearance of the service environment. In academic administration, tangibles include computers, printers, internet connections, service counters or rooms, digital platforms, and information media. Adequate tangibles can facilitate administrative work, although their presence alone does not guarantee high-quality service. Facilities must be functional, accessible, maintained, and appropriate to the volume and complexity of service demands.

Second, reliability concerns the ability to perform the promised service accurately, consistently, and in accordance with established procedures. In academic administration, reliability is reflected in accurate data entry, correct information, proper document processing, compliance with academic rules, and consistent completion of administrative procedures. Errors may have significant consequences because academic records, grades, examination information, and graduation documents are connected to students' formal academic status. Reliability therefore requires employee competence as well as effective verification and coordination mechanisms.

Third, responsiveness concerns employees' willingness and ability to help users and provide prompt responses. In an academic service environment, responsiveness includes answering questions, receiving complaints, identifying users' needs, explaining procedures, and following up unresolved matters. Responsiveness should not be interpreted simply as completing every request immediately. Some services require verification or coordination with other units. Accordingly, responsiveness also involves communicating the reason for a delay, directing users to the appropriate unit, and maintaining follow-up until the matter is resolved.

Fourth, assurance concerns the competence, knowledge, courtesy, and credibility of service personnel and their ability to create confidence and a sense of security among users. Academic administrative staff frequently handle information that users cannot independently verify. Users therefore need confidence that information provided by staff is accurate and that documents will be processed according to institutional rules. Assurance is strengthened when employees understand current policies, communicate carefully, verify uncertain information, and treat users respectfully. It can be weakened when procedures are unclear, completion times are uncertain, or employees lack updated knowledge about changes in academic systems and policies.

Fifth, empathy concerns individualized attention, courtesy, understanding, fairness, and willingness to recognize the specific needs of users. Academic service users differ in their knowledge of procedures, urgency, academic circumstances, and ability to navigate digital systems. Empathy does not mean giving preferential treatment. Rather, it involves explaining procedures patiently, listening to problems, providing appropriate assistance, and ensuring that users are treated fairly according to applicable rules. In a busy academic office, maintaining empathy can become challenging because high workloads may reduce the time available for individual interaction.

### **PPPK Educational Administrative Personnel in Public Service**

Within the institutional context of PPPK personnel, service quality must also be understood as part of human resource management and public-sector accountability. Government Regulation Number 49 of 2018 provides the regulatory framework for PPPK management, while Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning the State Civil Apparatus establishes the broader legal context of the public workforce. The employment status of staff does not replace the fundamental requirement of service quality. Instead, it establishes a formal institutional relationship within which employees are expected to perform assigned responsibilities professionally and according to applicable rules.

For academic administration, PPPK personnel occupy a direct service position. Their work connects institutional policies and academic systems with the practical needs of students and lecturers. Consequently, competence, procedural understanding, communication, accuracy, and responsiveness are relevant to service quality regardless of the employment arrangement. The present study therefore treats PPPK status as the institutional context of the service providers rather than as a direct determinant of service quality.

### **Conceptual Framework of the Study**

The literature reviewed supports a framework in which academic service quality results from the interaction of employee competence, organizational procedures, technological infrastructure, coordination, and user-oriented behavior. The five SERVQUAL dimensions provide the analytical categories for examining these interactions. Tangibles represent the physical and technological conditions that support service delivery; reliability represents accuracy and consistency; responsiveness represents willingness and promptness in assisting users; assurance represents competence, credibility, and courtesy; and empathy represents attention, fairness, and understanding of user needs.

The present study applies these dimensions to the specific setting of PPPK educational administrative staff at FISIP Tadulako University. This framework allows the study to identify not only whether services are functioning, but also the concrete strengths and constraints that shape users' administrative experiences. It also provides a basis for connecting employee-level practices with institutional factors such as facilities, digital systems, workload, and inter-unit coordination. Accordingly, the study examines service quality as an integrated phenomenon rather than as a characteristic of individual employees alone.

## **Method**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to obtain a systematic and contextual understanding of the quality of academic services provided by Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) serving as educational administrative staff at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University. The research site was selected because academic services at the faculty involve direct interaction between educational administrative personnel, students, and lecturers and because

the initial observations identified issues concerning service speed, responsiveness, coordination, and completion-time certainty.

The study used primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through direct observation and interviews with selected informants who understood and experienced the academic service process. Secondary data were obtained from institutional documents, archives, reports, relevant regulations, and other supporting records. Informants were selected through purposive sampling based on their direct knowledge or involvement in academic services. The study involved 11 informants, including the Vice Dean for Academic Affairs, PPPK educational administrative staff, students, and lecturers.

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation. Triangulation was used to strengthen credibility by comparing information obtained from different sources and methods. Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The analytical framework followed the five SERVQUAL dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy. The findings were interpreted descriptively by examining recurring patterns, supporting observations, and differences in service conditions. The study focused on describing actual service practices and constraints rather than producing numerical service-quality scores.

The credibility of the findings was supported by comparing observations with interview statements and documentary evidence. The analysis was conducted iteratively so that emerging information could be checked against the research focus and the five SERVQUAL dimensions. This procedure enabled the study to identify recurring conditions as well as contextual factors that influenced service delivery.

## Results and Discussion

The academic service system at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University, is an important administrative support structure for students and lecturers. Services examined in this study include study-plan registration, study-result administration, academic correspondence, examination-related documents and schedules, lecture administration, grade input, graduation administration, and academic data management, including activities associated with PDDikti. The findings show that these services are functioning and that PPPK educational administrative personnel are generally able to perform their assigned responsibilities. However, overall service quality is fairly good rather than fully optimal because infrastructure, system stability, coordination, workload, completion-time certainty, and competency development continue to influence service delivery.

### Tangibles

The tangibles dimension was found to be fairly good. The faculty has basic facilities needed for academic administration, including computers, printers, internet connectivity, service rooms, digital systems, and other administrative equipment. These facilities provide the operational foundation for receiving requests, verifying information, preparing documents, entering data, communicating with users, and completing administrative processes. The availability of digital systems is especially important because academic records, grades, examination information, and other services increasingly depend on information technology.

Nevertheless, the findings show that the existence of facilities does not automatically guarantee stable service quality. Maintenance remains necessary, particularly for technological equipment and network infrastructure. Network disruptions may interrupt services that require access to academic systems and can delay processes that would otherwise be completed quickly. Thus, tangibles should be understood not

simply as the presence of equipment but as the availability, functionality, stability, and maintenance of resources.

The physical service environment also influences the user experience. Service rooms should support communication and document handling, while information media should clearly explain requirements and procedures. Clear information can reduce incomplete submissions and repetitive questions. Improvement in this dimension therefore requires routine equipment maintenance, stable internet connectivity, adequate administrative facilities, and clearer service information.

### **Reliability**

Reliability was also assessed as fairly good. PPPK educational administrative personnel generally provide services according to their duties, authority, procedures, and academic requirements. This is reflected in efforts to provide accurate information, process requests, verify data, and correct problems when errors are identified. Employees demonstrate procedural awareness and attention to administrative accuracy.

However, reliability can be affected by incomplete documents, incorrect data entry, changes in academic information, data verification, coordination with other units, and system disruptions. Simple services that can be completed within one administrative unit tend to be processed more quickly, whereas services requiring confirmation or action from another unit take longer. Users may consequently perceive a delay as unreliability even when verification is necessary to prevent administrative errors.

The findings suggest that reliability can be strengthened through clearer inter-unit workflows, standardized document checklists, systematic verification, and better tracking of requests requiring coordination. Clear information about requirements and processing stages can reduce repeated submissions and inquiries. Reliable academic administration also requires accurate data management because errors in grades, schedules, or student records may affect subsequent academic processes. The existing procedural commitment is a positive foundation, but stronger coordination and administrative systems are needed for greater consistency.

### **Responsiveness**

Responsiveness was found to be fairly good because employees generally show willingness to assist students and lecturers, answer questions, listen to complaints, and follow up requests within their authority. Staff first identify the user's need and determine whether it can be solved directly or requires another unit. When a matter is within their authority, they attempt to resolve it; when it requires additional action, they provide direction or coordinate with the relevant unit.

The findings also show that responsiveness is not identical to immediate completion. Some academic services require verification, approval, or coordination. In such cases, responsiveness includes explaining the procedure, identifying the next step, and maintaining follow-up. Students indicated that service responses are faster when the service area is not crowded, whereas waiting time increases when many users arrive simultaneously.

Technical disruptions also affect response speed. An employee may be ready to provide service but unable to complete a transaction when an academic system or network is unavailable. Responsiveness is therefore shaped by both individual behavior and institutional conditions. Improvement requires better communication, workload management during peak periods, clear service channels, effective follow-up, and reduction of avoidable technical interruptions.

### **Assurance**

The assurance dimension was fairly good. Employees demonstrate knowledge of their duties and procedures and generally communicate politely and professionally. They are able to provide information and explain administrative requirements, helping users develop confidence that requests are handled according to institutional rules.

An important finding is employees' caution when information is uncertain. Rather than giving an unverified answer, they may confirm the information or seek clarification. This behavior supports credibility because academic policies and administrative procedures may change. Accurate verification is preferable to providing information that later proves incorrect.

Assurance is not yet optimal in relation to completion-time certainty. Services involving other units are difficult to estimate because the initial service point does not control every stage. This may create uncertainty for users even when the process is progressing normally. Clearer service standards and communication of processing stages could strengthen assurance.

Continuous competency development is also necessary. Academic administration is influenced by changes in regulations, policies, digital systems, and institutional procedures. Training should therefore address not only system operation but also policy updates, data accuracy, communication, and problem resolution. Updated knowledge, clearer procedures, and better coordination can strengthen both employee confidence and user trust.

### **Empathy**

Empathy was also found to be fairly good. Employees demonstrate attention, friendliness, willingness to listen, and readiness to assist students and lecturers. They do more than state formal requirements; they explain administrative steps, particularly when users are unfamiliar with procedures. When a problem falls outside their authority, staff direct users to the appropriate unit.

This behavior is important because students may not always understand which documents are required, where a request should be submitted, or why verification is necessary. Patient explanations can reduce confusion and incomplete submissions. Empathy also includes fair treatment. The findings indicate that students and lecturers generally receive services according to their needs and applicable procedures rather than personal background or closeness to an employee. Empathy therefore does not mean preferential treatment; it means understanding difficulties while applying institutional rules fairly.

Maintaining empathy can become more difficult during peak periods. High demand, interruptions, and queue pressure may reduce the time available for individualized explanations. Organizational support is therefore necessary. Service guides, frequently asked questions, standard procedures, and clear digital instructions can reduce routine inquiries and allow employees to focus on cases requiring personal assistance.

### **Integrated Discussion**

The five SERVQUAL dimensions indicate that academic service quality at FISIP Tadulako University is fairly good but not fully optimal. Employees have established a functioning service foundation and generally demonstrate professional behavior. At the same time, the findings reveal that service quality is shaped by interconnected organizational factors. Infrastructure and network stability influence tangibles and may also affect reliability and responsiveness. Inter-unit coordination influences the accuracy and completion time of services and therefore affects reliability and assurance. Workload influences response speed and the consistency of empathy.

These findings are consistent with the service-management perspectives represented in the literature used in this study. Service quality is produced through the interaction of human resources, procedures, facilities, technology, and users. Competent employees are essential, but individual effort cannot fully eliminate delays caused by unstable systems or coordination requirements. Likewise, digitalization may increase efficiency but cannot substitute for clear procedures and effective human communication.

The findings also complement studies cited in the original article. Mirza (2023) and Suardika and Indriani (2023) demonstrate the relevance of academic administrative service quality to students' experiences, while Satyadarma and Syamsudin (2023) highlight the importance of system, information, and service quality in higher education. The present study adds a faculty-level perspective by showing how these elements interact in services delivered by PPPK educational administrative personnel.

An integrated improvement strategy is therefore appropriate. First, technological facilities should be maintained and network stability strengthened. Second, inter-unit workflows should be clarified so that requests requiring coordination have identifiable responsibilities and can be tracked. Third, service requirements and realistic processing stages should be communicated clearly. Fourth, employee competency development should respond continuously to changes in academic systems and policies. Fifth, a fair, respectful, and user-oriented service culture should be maintained, particularly during peak administrative periods.

The findings further show that SERVQUAL dimensions should not be treated as isolated targets. A weakness in one dimension can create consequences in another. An unstable network is a tangible problem but may result in slower responsiveness and reduced reliability. Unclear coordination is an organizational problem but may appear to users as uncertainty regarding assurance. Moving from fairly good to more consistent academic service therefore requires simultaneous attention to employees, technology, procedures, and coordination.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that the quality of academic services provided by Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) serving as educational administrative personnel at the Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Tadulako University, is generally fairly good, although it has not yet reached an optimal level. Across the five SERVQUAL dimensions, employees have demonstrated their capacity to support the academic administration needs of students and lecturers and to perform services according to their duties, authority, and established procedures.

The tangibles dimension is supported by computers, printers, internet access, service facilities, and digital systems, but continued maintenance and network stabilization are required. Reliability is supported by procedural compliance and careful verification, while delays may occur because of incomplete documents, data checking, inter-unit coordination, and system disruptions. Responsiveness is demonstrated through employees' willingness to help, answer questions, receive complaints, and follow up on requests, although service speed can decline during peak workloads or technical problems. Assurance is reflected in employee competence, courtesy, and efforts to verify information before providing answers, but greater certainty regarding completion times and continuous competency updating remain necessary. Empathy is demonstrated through attention, friendliness, guidance, willingness to assist, and fair treatment, although consistency must be maintained when service demand increases.

The findings imply that improving academic service quality requires an integrated institutional strategy. Priority areas include maintaining technological infrastructure, strengthening coordination,

clarifying service procedures and completion stages, developing employee competencies, and sustaining a fair and user-oriented service culture. Future improvement should therefore address both employee performance and the organizational systems that shape service delivery.

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