

PUBLIC RESPONSE TO THE MAMUJU KEREN CARD PROGRAM OF THE MAMUJU REGENCY GOVERNMENT FOR THE 2020-2024 PERIOD

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the responses of the Mamuju Regency community to the Kartu Mamuju Program launched by the local government for the 2020-2024 period. The program was designed as a multifunctional public policy to improve community welfare through health, education, and social assistance services. However, its implementation has drawn pros and cons, including criticism from the DPRD and community groups about the program. The research method used was descriptive quantitative with data collection techniques through questionnaires distributed to 399 respondents selected by simple random sampling. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Likert scales to measure the level of knowledge, understanding, and attitude of the community towards the program. The results showed that: Community knowledge of the program is almost evenly divided, with 50.1% of respondents not knowing and 49.9% knowing. Community understanding of the program's benefits and procedures is low (46.1% not understanding), although 53.9% claim to understand. Community attitudes towards government services tend to be negative (54.1% rated them as "not good"), with the main complaints related to facilities, attitudes of government personnel, and service systems. These findings indicate the need for increased socialization, transparency, and improved services by the Mamuju district government. An inclusive, participatory, and community needs-based communication strategy is recommended to ensure the program achieves its objectives effectively. This research contributes to public policy evaluation and the development of more responsive government communication models.

Keywords: Cool Mamuju Card, Public Response, Mamuju Regency

INTRODUCTION

The Mamuju Regency Government, West Sulawesi, for the 2020-2024 period has a program plan that was launched during the campaign period by the Sutinah-Ado ticket, which ultimately won the regional election that year. The "Cool Mamuju Card" program was launched on February 26, 2022, and has generated both pros and cons since its launch. The Mamuju Regency government must address these challenges to ensure the program's success and success (Aslamsyah et al., 2025; Nur & Nara, 2024).

The Mamuju Regency government naturally has its own strategy for implementing this program. Mei et al. (2004) and Djahel et al. (2014) said that a communications strategy is also crucial for its smooth operation. A program will not be successful without an effective, innovative, and creative communication approach. In addition to effective public communication, engagement is also required through various communication activities based on situational analysis, target audience selection, appropriate media and message selection, and the organization of various agendas, all designed to ensure accurate information is conveyed to the public, ensuring the smooth running of the program and the community.



Figure 1. Source: mamujukab.go.id

Communication has a significant impact, empowering other institutions (Rogers & Singhal, 2003; Olugbo et

al., 2023). This can include talking to each other, watching television, and sharing information. Its ability to convey messages to many people in many places simultaneously makes it a powerful source, regardless of the information or idea being conveyed. Companies/organizations will experience the benefits of communication and public relations as they strive to develop their businesses/programs and avoid unfavorable environmental conditions.

Communication strategy serves as the primary driver of a program. However, in general, action strategies are invisible or difficult to identify by outsiders. Through a communication strategy, a campaign informs the public about the program. For example, publishing a campaign program in the media will provide benefits, including enhancing the organization's positive image in the public eye and achieving campaign objectives.

Strategy is a broad concept that encompasses all aspects of communication, so this study focuses on how the Mamuju Regency government implemented the communication strategy in implementing the program. Simply put, communication strategy is the plan, tactics, and design used to carry out the communication process with a predetermined goal.

From the perspective of Public Relations (PR), a campaign is an effort to convey an idea or concept to a target audience. Public relations is crucial in today's era of globalization (Starck & Kruckeberg, 2004; Sriramesh et al., 2013; Wilcox, 2006). Those who lack the knowledge and skills to obtain and disseminate information, or who fail to utilize it, will be left behind. In this context, Public Relations and related parties must be able to communicate effectively and interact with the public. Everyone knows that communication is a fundamental human activity. Public relations is also a form of communication, with the goal always being to influence public opinion so that they adopt the desired attitudes, opinions, and behaviors (Dozier & Ehling, 2013; Reber & Berger, 2013).

Regional government programs, which are incorporated into a card, are nothing new in government administration. For example, the Farmer Card program, launched by Ganjar Pranowo in Central Java Province, has successfully reduced farmers' complaints about the scarcity of subsidized fertilizer since 2015. One benefit of the Farmer Card is ensuring that fertilizer continues to be provided to farmers in need. Furthermore, the fertilizer currently provided by the government only covers one-third of farmers' needs, thus certainly not meeting their needs. This was conveyed by Achmad Bakir Pasaman, Director of PT Pupuk Indonesia, at a meeting with Commission VI of the Indonesian House of Representatives on Monday, September 19 Jawapos, 2023.

The fundamental difference with the "Kartu Mamuju Keren" program is that the scope of beneficiaries is not limited to farmers, but includes registered and eligible community members.

Program success indicators are used to measure the program's success. According to Mushori et al. (2020), indicators of program success include the conformity of infrastructure to established plans, the alignment of involved elements, obtaining policy recommendations, and establishing a monitoring system for continued development. This contrasts with Alshihre et al. (2020), who stated that program success is determined by construction completion that is timely, within budget, and meets customer satisfaction. Success in resolving problems.

The dynamic regional government dynamics that occurred during the 2021–2024 period in Mamuju Regency provided space for various public policies to be launched to improve public welfare. One prominent policy is the "Mamuju Keren Card" program, positioned as the regional government's flagship program to accelerate social and economic development. This program not only symbolizes the regional head's commitment to public service but also represents a policy direction that supports community needs, particularly in aspects of social assistance, access to basic services, and empowerment of vulnerable groups.

Given the program's importance within the regional policy structure, researchers were compelled to conduct a more in-depth study of how the community responded to its implementation. Public response is a key indicator in assessing how well the Mamuju Keren Card program meets public expectations and reflects the effectiveness of policy implementation by the local government. Public response also reflects the program's level of accountability, transparency, and relevance in meeting the diverse needs of the community.

Another reason the author is interested in the Mamuju Keren Card program is that it includes several facilities accessible to the community, such as free healthcare, educational facilities for low-income families, and economic incentives. Interestingly, the program has been incorporated by the central government through similar programs such as BPJS, PKH, KIP, social assistance recipients, etc. Academically, the lack of literacy on this subject makes it difficult for the public to access information related to this Mamuju Regency government program.

Furthermore, the success of a regional policy program depends heavily on the participation of all elements of government, especially the regional work units (SKPD) responsible for technical and administrative implementation. Therefore, the active involvement of SKPDs in supporting the implementation of the "Mamuju Keren" (Cool Mamuju Card) program is a crucial strategic factor. Inter-agency coordination, synergy in planning and implementation, and the bureaucracy's ability to respond to changes in the field all play a role in achieving program objectives effectively and sustainably.

By considering these various aspects, this study aims to explore public perceptions of the "Mamuju Keren" (Cool Mamuju Card) program. This study is expected to contribute to the evaluation of regional policies and serve as a basis for formulating more responsive public policies in the future.

This is a key reason for the author to conduct research on public responses to the Mamuju Regency government

program. Mamuju, ensuring the program is known and understood by the public and avoiding overlap with central government programs. The program will not succeed without an effective, innovative, and creative communication approach. Based on this, the author chose the title "Public Response to the Mamuju Keren Program of the Mamuju Regency Government for the 2020-2024 Period."

METHODOLOGY

The type of research used in this study is quantitative. Quantitative research methods are systematic, structured, and clearly planned, from the beginning to the development of the research design. This research method, based on the philosophy of positivism, is used to study a specific population or sample. Data collection uses research instruments and quantitative or statistical data analysis is used to test predetermined hypotheses.

This study employed quantitative research with a survey method. Surveys are quantitative research methods that use structured questions, and the answers are then recorded, processed, and analyzed. The research instrument used in this method is a questionnaire, which is then distributed to respondents (Amalia & Dianingati, 2022). This method supports the data collection and processing process. Respondents' answers in this survey method can help researchers draw conclusions about the population in this study. In this study, sampling was done using a purposive sampling technique, meaning only population members who meet the criteria set by the researcher are included in the sample (Apostolopoulos & Liargovas, 2016).

The reason for using this survey method is the completeness of the data obtained. The survey method is used in quantitative research, but this method is simple, so the statistical analysis tools used are also simple, in this case descriptive statistics. This is because the nature of the analysis is only used to supplement existing information. With the information obtained by the researcher in this study, the results will be more optimal, and the conclusions or final results of this study will be convincing.

A sample is a subject that represents the population that will be used as the object of the research. A sample is a small portion of the population selected in a specific way to represent it. Because the population is too large, it is difficult for researchers to study all the samples. The sampling for this study was carried out using simple random sampling. According to Sugiyono (2013) in Suriani & Jailani (2023), "simple random sampling is a technique for randomly selecting sample members from a population without considering the strata within the population."

According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the population of Mamuju Regency in 2024 was 297,141 people. Meanwhile, this study then determined the sample criteria, namely respondents or people who already had ID cards. According to data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the population of Mamuju Regency with ID cards is 262,155.

Data Collection Techniques

In this quantitative research, data collection techniques and instrument quality are crucial for producing accurate and accountable findings. Because this research focuses on empirical data discovery, the data collection method is a strategic step that determines the success of the research (Soni & Kodali, 2012). This study employed field research, which involves collecting data relevant to the problem being studied. The techniques employed included observation and questionnaires. Observations were conducted systematically at the research location, Mamuju Regency, to obtain information on respondents' behavior in completing the questionnaire. Meanwhile, the questionnaire served as the primary means of collecting data on public understanding and responses to the "Kartu Mamuju Keren" program. The questionnaire was structured on a Likert scale with five response categories weighted 5, 4, 3, 2, and 1, for both favorable and unfavorable statements. The Likert scale was chosen because it is able to measure respondents' perceptions, attitudes, and level of knowledge regarding the program.

The questionnaire was systematically structured to facilitate the data collection process. The validity of the instrument was tested to ensure that the statement items were able to measure the intended variables. The validity test was conducted by calculating the correlation between the score of each item and the total score using a significance level of 5%. Based on the analysis of 399 respondents, all statement items were declared valid because the calculated r value was greater than the r table of 0.098. Next, the reliability of the instrument was tested using the Cronbach Alpha method through SPSS version 26. The test results showed a Cronbach Alpha value of 0.914, which is above the minimum limit of 0.60, so the instrument was declared reliable. Thus, all questionnaire items were proven to be consistent and can be trusted as a measuring tool for public response to the Mamuju Keren Card program of the Mamuju Regency Government.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion of this study are based on all data collected during fieldwork in Mamuju Regency. The data used is primary data obtained from respondents' responses to a questionnaire. The data were then presented in text form by the researcher. The data processing revealed various public responses regarding the "Mamuju Keren Card" program run by the Mamuju Regency government.

Trends in Public Responses Regarding Knowledge of the Mamuju Keren Card Program Implemented by the Mamuju Regency Government

From the results of the descriptive analysis of the previous data, the minimum value was 6, the maximum value

was 20, the mean was 12 and the standard deviation was 3. Based on this, the tendency of the knowledge of the people of Mamuju Regency regarding government programs can be classified as follows: (1) 4–12: Don't Know; (2) 13–20: Know. If the classification of public knowledge is tabulated, the following picture is obtained:

Table 1. Categories of Public Knowledge Indicators Regarding the Cool Mamuju Card

No	Category	Frequency	Percent
1	Don't Know	200	50,1
2	Know	199	49,9
Total		399	100,0

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Based on data obtained from 399 respondents, the distribution of knowledge levels shows a nearly even split between the two main categories. The data above shows that 200 respondents (50.1%) fell into the "don't know" category, and 199 respondents (49.9%) fell into the "know" category. These results indicate that 399 respondents have a moderate level of knowledge (based on a mean of 12 out of a maximum score of 20), with nearly half not yet knowing or understanding the program. Educational intervention from the Mamuju Regency government is needed to increase awareness of this program aimed at community welfare, especially among the "don't know" group.

Trends in Public Responses Regarding Understanding of the Mamuju Keren Card Program by the Mamuju Regency Government

The description of the previous data shows that the minimum score is 3, the maximum is 15, the mean is 10, and the standard deviation is 3. Based on this, the criteria for public understanding of Mamuju Regency are: Mamuju's understanding of the Cool Mamuju Card program can be classified as follows: (1) Don't Understand: 3–9; (2) Understand: 10–15

If this understanding classification is presented in a table, the following picture is obtained:

Table 2. Categories of Indicators of Public Understanding of the Cool Mamuju Card

No	Options	Frequency	Percent
1	Don't Understand	184	46,1
2	Understand	215	53,9
Total		399	100,0

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

The data above reveals that although the majority of respondents (53.9%) (215 respondents) had adequate understanding, a significant proportion (184 respondents or 46.1%) remained uninformed. This comparison of proportions indicates a numerical advantage of 7.8% among those with understanding, but a significant proportion (46.1%) still had not achieved optimal understanding. This finding indicates the need for a more differentiated approach to improving respondent understanding, with a specific focus on groups that have not yet achieved the desired level of understanding. These results can serve as an important basis for developing more effective education strategies. These findings can also provide an important basis for decision-making and further strategy development in efforts to increase public understanding of future government programs.

Public Response Trends Regarding Government Attitudes Toward Mamuju Keren Card Users

From the descriptive analysis of the previous data, the following values were obtained: minimum 3, maximum 15, mean 10, and standard deviation 3. Based on this, the criteria for government officials' attitudes toward Mamuju Keren Card users can be classified as follows: (1) Poor: 3–9; (2) Good: 10–15. If this classification of government attitudes is presented in a table, the following results are obtained:

Table 3. Overall Indicator Category of Public Response Regarding the Government's Attitude Towards Mamuju Keren Card Users

No	Choice	Frequency	Percent
1	Not Good	216	54,1
2	Good	183	45,9
Total		399	100,0

Source: Processed Primary Data, 2025

Based on data obtained from 399 respondents, it was found that the majority of respondents gave a negative assessment of the object studied. A total of 216 respondents (54.1%) stated that the object was not good, while

183 respondents (45.9%) gave a good assessment. This percentage indicates that negative perceptions of the object still outweigh positive perceptions, although the difference is not significant. This finding indicates a need to evaluate and improve aspects deemed unsatisfactory in order to increase positive perceptions from respondents in the future.

In terms of quantitative scores, respondents' assessments of public services had a minimum score of 3 and a maximum of 15. The average score (mean) was 10 with a standard deviation of 3. This indicates that, in general, public perception of public services is in the moderate to favorable category, although significant variation in assessments remains visible among individuals. Thus, it can be concluded that although some people appreciate public services, the majority still consider the services provided to be suboptimal. Therefore, it is necessary to evaluate and improve the quality of public services comprehensively as well as good public communication in order to increase public satisfaction and trust in the service providers of a program.

DISCUSSION

Public Response Regarding the Form of Service Attitude Provided by the Mamuju Regency Government to the Community Using the Cool Mamuju Card

Based on data obtained from 399 respondents, it was found that the majority of respondents gave negative assessments of the object under study. A total of 216 respondents (54.1%) stated that the object was not good, while 183 respondents (45.9%) stated that it was good. Quantitatively, the difference between negative and positive assessments was only 8.2%. Although this difference is not significant, the preponderance of negative perceptions provides an important signal regarding public or user perceptions of the object's quality.

This finding indicates dissatisfaction among the majority of respondents with certain aspects inherent in the object under study. In the context of quality evaluation, assessments from users or the general public are important indicators for assessing the success of a product, service, program, or policy. The negative assessments given by more than half of the respondents indicate that there are still elements within the object that do not meet expectations, whether in terms of quality, effectiveness, efficiency, or relevance to needs. Furthermore, the negative assessments from the majority of respondents can be caused by several factors. These factors can include service quality, effectiveness of program implementation, suitability of facilities, ease of use, or even public perceptions formed through personal experience or information from third parties. Lack of adequate information, unresponsive services, and low public involvement in object development can also trigger negative perceptions. Therefore, further, more in-depth studies are needed to specifically identify the aspects that most influence respondents' assessments.

Two main theories are used to understand the mechanisms by which perceptions are formed. Constructive Perception Theory assumes that individuals actively construct perceptions by selecting specific stimuli and integrating them with previously stored sensations and memories. This process is interpretive and heavily influenced by the individual's experiences and knowledge. Meanwhile, Direct Perception Theory argues that perceptions are derived directly from information available in the environment, without involving a complex interpretation process. Within this framework, individuals receive stimuli as they are through their sensory systems. Based on the various explanations outlined, it can be concluded that public perception is a collective representation or viewpoint that emerges in response to phenomena occurring in the social environment. This perception is formed through interactions between individuals within a community, influenced by the knowledge and responses of each member of the community. Factors such as values, norms, procedures, and customs that apply dynamically and continuously contribute to shaping these perception patterns. Furthermore, societal perceptions are also influenced by collective identities formed through the process of interpreting sensory stimuli, which ultimately enables individuals to understand and respond to social realities collectively. These findings also demonstrate the importance of feedback mechanisms as part of the ongoing evaluation and improvement process. Respondents' perceptions reflect their actual experiences and, therefore, provide crucial data for decision-making. Facility managers need to conduct comprehensive evaluations using a participatory, data-driven approach to ensure that the solutions formulated address the community's real needs. This disparity between positive and negative assessments reflects the need for a comprehensive evaluation and improvement strategy. Evaluation is needed not only to address aspects that are sources of dissatisfaction but also to strengthen elements already appreciated by respondents. This way, the improvement strategy can be comprehensive and oriented toward improving overall quality. Therefore, these findings provide a strong foundation for the need for improvement and development efforts oriented toward community satisfaction and needs. Strategic steps that can be taken include improving service quality, promoting information transparency, and increasing stakeholder involvement in the evaluation and decision-making process. Furthermore, conducting an effective communication campaign is crucial to rebuild a positive image of the assessed facility. Overall, this data indicates that negative perceptions still predominate, requiring this to be a primary focus in decision-making, both in the planning and implementation of policies or programs related to the object under study. By conducting a comprehensive, data-driven evaluation, it is hoped that the quality of the object can be improved, thereby garnering more positive reviews from the public and users in the future.

CONCLUSION

Based on data from 399 respondents, it was found that negative perceptions of the object studied were dominant, with 54.1% of respondents stating that their assessment was unfavorable. Although the difference between negative and positive assessments was only 8.2%, this trend indicates dissatisfaction with certain aspects of the object. This assessment reflects that the quality, effectiveness, or relevance of the object has not fully met public expectations. Factors such as service quality, implementation effectiveness, and limited information likely also influenced respondents' perceptions. Therefore, further evaluation is needed to specifically identify the aspects that are the source of dissatisfaction for more targeted improvements.

Suggestion

Given the predominance of negative public perceptions of the research object, it is recommended that a comprehensive evaluation be conducted of aspects that could potentially lead to dissatisfaction, such as service quality, implementation effectiveness, and information availability. The government or implementing agency needs to specifically identify elements that have not met public expectations in order to formulate more targeted corrective measures. Furthermore, increasing information transparency and involving the public in the evaluation process is also crucial for building a more positive perception and supporting the success of the program or service in question.

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