

How do Micro-Legitimacy Processes Transform Public Service Delivery in Local Government? Insights from Public Affairs Management

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Abstract. This study examines how micro-legitimacy processes influence public service delivery in local government, focusing on the in-migration services provided at the Office of Population and Civil Registration (OPCR) in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. Adopting a public affairs management perspective, the research explores how routine interactions between citizens and public institutions shape the perspective of fairness, responsiveness, and trust. Using a case study design, the findings reveal that while the OPCR has established credibility, improvements in responsiveness and inclusivity are essential to meet public expectations. Public affairs professionals are critical in aligning institutional performance with citizen needs, fostering effective communication, ethical leadership, and stakeholder engagement. Highlighting micro-level dynamics, the study provides insights into the evolving nature of legitimacy in local governance and emphasizes the crucial role of public affairs in enhancing service delivery outcomes.

Keywords: micro-legitimacy; public service delivery; public affairs management; local governance

1 Introduction

In today's complex socio-political landscape, local governments face increasing pressures to maintain legitimacy while effectively delivering essential public services. Public affairs are pivotal in managing the relationship between organizations and their external environment [1, 2], especially in governmental services where public trust is paramount. While definitions of public affairs may vary, they generally encompass lobbying, government relations [3], media relations, and community engagement [4]. A central aspect of public affairs is the focus on maintaining an organization and social legitimacy [5], mainly within intricate socio-political environments [6, 7].

To navigate these challenges, government agencies must adeptly manage public perceptions and address various policy obstacles to align their organizational objectives, societal expectations, and legislative demands [8]. Public affairs professionals are integral to maintaining this delicate balance [9, 10], ensuring that government services effectively respond to citizens' needs while addressing the complexities of the policy landscape. This dynamic is particularly relevant in local government contexts, such as the Office of Population and Civil Registration (OPCR) in Bandar Lampung, where the delivery of services directly impacts citizen's daily lives and overall community well-being.

Indonesia is a country comprising 17,024 islands and 38 provinces across five major islands and four archipelagos [11], public service delivery presents unique challenges. With a

population distributed over vast and diverse geographic areas such as Sumatra, Java, Borneo, Sulawesi, and Papua, local governments must navigate significant socio-cultural differences and logistical complexities. This diversity and geographical dispersion create unique governance challenges, particularly in critical services like population and civil registration. The demand for transparent, responsive, and accountable services in Indonesia has increased, underscoring the need for local governments to engage effectively with citizens and adapt to their diverse needs.

The OPCR in Bandar Lampung is a compelling example of how local governments can navigate these challenges. As a vital provider of in-migration and civil registration services, the OPCR must operate to foster trust and cooperation with the local population. The central research question posed in this study is: *How do Micro-Legitimacy Processes Transform Public Service Delivery in Local Government?* Examines how McLoughlin's [12] micro-legitimacy framework can enhance the OPCR's service delivery. This framework emphasizes transparency, inclusivity, and trust as essential elements in cultivating public legitimacy. For the OPCR, integrating these elements into its operations is crucial for addressing the complex service needs in a region representative of Indonesia's broader diversity.

Moreover, the dual function of public affairs, acting as both a "buffer" and a "bridge," is critical in shaping the effectiveness of government services [13]. Public affairs can shield government institutions like the OPCR from external pressures while facilitating adaptation to evolving regulatory standards. In this context, the OPCR must meet these standards while enhancing service quality and accessibility for citizens. Conversely, public affairs also serve as a bridge, promoting proactive engagement between government authorities and the public. This role is essential in local governance, ensuring public expectations are integrated into service delivery, predominantly in sectors such as in-migration registration, where responsiveness to community needs is paramount.

Legitimacy, principally through the micro-legitimacy process, plays a vital role in fostering trust and cooperation between local government and citizens. This process involves understanding how public authorities engage with the community [14], ensuring their actions align [15] with public expectations and values [16, 17, 18]. As demands for transparent, responsive, and accountable services increase, chiefly in critical functions like population and civil registration, the micro-legitimacy frameworks become indispensable. It accentuates the necessity of integrating citizen feedback into decision-making processes [19, 20, 21], enhancing the perceived legitimacy of public services and reinforcing the social contract between local authorities [22] and their residents [23].

In light of these growing demands [24], local governments must prioritize transparent practices [25] that cultivate citizen trust [26]. This is especially important in population and civil registration, where effective service delivery relies on public cooperation and engagement. The micro-legitimacy framework [12] provides insights into how local authorities can build legitimacy through inclusive practices that resonate with community needs. Furthermore, as governments navigate complex policy environments, their ability to respond promptly and effectively to citizen concerns is crucial, transforming the relationship between public authorities and the communities they serve.

This study explores the potential of micro-legitimacy frameworks to transform public services, focusing on the practices of the OPCR in Bandar Lampung. A detailed examination of the OPCR's initiatives aimed at enhancing service delivery illustrates how the micro-legitimacy process improves public perceptions and strengthens the operational capacity of local governments. This exploration elucidates the interplay between legitimacy and effective

governance, demonstrating the transformative capacity of micro-legitimacy within public affairs management.

This research highlights the vital role of public affairs in sustaining legitimacy within government services, particularly in complex contexts like Indonesia. It commences with an analysis of the challenges faced by local governments due to the country's extensive geographic and cultural diversity, emphasizing the necessity for transparent and responsive service delivery. The OPCR in Bandar Lampung serves as a pertinent case study, illustrating how local authorities can foster trust and cooperation with their citizens. Through the lens of the micro-legitimacy framework, this study investigates how public affairs can enhance service quality, elevate public perceptions, and strengthen the overall capacity of local governments to deliver essential services.

In the analytical framework section, the authors explore several foundational concepts critical to this study, including public affairs, legitimacy, and micro-legitimacy in government service delivery. This research employs a qualitative case study approach to scrutinize the OPCR's service delivery mechanisms in Bandar Lampung. The findings section details the results of the case study, illuminating the implementation of public affairs strategies and micro-legitimacy processes at the OPCR. Additionally, the discussion explores the implications of these findings for public service delivery and the legitimacy of local governments. The conclusion synthesizes the study's findings and their broader implications for the field of public administration.

2 Literature Review

In the literature review, the authors explore foundational concepts central to this study, primarily focusing on public affairs, legitimacy, and micro-legitimacy in government service delivery. Through this approach, the study assesses how the OPCR in Bandar Lampung applies these principles to align its services with citizens' expectations and solidify its perceived legitimacy and operational capacity. While these concepts offer valuable insights into enhancing service delivery, potential challenges arise when emphasizing citizen satisfaction, leading to an overemphasis on immediate responsiveness at the expense of long-term institutional development.

2.1 Public Affairs in Government Service Delivery

In the local government setting, institutions like the OPCR operate under municipal or regional governance frameworks, ensuring the provision of essential public services. These smaller administrative units prioritize direct service delivery to meet the specific needs of residents, with responsiveness and accountability being key factors. As a local government entity in Bandar Lampung, the OPCR holds a crucial role in managing population and civil registration services, including in-migration registration, which are vital for maintaining accurate population data and ensuring residents' access to necessary services.

Public affairs professionals, including communication officers and public relations specialists, play a critical role in aligning the OPCR's service delivery with public expectations and regulatory requirements. Communication officers ensure clear dissemination of information about in-migration procedures, helping residents navigate these processes. In addition, public relations specialists manage the OPCR's public image, fostering trust and maintaining a positive perception among citizens. The OPCR's engagement with local communities through public affairs strategies illustrates its focus on meeting specific resident needs, enhancing credibility and operational effectiveness. In this local government context, public affairs significantly

influence service delivery outcomes as professionals ensure services like in-migration registration respond to diverse public needs while reinforcing the OPCR’s legitimacy [5].

2.2 Legitimacy in Public Service Delivery

Legitimacy serves as a fundamental pillar in the evaluation of public service delivery, determining whether government actions are perceived as appropriate, justified, and aligned with societal values. In public institutions, particularly at the local government level, legitimacy is crucial for fostering trust, enhancing cooperation, and ensuring effective service delivery. It shapes the public’s willingness to comply with government regulations and access public services, such as population and civil registration. For institutions like the OPCR in Bandar Lampung, legitimacy not only ensures that services meet legal and ethical standards but also resonates with the community’s expectations. To further understand the evolution of legitimacy in public administration, Table 1 provides a summary of the key definitions of legitimacy from various scholars, tracing the development of the concept from its earliest to the most recent. These definitions offer a comprehensive foundation for analyzing the OPCR’s case, particularly in how its service delivery aligns with or diverges from this established theoretical framework.

Table 1. Evolution of Legitimacy Definitions in Public Service Delivery

Year	Author	Definition
1971	Max Weber	Legitimacy is the belief in the legality of enacted rules and the right of authorities to command compliance.
1981	David Easton	Legitimacy involves public acceptance of the political system as appropriate and rightful.
1993	Mark C. Suchman	Legitimacy is a generalized perception that the actions of an entity are desirable, proper, or appropriate.
2000	Frederic Charles Schaffer	Legitimacy is built on transparency, responsiveness, and ethical accountability in service delivery.
2001	Rodney Barker	Legitimacy is derived from the combination of legal, moral, and rational bases for governance.
2002	Jean-Marc Coicaud	Legitimacy reflects a balance between public consent and the authority’s adherence to societal norms.
2009	Bruce Gilley	Legitimacy refers to the degree to which institutions are publicly recognized as rightful and competent in governance.
2015	Claire McLoughlin	Legitimacy in public service delivery involves the micro-level process of governance, shaped through everyday interaction with citizens.
2016	Michael Heazle and John Kane	Legitimacy arises from public judgments about the performance, conduct, and ethical standards of governance.
2024	Alexa Lenz	Legitimacy hinges on how well public authorities fulfill expectations of fairness, efficiency, and inclusivity.

The concept of legitimacy in public service delivery has evolved significantly, reflecting diverse and complex perspectives on governance. Initially, Max Weber established the foundation by defining legitimacy as rooted in the belief in the legality of rules and the authority’s right to command compliance [27]. This legal-rational approach was later expanded by David Easton [28], who added a social dimension by emphasizing that legitimacy also requires public acceptance of the political system as appropriate and rightful. Building on these early foundations, Mark Suchman [29] broadened the understanding further, suggesting that legitimacy involves the generalized perception that an institution’s actions are desirable, proper,

or appropriate. This shift toward considering institutional actions reflects an evolving focus on how public institutions align with societal expectations.

As perspectives on legitimacy continued to develop, Rodney Barker [30] synthesized these earlier views by proposing that legitimacy stems from a combination of legal, moral, and rational bases for governance. This multi-faceted approach illustrates that legitimacy is not solely about legal authority but also incorporates moral conduct and rational decision-making. Following this, Jean-Marc Coicaud [31] offered further nuance, arguing that legitimacy is shaped by a delicate balance between authority and public perception. This highlighted the role of public opinion in determining whether a governing body's actions are seen as legitimate, laying the groundwork for performance-based interpretations of legitimacy in modern governance.

Bruce Gilley [32] extended this notion by linking legitimacy to public recognition of an institution's competence and rightful governance. He emphasized that performance plays a critical role in how legitimacy is established and maintained, thus making it central to modern governance structures that rely on public trust. Building on this performance-based understanding, Claire McLoughlin [12] brought legitimacy directly into public interactions between citizens and service providers. This focus on everyday interactions reflects the increasing emphasis on the relational aspects of legitimacy, particularly, in public service institutions like the OPCR, which directly interface with the community.

Further expanding on these concepts, Heazle and Kane [33] highlighted the importance of public judgments regarding the ethical standards of governance. They argue that legitimacy is rooted in perceptions of moral conduct and complements Schaffer's [34] earlier emphasis on transparency, accountability, and ethical behavior as essential pillars of legitimacy. In the most recent evolution, Lenz [35] shifted the focus towards fairness, efficiency, and inclusivity, stressing that modern legitimacy is contingent upon meeting public expectations. This shift toward inclusivity and responsiveness is particularly relevant in the context of the OPCR, where legitimacy is closely tied to the agency's ability to meet diverse community needs while upholding fairness and transparency.

Taken together, the development of legitimacy theories, from Weber's foundational legal-relational authority to modern concepts of transparency and inclusivity, reflects the evolving expectations of public institutions like the OPCR. The institution's ability to maintain legitimacy hinges on its capacity to balance regulatory compliance with community engagement, ensuring that services like in-migration registration meet public needs while adhering to legal and ethical standards. The OPCR's approach to public affairs and service delivery demonstrates the practical application of these evolving theories, showcasing the ongoing relevance of legitimacy in the governance of local public institutions.

2.3 Micro-Legitimacy in Public Service Delivery

Claire McLoughlin's framework [12] on micro-legitimacy in public service delivery provides an insightful perspective on the dynamic processes that influence the legitimacy of public institutions, particularly in fragile and conflict-affected contexts. McLoughlin's analysis focuses on how public service providers can secure legitimacy by engaging with stakeholders through transparent, responsive, and accountable mechanisms. This framework is instrumental in understanding how the micro-level interactions between citizens and public authorities shape broader perceptions of institutional legitimacy. Her approach highlights the importance of the relationship between performance and legitimacy, emphasizing that legitimacy is not just a top-down imposition but is co-constructed through service delivery experiences.

Central to McLoughlin’s framework is the notion that legitimacy is not a static attribute but rather evolves, contingent on whether public service delivery meets or fails to meet citizens’ expectations. This evolving nature of legitimacy is particularly relevant in fragile states where trust in institutions may be eroded due to past governance failures or ongoing conflict. McLoughlin [12] posits that public institutions can rebuild or strengthen their legitimacy by addressing local needs, upholding fairness in service delivery, and maintaining clear communication channels with the public. Her micro-level focus on everyday interactions reinforces the idea that consistent, positive service experiences are essential for restoring and sustaining long-term trust in public administration.

Additionally, McLoughlin [12] introduces the concept of “micro-legitimation,” where legitimacy gradually develops as citizens perceive improvements in service quality, impartiality, and adherence to ethical standards. This incremental process is shaped not only by the actual performance of public services but also by how the public perceives that performance. McLoughlin’s [12] framework is thus particularly valuable for local governments seeking to build public trust through enhanced accountability and inclusive governance. The emphasis on local engagement and responsiveness also makes her framework adaptable to diverse governance contexts, especially in regions dealing with complex issues like internal migration and service delivery within multicultural populations.

In this study on the OPCR in Bandar Lampung, McLoughlin’s [12] framework serves as a useful tool for analyzing the legitimacy of in-migration services. The moderate perceived legitimacy score (17.8 out of 26) observed in this research, coupled with the identified need for greater transparency and inclusivity, resonates with McLoughlin’s [12] emphasis on the role of performance and stakeholder engagement in shaping legitimacy. Applying her framework to the OPCR, improvements in responsiveness to migrant needs, consistent ethical service delivery, and trust-building measures through fair interactions could significantly enhance the institution’s legitimacy. Figure 1 below visually illustrates McLoughlin’s micro-legitimacy process in local governance, showing how everyday interactions between public authorities and citizens shape broader institutional perceptions. This approach is particularly relevant for addressing the unique challenges of local governance in Indonesia’s diverse and complex socio-cultural context, and it could lead to strengthened public trust in OPCR services.

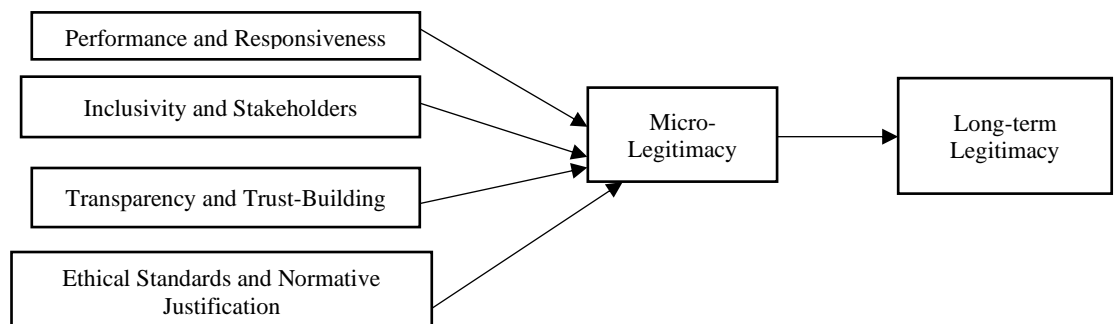


Figure 1. Micro-Legitimacy Process Framework in Local Governance

Source: Adapted from McLoughlin, C [12]

3. Methodology

A case study is ideal for this research, offering the opportunity to explore complex phenomena in their real-life context. This method provides a comprehensive view of the interactions and processes that define the legitimacy of services at the OPCR in Bandar Lampung. It also allows the researcher to delve into micro-legitimacy processes, revealing how in-migrants perceive these services and interact with local government. The research question, “How do micro-legitimacy processes transform public service delivery in local government?” fits seamlessly within this case study approach, enhancing its relevance.

Given the qualitative focus, the case study method is particularly effective in investigating the “how” aspect of in-migrations perceptions. This approach allows for a nuanced understanding of how legitimacy is built and experienced in an administrative setting. Grounding the research in real-life scenarios captures the dynamics of service delivery, such as the roles of providers and clients, the expectations of in-migrants, and informal practices shaping their experiences.

Likewise, data gathered through interviews and observations add depth to the analysis, highlighting the factors influencing public trust and legitimacy in local governance. This aligns well with the study’s aim to reveal how micro-legitimacy processes can improve public service delivery. Exploring these processes within the OPCR’s specific context helps identify themes and patterns that address broader issues in governance, accountability, and responsiveness. The flexibility of the case study approach further enables the researcher to adapt methods to capture the complexities of participants’ experiences. This adaptability proves essential in public affairs management, where contextual factors significantly affect service delivery.

This research, structured as a qualitative case study, investigates the legitimacy of in-migrant services at the OPCR in Bandar Lampung, Indonesia. Yin [36] defines a case study as an empirical inquiry that examines contemporary phenomena in real-life settings, particularly when the boundaries between the phenomenon and context are unclear. Creswell and Poth [37] also describe case study research as an in-depth exploration of a bounded system, making it suitable for complex inquiries. This study focuses on understanding public service delivery and legitimacy through in-migrants’ experiences with OPCR services, providing a robust framework to achieve its objectives.

3.1 Population and Study Location

The research was conducted in Bandar Lampung, a major urban center in Indonesia, where a significant number of in-migrants utilize OPCR services. According to the Central Bureau of Statistics [11], the city recorded over 34,000 in-migrants in 2020. This research concentrates exclusively on in-migrants, as they are required to register their relocation details with the OPCR, providing a relevant sample for studying service experiences. The individuals as research respondents comprised 30 informants, including an equal number of male and female respondents aged 18 to 60 as well as government and non-government officials, selected through purposive sampling to ensure they had direct experience with OPCR services.

3.2 Data Analysis

The collected data were analyzed using content analysis, a systematic approach to identifying recurring themes and patterns within qualitative data. Creswell and Poth [37] emphasize the importance of coding in organizing and interpreting qualitative data. In this study, the transcribed interviews underwent an iterative review and categorization into themes. This thematic analysis synthesized the data into coherent findings aligned with the study’s objectives,

providing a comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing the perceived legitimacy of the OPCR services.

Moreover, using SPSS (Statistical Package for the Social Sciences) to analyze the interview data enhances the rigor and depth of the research findings. Although primarily recognized for quantitative data analysis, SPSS offers valuable tools for organizing and coding qualitative data, enabling researchers to identify patterns, trends, and relationships within the responses. In this study, applying SPSS allows for systematic analysis of qualitative insights derived from interviews, facilitating the quantifying of themes and trends in participant experiences. This integration of SPSS strengthens the validity of findings, providing a more nuanced understanding of legitimacy in the OPCR services.

3.3 Ethical Integrity

Ethical considerations were integral to the research process. Before data collection, approval was obtained from the Ethics Committee of Khon Kaen University (EC KKU). Participants were informed about the study's purpose, procedures, and confidentiality measures. Informed consent was secured from all participants, allowing them the option to withdraw from the study at any time. The researcher ensured that all personal information was anonymized, protecting respondents' privacy throughout the research process. These ethical safeguards maintained the integrity and transparency of the study, fostering trust and respect between the researcher and participants.

4. Results and Discussion

This study investigates the perceived legitimacy of the OPCR in Bandar Lampung, focusing on the interplay between public affairs, service delivery mechanisms, and institutional legitimacy. The findings reveal a moderate perceived legitimacy score of 17.8 out of 26, indicating that while the OPCR maintains a level of credibility, areas for improvement remain to fully meet citizen's expectations. Remarkably, although the OPCR adheres to legal and ethical standards, the dimensions of responsiveness and inclusivity warrant significant enhancement. Ethical standards, particularly fairness in service delivery and equitable treatment of in-migrants, emerge as central to bolstering legitimacy. These findings resonate with Bruce Gilley's [32] assertion that performance and rightful governance are fundamental aspects of legitimacy, especially when service effectiveness directly influences citizen trust.

The synthesis of results with the broader literature underscores that legitimacy in public service delivery, particularly within local governance frameworks like the OPCR, represents a dynamic, multi-dimensional construct. Claire McLoughlin's [12] micro-legitimacy framework is particularly salient, emphasizing that legitimacy evolves through everyday interactions between public institutions and citizens. The moderate legitimacy score observed in this study suggests that while the OPCR has established a foundational level of trust and operational capacity, further inclusivity and responsiveness are essential for enhancing its legitimacy.

In addition, this study highlights the critical need for aligning institutional actions with public expectations [29, 34]. The findings confirm that the OPCR's capacity to address in-migration needs correlates closely with its perceived legitimacy. McLoughlin's [12] stresses the importance of transparency, stakeholder engagement, and ethical standards in fostering legitimacy. Consequently, the OPCR's service delivery must recalibrate its responsiveness and trust to resonate with citizen's expectations, particularly against the backdrop of Indonesia's complex socio-cultural landscape. The role of public affairs professionals emerges as vital in shaping the OPCR's public image and maintaining its credibility. These actors play a crucial

role in ensuring clear communication and transparency in service delivery processes. The study reiterates that advancements in these areas could yield substantial improvements in perceived legitimacy and operational efficiency, reflecting broader trends in public service delivery and governance legitimacy, as discussed by Arellano-Gault et al. [5] and Gilley [32].

4.1 Micro-Legitimacy and Micro-Legitimacy Processes of In-Migration Service Delivery

Micro-legitimacy refers to the legitimacy that emerges from everyday interactions and experiences between citizens and public service providers. It focuses on how individuals perceive the legitimacy of public institutions based on their direct engagement with these services. McLoughlin [12] suggests that micro-legitimacy is built through individual experiences, social norms, and the perceived fairness and effectiveness of service delivery. This concept underlines that legitimacy is not solely derived from formal structures or high-level governance but is significantly influenced by localized, interpersonal interactions and the subjective perceptions of citizens.

Within the OPCR, micro legitimacy is reflected in the daily experiences of in-migrants who interact with the office for registration and other related services. The perception of legitimacy is shaped by how these individuals experience service delivery. For instance, if in-migrants perceive the registration processes as fair, accessible, and efficient, their trust in the OPCR is likely to increase. Conversely, if they encounter delays, unresponsiveness, or perceived inequities, their trust and perception of legitimacy are diminished. This emphasized that the legitimacy of the OPCR is structured not merely through its formal policies but through the subjective experiences of the individuals it serves. According to McLoughlin [12], the micro-legitimacy process encompasses the dynamic and iterative interactions that occur between citizens and service providers, which contribute to the gradual construction and reinforcement of legitimacy over time. This process involves several key elements:

1. Performance and Responsiveness

McLoughlin's framework highlights that service performance is essential in shaping legitimacy. Citizen's perceptions of how well services meet their needs directly influence their trust in public institutions. The findings indicate that the OPCR's responsiveness to in-migrant needs requires enhancement. While legal standards are upheld, many residents express dissatisfaction with the speed and accessibility of services. This observation aligns with McLoughlin's assertion that institutions build legitimacy incrementally through visible performance improvements. To strengthen micro-legitimacy, the OPCR must prioritize the development of more efficient in-migration registration services tailored to the specific needs of residents.

2. Inclusivity and Stakeholder Engagement

Inclusivity is another core element of McLoughlin's [12] framework, referring to the extent to which institutions engage diverse stakeholder groups in decision-making processes. The research indicates that while the OPCR has established systems for service delivery, there is a notable lack of inclusivity, particularly concerning marginalized groups such as low-income in-migrants. McLoughlin [12] argues that legitimacy grows when institutions are perceived as representative and inclusive, ensuring all citizens feel heard and respected. To foster legitimacy, the OPCR must broaden its engagement mechanisms to incorporate all demographic groups and address their needs equitably.

3. Transparency and Trust-Building

Transparency serves as a crucial factor in McLoughlin's [12] micro legitimacy framework. The study highlights a moderate level of transparency within the OPCR, indicating that public trust hinges on the institution's ability to communicate its procedures, ensure accountability, and provide timely, accurate information to citizens. Enhanced communication regarding in-migration policies would significantly improve public perception. McLoughlin [12] emphasizes that transparency in governance builds long-term trust, as citizens feel more confident in the institution's fairness and openness. Improving transparency could involve refining real-time service updates.

4. Ethical Standards and Normative Justifications

Upholding ethical standards is fundamental for reinforcing moral legitimacy. While residents generally perceive the OPCR to maintain ethical conduct, particularly in fairness and justice in service delivery, there remains room for improvement, especially regarding equitable treatment across various social and economic backgrounds. McLoughlin [12] emphasizes that ethical conduct is essential for cultivating positive perceptions among citizens.

5. Conclusion

Linking to the research question and the analysis of the result, micro-legitimacy processes transform public service delivery through the everyday interactions between citizens and public institutions, shaping perceptions of fairness, responsiveness, and trustworthiness. These processes, often subtle, carry profound effects on how services like in-migration are experienced, determining whether institutions like the OPCR are seen as legitimate. Gaps in responsiveness and inclusivity identified in this study reveal areas where service delivery must evolve to meet public expectations, demonstrating that perceived legitimacy is continuously shaped by the quality of these interactions.

This dynamic calls attention to the fundamental role of public affairs management in bridging institutional performance with citizen expectations. Through strategic communication, stakeholder engagement, and ethical governance, public affairs professionals are instrumental in recalibrating service delivery mechanisms to align more closely with public needs. Their role transcends formal policies, directly influencing how legitimacy is constructed through more responsive, inclusive, and transparent services.

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