

# WOMEN'S POLITICAL REPRESENTATION IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT: ITS IMPACT ON PUBLIC SERVICE QUALITY

Y Anni Aryani \*, Evi Gantowati \*, An Nurrahmawati \*, Taufiq Arifin \*,  
Sutaryo Sutaryo \*\*

\* Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia

\*\* *Corresponding author*, Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Surakarta, Indonesia  
Contact details: Department of Accounting, Faculty of Economics and Business, Universitas Sebelas Maret, Jalan Ir. Sutami 36A, Surakarta, Central Java 57126, Indonesia



## Abstract

**How to cite this paper:** Aryani, Y. A., Gantowati, E., Nurrahmawati, A., Arifin, T., & Sutaryo, S. (2023). Women's political representation in local government: Its impact on public service quality [Special issue]. *Corporate Governance and Organizational Behavior Review*, 7(3), 375–384. <https://doi.org/10.22495/cgobrv7i3sip12>

Copyright © 2023 The Authors

This work is licensed under a Creative Commons Attribution 4.0 International License (CC BY 4.0).  
<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>

**ISSN Online:** 2521-1889  
**ISSN Print:** 2521-1870

**Received:** 08.11.2022  
**Accepted:** 21.08.2023

**JEL Classification:** H11, H70, H83, M40, M41  
**DOI:** 10.22495/cgobrv7i3sip12

Public service quality has been a significant issue in Indonesia (Lanin & Hermanto, 2019) along with woman's representation in politics (Aspinall et al., 2021). This study investigates the effect of woman's representation in the local government head and legislative positions on public service quality in Indonesian local governments. We use secondary data from the Ministry of Internal Affairs, a local government website, and the Indonesia Statistics Bureau from 2016–2019, analyzed with panel data regression analysis. Overall, we find that local government public service quality is at a high level. Meanwhile, women's political representation in Indonesian local government is still considerably low, both in legislative and top executive positions. Empirical findings demonstrate that women's representation in the legislative board provides a positive impact on public service quality while women's local government head has no significant effect. The effect is consistent both in district local governments and city local governments observations. Our study provides recommendations that suggest that women's representation in local politics should be increased to promote gender equality which leads to better public governance.

**Keywords:** Indonesia, Local Government, Public Service Quality, Women Legislators, Woman Local Head

**Authors' individual contribution:** Conceptualization — S.S.; Methodology — T.A.; Software — T.A.; Validation — S.S.; Formal Analysis — T.A.; Investigation — S.S.; Resources — S.S.; Data Curation — A.N.; Writing — Original Draft — E.G.; Writing — Review & Editing — Y.A.A.; Visualization — E.G.; Supervision — Y.A.A.; Project Administration — A.N.; Funding Acquisition — Y.A.A.

**Declaration of conflicting interests:** The Authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

**Acknowledgements:** This research is funded by the Penelitian Unggulan Terapan Grant No. 254/UN27.22/PT.01.03/2022 provided by Universitas Sebelas Maret (PUT-UNS).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia has implemented decentralization as one of the most significant changes in public governance since the 1998 reform (Furqan et al., 2020). Ever since the reformation started, Indonesia began implementing many significant changes in local governance, especially in terms of authority distribution and financial resources management (McLeod & Harun, 2014). It is expected that the local governments can maximize the potential of local potential that ultimately improve public welfare (Rakhman, 2019). Like many other countries that implemented decentralization, most of the public service delivery authority is given to the local governments as they are more likely to be able to deliver the public service better than the central government (Arends, 2020). However, the implementation of public service delivery in local government has not fully met people's expectations (Rochmansjah, 2019). The number of complaints over public service delivery has increased from 2018 to 2019 and the local governments have become the ones that received most of these complaints (Dewi, 2020).

Public service quality in local government is never apart from political factors as the public service delivery is related to local government programs that are proposed and executed by the executive (Sutaryo et al., 2022). One of the questions rising about political factors in Indonesia is the gender factor to explore whether the representation of women in local government politics matters for local governance. It is generally believed that women's representation in politics is necessary to improve governance (Fox & Schuhmann, 1999; Jacob, 2014). Shair-Rosenfield (2012) and Jung (2016) mention that female politicians are cleaner than male politicians as they are "unique", rare, and sometimes not related to political activity thanks to media portrayal. In Indonesia, women's participation in politics has become a significant discussion by the Indonesian media. This issue was even the most hits issue in the Indonesian parliament after the 1999 election (Susilo et al., 2019). Several efforts have been undertaken to increase women's political participation in Indonesia such as implementing the quota for women in the legislative elections. In addition, the number of women politicians has also increased thanks to the tendency of media coverage (Beta, 2019; Shair-Rosenfield, 2012). However, the representation of women politicians in Indonesia is still less than expected, and they still experience disparities between regions (Aspinall et al., 2021). Therefore, women's political representation in Indonesia becomes an interesting factor to study in Indonesian local governments.

In the research literature, the gender issue in politics is also considered less explored, especially in empirical studies investigating its impact on local governance, one of which is the quality of public service. To our knowledge, there is a limited number of studies that comprehensively investigates the impact of women's political representation on the quality of public service, specifically in Indonesia. Previous existing studies in the literature investigate the impact of women's political representation on transparency (Araujo & Tejedero-Romero, 2016, 2018), education quality (Clots-Figuera, 2012), and health service quality

(Lewis, 2019). This study makes a significant contribution to the public sector literature by providing a comprehensive examination of women's political representation in the executive and legislative positions on the quality of public services.

The remainder of the paper is presented as follows. The literature review in Section 2 provides the fundamental references of the study based on the relevant literature and the development of research hypotheses. The methodology in Section 3 illustrates how the study is conducted which explains research coverage, data, and analysis. The results and discussion in Section 4 present the empirical findings generated from the data analysis and will be discussed based on the supporting literature, references, and phenomena. Finally, the conclusion in Section 5 provides a summary of the study equipped with the research implications and recommendations.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1. Agency theory and gender

As introduced by Jensen and Meckling (1976), agency theory explains the agency relationship between two parties (principal and agent) in a contract that leads to agency conflict. Lane (2005) and Araujo and Tejedero-Romero (2016) posit that the concept of agency theory also applies in government, with the public acting as the principal while the government is the agent. This concept applies given that the main characteristic of an agency relationship lies in the contract of delegation of authority and responsibility from the people to the executive. Therefore, the characteristics of the legislative as the principal representatives and local government head as the agent become very important. One characteristic of the principal-agent relationship that has received increasing attention in the literature is the gender of the participating parties. The main strands of this literature have studied the relevance of gender for good governance. Studies focus on the impact of the gender factor. One standard approach to this set of questions is to consider the principal-agent relationship between the agent — the local government head — and the principal(s) — the legislative board — and ask how, and why, the gender of either party may affect the relationship between them and the outcomes of the agency relationship.

Several studies in socio-psychological and political science literature also suggest that women have political attitudes and societal orientations that differ in meaningful ways from men. There are several significant characteristics suggested by the literature. First, women and men may have different personal characteristics such as risk aversion, level of confidence, and ethical values that are obtained from working experience (Aguilar et al., 2009; Andersen et al., 2008; Belaounia et al., 2020; Charness & Gneezy, 2012; Croson & Gneezy, 2004; Li & Zeng, 2019; Miller & Ubeda, 2012). These differences in personality traits may affect decision-making and ultimately affect organizational achievement. It is believed that women often bring different leadership qualities, agendas, priorities, and methods of conceptualizing policy issues to their professional roles.

## 2.2. Public service quality

Public service is undeniably one of the most fundamental responsibilities that government should deliver well for the sake of public welfare (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Many aspects are very crucial for people's life such as healthcare, education, etc. (Pahala et al., 2016). Public service delivery is very crucial for a nation to be a developed country. When the public service is not well-delivered, the country's goal to be a developed country cannot be accomplished properly. Therefore, improving public service quality becomes one of the most important national agendas in Indonesia (Sutaryo et al., 2022). Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Local Government also regulates the delivery of public services in Indonesian local governments. Public services are classified into two categories: primary public services and secondary public services. Primary public services consist of education, health, environment, public work, and spatial planning, public housing, youth and sport, cooperation and small, and medium enterprises, population and civil registration, manpower, food security, woman empowerment, and child protection, population control, and family planning, transportation, land affairs, public order, and people protection, supporting function, community and village development, social services, culture, statistics, archival, and library. Meanwhile, secondary public services consist of marine and fishery, agriculture, tourism, industry, trading, and transmigration. For the sake of public service quality improvement, a national assessment is conducted annually by the Ministry of Internal Affairs to measure how well a local government has performed its public service responsibilities. The measurement follows the Minimum Service Standards (*Standar Pelayanan Minimal* – SPM) criteria for every public service category and is stated in a score.

## 2.3. Women's political representation in Indonesia

Indonesia is a country that follows a patriarchal value system (Soedarwo, 2014). The internalization of this patriarchal value has become an obstacle for women to participate in politics (White & Aspinall, 2019). Thus, the opportunity for women to become politicians tends to be limited because society's perceptions regarding the role of women tend to be biased towards the thinking that a woman's role should be limited to managing the household. The government has made several efforts to increase women's participation in politics in an attempt to improve the health of Indonesian democracy such as introducing a gender quota of 30% for women in the parliament since 2003 (Hillman, 2018). Despite these efforts, the country still experiences the inability to realize equal representation for its female citizens to participate in the political world. Women's representation in politics at the legislative bodies in Indonesia can still be considered at a low level, and further, the proportion of women elected to executive government positions is even lower, both as governors at the provincial level and local government heads in the district/city level (Aspinall et al., 2021). Based on these phenomena, women's participation in Indonesian politics is a very promising factor to examine, especially in terms of its impact on governance outcomes, specifically public service quality.

## 2.4. Woman local government head and public service quality

The role of women as a leader in the government has been studied in previous research (Araujo & Tejedo-Romero, 2016, 2018; Diliiani & Susanti, 2015; Fox & Schuhmann, 1999). Women's participation in politics is significant for good governance in dealing with a range of specific policy issues and proposing solutions (Dar & Shairgojri, 2022). Scholars in the past have demonstrated that the appointment of a woman as government leader brings a positive impact on governance thanks to women's characteristics in leadership. Araujo and Tejedo-Romero (2018) find that female mayor has better performance than male mayors in promoting local government transparency in Spain. Female local government head is also related to less corruption as mentioned by Diliiani and Susanti (2015) in the Indonesian context. Further, Esarey and Chirillo (2013) suggest that women are more likely to conform to the local social norms, so they are less likely to engage in corruption in an institutional environment than in societies when it is more accepted. Further, female mayors encourage more citizen participation, communication, and input as compared to male mayors (Rodríguez-García, 2015).

Specific to public service, Fox and Schuhmann (1999) stated that women city managers tend to have a higher commitment to public services. Women managers were more likely than men to refer to citizen welfare and community as the core value of their programs for local development agendas. Similarly, a study conducted by Barry et al. (1998) and Honour et al. (1998) in India mentions that female politicians possess values and attitudes that are more closely aligned with a public service ethos than male politicians. Supporting this concept, Bentillo et al. (2016) provide a case study in the Philippines that a female leader in a government has an undying dedication to public service. Therefore, the existence of women local government heads is expected to bring positive implications on public service quality. Based on the explanation above, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

*H1: Woman local government head positively affects public service quality.*

## 2.5. Woman's legislative representation and public service quality

The existence of women in the legislature has also become a concern in many countries. It is believed that women's representation in the legislative board can help improve the legislative board in carrying out its functions. Women's stereotype seems to be more favourable to increase communication and attempt to influence others (Merchant, 2012), and at the same time tends to be more collaborative and democratic (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). Women's representation in the legislative has a positive impact on legislative performance based on the study conducted by Jacob (2014) in India. In a broader context, Homola (2022) finds empirical evidence from European and American countries that the government is more likely to fulfill its election promises when levels of women's representation are higher. Women may engage in greater legislative activity (Anzia & Berry, 2011) and

focus on issues that are systematically different from the issues that men focus on (Catalano, 2009; Schwindt-Bayer, 2006). Baskaran et al. (2018) find that women legislators are less likely to be criminal and corrupt, more efficacious, and less vulnerable to political opportunism. Therefore, women's political representation can be expected to support public service delivery that has been mandated by the laws.

Specific to public service, the increase in female political representation has caused a better provision of public goods (Hessami & da Fonseca, 2020). In many developing countries, it is evidenced that legislative representation by women is positively associated with the implementation of policies that promote higher levels of social inclusion, and human development (Tusalem, 2022). Prihatini (2021) also evidenced that women legislators lead to higher allocation for public spending and promote higher economic welfare. Hessel et al. (2020) also report that the increases in women's political representation are associated with public better health outcomes in Brazil. Clots-Figueras (2012) evidenced that higher women proportion in the legislative board positively affects education outcomes in the city local governments in India. Further studies, such as by Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras (2014), explain that women politicians are more likely to build public health facilities and encourage antenatal care, institutional delivery, and immunization that results in better health services outcomes. In addition, the previous study demonstrates that higher women's representation in the legislative positively affects local government transparency (Araujo & Tejedro-Romero, 2018). Based on the explanation above, the hypothesis is formulated as follows:

*H2: Woman's legislative representation positively affects public service quality.*

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Population, samples, and data

This study employs all district/city local governments in Indonesia during the 2016–2019 fiscal period as our research population. There are 514 local governments in Indonesia. The study uses purposive sampling to select the samples due to data unavailability in several local governments and the existence of local governments with administrative city status. Finally, the study generates a total of 1,877 observations from 499 local governments. As for the research data, the study uses secondary data that are obtained from authorized government agencies such as the Ministry of Internal Affairs, the Indonesia Statistics Bureau (*Badan Pusat Statistik* — BPS), the Supreme Audit Board (*Badan Pemeriksa Keuangan* — BPK), and the respective local government website.

#### 3.2. Research variables

Our study uses the public local government service quality as the dependent variable. It is measured by using the assessment score of public service achievement based on the SPM as published by the Ministry of Internal Affairs. We investigate local government head gender and legislative gender as the independent variables. In addition, this study also employs several control variables to accommodate the factors outside independent variables that consist of local government head tenure, political coalition, total expenditure, capital expenditure, total task force, human development, and population. The summary of research variables along with the measurement is presented as follows:

**Table 1.** Research variables summary

Variable	Acronym	Measurement	Data source	References
<b>Dependent</b>				
Public service quality	$PSQ_{it}$	Local government public service quality score by Ministry of Internal Affairs	Ministry of Internal Affairs	Furqan et al. (2020), Sutaryo et al. (2022)
<b>Independent</b>				
Women local government head	$LGH\_GEND_{it}$	Dummy: 1= female, 0 = male	Local government financial statement	Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2016), Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2018)
Women legislative representation	$LEGIS\_GEND_{it}$	The proportion of women in the legislative board	Indonesia Statistics Bureau	Lewis (2019), Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2018)
<b>Control</b>				
Local government head tenure	$LGH\_TENURE_{it}$	Total number of years of local government head tenure	Local government financial statement	Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2016), Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2018)
Local political coalition	$LG\_POL_{it}$	The proportion of legislative members supporting the executive	Commission of General Elections	Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2016), Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2018)
Local government's total asset	$LG\_ASSET_{it}$	Logarithm (Log) value of local government total assets	Local government financial statement	Sutaryo et al. (2022), Utama et al. (2019)
Local government's total expenditure	$LG\_EXP_{it}$	Logarithm (Log) value of local government total expenditures	Local government financial statement	Sutaryo et al. (2022), Utama et al. (2019)
Local government capital expenditure	$LG\_CAPEX_{it}$	Natural logarithm value of local government total capital expenditures	Local government financial statement	Sutaryo et al. (2022), Utama et al. (2019)
Local government task force	$LG\_TF_{it}$	Total number of local government task forces	Local government financial statement	Martani (2017), Sutopo et al. (2017)
Local government human development	$LGHDI_{it}$	Local government Human Development Index (HDI)	Indonesia Statistics Bureau	Martani (2017), Sutopo et al. (2017)
Local government population	$LGPOP_{it}$	Natural logarithm (Ln) value of local government populations	Indonesia Statistics Bureau	Guillamón et al., (2011), Sutaryo et al. (2018)

### 3.3. Data analysis

This research is a causality study that uses quantitative methods. Causality research aims to test the hypothesis by examining whether there is a relationship between the variables in the study (Sekaran & Bougie, 2013). Our data analysis started with descriptive statistics analysis and a variable

correlation test. The main analysis is hypothesis testing, conducted with panel data regression analysis to examine the effect of women's representation in local government in top executive and legislative positions on the public service quality of Indonesian local governments. The regression formula is presented as follows:

$$PSQ_{it} = \alpha + \beta_1 LGH\_GEND_{it} + \beta_2 LEGIS\_GEND_{it} + \beta_3 LGH\_TENURE_{it} + \beta_4 LG\_POL_{it} + \beta_5 LG\_ASSET_{it} + \beta_6 LG\_EXP_{it} + \beta_7 LG\_CAPEX_{it} + \beta_8 LG\_TF_{it} + \beta_9 LGHDI_{it} + \beta_{10} LGPOP_{it} + \varepsilon \quad (1)$$

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1. Descriptive statistics and correlation

We used univariate analysis to obtain descriptive statistics summary of our research data. We find that the level of public service quality in Indonesian local governments on average is at a high level with an average score of 2.716. The lowest public service quality achievement is 0.207 (low) while the highest is 4 (very high). Further, the characteristics of local government heads show that women as mayor or

district heads are still quite low at 10.8 percent and thus there is still a small number of female local government heads in Indonesia. Meanwhile, the legislative board composition is still dominated by male legislators, with which the average composition of women in the legislature only at 13.7 percent. The highest women's representation in the local government legislative board reaches 44 percent. However, the lowest participation is 0 percent and the legislative board has no women's representation. In detail, the summary of descriptive statistics results is as follows:

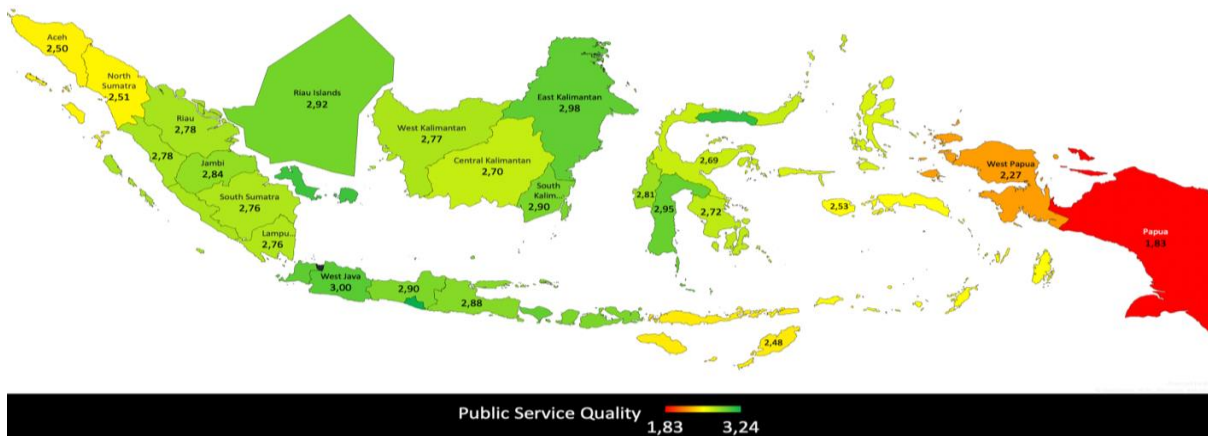
Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Variable	Obs.	Mean	Std. Dev.	Min	Max
PSQ <sub>it</sub>	1891	2.716	0.5	0.207	4
LEGIS_GEND <sub>it</sub>	2032	0.137	0.082	0	0.44
LGH_TENURE <sub>it</sub>	2032	2.677	1.375	0	6
LG_POL <sub>it</sub>	2032	0.384	0.197	0	1
LG_ASSET <sub>it</sub>	2032	12.381	0.268	11.483	13.631
LG_EXP <sub>it</sub>	2032	12.059	0.215	11.116	12.912
LG_CAPEX <sub>it</sub>	2016	26.367	0.501	23.508	28.614
LG_TF <sub>it</sub>	2032	51.452	21.262	22	209
LGHDI <sub>it</sub>	2032	66.361	7.482	19.62	86.65
LGPOP <sub>it</sub>	2032	12.618	0.998	9.523	15.266
Variable	Obs.	Dummy 0		Dummy 1	
		Freq.	Percentage	Freq.	Percentage
LGH_GEND <sub>it</sub>	2032	1812	89.2%	220	10.8%

We further analyze the local government public service quality achievement in Indonesia based on the geographic area by grouping the local governments based on the province. We find that local governments in Java and Bali Island have the best average public service quality achievement with a lower gap among provinces. Local governments in Borneo Island come up second in public service quality achievement in which most of the provinces have achieved good public service quality more than the average national score. Further, local governments

from Sumatra and Sulawesi Island follow with good public service quality achievement but there are still several regions in which the achievement is lower than the national score. Finally, the East Indonesian region is the last in which most of the local government still have public service quality achievement below the average national score and there are even several regions that are unable to achieve good public service quality. The result is presented as follows:

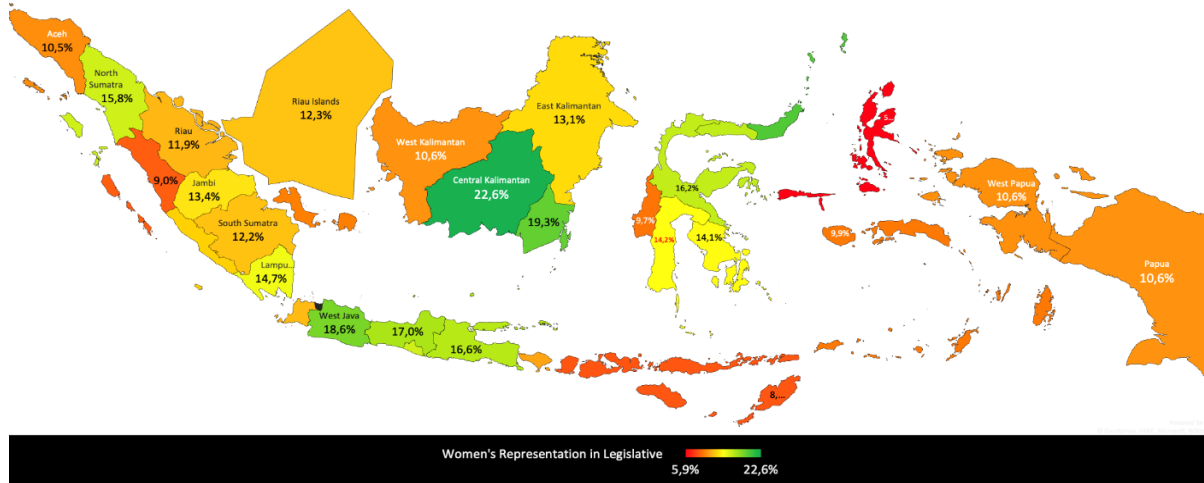
Figure 1. Local government public service quality achievement based on geographic area



We also explore the local government women's representation in Indonesia based on the geographic area. The grouping is also based on the province. It is evidenced that women's representation in the legislative board is still considerably low. There

are even several areas in which the average women's representation is below 10 percent. The illustration is presented in Figure 1. We also analyze the correlation among our research variables. The result is presented in Table 3.

**Figure 2.** Women's political representation in the legislative board based on geographic area



**Table 3.** Correlation matrix

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)	(7)	(8)	(9)	(10)	(11)
(1) $PSQ_{it}$	1.000										
(2) $LG\_GEND_{it}$	0.054	1.000									
(3) $LEGIS\_GEND_{it}$	0.117	0.031	1.000								
(4) $LG\_TENURE_{it}$	0.019	-0.053	0.006	1.000							
(5) $LG\_POL_{it}$	0.101	0.072	0.023	-0.107	1.000						
(6) $LG\_ASSET_{it}$	0.179	0.099	0.085	-0.004	0.111	1.000					
(7) $LG\_EXP_{it}$	0.245	0.148	0.095	0.024	0.129	0.814	1.000				
(8) $LG\_CAPEX_{it}$	0.175	0.093	0.060	-0.047	0.173	0.728	0.744	1.000			
(9) $LG\_TF_{it}$	0.050	0.057	0.018	-0.023	0.024	0.138	0.206	0.161	1.000		
(10) $LG\_HDI_{it}$	0.420	0.018	0.203	0.002	-0.052	0.315	0.267	0.109	0.010	1.000	
(11) $LGPOP_{it}$	0.327	0.144	0.115	0.010	0.121	0.588	0.815	0.596	0.242	0.325	1.000

#### 4.2. Panel data regression analysis

The main analysis for hypothesis testing in this study is conducted with panel data regression analysis. We perform the main regression using all local governments in Indonesia. Further, we conduct a subsample analysis by classifying the observations into district local governments and city local governments. Our results demonstrate that women's local government head has no significant effect on

public service quality. Thus, local governments led by a woman leader has no tendency to have higher or lower public service quality. Further, the regression analysis evidences that women's legislative representation has a positive effect on public service quality achievement. Local governments with higher women's representation in the legislative board tend to have higher public service quality achievement. The result of the panel data regression analysis is presented in the following table:

**Table 4.** Panel data regression analysis result (Part 1)

Variables	(1)	(2)	(3)
	All LGs	District LGs	City LGs
$LG\_GEND_{it}$	0.0150 (0.0658)	0.0055 (0.0783)	0.0060 (0.1260)
$LEGIS\_GEND_{it}$	<b>0.7511**</b> (0.3103)	<b>0.6683*</b> (0.3474)	<b>1.2752*</b> (0.7022)
$LG\_TENURE_{it}$	0.0056 (0.0065)	0.0071 (0.0073)	-0.0030 (0.0144)
$LG\_POL_{it}$	0.0222 (0.0851)	0.0914 (0.0949)	-0.3141 (0.1963)
$LG\_ASSET_{it}$	<b>-1.1141***</b> (0.1862)	<b>-1.1843***</b> (0.2324)	<b>-0.9182***</b> (0.3062)
$LG\_EXP_{it}$	<b>0.6922***</b> (0.2263)	0.4574 (0.3044)	<b>0.8742***</b> (0.3332)
$LG\_CAPEX_{it}$	<b>0.2203***</b> (0.0412)	<b>0.2351***</b> (0.0471)	0.1243 (0.0886)

**Table 4.** Panel data regression analysis result (Part 2)

<i>Variables</i>	(1)	(2)	(3)
	<i>All LGs</i>	<i>District LGs</i>	<i>City LGs</i>
$LG\_TF_i$	0.0007 (0.0001)	0.0002 (0.0008)	-0.0009 (0.0026)
$LGHDI_i$	0.0098 (0.00985)	0.0022 (0.0111)	<b>0.0423*</b> <b>(0.0220)</b>
$LGPOP_i$	-0.0230 (0.0683)	-0.0468 (0.0859)	0.0155 (0.1101)
Constant	1.8892 (3.8762)	5.9314 (4.9013)	-2.9572 (6.4881)
Observations	1,877	1,521	356
R-squared	0.0501	0.0482	0.1004
Number of LGs	499	406	93

The result of the subsample analysis provides consistent findings with the overall observations. The effect of women's local government head on public service quality is not significant both in the district and city local governments. Meanwhile, women's legislative representation has a positive effect on public service quality achievement. Female local government head has no significant effect on public service quality achievement. The finding may appear as a result of the low participation of female local government heads in Indonesia. Thus, the participation of female leaders in local governance has not produced the expected positive effect (Araujo & Tejedro-Romero, 2016). Further studies conducted by D'Agostino (2015) revealed that female leaders in government institutions have not been able to make a difference as compared to male leaders in bringing significant changes.

Feeney and Camarena (2021) mention that female leaders may face obstacles because even in leadership positions, women remain the out-group in male-dominated organizations. Indeed, women still encounter issues in politics such as crab mentality, passing of legislation, blame games, and considerably lesser knowledge about the political relationship (Sibal et al., 2021). Specific to the Indonesian context, there is also limited major accomplishment by female local government heads in Indonesia. In addition, there was even a female local government head that faced an impeachment case by the legislative in Jember District so the local government head step down from her position. Therefore, a female politician should have certain qualities to realize good governance and good public service, namely strong will, determination, and love for service. A female politician must have respect for constituents and colleagues, sincerity, dedication, and commitment to work, and also be a good follower. Through the qualities that the female leaders possessed, they managed to overcome these issues to perform their roles properly and contribute to improving public service.

Meanwhile, our analysis demonstrates the positive effect of women's legislative representation on public service quality achievement by the local government. The finding supports the idea that women's representation in the legislative board is essential as it can help the legislative board in carrying out its functions. There is a positive impact from having a considerable amount of women representation thanks to women's personal traits that are useful to support communication (Merchant, 2012) and to be more collaborative and democratic (Eagly & Johannesen-Schmidt, 2001). In practice, women legislators may engage in more

detailed legislative activities (Anzia & Berry, 2011) and hence the legislative board has better performance (Jacob, 2014). Therefore, women's presence in the legislative board has significant contributions in terms of affecting policy outcomes that improve the human condition (Tusalem, 2022), including the public service aspect.

Higher female representation plays a role in improving institutional quality by reducing fraudulent behavior such as corruption and rent extraction (Hessami & da Fonseca, 2020). As women legislators are less likely to be criminal and corrupt, they become more efficacious and less vulnerable to political opportunism that will support local government financial monitoring (Baskaran et al., 2018). In addition, women tend to have a higher commitment to public services as they are more likely to refer to citizen welfare and community as the main values of their programs (Fox & Schuhmann, 1999). It is in line with Hicks et al. (2016) who discover that the empowerment of women in the legislatures is associated with a reallocation of aid flows in favor of education and health-related projects. Further, women politicians will also tend to result in a higher level of realization of political promises (Homola, 2022), including various programs to improve public service quality. Besides, this finding also supports previous studies such as Araujo and Tejedro-Romero (2018), who demonstrate that woman legislators positively affect local government transparency, Clots-Figueras (2012), who find a positive effect on education outcomes, and Bhalotra and Clots-Figueras (2014), who find a positive effect on health service outcomes.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This study aims at investigating the impact of women's political representation on public service quality achievement in Indonesian local governments. Overall, we find that local government public service quality in Indonesia is already at a high level. There are several local governments that are still only able to achieve a medium or even low public service quality. Geographically, Java and Bali regions have the best accomplishment in which most of the local governments are able to achieve high-level public service quality, followed by Borneo and Sumatra regions. However, the accomplishment of local governments in East Indonesian regions is still below the national average. Meanwhile, women's political representation in Indonesian local government is still considerably low, both in the legislative board and top executive position. Empirical findings demonstrate that women's representation in



the legislative board provides a positive impact on public service quality while women's local government head has no significant effect. The influence is consistent both in district local governments and city local governments observations. Based on our findings, we suggest that women's representation in local politics is necessary and thus should be increased to promote gender equality that leads to better public governance. In practice, though, female politicians should possess the required qualities both in knowledge, commitment, and mentality to really be able to contribute to

improving local governance and delivering a positive impact to increasing the governance outcomes, one of which is the public service quality. Our study contributes to the existing literature by providing one of the earliest comprehensive empirical analyses of the impact of women's political representation in Indonesian local government on public service. Nevertheless, the study is still limited to the Indonesian context so that future studies can cover more countries for the observations and increase the research comprehensiveness even further.

## REFERENCES

1. Aguiar, F., Brañas-Garza, P., Cobo-Reyes, R., Jimenez, N., & Miller, L. M. (2009). Are women expected to be more generous? *Experimental Economics*, 12(1), 93–98. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s10683-008-9199-z>
2. Andersen, S., Bulte, E., Gneezy, U., & List, J. A. (2008). Do women supply more public goods than men? Preliminary experimental evidence from matrilineal and patriarchal societies. *American Economic Review*, 98(2), 376–381. <https://doi.org/10.1257/aer.98.2.376>
3. Anzia, S. F., & Berry, C. R. (2011). The Jackie (and Jill) Robinson effect: Why do congresswomen outperform congressmen? *American Journal of Political Science*, 55(3), 478–493. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2011.00512.x>
4. Araujo, J. F. F. E., & Tejedo-Romero, F. (2016). Women's political representation and transparency in local governance. *Local Government Studies*, 42(6), 885–906. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2016.1194266>
5. Araujo, J. F. F. E., & Tejedo-Romero, F. (2018). Does gender equality affect municipal transparency: The case of Spain. *Public Performance and Management Review*, 41(1), 69–99. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2017.1362350>
6. Arends, H. (2020). The dangers of fiscal decentralization and public service delivery: A review of arguments. *Politische Vierteljahresschrift*, 61(3), 599–622. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s11615-020-00233-7>
7. Aspinall, E., White, S., & Savirani, A. (2021). Women's political representation in Indonesia: Who wins and how? *Journal of Current Southeast Asian Affairs*, 40(1), 3–27. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1868103421989720>
8. Barry, J., Honour, T., & Palnitkar, S. (1998). Women, urban governance and the public service ethos. *Law & Social Change*, 29, 251–272. <https://doi.org/10.1023/A:1008325625543>
9. Baskaran, T., Bhalotra, S., Min, B., & Uppal, Y. (2018). *Women legislators and economic performance* (WIDER Working Paper No. 47/2018). United Nations University World Institute for Development. <https://www.wider.unu.edu/publication/women-legislators-and-economic-performance>
10. Belaounia, S., Tao, R., & Zhao, H. (2020). Gender equality's impact on female directors' efficacy: A multi-country study. *International Business Review*, 29(5), Article 101737. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ibusrev.2020.101737>
11. Bentillo, M. P., Alexis, E., Cortes, A., Carmel, J., Gabor, Y., Navarrete, F. C., & Inocian, R. B. (2016). A life dedicated to public service: The lady L story. *Asia Pacific Journal of Multidisciplinary Research*, 4(2), 37–43. [https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303271232\\_A\\_Life\\_Dedicated\\_to\\_Public\\_Service\\_The\\_Lady\\_L\\_Story](https://www.researchgate.net/publication/303271232_A_Life_Dedicated_to_Public_Service_The_Lady_L_Story)
12. Beta, A. R. (2019). Commerce, piety and politics: Indonesian young Muslim women's groups as religious influencers. *New Media and Society*, 21(10), 2140–2159. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1461444819838774>
13. Bhalotra, S., & Clots-Figueras, I. (2014). Health and the political agency of women. *American Economic Journal: Economic Policy*, 6(2), 164–197. <https://doi.org/10.1257/pol.6.2.164>
14. Catalano, A. (2009). Women acting for women? An analysis of gender and debate participation in the British House of Commons 2005–2007. *Politics and Gender*, 5(1), 45–68. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X09000038>
15. Charness, G., & Gneezy, U. (2012). Strong evidence for gender differences in risk taking. *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 83(1), 50–58. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2011.06.007>
16. Clots-Figueras, I. (2012). Are female leaders good for education? Evidence from India. *American Economic Journal: Applied Economics*, 4(1), 212–244. <https://doi.org/10.1257/app.4.1.212>
17. Croson, R., & Gneezy, U. (2004). Gender differences in preferences. *Journal of Economic Literature*, 42(2), 448–474. <https://doi.org/10.1257/jel.42.2.448>
18. D'Agostino, M. J. (2015). The difference that women make: Government performance and the difference that women make: Government performance and women-led agencies. *Administration & Society*, 47(5), 532–548. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0095399714548267>
19. Dar, S. A., & Shairgojri, A. A. (2022). Role of women in good governance. *Journal of Sosial Science*, 3(4), 648–655. <https://doi.org/10.46799/jss.v3i4.360>
20. Denhardt, J. V., & Denhardt, R. B. (2000). The new public service: Serving, not steering. *Public Administration Review*, 60(6), 549–559. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-3352.00117>
21. Dewi, R. S. (2020, January 24). *Proyeksi peningkatan kualitas pelayanan publik*. Ombudsman Republik Indonesia. <https://ombudsman.go.id/artikel/r/artikel--proyeksi-peningkatan-kualitas-pelayanan-publik-2020>
22. Diliyani, D. S. N. A., & Susanti, D. S. (2015). A female leader in executive service: The case of Mayor Risma of Surabaya. In E. Berman & M. S. Haque (Eds.), *Asian leadership in policy and governance* (pp. 287–304). Emerald Group Publishing Limited, Bingley. <https://doi.org/10.1108/s2053-769720150000024012>
23. Eagly, A. H., & Johannesen-Schmidt, M. C. (2001). The leadership styles of women and men. *Journal of Social Issues*, 57(4), 781–797. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0022-4537.00241>
24. Esarey, J., & Chirillo, G. (2013). "Fairer sex" or purity myth? Corruption, gender, and institutional context. *Politics & Gender*, 9(4), 361–389. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X13000378>
25. Feeney, M. K., & Camarena, L. (2021). Gender, race, and diversity values among local government leaders. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 41(1), 105–131. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X19865009>
26. Fox, R. L., & Schuhmann, R. A. (1999). Gender and local government: A comparison of women and men city managers. *Public Administration Review*, 59(3), 231–242. <https://doi.org/10.2307/3109951>



27. Furqan, A. C., Wardhani, R., Martani, D., & Setyaningrum, D. (2020). The effect of audit findings and audit recommendation follow-up on the financial report and public service quality in Indonesia. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 33(5), 535–559. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-06-2019-0173>
28. Guillaumon, M. D., Bastida, F., & Benito, B. (2011). The determinants of local government's financial transparency. *Local Government Studies*, 37(4), 391–406. <https://doi.org/10.1080/03003930.2011.588704>
29. Hessami, Z., & da Fonseca, M. L. (2020). Female political representation and substantive effects on policies: A literature review. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 63(1), Article 101896. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2020.101896>
30. Hessel, P., González Jaramillo, M. J., Rasella, D., Duran, A. C., & Sarmiento, O. L. (2020). Increases in women's political representation associated with reductions in child mortality in Brazil. *Health Affairs*, 39(7), 1166–1174. <https://doi.org/10.1377/hlthaff.2019.01125>
31. Hicks, D. L., Hicks, J. H., & Maldonado, B. (2016). Women as policy makers and donors: Female legislators and foreign aid. *European Journal of Political Economy*, 41, 46–60. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.ejpoleco.2015.10.007>
32. Hillman, B. (2018). The limits of gender quotas: Women's parliamentary representation in Indonesia. *Journal of Contemporary Asia*, 48(2), 322–338. <https://doi.org/10.1080/00472336.2017.1368092>
33. Homola, J. (2022). The effects of women's descriptive representation on government behavior. *Legislative Studies Quarterly*, 47(2), 295–308. <https://doi.org/10.1111/lsq.12330>
34. Honour, T., Barry, J., & Palnitkar, S. (1998). Gender and public service: A case study of Mumbai. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 11(2/3), 188–200. <https://doi.org/10.1108/09513559810216555>
35. Jacob, S. (2014). Gender and legislative performance in India. *Politics and Gender*, 10(2), 236–264. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1743923X14000051>
36. Jensen, N., & Meckling, W. (1976). Theory of the firm: Managerial behavior, agency costs, and capital structure. *Journal of Financial Economics*, 3(4), 305–360. [https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X\(76\)90026-X](https://doi.org/10.1016/0304-405X(76)90026-X)
37. Jung, E. (2016). Dewi Hastuti Kurniawati. *Indonesian women and local politics: Islam, gender and networks in Post-Suharto Indonesia*. *International Feminist Journal of Politics*, 18(1), 158–160. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14616742.2015.1125637>
38. Lane, J.-E. (2005). *Public administration and public management: The principal-agent perspective* (1st ed.). Springer. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203029763>
39. Lanin, D., & Hermanto, N. (2019). The effect of service quality toward public satisfaction and public trust on local government in Indonesia. *International Journal of Social Economics*, 46(3), 377–392. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJSE-04-2017-0151>
40. Lewis, B. D. (2019). Legislature size, local government expenditure and taxation, and public service access in Indonesia. *Studies in Comparative International Development*, 54(2), 274–298. <https://doi.org/10.1007/s12116-019-09278-1>
41. Li, Y., & Zeng, Y. (2019). The impact of top executive gender on asset prices: Evidence from stock price crash risk. *Journal of Corporate Finance*, 58, 528–550. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jcorpfin.2019.07.005>
42. Martani, D. D. (2017). Correlation between performance measures and development output: Relationship analysis of EKPPD and HDI. *Jurnal Keuangan Dan Perbankan/Finance and Banking Journal*, 17(1), 12–23. <http://jurnal.perbanas.id/index.php/JKP/article/view/20>
43. McLeod, R. H., & Harun, H. (2014). Public sector accounting reform at local government level in Indonesia. *Financial Accountability and Management*, 30(2), 238–258. <https://doi.org/10.1111/faam.12035>
44. Merchant, K. (2012). How men and women differ: Gender differences in communication styles, influence tactics, and leadership styles. *CMC Senior Theses*, 513. [http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc\\_theses/513](http://scholarship.claremont.edu/cmc_theses/513)
45. Miller, L., & Ubeda, P. (2012). Are women more sensitive to the decision-making context? *Journal of Economic Behavior and Organization*, 83(1), 98–104. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jebo.2011.06.014>
46. Pahala, I., Sudarma, M., Sutrisno, & Rosidi. (2016). Financial accountability on public service agency (BLU): Phenomenological study at the State University of Jakarta. *Review of Integrative Business and Economics Research*, 5(2), 11–27. [http://www.sibresearch.org/uploads/3/4/0/9/34097180/riber\\_h15-104\\_11-27\\_.pdf](http://www.sibresearch.org/uploads/3/4/0/9/34097180/riber_h15-104_11-27_.pdf)
47. Prihatini, E. S. (2021). Women's representation and government welfare spending in Indonesia 1970–2020. *IOP Conference Series: Earth and Environmental Science*, 729(1), Article 012139. <https://doi.org/10.1088/1755-1315/729/1/012139>
48. Rakhman, F. (2019). Budget implementation in a risky environment: Evidence from the Indonesian public sector. *Asian Review of Accounting*, 27(2), 162–176. <https://doi.org/10.1108/ARA-01-2018-0020>
49. Rochmansjah, H. (2019). Impact regional autonomy in improving public services quality. *International Journal of Science and Society*, 1(2), 173–180. <https://doi.org/10.54783/ijssoc.v1i2.137>
50. Rodríguez-García, M. J. (2015). Local women's coalitions: Critical actors and substantive representation in Spanish municipalities. *European Journal of Women's Studies*, 22(2), 223–240. <https://doi.org/10.1177/1350506814549424>
51. Schwindt-Bayer, L. A. (2006). Still supermadres? Gender and the policy priorities of Latin American legislators. *American Journal of Political Science*, 50(3), 570–585. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-5907.2006.00202.x>
52. Sekaran, U., & Bougie, R. (2013). *Research methods for business a skill-building approach* (6th ed.). John Wiley & Sons Ltd.
53. Shair-Rosenfield, S. (2012). The alternative incumbency effect: Electing women legislators in Indonesia. *Electoral Studies*, 31(3), 576–587. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.electstud.2012.05.002>
54. Sibal, I. R., Palattao, E. G., & Tindowen, D. J. (2021). Politics and governance in the lens of women leaders. *Journal of Women Empowerment and Studies*, 1(2), 26–41. <https://doi.org/10.55529/jwes.12.26.41>
55. Soedarwo, V. S. D. (2014). Political ideology meaning and patriarchal ideology of female politicians in Indonesia: A case in Malang. *Procedia Environmental Sciences*, 20, 486–495. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.proenv.2014.03.061>
56. Susilo, D., Sugihartati, R., & Ariani Arimbi, D. (2019). Indonesian women in politics: Critical analysis of portrayal in online news sites. *Jurnal Ilmu Komunikasi*, 16(2), 225–242. <https://doi.org/10.24002/jik.v16i2.1477>
57. Sutaryo, Rossa, D. A., Aryani, Y. A., Rahmawati, I. P., & Muhtar. (2018). Behind budget deviation in the Indonesian local government's electoral cycle. *International Journal of Business and Society*. <http://www.ijbs.unimas.my/index.php/volume-11-20/volume-19-s4-2018/530-behind-budget-deviation-in-the-indonesian-local-government-s-electoral-cycle>

58. Sutaryo, S., Sahari, S., Jakpar, S., & Balia, S. S. (2022). Internal audit function and public service quality: Evidence from Indonesian local governments. *Public Administration Issues*, 16(5), 110-133. <https://doi.org/10.17323/1999-5431-2022-0-5-110-133>
59. Sutopo, B., Wulandari, T. R., Adiati, A. K., & Saputra, D. A. (2017). E-government, audit opinion, and performance of local government administration in Indonesia. *Australasian Accounting, Business and Finance Journal*, 11(4), 6-22. <https://doi.org/10.14453/aabfj.v11i4.2>
60. Tusalem, R. F. (2022). Does gendered representation in national legislatures promote substantive representation and human development? Evidence from the developing world. *Politics & Policy*, 50(6), 1096-1137. <https://doi.org/10.1111/polp.12503>
61. Utama, F. R., Evana, E., & Gamayuni, R. R. (2019). The effect of local government characteristics on performance of local government administration. *International Research Journal of Business Studies*, 12(2), 197-208. <https://doi.org/10.21632/irjbs.12.2.197-208>
62. White, S., & Aspinall, E. (2019). *Research brief December 2019: Why does a good woman lose? Barriers to women's political representation in Indonesia*. New Mandala. <https://www.newmandala.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/12/White-Aspinall-Why-Does-a-Good-Woman-Lose.pdf>