

## The impact of public information awareness and service towards public engagement

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**Abstract** Public participation in policymaking remains a significant challenge in Indonesia. Previous studies found that public participation in the policymaking process is still dominated by the elite (i.e. policymakers). This paper argues that a lack of well-informed public causes diminishing public involvement in policymaking. This study aims to fill the gap in public participation study in Indonesia, particularly the impact of public information on public participation. This study measures to what extent public information awareness and public information service may form public participation behaviour. As quantitative research, this study uses a survey as the primary method to collect data. The questionnaire was constructed through concepts and legal documents related to public information disclosure and public information services. The multi-stage proportional random sampling is applied with the number of samples in this study is 1,584 in 25 provinces (out of 34 provinces). The results show that public information awareness significantly impacts public participation, while public information service satisfaction does not affect public participation.

**Keywords:** public information disclosure; public information service; public participation; Indonesia

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## INTRODUCTION

In 2011, Indonesia was one of OECD-Open Government Partnership's founding members who declared a commitment to "foster a global culture of open government that empowers and delivers for citizens and advances the ideals of open and participatory 21<sup>st</sup>-century government" (OECD, 2016), which is incorporated in the government's national middle and long-term development goals. Up till now, seven initiatives have been launched and will be improved by adding the following issues: 1) budget disclosure through online platform ([data-apbn.kemenkeu.go.id](http://data-apbn.kemenkeu.go.id)); 2) One Data Indonesia; 3) public consultation forum; 4) public information disclosure (Open Government Partnership, 2018). The initiative to strengthen Public Information Disclosure is based on One Data Indonesia Principles, one of 14 Indonesia National Action Plans 2018-2020. In 2019, Indonesia was successfully elected as a Steering Committee member in the Open Government Partnership (OGP) for the 2019-2022 period. Indonesia's joining in the OGP proves that the Government of Indonesia's efforts to build transparency and accountability in governance at the global level have received international recognition (Ministry of Foreign Affairs, 2019).

Transparency has been guaranteed in the Indonesian Law number 14 Year 2008 on Public Information Disclosure (hereinafter referred to as 'UU KIP'), which mandates every public institution to provide or to give access to the public for all public information, except classified information (The Indonesian Law number 14 year 2008 on The Public Information Disclosure, 2008). According to the law, one public officer is assigned to assist an individual to obtain certain information in a public institution known as the Information and Documentation Management Officer (hereinafter referred to as 'PPID'). In addition, PPID also assists information exchange between institutions. Therefore, a quasi-government called the Central Information Commission (hereinafter referred to as 'KIP') was formed to strengthen the UU KIP's enforcement. This commission is tasked to authorise public information governance and mediate public information disputes at individual and institutional levels.

In addition, the Indonesian President has instructed the importance of data for policymaking. "Satu Data Indonesia" is a web-based data portal consisting of national and local government datasets (<https://data.go.id/>). This portal aims to provide accurate, integrated, updated, accessible, shareable data to support policymaking and program developments among government institutions (Indonesian President Decree No. 39 Year 2019 on Indonesian One Data, 2019). Unfortunately, some of datasets in this portal are out of date. For example, the latest dataset of internet usage according to the occupation issued by the Ministry of Communication and Information (the MCI) is from year 2016. The study related to this portal is very limited so that the data management, interoperability, and feasibility are unclear.

Public participation is an essential pillar of democracy. It is the most apparent mirror of democracy in everyday life. In a general context, public participation is understood as community participation at all decision-making processes and stages. The participation of the public is beneficial during policymaking procedures. Public participation in policymaking can be carried out through the agenda-setting stages, policy formulation, and implementation (Rahma, 2019). The government may fail to determine policy priorities due to the complexity of the public issues. Hence, public involvement during the policymaking process may help the government resolve issues in a priority setting as well as to get support for the policy implementation (Parlindungan, 2019). Diverse factors may determine the success of public participation during policymaking processes that include the effectiveness of government communication (Sebola, 2017), information disclosure strategy (He, Yeerkenbieke, & Baninla, 2020) and even the influence of civil society (Li et al., 2020).

There are several forms of public participation, such as direct public meetings or hearings or indirectly represented by civil associations or citizen advisory board (Alibegović & Slijepčević, 2015). In addition, most of the time, the Indonesian government may involve experts, academics, researchers, or practitioners to compose a particular national policy or program and then calls for a public test. This public test is an opportunity for citizens, especially those affected by this policy or program, to give their judgments. However, to what extent the public participation and their influence during this public test remain unclear.

In a classic study of public participation, Arnstein (2007) proposes her opt-cited "a ladder of citizen participation," which consists of eight participation levels that reflect who is in charge during decision making. These levels are: 1) manipulation; 2) therapy; 3) informing; 4) consultation; 5) placation; 6) partnership; 7) delegation; 8) citizen control. The lowest levels are manipulation and therapy, which are categorised as 'nonparticipation.' The next three levels, which include informing, consultation, and placation, are considered 'tokenism,' the initial steps of involvement. The last two at the top of the ladder are delegation and citizen control, which reflects the true condition of participation where citizens have the power to control the outcome of a decision. Applying this concept in analyzing the level of public participation during Provincial Budget decision making in Lampung, Duaji (Duadji, 2013) reveals that the level participation falls in levels 3 and 4 of the ladder. This finding shows policy makers' domination in this decision-making, which may dismiss public aspiration, critiques, or priority issues. Public participation is important to ensure that each of the resulting policies is beneficial for certain people and had a positive impact on society.

Policymaking involves two processes for both the policymakers as well as the society. It is a room for the social politic process where

individual or community, or society share knowledge, interact, and even negotiate in formulating policy (Hikmawati, 2013; Mariana, 2015). At the same time, it is a bargaining arena for political elites (Duadji, 2013). To participate in a policymaking mode, a citizen should be aware of his or her involvement would develop better policy outcomes. Nevertheless, several factors can be the obstacles for public to participate including 1) society's lack of awareness of his/her political rights; 2) less access to the public sphere to have an open dialogue with government; and 3) lack of educational institution or public figure's role to encourage individual or community to involve in policymaking (Witianti & Solihah, 2018).

There is a close relationship between participation, accountability, and transparency. Public participation will not be possible without transparency, and transparency will also encourage increased public accountability. Meanwhile, accountability is difficult to achieve without monitoring and public participation in decision making (Mardiyanta, 2013). Transparency itself is one of the principles of good governance. It aims to create mutual trust between government and society through providing information and ensuring convenience inside obtain information. Transparency is necessary for public monitoring against state administration can be done objectively (Arista, 2015).

Public participation in policymaking remains a significant challenge in Indonesia (Witianti & Solihah, 2018). Mariana (2015) argues that insufficiency of public awareness may contribute to this challenge. The Pew Research 2018 report reveals that most Indonesian (around 71 per cent) are reluctant to participate in organised protest or post online to express their political and social thoughts. In addition, more than 50 per cent of Indonesian would never attend a political campaign event or speech (Pew Research Center, 2019).

It is argued that information has a vital role in public participation. The more and well-informed public is, the more public participation would be. Gudowsky and Bechtold argue that the provision of good public participation in the policymaking process is determined by meaningful information and communication (i.e. flow of information) (Gudowsky & Bechtold, 2013). Hence, public participation is possible only when citizens have adequate information on public resources and various implications of a policy set. Public information itself is information that is managed, disseminated, produced, received, and produced by a public body (The Indonesian Law number 14 Year 2008 on The Public Information Disclosure, 2008). Freedom and citizens' ability to access information and public documents are essential indicators for participation stages' progress. Without participation and freedom of obtaining information, there will be no interaction between citizens and government, the implication is prone to the emergence of irregularities and abuse power (Kristiyanto, 2016). Local studies about public participation which place public information as the center of the study is limited. This study fills the gap by assessing to what extent

public information awareness and public information service form public participation behaviour.

UU KIP mandates the government institution to provide information for the public to achieve transparency in government and achieve credibility in the public in terms of public budget spending (Lubis, Kusumasari, & Hakim. Public information disclosure is an essential part of public service delivery and fundamental human right preservation. Based on the UU KIP, every public institution obliges to provide or give access to all public information, except the classified one.

According to Kristiyanto (2016) there are four reasons regarding the importance of information disclosure: First, information is everyone's ultimate need for personal development, social environment, and an essential part of national resilience. Second, obtaining information is a human right where public information disclosure became one of the country's essential characteristics that uphold its folk's sovereignty. Third, public information disclosure optimizes public supervision of state and other state public bodies, which impacts the public interest. Fourth, the management of public information is one of the methods to actualize the information society.

The primary goal of disclosing public information in each country is to ensure that institutions the public will be more accountable and credible by providing information and documents according to public demand. Thus, the concept of disclosure information on each scope of the state is applied (Retnowati, 2012). Public information disclosure has a significant role in forming public participation in two ways: providing policy input and monitoring the policy implementation and public institution's performance (Duadji, 2013). Another research states the same thing, and information disclosure has at least two positive impacts on its role in participation. First, the community participates in providing policy input to the government. Second, the community participates in overseeing the performance of public bodies. This correlates with the opinion that participation is an active and voluntary involvement that has various reasons, both intrinsic and extrinsic, in various kinds of process activities, such as decision making for supervision, evaluation, and utilization of the results of activities achieved (Mardikanto & Soebiato, 2017).

Information disclosure carried out by public bodies intersects with the principles of good governance. First, information disclosure has a positive correlation with participation and makes public participation more substantial. Second, with the disclosure of information, the level of accountability of public bodies will be maintained (Duadji, 2013). Third, with this public information disclosure, the public can also determine the extent of government performance and assess the suitability of expectations and public interests. Besides, the public can also determine the government's alignments with public services to provide attitudes towards government policies (Retnowati, 2012). Hence, the first hypothesis is:

***H1: The increasing of public information awareness has a positive impact on public participation***

Most of the study of public information or government information service (GIS) is heavily on the study of e-government or any information and communication technology-based government service (Liu & Zhong, 2018; Witarsyah, Sjafrizal, Fudzee, & Salamat, 2017);(Zaidi et al., 2018). However, study that specifically about GIS and participative behaviour is quite limited. Some scholars propose frameworks for assessing GIS. In Liu and Zhong's GIS evaluation framework, service quality (i.e. information availability and interaction between the public and the public information officer) and user experience (i.e. transparency and privacy protection) are inseparable indicators for GIS (Liu & Zhong, 2018). In Witarsyah and his colleagues' conceptual framework, information quality plays a role to form an individual's expectancy towards the e-government system or, in other words, that individual would use e-government if the available information would enhance his or her performance. These show that information quality and service are essential to forming citizens' intention to use the service and form participative behavior.

This study tries to find the correlation between public information service and public participation. The Central Information Commission, a quasi-governmental body formed as mandated on UU KIP, partially regulates public information. Based on the Regulation of Central information Commission Number 1 Year 2010, public institutions have to provide public information service standards that include 1) provide supporting systems and facilities for public information service; 2) provide PPID (or public information officers); 3) update the List of Public Information in a period of time; and also 4) set up the standard fee for the copy of public information (Komisi Informasi Pusat, 2010). PPID has an important role as a reliable source of government information. Besides, PPID may act as a facilitator for the public to be involved in policymaking by giving information such as how to submit a review about the ongoing regulatory bill. Like common public information officers, the PPID is a public sector employee responsible for facilitating the flow of public information. Nevertheless, the biggest challenge of this responsibility is the possible political pressure from high officials and may harm his or her perceived objectivity and credibility to disseminate information (Édes, 2000).

This study may not specifically focus on the role of PPID, but the public information service quality perceived may impact public participation behaviour. There are five indicators of the Public Information service that derives from the regulation of Central of Information Commission number 1 Year 2020, which include: 1) the perceived clarity of public information flow; 2) the admissible time to receive public information; and 3) the reasonable cost to acquire public information. Hence, the second hypothesis is:

**H2:** *The public information service perceived satisfaction might have an impact on public participation.*

## METHODOLOGY

The current research is quantitative-based research in which a survey was used for primary data collection. The data itself was part of a study carried out by the Centre of Informatics Application and the Information and Public Communication, Research and Human Resource Development of the Ministry of Communication and Informatics in 2019.

**Table 1.** Demographic Information

Demographic information	Category	Freq	%
Gender	Male	874	55.2
	Female	710	44.8
Age	15-19 y.o	82	5.2
	20-24 y.o	129	8.1
	25-29 y.o	156	9.8
	30-34 y.o	177	11.2
	35-39 y.o	230	14.5
	40-44 y.o	200	12.6
	45-49 y.o	215	13.6
	50-54 y.o	198	12.5
	55-59 y.o	112	7.1
	≥ 60 y.o	85	5.4
Latest Formal Education	No education	3	0.2
	Elementary School	44	2.8
	Junior High School	133	8.4
	Senior High School	749	47.3
	Undergraduate	116	7.3
	Bachelor Degree	414	26.1
	Master or Doctor	125	7.9
Occupation	Students	132	8.3
	Civil Servants	223	14.1
	Private Sectors	398	25.1
	Entrepreneur	384	24.2
	Farmers/ Fisherman	10	0.6
	labour	39	2.5
	Retiree	46	2.9
	Housewife	269	17
	Unemployed	34	2.1
	others	49	3.1

Source: Data Processed by Author (2020)

The random sampling method is applied in this study. The respondent population is 15-64 years old, which reached around 16 million people (BPS, 2018). With a margin of error of 2.5 per cent and a confidence level of 95 per cent, the number of samples in this study is

1,584 people. The survey was carried out in 25 provinces (out of 34 provinces) from 9th September to 4th October 2019. The multi-stage proportional random sampling is also applied to get the number of samples in each of the capital city in provinces (the maximum number of samples is 180 respondents in the most significant population of the province, and the minimum number of samples is 30 in the least population of the province). Table 1 shows the demographic background of the respondents.

**Table 2.** Recommended cut off Values to Asses Goodness of Fit Models

Indices	Values for models with $12 < m < 30$ and sample size $> 250$
Chi-Square	Significant p-values
CFI or TLI	Above .92
SRMR	.08 or less (with CFI above .92)
RMSEA	Values $< .07$ with CFI or .92 or higher

Source: Hair et al.(2014)

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Goodness of Fit is a parameter to analyse the overall structural model. Table 2 shows that various index of Goodness of Fit with the misspecified model. All indexes essentially are close to 1.0, indicating the overall structural model is fit (Bentler, 1990), except for RMSEA, which is 0.071. The RMSEA is an indicator of empirical fit. It is suggested that RMSEA cut-off points considered good fit are a stringent upper limit of 0.07 (Steiger, 2007).

**Table 3.** The goodness of Fit Index

Index	Value	Level
The goodness of Fit Index (GFI)	0.92	Good Fit
Root Mean Square Error of Approximation (RMSEA)	0.071	Good Fit
Non-Normed Fit Index (NNFI)	0.96	Good Fit
Normed Fit Index (NFI)	0.97	Good Fit
Relative Fit Index (RFI)	0.97	Good Fit
Incremental Fit Index (IFI)	0.97	Good Fit
Comparative Fit Index (CFI)	0.96	Good Fit

Source: Data Processed by Authors (2020)

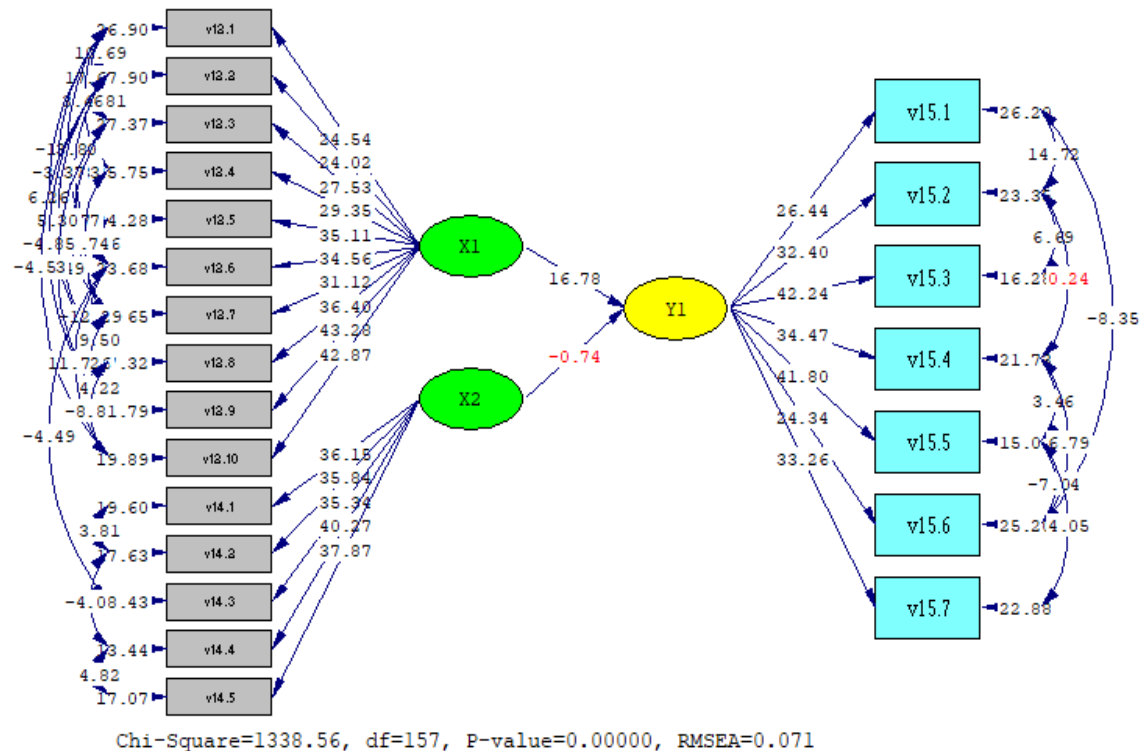
The causal relation of the structural model is tested with significance at a 5% level (critical t-value is  $\pm 1.96$ ) (Table 3, Figure 1 and Figure 2). Figure 3 and 4 show the structural model of both t-values and standardised solution. Standardised regression coefficients indicate the change of standard deviations of the dependent variable when the independent variable is increased by one standard deviation. The path coefficients absolute of t-values is  $> 1.96$ , which means that independent variables significantly affect dependent variables (Benitez, Henseler, Castillo, & Schuberth, 2020).

The degree of variance ( $R^2$ ) shows the extent of the independent variable construct the dependent variable. The  $R^2$  is 0.23, which



explains that both the Public Information Awareness and the Public Information Service could explain a 23 per cent variance of the Public Participation.

**Figure 1.** The structural model (t-values)



Source: Data Processed by Authors (2020)

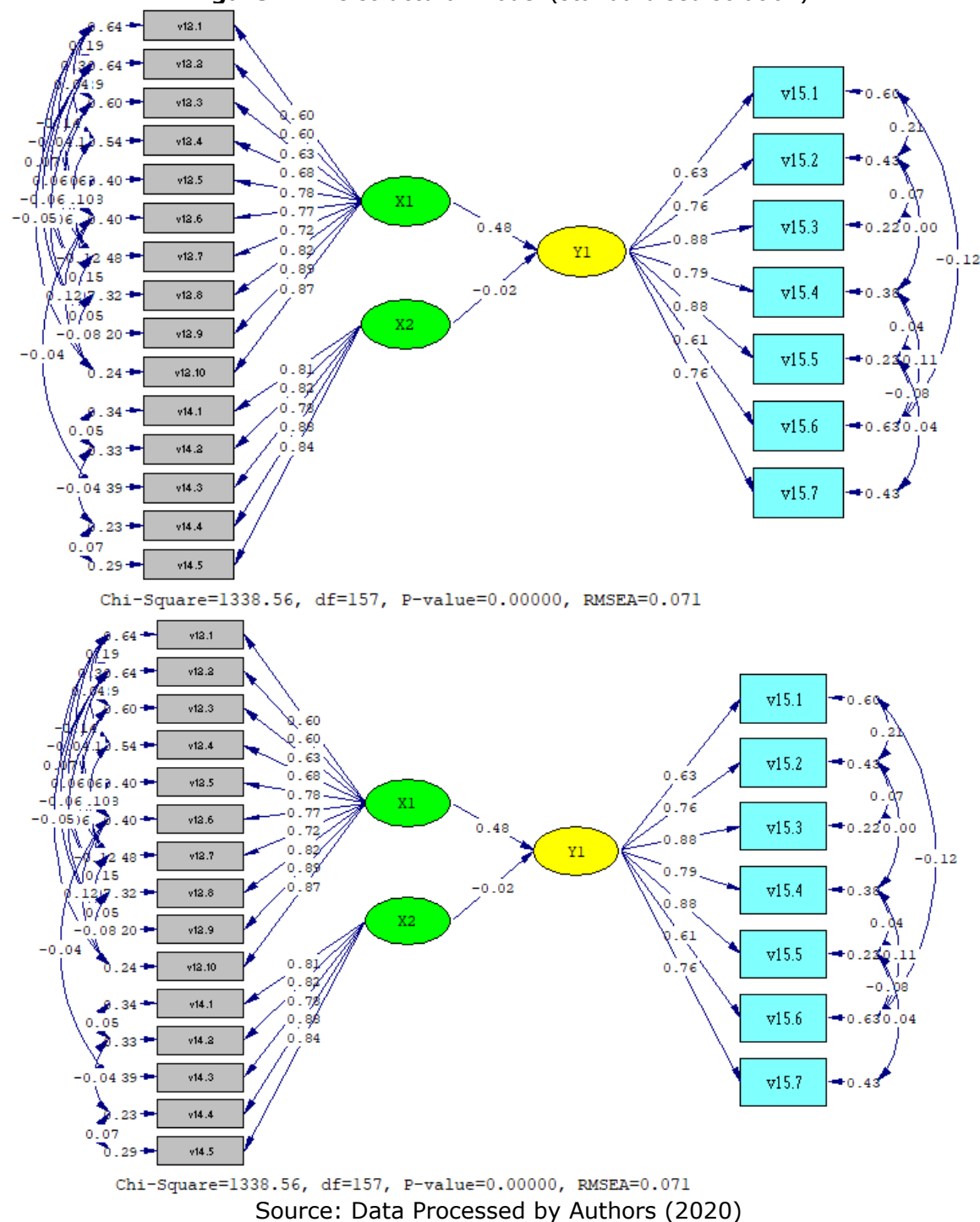
The hypothesis test with significance at 5% and critical t-value is  $\pm 1.96$  show that H1 is accepted with the t-value is 16.78 while H2 is not accepted since the t-value is -0.74 (Figure 3.). The study finds that public information awareness has a highly significant impact on public participation.

This study confirms the initial research hypothesis that argues that public information awareness impacts positively and significantly to public participation. However, there is no evidence that public satisfaction with public information service may influence public participation. Before the public participates in policymaking, the public should be informed. The disclosure of the policy draft may encourage the public to provide input and oversee the government's performance (Fudin & Rahayu, 2019).

Information disclosure has been mandated in the UU KIP article 3, which states that it "guarantees the right of citizens to know the plans for public policymaking, public policy programs and the reasons for making a public decision." The previous study suggests that the UU KIP may be good at the political and policy levels but not at the practical level (Parlindungan, 2019). The implementation of the law should co-exist with the awareness of how meaningful public participation is and information dissemination of policy processes between the government

and society. Simultaneously, mutual understanding and trust among government, community and civic groups may exist during this process.

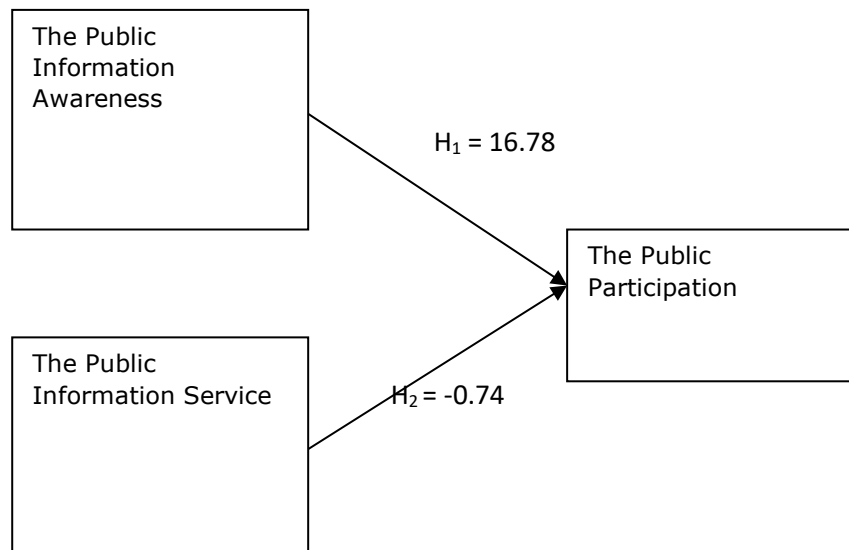
**Figure 2.** The structural model (standardised solution)



Public participation in operating public policy services are implemented as fundamental pillars of governance people-based. Public participation will substantially build understanding to manifest public service (public service) following the corridor layout good governance.

Understanding this, thematically are the fundamental reasons for the public's composing and formulating policies services to build public services (public service), which prioritises the principles of democracy, transparency, accountability, and responsibility (Larasari, 2008). Meanwhile, for the public, information disclosure is beneficial for the fulfilment of the right to view public information so that at the level, it can encourage participation in development.

**Figure 3.** Research Framework and Hypothesis Test Result



Source: Data Processed by Authors (2020)

As a democratic country, the government must encourage the public according to its role to create awareness of public information to increase public participation. Several strategies for increasing participation in public services include, first, identifying the role of the community. This aspect is essential in realizing awareness of public information as a stimulus to encourage public participation. Second, increasing the role of external supervisory agencies. The Indonesian Ombudsman is an externally supervisory state institution with the task and function of supervising public services. The Ombudsman can also function as a public intermediary in submitting complaints and evaluating less than optimal public services. Third, commitment from the government. The commitment of the government, especially public officials, is essential to increase participation (Septiani, 2020).

The contribution of the study to the theoretical implication is limited. However, this study reveals initial thought for future research regarding the role of the well-informed public in influencing the decision-making process. One of the critical theoretical concerns in public participation study is "the challenge of the participation process." (Quick, K., & Bryson, 2016) argue that the limitation of public participation study conducted by a social scientist is heavily focusing on "hypothesis testing and generalizable theory development" without giving explicit solution,

i.e. effective participation design. This study gives empirical evidence that public information disclosure plays a significant influence on public participation behaviour. This public information disclosure can be integrated as a dimension in designing the participation, i.e. to what extent the well-informed public would exert power during the policymaking process or perceive the policy outcome.

## CONCLUSION

This study aims to measure to what extent that public information awareness and public information service perception may form public participation behaviour. The design of the survey was derived based on existing concepts and regulations. Two hypotheses were tested in this study: 1) The increasing of public information awareness has a positive impact on public participation; 2) The public information service perceived satisfaction might impact public participation. This study was survey-quantitative research that involves 1,584 respondents in 25 provinces (out of 34 provinces) from 9th September to 4th October 2019. A Weighted Least Squares (WLS) is used to analyze the data.

This study confirms the initial research hypothesis that argues that public information awareness impacts positively and significantly to public participation. Nevertheless, there is no evidence that public satisfaction with public information service may influence public participation. This study may give a little contribution to the theoretical implications. However, this study suggests an initial thought for future research regarding the role of the well-informed public in influencing the decision-making process.

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