

## THE COMPLICATED DIVORCE PETITION PROCESS: SERVICES AT THE CIREBON CITY RELIGIOUS COURT

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### ABSTRACT

Divorce is a complex and sensitive process in Indonesian family law. Therefore, the quality of service in filing divorce applications at the religious court office plays an important role in ensuring justice and welfare for the parties involved. The study aims to evaluate the quality of service in filing divorce applications at the Cirebon City religious court office. The research method used is a qualitative approach, with data collection techniques in the form of direct observation, and interviews with officers and service users. Secondary data in the form of journal books related to research. The informant selection technique used by researchers in this study was the purposive sampling technique. The purposive sampling technique was three key informants, the informants were selected by the researcher to selectively select informants who were relevant to the research objectives. The results showed an evaluation of service quality, there are still obstacles including employees who are less friendly and the process is quite long which affects the quality of service.

**Keywords: Public Service, Divorce.**

### Introduction

The government has an important role in providing public services as mandated in Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning public services article 1 states that: "Public Service is an activity or series of activities in order to fulfill service needs in accordance with laws and regulations for every citizen and resident for goods, services and/or administrative services provided by public service providers". Meanwhile, Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government explains that "the implementation of regional government is directed to accelerate the realization of community welfare through improved services, empowerment, and community participation".

Various efforts have been made by the state to reduce the high divorce rate in Indonesia. One of them is integrating mediation into the court process. Supreme Court Regulation No. 1/2016 on Mediation Procedures in Courts states that all civil cases, including divorce, must first undergo mediation. However, a number of studies have shown that mediation does not run optimally. The reason is the absence of the defendant/respondent. The absence of the parties can occur from the beginning of the

trial or during the mediation process. There are indications that the absence of the parties is done intentionally and aims to accelerate the divorce process. The absence of the parties in the mediation process shows that the parties do not have good faith to resolve the case amicably. The absence of the parties twice in a row without a clear reason and/or not sending a representative causes more divorce cases to be decided by verdict.

Service quality is a condition where a dynamic relationship is created between service users and service providers. If the service provided is in accordance with what is expected by service users, then the service is a quality service, otherwise, if the service provided is not in accordance with what service users expect, then the service is not quality. Good or bad service quality is not based on the point of view or perception of service providers or services, but rather based on consumer perceptions and applicable rules or regulations regarding service quality. The low quality of public services provided by government officials is a bad image of the government in society. Some people who have dealt with the bureaucracy always complain and are disappointed with the various services provided, and there are even some people who still underestimate the performance of the bureaucracy. The services provided in general have not satisfied the community.

According to Sugiyono (2015), evaluation is a process to find out how far the planning can be implemented and how far the program objectives are achieved. According to Moenir (2006), public service is an activity carried out by a person or group of people based on material factors through certain systems, procedures, and methods in an effort to fulfill the interests of others according to their rights. The word "quality" contains many meanings, according to the Indonesian Dictionary, quality means: (1) the level of good and bad of something; (2) degree or level (intelligence, skill, etc.); or quality. The definition of quality according to (Tjiptono, 2004) is: Compliance with requirements, Suitability for use Continuous improvement, Free from damage/defects, Fulfillment of customer needs from the start and at all times, Doing everything right, Something that can make customers happy. According to Ibrahim (2008: 22), the quality of public services is a dynamic condition related to products, services, people, processes, and the environment where quality assessment is determined at the time of the provision of public services. Service activities organized by the state to the community include many things that cover all community needs.

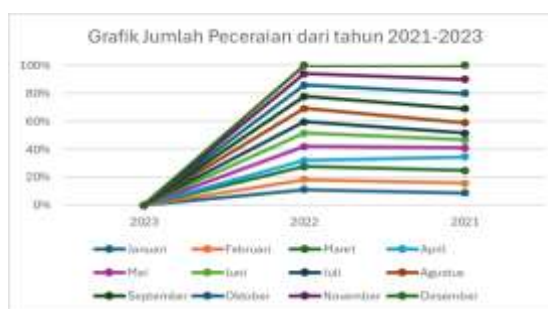
To measure the quality of public services at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office, Sugiyono (2015) proposed a comprehensive service evaluation method. Sugiyono highlighted the complexity of the divorce application process as one of the main indicators of service. The data collected showed that the number of divorces in Cirebon City was quite high, reflecting the need for efficient and effective services. Through initial assumptions and direct surveys, Sugiyono found that many applicants felt the complex divorce process prolonged time and increased costs, as well as adding to the emotional burden. The facts on the ground suggest shortcomings in transparency and clarity of procedures, as well as a need to improve the competence and attitude of officers in handling divorce cases. This study recommends reforms in service procedures

and capacity building of human resources to improve the quality of public services in the office.

**Table 1**  
**Divorce Data in Cirebon City (Religious Court) in 2021 - 2023**

Number of divorces	Total	Description
Year 2021	1,011 cases	1. Contested divorce (wife): 732 cases (72%) 2. Divorce (husband): 279 cases (28%)
Year 2022	1,045 cases	3. Plaintiff's divorce (wife): 732 cases (70%) 4. Divorce (husband): 313 cases (30%)
Year 2023 (until May):	3,127 cases (provisional data)	

The above data only includes data from the Cirebon City Religious Court. There was a slight increase in the number of divorce cases from 2021 to 2022. In 2023, until May, the number of divorce cases was high, with an average of 20 couples divorcing every day. Contested divorces filed by wives dominate each year, with a percentage above 70%. Economic factors are one of the main causes of divorce in Cirebon City.



**Figure 1**  
**Divorce Chart 2021-2023**

Divorce data in Cirebon City may be different. Data for 2023 is provisional and subject to change. The divorce rate in Cirebon City is high, with a slight upward trend in recent years. Prevention and family development efforts need to be made to reduce the divorce rate.

Based on data on the number of divorces in Cirebon City for the last three years (2021-2023), it can be seen that there are variations in the number of divorces every month. In 2021, the number of divorces tends to be stable with slight fluctuations from month to month but tends to show an increase from the beginning of the year to the end of the year. In 2022, there was a decrease in the number of divorces in the first few months, but then experienced a significant increase in the middle of the year, before declining again at the end of the year. Meanwhile, in 2023, the number of divorces experienced greater variation from month to month, with the highest peaks occurring in October and December. This indicates that the trend in the number of divorces in Cirebon City tends to fluctuate and can be influenced by various factors such as

economic, social, and cultural conditions in the local community. Further analysis can be conducted to understand the factors that influence the fluctuation in the number of divorces, as well as the social and psychological implications of these trends for the people of Cirebon City as a whole.

In the context of increasing divorce cases, there is a direct link between the divorce graph and the quality of service at the Religious Courts. When the divorce graph shows an upward trend, with more divorce cases being filed, this has the effect of slowing down services at the Religious Courts. An increase in the number of cases results in a greater workload for staff, which leads to a decrease in the efficiency and effectiveness of services. In addition, the Religious Courts sometimes deliberately slow down administrative processes in order to allow time for disputing couples to mediate and reconsider their decision, in an effort to reduce divorce rates. Thus, the surge in divorce cases is directly proportional to the decline in the quality and speed of services, as mediation efforts are expected to encourage couples to abandon their intention to divorce and improve their domestic relations.

The background of the quality of service for filing divorce applications at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office can be explained by the important role of the agency in handling divorce cases, which are sensitive aspects of community life. Optimal service in the divorce application process is expected to create public trust in the justice system.

Therefore, it is important to evaluate the quality of service for divorce applications at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office. In order to facilitate clear access and fair divorce settlement. Common problems in divorce application services at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office involve slow processing, lack of applicant understanding of procedures and transparent communication of information, and potential gender inequality in the handling of divorce cases. The following is a journal of previous research that focuses on services in Religious Court offices in Indonesia:

Based on previous journals on service quality evaluation: Fitriani Nurul conducted research in 2017 on *Improving Service Quality at the Religious Court Office*: This research is a case study on efforts to improve service quality in religious court offices in West Java province. This journal discusses strategies and implementation to improve service user satisfaction in religious courts.

Dian Kartika conducted research in 2019 on *Service Quality Analysis at the Religious Court Office: Service User Perspective*" This research analyzes the quality of service at the religious court office from the perspective of service users. This journal provides an in-depth understanding of service users' expectations, perceptions, and satisfaction with the religious court office. The extent to which users are satisfied with the services provided by the religious court office.

Khumayah Siti conducted research on "Performance of Transportation Department Employees in the field of transportation in city services in Cirebon City" The main focus of this research is on the quality of public services provided, including reliability, responsiveness, and satisfaction of users of city transportation services. This study also identifies factors that affect service performance and provides recommendations for improvement, such as increased employee training and improved

management systems, in order to improve the quality of public transportation services in the city of Cirebon.

Santoso Budi conducted research in 2018 on "Improving Service Quality at Regional General Hospitals for KIS Patients: Challenges and Opportunities". This study discusses efforts to improve service quality in regional public hospitals for KIS patients. This journal identifies challenges and opportunities in improving KIS patient satisfaction and provides solutions to overcome the problems faced. The difference between this previous research which usually only examines public services, and this research lies in its focus on evaluating the quality of divorce filing services at the Cirebon City religious court office. This research in detail studies aspects such as the speed of the process of accuracy of information and the effectiveness of communication in the context of providing divorce filing services in the city of Cirebon. This research in detail studies aspects such as the speed of the process of accuracy of information and the effectiveness of communication in the context of providing divorce filing services in the city of Cirebon.

### Research Method

The research on evaluating the quality of divorce application services at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office will adopt a qualitative approach to deeply understand the experiences, perceptions, and expectations of individuals involved in the process. The initial step will involve selecting representative respondents, including divorce applicants, court officers, and other relevant parties. Next, a structured or semi-structured interview guide will be designed to guide interactions with respondents. Data will be collected through direct interviews and observation of the divorce application process at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office. By using a qualitative approach, this research is expected to provide an in-depth understanding of the quality of divorce filing services and provide valuable insights to improve the process. The details of the informants used in this study are as follows:

In the Cirebon City Religious Court office, key informants include the public as service users who provide information about their experiences and perceptions of the legal process in the court. They provided insight into their needs, expectations, and satisfaction with the services provided. Supporting informants included service staff, who were in charge of receiving applications for divorce cases. They provided information on the administrative process, filing procedures, and interactions with applicants. Their role is important in facilitating the application process in an efficient and professional manner. The head of the Religious Courts office was also a key informant, providing insight into the policies, internal procedures, and vision and mission of the court. As leaders, they have great influence in directing the direction and performance of the court office, as well as maintaining integrity and fairness in the handling of cases.

Techniques and data collection The researcher chose a desk study to gather information from relevant text sources, such as books, journals, and official documents, in order to understand the theoretical basis and context of the research topic. Field

studies were also chosen to collect data directly from practical experiences or observations in the field, allowing the researcher to gain deep and contextualized insights into the phenomenon under study. Researchers chose the triangulation technique because it allowed them to combine different data sources, methods, or theories in their research.

Thus, they can ensure the accuracy (validity) and reliability (reliability) of their findings by looking at the phenomenon from multiple perspectives. Triangulation allows researchers to verify or strengthen their findings by using different approaches, such as combining qualitative and quantitative data or using various data collection techniques. It also provides a greater richness of data, allowing researchers to gain a deeper understanding of the phenomenon they are researching. As such, triangulation techniques strengthen the analysis and ensure the overall strength of the research results.

### Result and Discussion

The Cirebon City Religious Court Office has demonstrated a strong commitment to providing efficient, friendly, and non-discriminatory services to all those who require its services. Interviews with employees of the Religious Courts office provide an overview of the office's efforts to create a work environment that supports high-quality service. In terms of efficiency, measures such as communication skills training, effective time management, and improved facilities are clear evidence of the office's efforts to improve efficiency in every aspect of the services provided. By ensuring processes run smoothly and efficiently, the office can minimize waiting times and delays, thus providing a more positive experience for visitors. In addition, efforts to create a welcoming environment through communication skills training is also a very important step. Good communication between staff and visitors not only creates a comfortable atmosphere but also builds a better relationship between the office and the community. This way, visitors feel heard, valued, and supported at every stage of the legal process. Furthermore, the commitment to not discriminate against anyone who needs services is a very important principle in public service. By ensuring that every individual is treated fairly and without discrimination, the Cirebon City Religious Court office creates an inclusive environment and provides assurance that justice will be served indiscriminately.

Although the Cirebon City Religious Court currently facilitates the community by providing access to services through the e-Court website, the mediation step remains an integral part of the divorce filing process. The use of the e-Court platform does speed up and simplify the administrative process, allowing the public to file for divorce online more efficiently. However, despite this convenience, the Religious Courts still endeavor to facilitate mediation between disputing couples. The aim is to give the couple the opportunity to reconsider their decision and potentially reverse their intention to divorce. This step is taken in an effort to reduce the divorce rate and prevent a drastic increase in the number of cases, which could overwhelm the service at the Religious Courts office. Thus, although services are facilitated through e-Court technology,

mediation efforts are still made to maintain the balance and quality of services and reduce the divorce rate in Cirebon City.

Overall, the interviews with staff at the Religious Courts reflect the office's firm commitment to providing quality and inclusive services to the community. The steps taken show that the office not only focuses on operational efficiency but also on the qualitative aspects that are important to ensure that every individual gets fair treatment and quality services. Based on the results of interviews with several key informants who use services at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office, it appears that there are several positive aspects that should be considered in evaluating the quality of public services at the institution.



**Figure 1**  
**E-Court self-service lawsuit website on the religious court website**

First, the openness and clarity of procedures were an important highlight of the interview with Ms. NM. Although there were some shortcomings in terms of staff friendliness, service users felt that processes were well explained and services were provided according to queues and in a timely manner. This demonstrates the commitment of the court office to pay attention to clarity of procedures, which is an important aspect of providing transparent and trustworthy services.

Second, speed and ease of processing were highlighted in the interview with Ms. ER. The perception that the service at the religious court office is quite fast because it provides convenience in the process demonstrates the efforts of the court office to pay attention to the need for efficiency and convenience for service users. This illustrates that the religious court office is not only focused on clarity of procedures but also on improving the overall efficiency of the service. Third, the technological skills and responsiveness of staff in providing services were highlighted in the interview with Ms. LS. The ability to provide access through the website of the religious court office not only improves service accessibility but also demonstrates the court office's adaptation to technological developments to improve service efficiency and effectiveness. In addition, the responsiveness of staff in providing services also gives a positive picture of the court office's commitment to providing a satisfactory service experience for the community.

Thus, from the results of these interviews, it can be concluded that the Cirebon City Religious Courts Office has tried to provide services in accordance with the expected principles of public service quality.

Although there are still some areas for improvement, such as improving officer friendliness, overall, efforts to improve clarity of procedures, speed of service, and





there were cases where some employees were less friendly in their interactions with the public. Some employees attributed this to fatigue or other internal factors affecting their performance. This shows the importance of continuously improving the quality of service in the Religious Courts office, especially in terms of providing better information to the public as well as paying attention to aspects such as friendliness and professionalism in interacting with service users. Improvements in this regard are expected to increase community satisfaction and strengthen their trust in the religious courts. Based on an interview with a representative of the head of the religious court office, he explained:

"That the office is very integrity in providing services. They are committed to providing the best possible service without discrimination and always maintain integrity in every process. The leadership also routinely monitors and gives briefings to service staff twice a week. This aims to ensure that employees serve quickly, responsively, and carefully while maintaining good manners and non-discrimination in service to the community". This shows that the religious court office has a high commitment to providing quality and fair services to all. Based on the results of interviews with informants:

"The staff at the Religious Courts feel that they have provided the best possible service without discriminating against anyone.

They implemented the standard operating procedures in a friendly manner and provided appropriate services to everyone, including the poor, who wanted to get a divorce. There is no difference in the service provided to anyone. The Religious Courts not only provide free services to those who cannot afford a divorce but also have a constantly updated website to facilitate access to all available services. On the e-court website, the public can obtain and download all the information they need about the divorce process as well as all the relevant securely stored divorce archive documents.

This ensures greater transparency and accessibility for all parties involved. The enabling factors that allow the Religious Courts office to provide free services to the poor in obtaining divorces and in having an updated website with downloadable divorce records via the internet include a commitment to social justice, institutional support, quality human resources, advanced information technology, commitment to transparency, and partnerships with external parties".

The steps taken by the Cirebon City Religious Court Office are positive and proactive in improving the quality of service to the community. Regular communication skills training for staff is a worthwhile investment because good communication between staff and the public can increase service user trust and satisfaction. By improving communication skills, employees can be more effective in explaining information to the public, thus minimizing confusion and increasing positive service user experiences. Improving facilities such as air conditioning and other amenities is also an important step towards creating a comfortable environment for visitors. A comfortable environment can create a better atmosphere within the court office so that visitors feel more valued and supported in their legal process. This can also help in creating a positive image of the court office in the eyes of the public.

To address this issue, an evaluation of the court's internal processes is required, including a review of existing SOPs and efforts to improve efficiency in case handling. The implementation of more sophisticated information technology and case management systems could help to reduce the time required in court proceedings. In addition, consideration should also be given to increasing the capacity and number of staff to handle a larger volume of cases more effectively. Thus, while the provision of free services is a very positive step, improvements in the efficiency and effectiveness of court processes also need to be considered so that the services provided can be more responsive to the needs of the community and better ensure speedy and appropriate justice. At the Religious Courts office, factors supporting service quality include the responsiveness of staff in providing information clearly and in a friendly manner to the community. They are trained to be responsive and thorough in answering questions and providing assistance where needed. In addition, weekly monitoring and briefing routines help maintain high service standards by ensuring that employees are updated on the latest policies and best practices in providing services to the community. In addition to being responsive, staff also ensure that services are provided in a timely manner according to the needs of the community. This helps to reduce waiting times and improve the efficiency of court processes. In addition, a convenient and strategic service location is also a supporting factor for service quality. By providing a comfortable environment for visitors, the Religious Courts office creates a supportive atmosphere for people coming for legal services.

The implementation of effective time management is also very important to maintain employee welfare and service quality. By managing time well, employees can avoid fatigue which can affect their performance in providing services. Effective time management can also assist in optimizing employee productivity and efficiency, thereby increasing the capacity of the court office to handle the volume of cases. These measures demonstrate that the management of the Religious Courts office understands the importance of providing quality service to the community and actively seeks to improve the awareness and skills of employees in providing good service. With a commitment to continuous improvement and innovation, it is hoped that the Religious Courts Office can continue to improve the quality of its services and make a positive contribution to justice and community satisfaction.

## Conclusion

The length of the process at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office is a major impediment that needs to be addressed. While adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) is important to ensure fairness and order in the courts, in some cases, it can result in undesirable delays in the resolution of cases. Especially in situations where the number of cases to be handled is large or the court process is complex, the length of the process can be a major obstacle for the parties involved. It should be recognized that the provision of free service assistance to those who cannot afford it is a positive step taken by the Religious Courts Office. It ensures that the issue of cost is not a barrier to those who need access to the courts. However, while cost is not a constraining

factor for the financially disadvantaged, the length of the process due to compliance with SOPs and queues remains a serious challenge.

The divorce petition process at the Cirebon City Religious Court Office exhibits a complexity that is matched by strategic measures to maintain service quality and reduce divorce rates. Although ease of access through the e-Court website has accelerated and simplified the administrative process, mediation efforts remain an integral part of the procedure. The Religious Courts implement mediation and sometimes slow down the divorce filing process with the aim of allowing time for couples to reconsider their decision and seek an amicable solution. This is done to prevent a surge in divorce cases that could cause the divorce charts to rise significantly and overwhelm the ministry. Thus, although technology has made the filing process easier, a balance between ease of service and efforts to maintain household stability is maintained by the Cirebon City Religious Court. Evaluation of the quality of service of the Cirebon City Religious Court Office shows good implementation of SOPs although there are still obstacles in providing understanding to the community. Service time is quite good with efforts to fulfill files on time. Employees provide information through information boards and friendly interactions. The waiting room is equipped with comfortable and safe facilities, including fans, television, and seating, as well as maintained cleanliness and availability of reading materials.

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