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| Journal Name: | [**South Asian Journal of Social Studies and Economics**](https://journalsajsse.com/index.php/SAJSSE) |
| Manuscript Number: | **Ms\_SAJSSE\_139700** |
| Title of the Manuscript: | **The Mediating Role of Public Service Quality in the Relationship Between Sectoral Budget Allocations and Human Development Index in Langkat Regency, Indonesia** |
| Type of the Article |  |

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| **PART 1: Comments** | | |
|  | **Reviewer’s comment**  **Artificial Intelligence (AI) generated or assisted review comments are strictly prohibited during peer review.** | **Author’s Feedback** (It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here) |
| **Please write a few sentences regarding the importance of this manuscript for the scientific community. A minimum of 3-4 sentences may be required for this part.** | **The topic is interesting and relevant with one of the biggest challenges in delivering effective and efficient development policy in developing countries. The topic will be even more attractive if the authors provide more decisive reasonings of choosing the study area of Langkat Regency in Indonesia. This Regency may indeed the best region to dig deeper the importance of public service quality, but a sufficient more explicit explanation is needed. However, if this paper is presented in a more comprehensive and proper way, the findings can be powerful in giving supportive recommendations for any developing countries. A deeper analysis using secondary data from the Statistics Indonesia or any other data set is required to give more**  **decisive reasoning why Langkat Regency is chosen as the study area.** |  |
| **Is the title of the article suitable?**  **(If not please suggest an alternative title)** | **The title can describe the general idea of this paper, but it misses some important aspects in analysis:**   * **This study is primarily based on perceived idea of the respondents** * **This study is not merely discussing the relationship between variables, but statistically it has the capacity to conclude the influence of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable**   **A more representative title would be: "The Mediating Role of Perceived Public Service Quality in the Influence of Sectoral Budget Allocations on the Human Development Index in Langkat Regency, Indonesia"** | Title revised as per your suggestion |
| **Is the abstract of the article comprehensive? Do you suggest the addition (or deletion) of some points in this section? Please write your suggestions here.** | **Similar to the title, the abstract represent the general idea of this paper, but it misses some important aspects in analysis:**   * **This study is primarily based on perceived idea of the respondents** * **This study is not merely discussing the relationship between variables, but statistically it has the capacity to conclude the influence of the explanatory variables on the dependent variable**   **The two keywords, perceived and influence should be included in the abstract.** | Abstract revised |
| **Is the manuscript scientifically, correct? Please write here.** | The manuscript is scientifically correct when some additional information regarding the empirical strategy can be included in the paper, particularly:   * Detailed discussion on the questionnaires as well as the instruments of each variable (for example, what is x1.1, x1.2, x2.3 and so on * Literature review section (missing in the manuscript) * Some other suggestions in following comments | The paper has been revised as per your suggestion |
| **Are the references sufficient and recent? If you have suggestions of additional references, please mention them in the review form.** | The references are not sufficient because:   * Almost all references listed in the references section cannot be found in the text (only one can be found in the text) * Some important information is missing in references, for example: publisher or journal name, DOI or link to the articles? * Style does not in line with any referencing standard style? * The number of references in the references section is relatively too small (only 11) * Many articles are not from reputable peer reviewed international journals | References are revised |

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| **Is the language/English quality of the article suitable for scholarly communications?** | The language is suitable; however, some typos should be revised to avoid confusing the readers. For example: Confusing table number when cited in the text, sub section “3.2 Demografi Langkat Regency” is not entirely in English, etc. |  |
| **Optional/General** comments | **Important other notes to be properly addressed in order to make this manuscript satisfy minimum basic feature of scientific journal articles (in addition to those already mentioned above):**   * **Missing sections: Results section is missing. It seems that the authors included the results in the method section, which uncommon in practice. In general, the format (including the sections/name of the headings) are not presented as typical journal articles.** * **Explanation on the details of purposive sampling conducted in the study** * **The symbols of variables are replaced by more meaningful letters (instead of using generic X and Y letters normally used in textbooks). For example: ee for education expenditure, he for health expenditure, and ie for infrastructure expenditure** * **Sub section 3.2 is not very relevant with the analysis in the study. It should be replaced by for example: detailed discussion how the Langkat Regency deliver the education, health, and infrastructure expenditure along with the detail of the quality of public service found from the surveys of from interviews** * **Some aspects of respondents (in sub-section 3.3) are not clearly described. For example: what Division Heads are exactly, what key department officials are exactly, Head of the Public Works Department is exactly (national or regional level), officials from organization bureau are exactly,** * **Sub sections “3.3.1 By Gender” and “3.3.2 By Age” are not very relevant with the analysis. Since respondents are not homogenous (coming from the same occupation or economic actor), gender and age is not very relevant. Years of service might be more relevant, because the position has already shown the capacity anyway. In addition, valid percent and cumulative percent columns are not necessary here.** * **The meaning of direct and indirect effect should be clearly defined since the paper mentions that the relationships between expenditure (X) and public service quality (Z) as direct paths, while it is not literally direct because Z is considered as a mediating variable.** * **Page number is missing** * **Section 3.4 mentions that each indicator has the highest loading on its intended construct compared to its correlation with other constructs. The example is only provided for X1.1 while the table may show different findings for other indicators.** * **Certain figure (Figure 2) is not cited in the text.** * **Some references are not very recent (2015 for example), while it is possible to find more recent references.** * **Some references are probably (unclear because not listed in the references section) from textbooks, while it is possible to find it in more trustworthy journal article.** * **The support and rejection of Hypotheses H1, H2, H3, H4 are mentioned without prior explanation about the hypotheses are.** * **The results for supporting H2 are not easily found in the table** |  |

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| **PART 2:** | | |
|  | **Reviewer’s comment** | **Author’s Feedback** (It is mandatory that authors should write his/her feedback here) |
| **Are there ethical issues in this manuscript?** | *(If yes, Kindly please write down the ethical issues here in details)* |  |