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The Influence of Competence and Work Creativity on Service Quality and Its Implications on Public Satisfaction at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency

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Abstract: This study has several objectives, including identifying and describing competency, work creativity, service quality, and public satisfaction at the Regional Revenue Agency in West Tanjung Jabung Regency. It also aims to identify and analyze the influence of competency and work creativity on public satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through service quality. This research was conducted at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency. The population was 120,740 taxpayers who received services. The sample size used Slovin's theory with a 10% margin of error, resulting in a sample size of 100. This study employed a quantitative approach with a survey method and Partial Least Square (PLS) data analysis. This study concludes that competency, work creativity, service quality, and public satisfaction at the West Tanjung Jabung Regency Regional Revenue Agency are in good and high condition. Furthermore, competency and work creativity have a positive and significant influence on public satisfaction, both directly and indirectly through the quality of employee service at the West Tanjung Jabung Regency Regional Revenue Agency.

Keyword: Competence, Work Creativity, Service Quality, and Public Satisfaction.

INTRODUCTION

Public services are the primary manifestation of the state's presence in fulfilling the basic rights of the people and realizing general welfare. In the modern public administration paradigm, public services are no longer understood merely as administrative activities, but rather as strategic instruments in building government trust, legitimacy, and accountability to the public (Dwiyanto, 2021). In line with the principles of good governance, public service delivery is required to be oriented towards transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness to the evolving needs of the community (World Bank, 2020).

The growing demands of society in the era of bureaucratic reform and digitalization of services increasingly emphasize the importance of quality public services. The public now expects services that are fast, accessible, and consistent, supported by the use of information technology (Tjiptono, 2019; Nurmandi & Kim, 2020). Good service quality not only impacts

the efficiency of the service process but also directly contributes to increasing public trust and satisfaction with government institutions (Kurniawan et al., 2021). Conversely, slow, inconsistent, and unresponsive services have the potential to undermine the government's image and legitimacy in the public eye.

In the context of regional government, the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) plays a strategic role because it directly interacts with the public as taxpayers and managers of local revenue. The increasing number of residents served by Bapenda in West Tanjung Jabung Regency during the 2020–2024 period demonstrates growing public participation in fulfilling regional tax obligations. However, this increased service volume also brings consequences for increased staff workload and service complexity. If this condition is not balanced with improvements in service quality, it has the potential to cause problems such as service delays, inaccurate information, and decreased public satisfaction (Hardiansyah, 2018).

One of the internal factors that significantly determines the quality of public services is employee competence. Competence encompasses knowledge, skills, attitudes, and professional abilities that enable employees to carry out their duties effectively and responsibly (Sedarmayanti, 2019). Competent employees are able to understand procedures, master the technical aspects of their work, and communicate well with the public. Various empirical studies have shown that employee competence significantly influences service quality and public satisfaction (Lestari, 2022; Saputra & Rahayu, 2020). However, the low level of employee participation in competency certification programs, as observed at the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency, indicates a gap between service demands and available human resource capacity.

In addition to competence, civil servant creativity is also a crucial determinant in improving the quality of public services. Creativity enables employees to generate new ideas, simplify procedures, and develop service innovations that adapt to community needs (Amabile in Luthan, 2006). In the context of modern public services, creativity is not only oriented towards idea generation but also the ability to implement innovations sustainably. Empirical studies show that employee creativity positively influences service effectiveness and public perceptions of service quality (Sari & Nugroho, 2019; Putra et al., 2021).

However, empirical reality at the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency shows that employee creativity has not developed consistently and sustainably. Fluctuations in service innovation achievements from year to year indicate that an innovative work culture has not been strongly internalized within the organization. This condition aligns with the findings of Putra and Ananda (2021), who stated that a rigid bureaucratic culture often hinders the development of employee creativity. As a result, the resulting service innovations have not been able to significantly impact service quality.

Data from the assessment of the Public Service Quality (KPP) and the Public Satisfaction Index (IKM) of the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency for the 2020–2024 period indicate that service performance is in the “Good” category, but has not yet reached the “Very Good” level. Several crucial indicators, such as service speed, procedural consistency, complaint handling, and implementer competence, still show relatively low and fluctuating values. This indicates that improvements in service quality are not yet fully stable and equitable, resulting in suboptimal public satisfaction (PermenPAN-RB No. 14 of 2017).

Based on the above description, it can be concluded that improving the quality of public services at the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency does not solely depend on service systems and procedures, but is also strongly influenced by internal factors of the apparatus, particularly competency and work creativity. Furthermore, service quality is suspected to act as a mediating variable that bridges the influence of competency and work creativity on public satisfaction (Susanti, 2023; Rahman & Lestari, 2022). Therefore, this study is important and relevant to empirically examine the influence of competency and work

creativity on service quality and their implications for public satisfaction at the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency.

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory design, which aims to examine the causal relationship between civil servant competence and creativity on service quality and its implications for public satisfaction. The quantitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to objectively measure respondents' perceptions and statistically analyze the relationships between variables (Sugiyono, 2017). The explanatory design is used to explain the patterns of direct and indirect influences between the variables studied.

The object of this research is the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency, while the research subjects are taxpayers who receive services from the agency. The research population includes all people who receive Bapenda services in 2024, totaling 120,740 people. Sampling was determined using the Slovin formula with a 10 percent error rate, resulting in a sample size of 100 respondents. The sampling technique used was accidental sampling, namely respondents who were encountered by chance and met the criteria as Bapenda service users (Umar, 2016).

The research data consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through the distribution of questionnaires to community members using Bapenda services in West Tanjung Jabung Regency. The research instrument was constructed using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree, to measure respondents' perceptions of the variables of competence, work creativity, service quality, and community satisfaction. Meanwhile, secondary data were obtained through documentation studies, agency performance reports, as well as laws and regulations and scientific literature relevant to the research topic (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares-based Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS) approach through SmartPLS software. The SEM-PLS method was chosen because it is capable of testing complex structural models, does not require normal data distribution, and is suitable for use with relatively small sample sizes (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The SEM-PLS analysis includes an outer model evaluation to test construct validity and reliability, as well as an inner model evaluation to test causal relationships between latent variables.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The description of the respondent profiles in this study includes characteristics such as gender, age group, and education level. This data was obtained through a questionnaire distributed to the community as respondents, namely those who have received services at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency. The presentation of respondent characteristics aims to provide a general overview of the respondents' backgrounds, which can then be used as a basis for analyzing and interpreting the research results. Further explanation of respondent characteristics is presented in the following description.

Tabel 1. Respondent Characteristics

No	Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender			
1	Man	69	69
2	Woman	31	31
Total		100	100
Age Group			
1	< 25 Years	4	4
2	25 – 35 Years	51	51

No	Respondent Characteristics	Frequency	Percentage (%)
3	36 – 45 Years	33	33
4	46 – 55 Years	10	10
5	> 55 Years	2	2
Total		100	100
Education			
1	High School or Equivalent	29	29
2	Diploma	5	5
3	Bachelor's Degree	63	63
4	Master's Degree	3	3
Total		100	100
Work			
1	Civil Servants	25	30,5
2	Soldier/Police	13	25
3	Private Sector Employees	15	13
4	Self-Employed	31	31
5	Farmers/Fishermen	16	16
Total		100	100

Source: Processed data (2025)

Description of Research Variables

Descriptive statistical analysis in this study was used to describe the condition of each variable measured through a Likert-scale questionnaire. This study involved four main variables: competence, creativity, service quality, and job satisfaction at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency. Each indicator compiled within each variable aims to reflect the agency's actual condition, with each statement having a specific assessment category that can represent the actual situation on the ground.

Table 2. Description of Research Variables

No	Variable	Score	Range	Results
1.	Competence	3.355	3.060 – 3.779	High
2.	Creativity	3.343	3.060 – 3.779	Creative
3.	Service Quality	3.701	3.400 – 4.199	Good
4.	Customer Satisfaction	2.984	2.720 – 3.359	Satisfied

Source: Processed data (2025)

Data Analysis Results

Measurement Model Analysis (Outer Model)

Evaluation of the outer model in PLS-SEM analysis using SmartPLS 3.0 includes three main criteria: convergent validity, discriminant validity, and composite reliability. In a measurement model with reflective indicators, convergent validity is assessed based on the relationship between indicator scores and the constructs generated by SmartPLS 3.0. An indicator is declared to meet the criteria if it has a loading factor value of at least 0.70 for the construct being measured. In this study, the loading factor value limit was set at 0.70 as the assessment reference. The test results show the following findings:

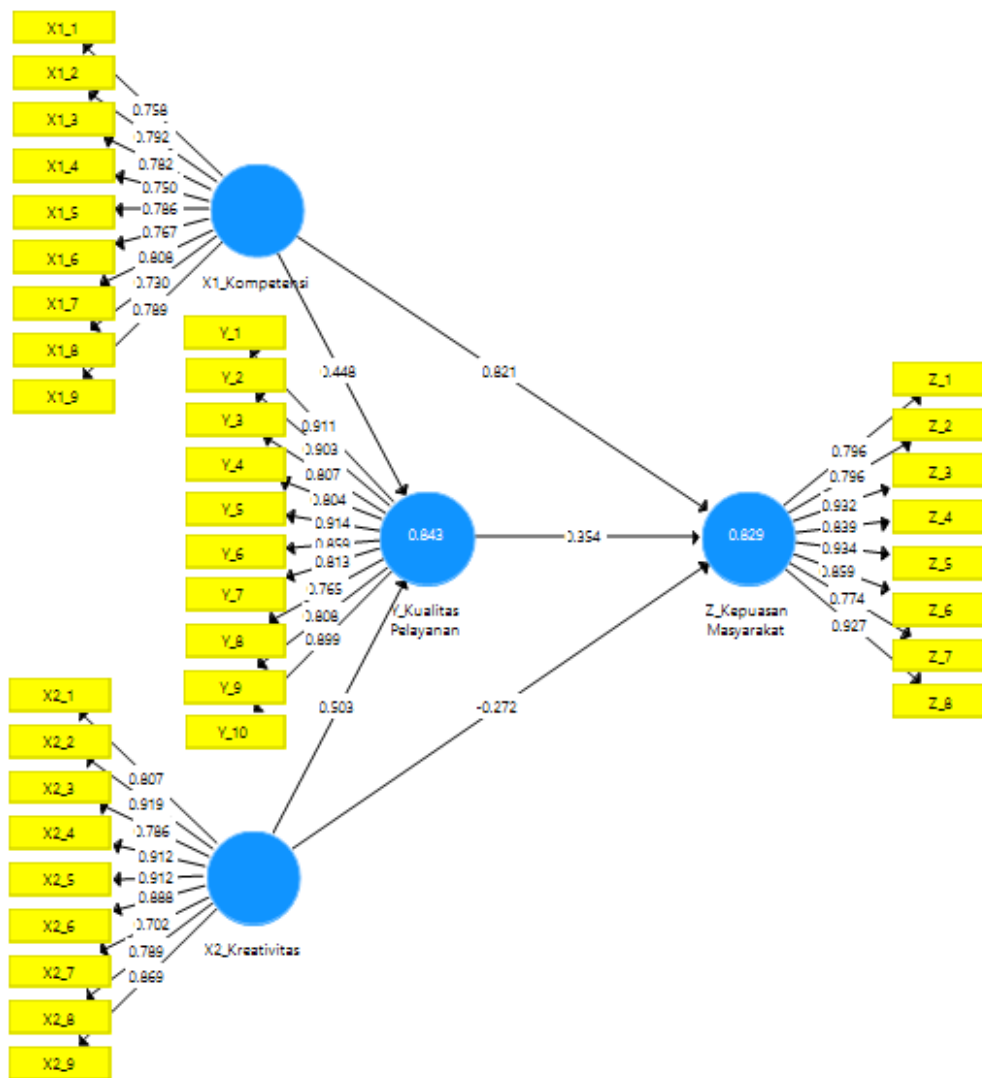


Figure 1. Full Outer Model

Based on the results of the outer loading test as presented in Figure 1, it can be seen that all indicators in each construct have loading factor values above the minimum limit of 0.70. This indicates that each indicator is able to reflect the construct being measured well and meets the criteria for convergent validity. Furthermore, overall, the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above the threshold of 0.70, so it can be concluded that this research instrument is reliable and suitable for further analysis in testing the relationship between research variables.

Structural Model Analysis (Inner Model)

a. R-Square Test Analysis Results

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is used as a measure to indicate the extent to which variations in endogenous constructs can be explained by exogenous constructs in a model. In the context of structural model evaluation, the R^2 value describes the overall level of predictive ability of the model. Referring to the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2017), the interpretation of the R^2 value is grouped into three categories, namely: (1) a value of 0.75 which indicates strong predictive power, (2) a value of 0.50 which reflects moderate predictive ability, and (3) a value of 0.25 which indicates relatively low predictive ability. The results of the calculation of the coefficient of determination in this study are presented in the following table.

Table 3. R Square Test Results

Variable	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Service Quality	0,843	0,840
Community Satisfaction	0,829	0,824

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2025).

Based on Table 3, the coefficient of determination (R-Square) for the service quality variable (Y) is 0.843 with an Adjusted R-Square value of 0.840. This finding indicates that 84.3% of the variation in service quality at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency can be explained by exogenous variables in the research model, while the remaining 15.7% is influenced by other factors outside the model. An R-Square value above 0.75 indicates that the model has strong predictive ability in explaining service quality.

Furthermore, the public satisfaction variable (Z) has an R-Square value of 0.829 and an Adjusted R-Square of 0.824. This means that 82.9% of the variation in public satisfaction can be explained by the predictor variables contained in the model, while the remaining 17.1% is influenced by other variables not examined. This very high R-Square value indicates that the structural model has very strong explanatory power and predictive ability regarding public satisfaction. Thus, overall, it can be concluded that the research model constructed has been able to explain the relationship between variables comprehensively and has a very good level of predictive accuracy.

b. F-Square Analysis Results (f² Effect Size)

The F-square (f²) test is used to evaluate the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous construct by observing changes in the R-square value when a variable is removed from the structural model. This analysis aims to determine the role of each predictor variable in explaining the dependent variable. According to the criteria proposed by Hair et al. (2017), an f² value of 0.02 indicates a small influence, a value of 0.15 reflects a moderate influence, and a value of 0.35 indicates a large influence, while a value below 0.02 indicates that the variable does not have a significant influence in the model. The results of the F-square calculation in this study are presented in the following table.

Table 4. F-Square Test Results

Variable	Service Quality	Public Satisfaction
Competence	0,327	0,759
Creativity	0,413	0,078
Service Quality		0,115

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2025).

Based on Table 4, the F-square (f²) value indicates the magnitude of the contribution of each exogenous variable to the endogenous variable in the structural model. In the relationship between X1_Compentence and Y_Service Quality, the f² value obtained was 0.327, which is included in the moderate influence category (above 0.15). This finding indicates that employee competence is quite dominant and substantial in improving service quality at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency. Conversely, X2_Creativity towards Y_Service Quality has an f² value of 0.413, which is in the large influence category, so the contribution of creativity to improving service quality is very dominant compared to competence.

Furthermore, regarding the variable Z_Public Satisfaction, X1_Compentence shows an f² value of 0.759, while X2_Creativity has an f² value of 0.078. The difference between the two is quite striking, where competence has a large influence, while creativity has a small influence in shaping public satisfaction. In addition, Y_Service Quality on Z_Public Satisfaction has an f² value of 0.115, which also has a small influence in shaping public satisfaction.

c. Results of Model Testing Analysis (Path Coefficient)

Structural model analysis was conducted to examine the causal relationships between constructs as hypothesized in the study. The results of the significance test were obtained through a bootstrapping procedure with multiple sample replications. The findings of the structural model testing are presented in detail in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Path Coefficients

Relationship between variables	Original Sample (O)
X1_Compentence -> Y_Service Quality	0,448
X2_Creativity -> Y_Service Quality	0,503
X1_Compentence -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	0,821
X2_Creativity -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	0,272
Y_Service Quality -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	0,354
X1_Compentence -> Y_Service Quality -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	0,308
X2_Creativity -> Y_Service Quality -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	0,178

Source: SmartPLS 3 output, 2025.

Based on the results of the path analysis (path coefficients) presented in Table 5, the relationship between variables can be interpreted as follows.

- 1) Competence has a positive effect on service quality with a path coefficient of 0.448. This indicates that every one-unit increase in competency will increase service quality by 0.448 units, assuming other variables remain constant.
- 2) Creativity also has a positive effect on service quality, with a coefficient of 0.503. A positive path value indicates that every one-unit increase in creativity will increase service quality by 0.503 units, assuming other variables remain constant.
- 3) Employee competency has a direct effect on customer satisfaction with a coefficient of 0.821. A positive path value indicates that every one-unit increase in competency will increase customer satisfaction by 0.821 units, assuming other variables remain constant.
- 4) Creativity has a direct effect on customer satisfaction with a coefficient of 0.272. A positive path value indicates that every one-unit increase in creativity will increase customer satisfaction by 0.272 units, assuming other variables remain constant.
- 5) Service quality has a positive and significant effect on customer satisfaction with a coefficient of 0.354. A positive value on the path indicates that each one-unit increase in service quality will increase public satisfaction by 0.354 units, assuming other variables remain constant.
- 6) The indirect effect of competence on public satisfaction, mediated by service quality, is 0.308. This value confirms that motivation acts as a partial mediator in the relationship between competence and public satisfaction, so that part of the influence of competence on public satisfaction occurs through improvements in service quality.
- 7) The indirect effect of creativity on public satisfaction through service quality is 0.178. Although this value is lower than the training path, this finding still indicates that service quality also mediates the relationship between creativity and public satisfaction, albeit with a smaller contribution.

Hypothesis Testing Results

The results of the structural model testing are explained in the discussion in Figure 2 and Table 5 below.

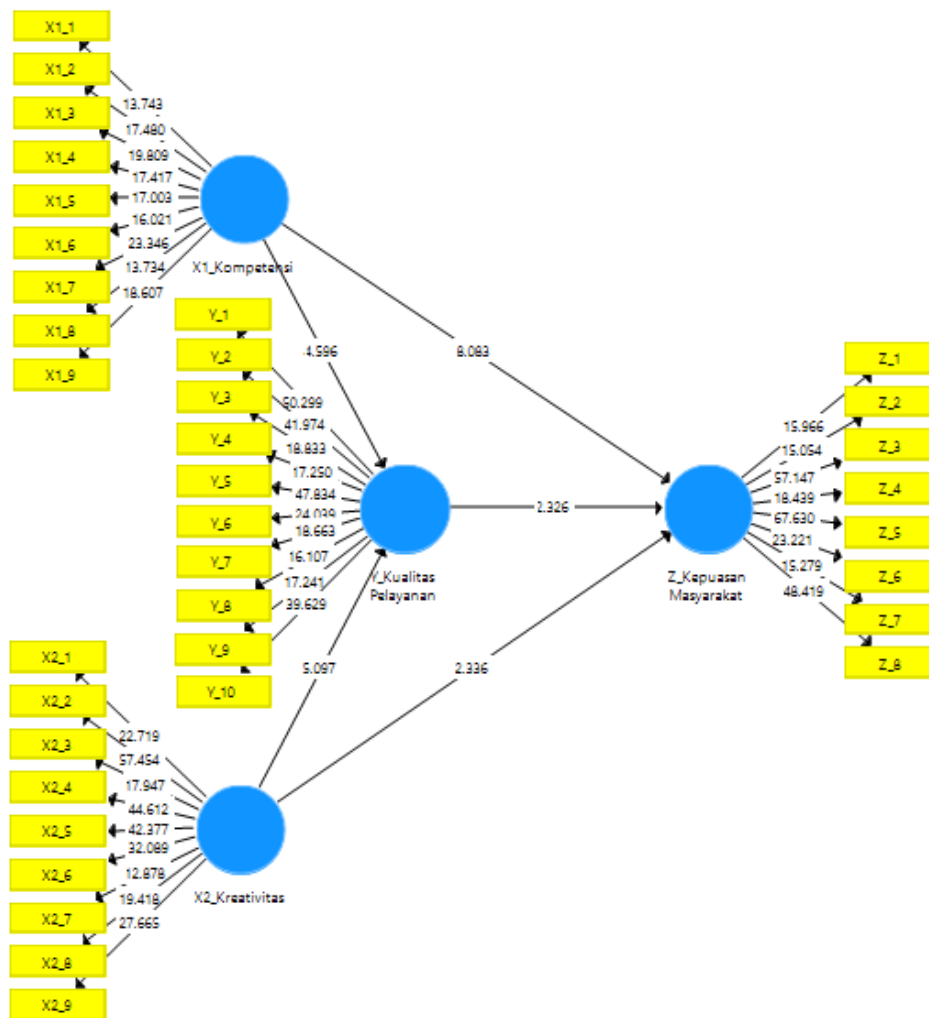


Figure 2. Bootstrapping Model

Based on the results of the inter-construct relationship modeling obtained, the next step is to conduct a statistical evaluation using the bootstrapping technique in SmartPLS 3.0. This analysis will comprehensively describe both the direct and indirect influences between the research variables, with the following explanation:

Table 6. Hypothesis Test Results

Hypothesis	T-Statistics	P Value	Decision
X1_Compentence -> Y_Service Quality	4.596	0.000	Accepted
X2_Creativity -> Y_Service Quality	5.097	0.000	Accepted
X1_Compentence -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	8.083	0.000	Accepted
X2_Creativity -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	2.336	0.020	Accepted
Y_Service Quality -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	2.326	0.020	Accepted
X1_Compentence -> Y_Service Quality -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	2,101	0,036	Accepted
X2_Creativity -> Y_Service Quality -> Z_Citizen Satisfaction	2,435	0,015	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS 3 output (2025).

Discussion

The results of the study indicate that employee competence has a positive influence on service quality at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency. This

finding confirms that employee abilities in understanding regulations, mastering service procedures, and demonstrating a professional attitude are important determinants in producing reliable, responsive, and accurate public services. Conceptually, these results align with Sedarmayanti's (2019) view that competence is a primary prerequisite for creating effective service performance that is oriented towards the needs of service users. Competent employees tend to be able to minimize procedural errors and provide service assurance to the public.

Empirically, these findings reinforce the research findings of Lestari (2022), Saputra and Rahayu (2020) and Haiz et al. (2025), which concluded that staff competency significantly influences the quality of public services. In the context of the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency, this influence is particularly relevant given the low level of employee participation in technical competency certification. This situation suggests that improving service quality requires not only increasing the number of staff but also emphasizing the capacity and professionalism of staff who interact directly with the public.

In addition to competence, work creativity has also been shown to positively impact service quality. These findings indicate that officials who are able to generate new ideas, simplify service flows, and adaptively utilize information technology can improve public perception of the quality of services provided. Theoretically, this aligns with the concept of organizational creativity proposed by Amabile (2018), which emphasizes that creativity is not only about new ideas but also the ability to implement those ideas in a real-world work context.

The results of this study are also consistent with the empirical findings of Sari and Nugroho (2019) and Putra et al. (2021), which state that civil servant creativity contributes significantly to the effectiveness and quality of public services. In the context of the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency, fluctuations in service innovation achievements from year to year indicate that civil servant creativity has not developed sustainably. Therefore, these findings indicate that strengthening an innovative work culture is a strategic necessity to consistently improve service quality.

Furthermore, research results show that competence has a positive effect on public satisfaction. This finding indicates that the public tends to feel satisfied when services are provided by officials who possess adequate knowledge, good technical skills, and a friendly and responsible attitude. Conceptually, public satisfaction arises when there is a match between expectations and perceived service performance (Lovelock & Wirtz, 2011). Competent officials are able to provide certainty about procedures and service times, thereby reducing uncertainty and increasing public trust.

Empirically, these findings support the research of Rahman and Lestari (2022) and Kurniawan et al. (2021), which found that staff competency significantly influences public satisfaction. In the context of the West Tanjung Jabung Regency Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda), the Public Satisfaction Index (IKM) is in the "Good" category but has not yet reached "Very Good," indicating that staff competency still needs to be improved, particularly in terms of service speed and procedural consistency.

Work creativity has also been shown to positively influence public satisfaction. This finding suggests that the public assesses services not only from a procedural perspective, but also from the extent to which officials are able to provide innovative, solution-oriented, and convenient services. Theoretically, employee creativity enables the creation of a more enjoyable and adaptive service experience to the public's needs (Amabile in Luthan, 2006). This is relevant to the characteristics of regional tax services, which demand clear information and easy access to services.

These results align with research by Putra et al. (2021) and Susanti (2023), which states that civil servant creativity contributes to increased public satisfaction through service innovation. In the context of this research, the low consistency of service innovation at Bapenda indicates that civil servant creativity has not been fully optimized as an instrument for increasing public satisfaction.

Furthermore, service quality has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on public satisfaction. This finding confirms that service quality is a key factor directly determining the level of public satisfaction as users of public services. Conceptually, service quality reflects the gap between public expectations and the service performance received (Parasuraman et al., 1988). Reliable, fast, empathetic service, supported by adequate facilities, will enhance positive public perceptions of government institutions.

Empirically, these findings support the research of Hardiansyah (2018) and Tjiptono (2019), which asserted that service quality significantly influences customer and public satisfaction. In the context of the West Tanjung Jabung Regency Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda), fluctuations in Public Service Quality (KPP) scores and stagnation in complaint handling indicators indicate that improving service quality remains a major challenge in efforts to sustainably increase public satisfaction.

Furthermore, the research results show that service quality acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between work competence and creativity on public satisfaction. This finding indicates that civil servant competence and creativity do not directly and completely increase public satisfaction without being supported by good service quality. Theoretically, this reinforces the view that service quality is the primary mechanism bridging internal civil servant factors with public satisfaction perceptions (Susanti, 2023).

Empirically, these findings align with research by Putra et al. (2021), Rahman and Lestari (2022) and Haiz et al. (2025), which concluded that service quality mediates the influence of staff competence and creativity on public satisfaction. Therefore, improving public satisfaction at the Regional Revenue Agency (Bapenda) of West Tanjung Jabung Regency requires a holistic approach that focuses not only on improving staff competence and creativity but also on strengthening service systems and practices that are consistent, responsive, and oriented toward public needs.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the competence and creativity of civil servants are crucial factors in improving the quality of public services at the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency. Civil servants with professional knowledge, skills, and attitudes, supported by creative and innovative thinking, have been shown to deliver more reliable, responsive, and community-oriented services.

The research also shows that work competence and creativity positively influence customer satisfaction. Customers tend to feel more satisfied when served by competent personnel who are able to provide innovative and convenient service solutions. This finding confirms that customer satisfaction is determined not only by formal service procedures but also by the quality of interactions and the direct service experience.

Furthermore, service quality has been shown to act as a mediating variable in the relationship between work competence and creativity and public satisfaction. This finding indicates that improving civil servant competence and creativity will not have an optimal impact on public satisfaction without being accompanied by consistent and sustainable service quality. Thus, service quality is a key mechanism bridging internal civil servant factors with public perceptions of satisfaction with public services.

This study has several limitations that need to be considered when interpreting the results. First, this study used a quantitative approach with data collection through questionnaires, thus relying heavily on the subjective perceptions of respondents. This condition has the potential to create perceptual bias that does not fully reflect the objective conditions of service. Second, the scope of the study was limited to one agency, namely the Regional Revenue Agency of West Tanjung Jabung Regency. This contextual limitation means that the results cannot be broadly generalized to other public service agencies with different organizational characteristics and types of services. Third, this study only focused on the variables of competence, work creativity, service quality, and public satisfaction. Other factors that could potentially influence public satisfaction, such as leadership, organizational culture, utilization of information technology, and reward and monitoring systems, were not accommodated in this research model.

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