

# Strategies to Enhance Christian Community Trust through Spiritual Leadership and Public Service Quality, with Satisfaction as a Mediating Variable, at the Christian Community Guidance Division (Bimas Kristen) of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bangka Belitung Islands Province

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## Abstract

*This study aimed to analyze the effects of Spiritual Leadership and public service quality on congregational satisfaction and their impact on the trust of Christian congregants in the Christian Guidance Division of the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of the Bangka Belitung Islands Province. The study was motivated by the need for religious public services that not only emphasize administrative efficiency but also provide professional, humane, responsive, and spiritually grounded services to strengthen satisfaction and trust among service users. A quantitative approach with a survey method was employed in this study. The sample consisted of 395 Christian congregants in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province who had previously received services from the Christian Guidance Division. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling, and the data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS).*

*The results showed that Spiritual Leadership had a positive and significant effect on congregational satisfaction. Public service quality also positively and significantly influenced congregational satisfaction. Furthermore, both Spiritual Leadership and public service quality had positive and significant effects on Christian congregational trust. Congregational satisfaction was found to positively influence trust and significantly mediated the relationships between Spiritual Leadership, public service quality, and congregational trust. These findings suggest that strengthening effective Spiritual Leadership and improving service quality can enhance satisfaction and sustain public trust in religious public services.*

**Keywords:** *Spiritual Leadership, public service quality, congregational satisfaction, Christian congregational trust, SEM-PLS.*align Justify

## 1. Introduction

Religious public service constitutes a strategic government function in ensuring the fulfillment of spiritual needs and the requirements of religious life. In the Indonesian context, the Ministry of Religious Affairs plays a pivotal role in providing religious services that extend beyond mere administration to encompass the dimensions of values, spirituality, and the social lives of religious communities. Consequently, the quality of religious public services is a crucial factor in fostering trust among Christians—as recipients of Christian Community Guidance services—in government institutions, particularly regarding services directly linked to matters of faith and community development. Christian trust in religious public service institutions reflects the conviction that the government possesses the capability, integrity, and commitment to deliver services that are fair, responsive, and oriented toward the community's needs (Osborne, 2018; Van der Meer & Zmerli, 2017).

The relationship between service quality and the trust of the Christian community possesses characteristics that are more complex than those found in public services within other sectors. This is because religious public services involve not only the fulfillment of administrative requirements but also touch upon aspects of spiritual values, empathy, and the officials' genuine concern for the Christian community. Consequently, beyond service quality, the leadership of officials serves as a crucial element in shaping a satisfying service experience and enhancing the Christian community's trust in religious public service institutions. Leadership oriented toward

moral and spiritual values is believed to improve the quality of public services and strengthen the relationship between the government and the Christian community as service recipients (Northouse, 2021; Chen, Yang, and Li, 2019).

The Public Satisfaction Index (IKM) for services provided by the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province shows an upward trend from 2022 to 2024. In 2022, the IKM score was recorded at 83.00. This figure rose to 86.40 in 2023 and increased further to 88.80 in 2024. This trend indicates a consistent improvement in the quality of public services within the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province. However, the IKM data remains general in nature and does not specifically reflect the perceptions of the Christian community regarding the services provided by the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) division. Further research at the micro-level is required to understand how satisfaction and trust among the Christian community are shaped by their service experiences.

The Public Service Satisfaction Index (IKM) score for the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province rose from 83.00 in 2022 to 86.40 in 2023, and further increased to 88.80 in 2024. Meanwhile, the Religious Harmony Index (IKUB) score for the Bangka Belitung Islands Province in 2024 reached 78.90, surpassing the national IKUB score of 76.47. These achievements indicate that, overall, the quality of public services and the state of religious harmony are in good condition.

The IKM and IKUB are macro-level indicators that do not specifically capture the experiences of the Christian community as recipients of services from the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) division. The IKM primarily reflects public perception of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' services in general, whereas the IKUB depicts the broader state of religious harmony. Neither indicator specifically explains how the Christian community evaluates the quality of public services, spiritual leadership, their own satisfaction levels, or their trust in the Christian Community Guidance division of the Ministry of Religious Affairs' Regional Office in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province.

Previous studies indicate that public service quality plays a crucial role in shaping public satisfaction with and trust in government institutions. Dewi and Yasa (2020) found that public service quality has a positive impact on public satisfaction. Similar findings were presented by Putra and Lestari (2021), who explained that public services that are responsive, clear, and aligned with public expectations can enhance service recipient satisfaction. Furthermore, Van der Meer and Zmerli (2017) emphasized that the public's experience in receiving public services contributes to the formation of trust in government institutions.

Prior research also confirms that public satisfaction plays a vital role in building public trust. Jiang, Hu, and Wang (2023) stated that public satisfaction significantly influences the level of public trust. This implies that the more positive the public's experience with the services received, the higher the level of trust in the service-providing institution. In the context of public service, Biswas, Mishra, and Sahoo (2024) further explain that the quality of public service is a key factor influencing the rise in public trust in government institutions.

Ningsih and Hakim (2020) as well as Wibowo and Santoso (2020) explain that spiritual leadership can enhance the performance of civil servants and service motivation within public sector organizations. These findings indicate that leadership grounded in spiritual values—such

as integrity, empathy, leading by example, and care—can play a role in fostering services that are more meaningful and trusted by the public. In the context of religious public services, Mardiana and Yanto (2022) found that the quality of religious public services influences the public's trust in religious service institutions. Meanwhile, Alfiah (2025) found that public service quality simultaneously affects public satisfaction and trust. Most prior research has focused on general public services, public sector organizations broadly, or religious services in a general sense. Research specifically examining the relationships between spiritual leadership, public service quality, Christian community satisfaction, and Christian community trust within the context of Christian Community Guidance (\*Bimas Kristen\*) remains relatively limited.

## **2. Literature Review**

### **2.1. New Public Service Theory**

New Public Service theory emphasizes that the primary task of government institutions is not merely to perform administrative functions but to serve the public as citizens. From this perspective, the public is viewed as possessing rights, the capacity for participation, and interests that must be considered in the public service process. Consequently, public service is oriented not only toward service efficiency but also toward values such as equity, responsiveness, participation, and the public interest (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015; Bryson et al., 2017). The core principle of New Public Service theory is that the government should serve the public rather than simply control it. Public services must be delivered in a manner that is democratic, responsive, and oriented toward the needs of citizens. In the context of religious public services, Christians are viewed as citizens entitled to services that are fair, transparent, and aligned with their needs. The quality of public service plays a crucial role in fostering positive relationships between government institutions and the public (Bryson et al., 2017).

### **2.2. Social Exchange Theory**

Social Exchange Theory posits that relationships between individuals and institutions are formed through a process of social exchange involving benefits, experiences, and reciprocal responses arising from their interactions. The theory emphasizes that individuals tend to maintain relationships that yield advantages, satisfaction, and positive experiences, whereas relationships perceived as lacking benefit tend to weaken (Ahmad et al., 2023). A core principle of Social Exchange Theory is reciprocity: when individuals receive treatment that is fair, favorable, and meets their expectations, they respond positively—demonstrating satisfaction, loyalty, and trust toward the service provider. In the context of public service, the public forms a positive perception of an institution when the services received are deemed responsive, clear, and aligned with community needs (OECD, 2024).

This study employs Social Exchange Theory to explain the relationships among spiritual leadership, public service quality, and the satisfaction and trust of the Christian community regarding the services provided by the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) agency. As service recipients, members of the community tend to develop satisfaction and trust when they experience high-quality service, attentive staff, and positive interactions with this religious public service institution.

### **2.3. The Spiritual Leadership theory**

The Spiritual Leadership theory was developed by Fry (2003) as a leadership approach emphasizing spiritual values, vision, hope/faith, and altruistic love to foster intrinsic motivation among individuals within an organization. Spiritual leadership focuses not only on achieving

organizational goals but also on creating meaningful work, fostering positive interpersonal relationships, and promoting the psychological well-being of organizational members (Fry & Egel, 2017; Eva et al., 2019). A core principle of this theory is that leaders who demonstrate integrity, empathy, role-modeling, care, and a service orientation are better able to build commitment, trust, and morale among organizational members. In the context of public service, spiritual leadership is viewed as capable of fostering more humanistic service relationships, as the public evaluates not only the service outcomes but also the attitudes and values demonstrated by officials during the service delivery process (Fry & Egel, 2017).

In this study, the Spiritual Leadership theory is used to explain how value-based leadership within Christian Community Guidance (\*Bimas Kristen\*) services can shape the satisfaction and trust of the Christian community as service recipients. Community members tend to form positive assessments when officials demonstrate a service attitude characterized by empathy, care, integrity, and a focus on community needs.

### 3. Methodology

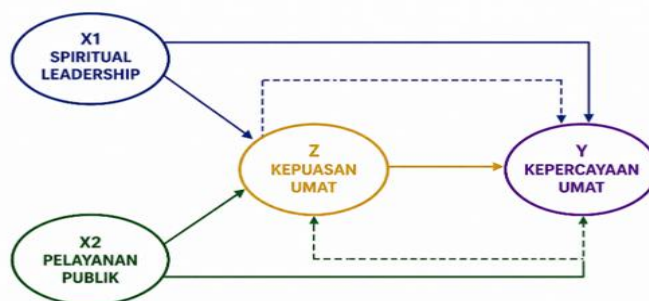
This study employs a quantitative approach, specifically explanatory research. A quantitative approach was chosen because the study aims to objectively examine the relationships between variables through numerical measurement and statistical analysis. Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method as the data analysis technique. The selection of SEM-PLS is based on several methodological considerations. This approach enables the researcher to obtain an empirical overview of the influence of spiritual leadership and public service quality on the satisfaction and trust of the congregation regarding the Christian Community Guidance (\*Bimas Kristen\*) services provided by the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs in the Bangka Belitung Islands Province. This study employs a margin of error of 5% (0.05) and a population size of 32,657; the sample size calculation is as follows:

$$n = N / (1 + N(e)^2)$$

$$n = 32,657 / (1 + 32,657(0.05)^2) = 32,657 / 82.6425 = 395 \text{ respondents}$$

Based on this calculation, the sample size used in this study is 395 respondents.

The relationship between research variables constitutes a theoretical and empirical explanation of the causal links among the independent, mediating, and dependent variables employed in the



Fry & Egel (2017); Chen et al. (2019); Osborne (2018); Grimmelikhuijsen & Knies (2017);  
Tanjung et al. (2023).

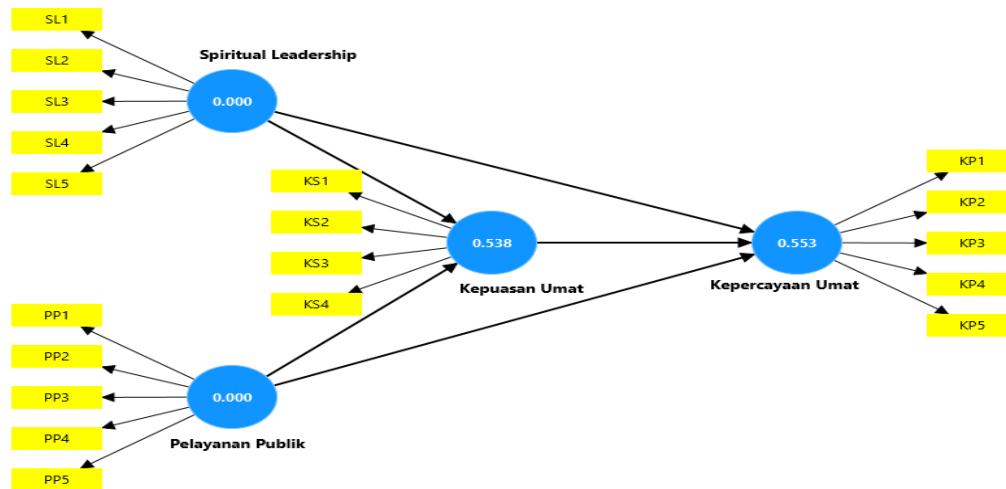
study. This explanation is crucial for articulating the scientific rationale behind why a specific variable is expected to influence another, while also serving as the foundation for formulating :

H1: Spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on congregational satisfaction.

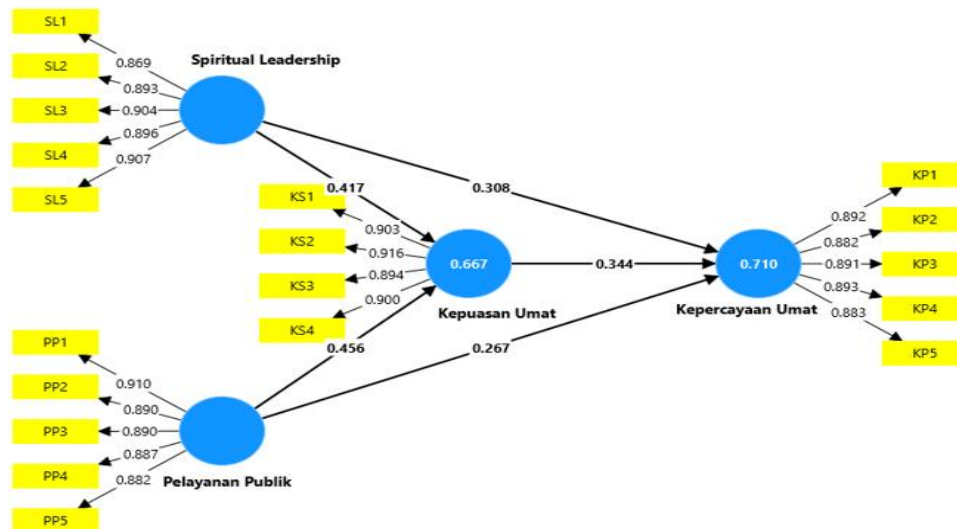
H2: Public service has a positive and significant effect on the satisfaction of the religious community.

- H3: Spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on the congregation's trust.  
H4: Public service has a positive and significant effect on the congregation's trust.  
H5: Community satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on community trust.  
H6: Congregation satisfaction mediates the effect of spiritual leadership on congregation trust.  
H7: Public satisfaction mediates the effect of public service on public trust.

#### 4. Result and Discussion



Source: Output SmartPLS (v.4.2.9)



The hypothesis stating that spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on the satisfaction of the congregation is accepted. The research findings indicate that the better the implementation of spiritual leadership in the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) services, the higher the level of congregation satisfaction with the services received. Leadership characterized by integrity, role modeling, care, a vision for service, and a humanistic service orientation fosters a more positive service experience for Christians as recipients of these religious public services.

Research findings indicate that the quality of public service is the primary factor influencing the satisfaction levels of the Christian community. The better the quality of service perceived by the community, the higher their satisfaction with the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) services. Services that are fast, responsive, clear, friendly, and procedurally compliant provide a positive service experience for the community as service recipients.

The proposition that spiritual leadership has a positive and significant influence on the trust of the religious community is accepted. These findings indicate that spiritual-value-based leadership is capable of fostering the community's confidence and trust in religious public service institutions. Such trust is built through the consistent behavior of officials, the integrity of leaders, and the setting of a good example in delivering services to the community.

The hypothesis stating that the quality of public service has a positive and significant effect on the public's trust is accepted. These findings indicate that quality service can build and strengthen the public's trust in religious public service institutions. Consistent, transparent, responsive, and professional service fosters repeated positive experiences, thereby enhancing the public's confidence in the institution.

The proposition that the satisfaction of the religious community has a positive and significant effect on their trust is accepted. These findings indicate that community satisfaction is a crucial factor in shaping trust in religious public services. Individuals who are satisfied with the service experience they receive tend to hold positive perceptions and possess greater confidence in public service institutions.

The finding that constituent satisfaction mediates the impact of spiritual leadership on constituent trust is accepted. This indicates that the influence of spiritual leadership on constituent trust occurs not only directly but also through enhanced constituent satisfaction. Leadership grounded in spiritual values fosters a superior service experience, thereby increasing satisfaction and ultimately strengthening constituent trust in religious public service institutions.

The hypothesis stating that public satisfaction mediates the influence of public service quality on public trust is accepted. The research findings indicate that the quality of public services can enhance public trust through public satisfaction acting as a mediating variable. Quality service creates a positive service experience, thereby increasing satisfaction and ultimately strengthening public trust in religious public service institutions.

## **5. Conclusion**

1. Spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on the satisfaction of the Christian community regarding the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) services at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bangka Belitung Islands Province;
2. Public service quality has a positive and significant effect on the satisfaction of the Christian community regarding the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) services at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bangka Belitung Islands Province;
3. Spiritual leadership has a positive and significant effect on the trust of the Christian community regarding the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) services at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bangka Belitung Islands Province;
4. Public service quality has a positive and significant effect on the trust of the Christian community regarding the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) services at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bangka Belitung Islands Province;

5. Community satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on the trust of the Christian community regarding the Christian Community Guidance (Bimas Kristen) services at the Regional Office of the Ministry of Religious Affairs, Bangka Belitung Islands Province;
6. Community satisfaction is proven to mediate the effect of spiritual leadership on the trust of the Christian community;
7. Community satisfaction is proven to mediate the effect of public service quality on the trust of the Christian community.

Given that the satisfaction of the congregation is proven to play a role in building trust, every policy and service program should be oriented toward the congregation's needs and prioritize the principles of transparency, accountability, and ease of access to services. Such conditions are essential for maintaining a positive and sustainable relationship between the service institution and the Christian congregation as the recipients of the services.

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