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## PUBLIC SERVICE DELIVERY IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: FINDINGS FROM LOCAL AUTHORITIES IN MALAYSIA

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### Abstract:

This article examines the effectiveness of public service delivery at the local government level in Malaysia, with a focus on the Sungai Petani Kedah Municipal Council (MPSPK). This study aims to identify the determinants that influence public satisfaction and provide insights for policy development in local government. A quantitative cross-sectional survey approach is used to investigate how variables such as responsiveness, tangibles, assurance, reliability, and empathy influence the effectiveness of public service delivery. This study highlights the importance of these service quality characteristics in improving the efficiency and quality of services offered by MPSPK. The findings of the study show a positive relationship between all independent variables and the effectiveness of public service delivery, indicating the importance of these elements in shaping public satisfaction. This study also reveals the limitations of the study, particularly those related to data collection, and suggests areas for further research, such as improving the sampling method and investigating additional variables. Overall, this study adds significant insight into the elements that influence local government service delivery and makes concrete recommendations for improving service quality to better meet public expectations.

### Keywords:

Local Authority, Local Government, Public Satisfaction, Public Service Delivery, Service Quality

## Introduction

Public service delivery is a core role of government, and its performance is essential to ensuring the well-being of citizens and promoting equitable development. At the local level, governments act as a bridge between the state and society, providing critical services such as waste management, public utilities, urban planning, and healthcare (Lee & Mustaffa, 2021). Local government performance in this area is often used as an indicator of the quality of governance and institutional efficiency. In recent decades, much effort has been devoted to improving service delivery outcomes in municipal governments around the world. Various tactics and reforms have been implemented globally to increase openness, accountability, and efficiency in the public sector. These include decentralization programs, performance-based budgeting, citizen engagement systems, and the use of digital technologies. Comparative studies have shown varying degrees of success, depending on the political, economic, and institutional situation (Jamil & Abu Bakar (2018). Local governments in Malaysia function within a centralized federal framework that both empowers and limits their ability to deliver services (KPKT, 2022). Many studies have examined the performance of Malaysian local governments, often noting concerns about excessive jurisdiction, limited autonomy, and human resources. low public engagement. Despite policy reforms and modernization efforts, issues of service quality, responsiveness, and administrative capacity continue to impact performance (Zainal & Ibrahim (2020). Despite ongoing reform and modernization initiatives, the effectiveness of Malaysian local governments in providing public services remains a cause for concern. Local governments are often punished for public inefficiency and are slow to respond to inefficiency. Bureaucratic processes, red tape, overlapping functions, and lack of economic autonomy continue to degrade the quality and timeliness of services provided to citizens. According to a study by the Malaysian Productivity Corporation (MPC, 2021), public complaints about local government services, particularly waste management, drainage maintenance, and road repairs, have been steadily increasing, with over 25,000 complaints filed in 2020 alone through platforms such as Aduan Rakyat and local municipal portals.

Furthermore, the Auditor General's Report (2022) identified recurring weaknesses in financial management and project implementation across several local councils, such as delayed infrastructure projects and non-compliance with procurement processes. Furthermore, many Malaysian municipal authorities face severe budgetary and human resource constraints. According to the Ministry of Housing and Local Government (KPKT, 2022), over 70% of local councils are not self-sufficient, meaning they rely heavily on federal transfers to fund their operations. This monetary dependence limits their ability to invest in service improvements or innovate in service delivery techniques. Human capital difficulties persist, with reports indicating a lack of technological skills, inadequate staff training, and low digital adoption rates in certain local governments (Lee & Mustaffa, 2021). Furthermore, citizen participation in municipal government remains relatively low. According to a Merdeka Center (2020) poll, only 12% of Malaysians participated in any type of local council consultation or community-based planning activity in the previous year, indicating a significant gap in government participation and feedback channels. These systemic problems highlight the urgent need for a better understanding of the structural and operational aspects that influence public service delivery in the Malaysian local government system. By examining both foreign best practices and domestic weaknesses, this study aims to identify policy measures that can improve performance, accountability, and citizen-centeredness in local service delivery. As a result, the purpose of this study is to investigate the effectiveness of public service delivery at the local government level in Malaysia, with a focus on the Sungai Petani Kedah Municipal Council

(MPSPK). This research aims to add to the discussion on strengthening local governance and improving public service delivery in Malaysia by drawing on cross-country experiences and local case studies.

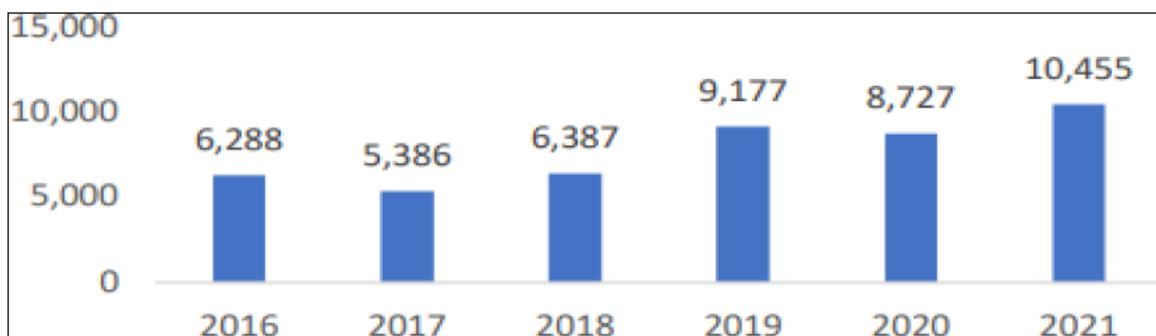
The National Audit Department (2022) found chronic financial mismanagement, project delays, and inadequate resource allocation in several local governments. Lee and Mustafa (2021) and Kamarudin et al. (2019) cite a shortage of qualified human resources and a slow adoption of e-governance systems as hurdles to enhanced service delivery. Despite programs like the Malaysian Urban-Rural National Indicators Network for Sustainable Development (MURNInets), which aim to monitor and enhance urban quality of life, local government performance is uneven. For example, the MPC (2021) discovered that some local governments frequently fail to handle citizen concerns and maintain essential services. Citizen participation has become increasingly recognised as critical to enhancing service delivery. Jamil and Abu Bakar (2018) discovered that public participation in municipal budgeting and planning procedures improves transparency and encourages more needs-based service provision. However, participation rates remain low, with many Malaysians uninformed of or disengaged with local government operations (Merdeka Centre, 2020). Digital innovation is also being seen as a solution. According to Zainal and Ibrahim (2020), smart city projects and digital platforms (for example, mobile reporting apps) have the potential to improve responsiveness and transparency in cities such as Kuala Lumpur and Putrajaya. However, gaps in technology infrastructure and digital literacy continue to have an impact on broader implementation in municipalities. Effective service delivery in local governments is inextricably linked to governing structures and the institutional environment. Cheema and Rondinelli (2007) emphasise that decentralisation measures must be supported by institutional development; otherwise, local governments will be administrative extensions of central authority with no genuine decision-making ability.

In Malaysia, Siti Rohani et al. (2015) discovered that centralising essential responsibilities, such as planning approval and budget control, frequently impairs local council autonomy and delays service delivery. Institutional fragmentation is another concern. According to Nordin, Hassan, and Jusoff (2011), overlapping jurisdictions of federal, state, and municipal governments cause uncertainty in duties and responsibilities, resulting in ineffective coordination and duplication of efforts in urban service management. Effective service delivery relies on sound financial management techniques. In a comparative analysis of fiscal management, Smoke (2015) stated that local governments in developing nations frequently lack strong financial systems, resulting in leakages, underinvestment, and service backlogs. Rahmat, Osman, and Mohd Noor (2019) found flaws in Malaysian municipal councils' budgeting and procurement processes, which led to cost overruns and subpar service outcomes. Furthermore, Salleh et al. (2021) noted that financial openness and public disclosure policies remain underdeveloped in many Malaysian local governments, eroding citizen trust and limiting supervision. The widespread adoption of e-government technologies has altered public service delivery around the world. Ndou (2004) highlighted e-government as a key driver of administrative efficiency, cost savings, and increased public participation.

In Malaysia, projects such as myGOV and Smart Selangor seek to digitise service delivery and increase responsiveness. However, Azizan, Ismail, and Mustapha (2022) discovered considerable variations in digital infrastructure and uptake across urban and rural councils, which hinder the scalability of digital solutions. According to Mohamad and Ibrahim (2020),

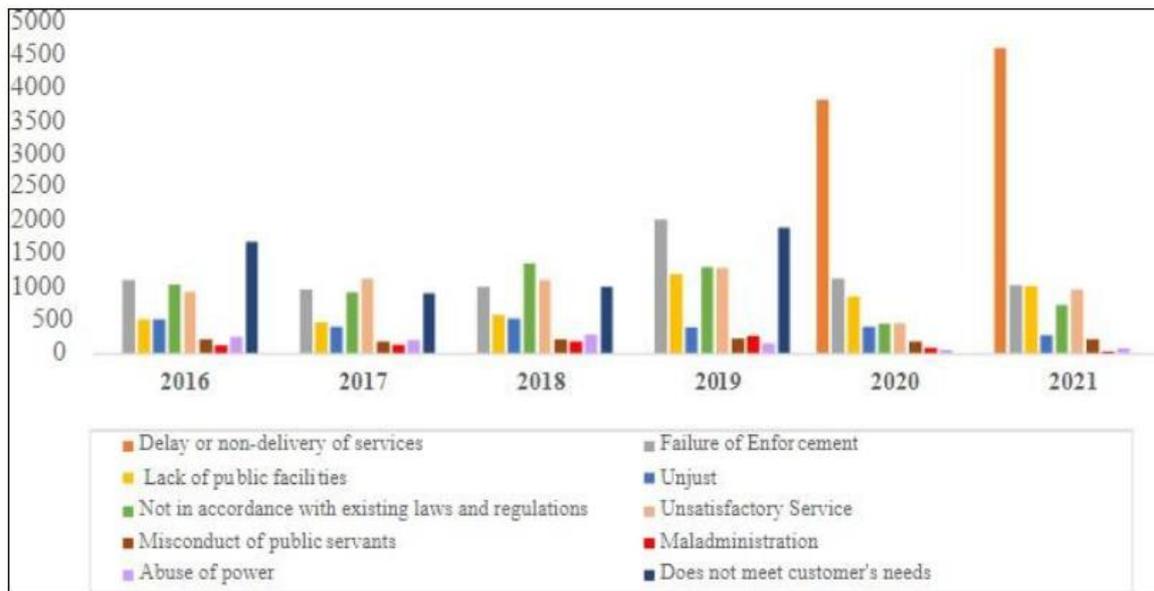
successful e-service adoption necessitates cultural change, personnel training, and citizen digital literacy in addition to technology. Performance measurement frameworks are crucial for assessing and improving service outcomes. Holzer and Yang (2004) highlight the importance of benchmarking and key performance indicators (KPIs) in promoting continual development. In Malaysia, the Ministry of Housing and Local Government's usage of MURNInets and Star Rating Systems has brought about some standardisation (Abdullah and Lim, 2021). However, Rashid and Said (2016) contend that these technologies are frequently utilised for compliance rather than genuine performance improvement, with little follow-up on underperforming councils. Another rising subject is equity in service delivery, particularly for underserved or marginalised areas. UN Habitat (2010) emphasises the importance of inclusivity for local governments in reducing spatial and socioeconomic inequities. In Malaysia, Abdullah and Lim (2021) found that informal settlements and low-income urban neighbourhoods often receive poor quality services due to lack of representation and policy attention.

The Public Complaints Bureau under the Prime Minister's Department revealed that the annual trend of both a decline and an increase in the number of complaints between 2016 and 2021 as shown in Figure 1, where issues such as delay or non-delivery of services became the top complaint category reported starting the year 2020 as stated in Figure 2. This reveals that the public is expecting the government to deliver and at the same time demand fast service (Ali et al., 2023).



**Figure 1: The Total Number of Complaints Per Year**

Source: Ali et al., 2023



**Figure 2: Graph of Top 10 Complaint Categories**

Source: Ali et al., 2023

### Research Methodology

This study used a quantitative cross-sectional survey approach to assess the factors influencing people's satisfaction with the delivery of services provided by MPSPK. The cross-sectional strategy was adopted to collect data at one point in time, yielding a picture of people's perspectives and experiences (Sekaran & Bougie, 2016). The study was guided by the SERVQUAL framework, which assesses service quality across five core dimensions: responsiveness, reliability, tangibles, empathy and assurance. A total of 300 respondents were selected using cluster sampling, a probability sampling technique designed for geographically dispersed populations. The population was initially segregated into three clusters based on the residential zones under the control of MPSPK. One or more clusters were then randomly selected, and all individuals within the cluster were invited to participate. The sample size was established using Roscoe's Rule of Thumb (1975), which recommends a minimum of 30 to 500 respondents for social science research. Data were collected using self-administered standard questionnaires that were delivered physically and electronically. The questionnaires were created in Malay and English to accommodate respondents with varying language skills. It has three sections: demographic data, SERVQUAL service quality aspects, and overall satisfaction with local government service delivery. Responses were scored on a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Descriptive statistics were used to summarise respondents' demographic attributes and average satisfaction levels. Pearson correlation analysis was used to investigate the links between the SERVQUAL characteristics and public satisfaction with service delivery. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS version 25.

## Findings

### *Demographic Profile*

The study received a 100% response rate, with 323 participants successfully completing the survey. All participants were residents of Sungai Petani, Kedah, and were chosen using a cluster sampling methodology, a probability-based strategy that allows for efficient data collection from defined subgroups within a population. The high response rate demonstrates both the success of the sampling method and the appropriateness of the sample size, ensuring that the data acquired is robust and representative. The demographic profile of the respondents exhibited a balanced gender distribution, with 48.6% male and 51.4% female respondents. In terms of age, the largest group (31.9%) was between the ages of 18 and 24, followed by 19.5% aged 45 to 54, 19.2% aged 25 to 34, 17.0% aged 35 to 44, and 12.4% aged 55 and up. According to ethnicity, 47.4% of respondents identified as Malay, 34.7% as Chinese, and 18.0% as Indian. Religious affiliations included 39.0% Muslims, 26.0% Hindus, 22.6% Buddhists, and 12.4% Christians. Marital status also differed: 38.4% of respondents were single, 33.1% were married, 19.5% divorced, and 9.0% widowed. Regarding the period of residency in Sungai Petani, 28.5% had lived there for 1-5 years, 26.9% for 6-10 years, 25.7% for more than 10 years, and 18.9% for less than one year. Finally, the frequency of using local government services found that 28.2% utilised them occasionally (3-5 times per year), 27.9% frequently (6-10 times), 25.1% seldom (1-2 times), and 18.9% extremely regularly (more than 10 times per year).

### *To Study The Extent Of Public Service Delivery Effectiveness In Local Government*

The first goal is to investigate the level of public service delivery efficacy in local governments. This objective was investigated using descriptive statistics. The findings of the analysis are presented in the table below.

**Table 1: Results of Mean Score Level of Public Service Delivery**

Statements	N	Mean
The local government has a clearly defined service charter outlining the expected delivery standards	323	3.42
All citizens are treated fairly when accessing services from this local	323	3.41
The local government effectively identifies areas where service delivery can be improved	323	3.44
The local government consistently delivers on its service promises as outlined in the service charter	323	3.38
Employees at the local government demonstrate a strong understanding of the expected standards for service delivery	323	3.50
The local government clearly communicates information about service expectations to its citizens	323	3.43

Source: Field Study, 2025

Table 1 shows the descriptive statistics analysis for each statement in the dependent variable, public service delivery effectiveness. According to the findings, the statement "employees at the local government demonstrate a strong understanding of the expected standards for service delivery" had the highest mean value of 3.50. Next, the statement "The local government effectively identifies areas where service delivery can be improved" had the second highest mean (3.44). The mean value for the statement "the local government clearly communicates information about service expectations to its citizens" was 3.43. Furthermore, the statement "the local government has a clearly defined service charter outlining the expected delivery standards" had a mean value of 3.42. Not only that, but the statement also "all citizens are treated fairly when accessing services from this local" has a mean value of 3.41. Finally, the statement "the local government consistently delivers on its service promises as outlined in the service charter" had the lowest mean value (3.38). To summarise, the highest and lowest mean values for determining public service delivery effectiveness in local government vary from 3 to 4. According to Sekaran and Bougie (2016), the range is inside the average category of mean. This demonstrates that several factors have a moderate impact on the effectiveness of public service delivery in local governments.

***To Determine the Relationship Between Responsiveness and Public Service Delivery***

The second research goal of this study is to evaluate the link between responsiveness and public service delivery efficacy. The hypothesis testing is described as follows:

Ho1: There is no relationship between responsiveness and public service delivery

Ha1: There is a relationship between responsiveness and public service delivery

**Table 2: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Responsiveness and Public Service Delivery**

Relationship between Variables	R - Value	P - Value	Decision
Responsiveness and Public Service Delivery Effectiveness	0.549	0.000, $p < 0.05$	Ha1 is accepted

Table 2 displays the findings of a Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between responsiveness and public service delivery effectiveness. The results indicate a strong correlation between responsiveness and public service delivery efficacy ( $r = 0.549, p < 0.05$ ). As responsiveness increases, so does the effectiveness of public service delivery. Therefore, Ha1 is accepted. To summarise, there is a link between responsiveness and public service delivery efficacy in local governments.

***To Examine the Relationship Between Tangibles and Public Service Delivery***

The final research goal of this study is to investigate the relationship between tangibles and public service delivery efficacy. The hypothesis testing is described as follows:

Ho2: There is no relationship between tangibles and public service delivery

Ha2: There is a relationship between tangibles and public service delivery

**Table 3: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Tangibles and Public Service Delivery**

Relationship between Variables	R-Value	P - Value	Decision
Tangibles and Public Service Delivery Effectiveness	0.596	0.000, $p < 0.05$	Ha <sub>2</sub> is accepted

Table 3 shows the findings of a Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between tangibles and public service delivery efficacy. The results indicate a strong correlation between tangibles and public service delivery effectiveness ( $r = 0.596$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). As tangible assets improve, so does the effectiveness of public service delivery. Therefore, Ha<sub>2</sub> is accepted. To summarise, there is a relationship between tangibles and public service delivery effectiveness in local government.

***To Examine the Relationship Between Tangibles and Public Service Delivery***

The fourth research objective of this study is to determine the relationship between assurance and public service delivery efficacy. The hypothesis testing is described as follows:

Ho<sub>3</sub>: There is no relationship between assurance and public service delivery

Ha<sub>3</sub>: There is a relationship between assurance and public service delivery

**Table 4: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Assurance and Public Service Delivery**

Relationship between Variables	R-Value	P - Value	Decision
Assurance and Public Service Delivery Effectiveness	0.575	0.000, $p < 0.05$	Ha <sub>3</sub> is accepted

Table 4 displays the findings of a Pearson correlation analysis of the relationship between assurance and public service delivery effectiveness. The results indicate a significant correlation between assurance and public service delivery performance ( $r = 0.575$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). If certainty increases, so will the effectiveness of public service delivery. Therefore, Ha<sub>3</sub> is accepted. To summarise, there is a link between assurance and public service delivery effectiveness in local governments.

***To Study the Relationship Between Reliability and Public Service Delivery Effectiveness***

The fifth research goal of this study is to investigate the relationship between dependability and public service delivery effectiveness. The hypothesis testing is described as follows:

Ho<sub>4</sub>: There is no relationship between reliability and public service delivery

Ha<sub>4</sub>: There is a relationship between reliability and public service delivery

**Table 5: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Reliability and Public Service Delivery**

Relationship between Variables	R - Value	P - Value	Decision
Reliability and Public Service Delivery Effectiveness	0.540	0.000, $p < 0.05$	$H_{a4}$ is accepted

Table 5 shows the findings of a Pearson correlation analysis of the link between dependability and public service delivery effectiveness. The results indicate a strong correlation between dependability and public service delivery effectiveness ( $r = 0.540$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). As reliability increases, so will the effectiveness of public service delivery. Therefore,  $H_{a4}$  is accepted. To summarise, there is a link between reliability and public service delivery efficacy in local government.

#### *To Examine the Relationship between Empathy and Public Service Delivery Effectiveness*

The final research goal of this study is to investigate the relationship between empathy and public service delivery efficacy. The hypothesis testing is described as follows:

$H_{o5}$ : There is no relationship between empathy and public service delivery

$H_{a5}$ : There is a relationship between empathy and public service delivery

**Table 6: Results of Pearson Correlation Analysis between Empathy and Public Service Delivery**

Relationship between Variables	R-Value	P - Value	Decision
Empathy and Public Service Delivery Effectiveness	0.595	0.000, $p < 0.05$	$H_{a5}$ is accepted

Table 6 displays the findings of a Pearson correlation analysis of the association between empathy and public service delivery efficacy. The study found a positive correlation between empathy and public service delivery efficacy ( $r = 0.595$ ,  $p < 0.05$ ). Empathy improves the effectiveness of public service delivery. Therefore,  $H_{a5}$  is accepted. To summarise, there is a link between empathy and public service delivery efficacy in local governments.

#### **Discussions and Conclusion**

The findings show that most respondents, who use local government services in the Sungai Petani area, assess public service delivery efficacy as moderate. This is demonstrated by a mean score of 3.43, which is within the normal range of 3 to 4. Consequently, the success of local government service delivery may be influenced by critical elements such as responsiveness, tangibles, certainty, dependability, and empathy. The findings emphasise the significance of public service delivery effectiveness in reflecting the performance of government staff in addressing people's complaints. The effectiveness of public service delivery refers to the degree to which public services are successfully delivered to their intended recipients, resulting in desired results or benefits for society (Osman et al., 2023). Increased service availability guarantees that citizens can access services when they need them, while enhanced service quality results in consistent, satisfying experiences that minimise frustration

and boost satisfaction. These characteristics not only improve local government performance, but also develop stronger relationships with citizens, resulting in long-term mutual success (Bereket, 2013). When services are delivered efficiently, resources are best used, processes are more accessible and dependable, and community needs are better satisfied. Ultimately, these enhancements lead to increased citizen happiness, trust, and loyalty to local government services.

The second research goal is to establish the correlation between responsiveness and public service delivery effectiveness. Based on the reported findings, the hypothesis is accepted. The data in Table 2 show an R-value of 0.549 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the significance level of 0.05. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha1) is supported, indicating a strong and significant association between responsiveness and public service delivery efficacy. Responsiveness has been acknowledged as a vital aspect in ensuring effective service delivery. Increased responsiveness is linked to better efficacy in public service delivery. Responsiveness relates to the government's willingness and ability to assist residents quickly and efficiently (Mohd Wahid et al., 2020). When government institutions communicate proactively, they increase public trust and enable real-time input, allowing issues to be resolved quickly and services to be tailored to individual community requirements (Kosec & Wantchekon, 2020). Such responsiveness exemplifies a citizen-centric approach in which accessibility, dependability, and promptness are prioritised to reduce inconvenience and increase satisfaction (Sugiarto & Octaviana, 2021). The findings show that responsiveness has a substantial influence on the effectiveness of public service delivery in MPSPK.

The third research goal is to investigate the relationship between tangibles and public service delivery efficacy. Based on the reported findings, the hypothesis is accepted. The results in Table 3 show an R-value of 0.596 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha2) is accepted, indicating a significant correlation between tangibles and public service delivery efficacy. Tangibles are the physical buildings, equipment, staff appearance, and other visible features of the service environment (Santos, 2002). In the context of local government services, this includes clean and well-organised offices, visible and informative signage, and personnel professionalism, as evidenced by their clothes and demeanour (Parasuraman, 1988). In addition, the physical setting in which services are given has a significant impact on public opinion. Well-maintained, visually appealing settings make a good first impression and convey professionalism and dependability (Ilhaamie, 2010). A clean, well-organised, and properly planned room can reduce stress, increase trust, and improve the entire client experience. This study found that tangible elements had a large and favourable impact on public service delivery performance. When tangible elements are effectively controlled, they improve the overall quality and efficiency of government services. As a result, it can be stated that well-maintained and effectively utilised tangible elements play an important role in improving the effectiveness of public service delivery at the local government level.

The fourth research goal is to determine the relationship between assurance and public service delivery effectiveness by MPSPK. Based on the reported findings, the hypothesis is accepted. The results in Table 4 show an R-value of 0.575 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 significance level. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha3) is accepted, indicating a substantial and significant correlation between assurance and the effectiveness of public service delivery. Assurance, as a basic factor of service quality, is crucial for improving the

effectiveness of public service delivery. It includes the knowledge, civility, and capacity of government officials to instil trust and confidence in residents. Ilhaamie (2010) defines assurance as professional contacts, straightforward and honest communication, and a readiness to openly address public issues. It also includes secure and transparent processes, such as protecting personal and financial information, which boosts trust in government services. A respectful and professional approach among workers, along with extensive competence, improves the overall citizen experience and boosts trust in service reliability. Furthermore, assurance is enhanced when public officials apply their expertise competently and ethically, fostering a sense of professionalism that strengthens the trust of public services (Khan & Fashi, 2014). According to Buchman (2001), higher frequency and relevance of data reporting contribute to decision-makers receiving timely and reliable information.

The final research goal is to investigate the relationship between reliability and public service delivery effectiveness in local government. Based on the reported findings, the hypothesis is accepted. Table 5 indicates an R-value of 0.540 and a p-value of 0.000, which are less than the 0.05 significance level. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha4) is supported, implying a strong and significant link between reliability and public service delivery effectiveness. The findings show that reliability is an important aspect in increasing the effectiveness of local government services. A positive correlation between these factors means that as service reliability improves, so does the effectiveness of delivery. Reliability in public service refers to service providers' capacity to deliver the promised service consistently and precisely. Timely service delivery minimises disruptions to citizens' everyday routines, resulting in a more positive service experience. Furthermore, maintaining accurate and error-free records speeds up service procedures and facilitates the transmission of exact information, increasing public trust in the service system (Ilhaamie, 2010). According to Parasuraman et al. (1988), a high emphasis on reliability enables service providers to swiftly detect and rectify difficulties, reducing service disruptions and ensuring consistency. Reliability is a key component of customer satisfaction, and when government services are dependable, customers have less delays and have more efficient and trustworthy interactions.

The sixth study goal is to investigate the relationship between empathy and public service delivery effectiveness in local government. Based on the reported findings, the hypothesis is accepted. The data in Table 6 show an R-value of 0.595 and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the 0.05 threshold. As a result, the alternative hypothesis (Ha5) is supported, implying a significant relationship between empathy and the effectiveness of public service delivery. The study concludes that empathy is an important aspect in efficient service delivery in local government. A strong link between empathy and service efficacy demonstrates the significance of understanding citizens' needs and responding to them with care and compassion. When public service providers demonstrate empathy, they engage citizens in deeper, more meaningful conversations, actively listen to their concerns, and personalize services to their specific needs. This approach not only increases enjoyment, but also builds trust and confidence in the government's ability to serve its citizens. Sugiarto and Octaviana (2021) define empathy in public service delivery as providing personalized attention and demonstrating genuine concern for the well-being of residents. Baron-Cohen (2008) defines empathy as the ability to understand and respond to the emotional states of others, even when those feelings differ from one's own. Encouraging public officials to adopt the perspective of citizens contributes to a more inclusive, respectful, and responsive public service environment. Bove (2019) adds to this by emphasizing that empathetic engagement fosters trust and

encourages long-term collaborative relationships between individuals and public institutions. While providing useful insights into the effectiveness of public service delivery at the local government level, this study has several limitations that may affect how its findings are interpreted and generalized. This study used a quantitative approach with an online data collection tool.

Although this strategy allows for rapid data analysis and hypothesis testing, it hinders our understanding of citizens' subjective experiences. The omission of qualitative insights may have limited the investigation of the complex social interactions and environmental factors that influence public service opinions. This study was limited to the Sungai Petani area and only involved users of local government services. This narrow demographic and geographical scope may limit the applicability of the findings to other settings with different socioeconomic or cultural characteristics. The investigation focused on five critical elements of service quality: responsiveness, tangibles, assurance, reliability and empathy. While these are important for assessing service delivery, other important criteria such as accessibility, equity and long-term treatment outcomes were not included. Their absence may limit the scope of the study's evaluation framework. To address these limitations and improve upon the current findings, future studies should employ mixed methods research designs that include both quantitative and qualitative methodologies. Interviews, focus groups and open surveys can enhance data by incorporating nuanced perspectives and contextual elements. Mixed approaches can provide a more comprehensive understanding of public service dynamics, increasing the depth and precision of analysis (Creswell & Plano Clark, 2017). Using stratified random sampling can increase representativeness and generalizability. Researchers can ensure that underrepresented groups such as rural residents, the elderly, and low-income households are adequately represented by stratifying the population based on age, income, or geographic location. This method allows for a more equitable assessment of access to and satisfaction with public services (Bryman, 2016). To gain a more complete picture of public service delivery, future research should include characteristics such as accessibility, equity, and long-term implications (Osman et al., 2023; Kosec & Wantchekon, 2020). Addressing this research gap will allow future studies to provide more rigorous data to support policy decisions and improve local government service delivery.

## Conclusion

The findings show positive relationships between all independent variables and the effectiveness of public service delivery, indicating that the analytical procedures used were adequate to achieve the research objectives. It also includes a comprehensive discussion, confirming that the study met its objectives and answered the research questions. The significant relationships of factors with the effectiveness of public service delivery indicate that improvements in the identified dimensions of service quality can significantly improve the efficiency and quality of services provided by local government agencies. The article also acknowledges the limitations of the study, particularly those related to the data collection process, and suggests ways to improve future research in this area. To gain better knowledge about the effectiveness of public service delivery, this study recommends broadening the research approach, using more diverse sampling methods, and investigating other variables such as accessibility and equity. Overall, this study provides useful insights into the elements that influence public service delivery and actionable advice for public organizations seeking to improve service quality and meet public expectations. Furthermore, it provides a solid platform

for future research on this topic, allowing for further investigation and refinement of the elements that impact effective service delivery in the local government context.

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