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Managing Citizen Support Through Perceived Service Competence And Responsiveness: The Mediating Role Of Public Trust In Community-Based Fire Services

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Abstract

Community-based fire services play an important role in supporting public safety, particularly where emergency response relies on volunteer participation. This study examines the effects of perceived service competence and responsiveness on citizen support through public trust in community-based fire services in Banjarmasin, Indonesia. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 82 respondents through purposive sampling and analyzed with Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 3.0. The results indicate that perceived service competence and responsiveness have significant positive effects on public trust. Perceived service competence does not significantly affect citizen support, whereas responsiveness has a significant positive effect. Public trust also has a significant positive effect on citizen support and significantly mediates the effects of both perceived service competence and responsiveness on citizen support. These findings suggest that perceived service

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competence contributes to citizen support mainly through public trust, whereas responsiveness influences citizen support both directly and indirectly. The study highlights the importance of responsiveness and public trust in strengthening citizen support for community-based fire services.

Keywords: Perceived Service Competence; Responsiveness; Public Trust; Citizen Support; Community-Based Fire Services.

INTRODUCTION

Fire and rescue services play an important role in protecting lives, property, and communities, with responsibilities increasingly extending to emergency response, prevention, and community resilience. These expanding roles increase demands for effective service delivery, particularly when organizations face limited personnel and resources (Waring et al., 2026). Hampton et al. (2025) also highlight the expanding role of fire services in prevention activities and support for community health and well-being. Under these conditions, community-based fire management has become increasingly relevant because it directly involves local actors and volunteers in addressing fire and disaster risks (Ito-Morales, 2024). In Banjarmasin, this model is reflected in community-based Fire Brigades (Barisan Pemadam Kebakaran or BPK), which engage in various social activities based on mutual cooperation and voluntary action, while their sustainability is closely related to volunteer capacity, organizational support, and relationships with the community (Syaharuddin et al., 2020; Zhang et al., 2026; Lantz et al., 2023).

The relationship between BPK and the community is influenced by how citizens evaluate the services provided. Cooperation among BPK organizations, residents, and government institutions can be seen in fire mitigation, public education, and preparedness activities (Subiyakto et al., 2021). Perceived service competence reflects citizens' evaluations of firefighters' knowledge, expertise, and ability to perform their responsibilities, whereas responsiveness concerns their ability to provide timely and appropriate assistance. Citizens also form perceptions of the capability and capacity of local fire services when assessing their performance (Stasiewicz & Paveglio, 2022). The importance of competence, preparedness, and response capability in supporting effective emergency services is further emphasized by Harabin et al. (2025) and Duray et al. (2025).

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Effective emergency response also requires community involvement, making citizens important stakeholders in community-based services (Elkady et al., 2022). Public trust becomes particularly important because citizens must rely on service providers under uncertain and high-risk conditions. Krogh & Lo (2025) emphasize the role of trust when citizens depend on service providers in situations that are difficult to predict. This relationship is consistent with Stakeholder Theory, which views citizens as parties who can affect or be affected by organizational activities. Their trust and support therefore become important considerations in maintaining constructive relationships between community-based service organizations and the people they serve (Parmar et al., 2010).

Previous studies generally indicate relationships among service competence, responsiveness, public trust, and citizen support. Perceived service effectiveness has been associated with stronger public trust (Lim & Kwak, 2022), while Abdi & Hashi (2024) link effective service performance with trust and citizens' willingness to cooperate. Kitt et al. (2021) associate institutional competence with more favorable public responses, whereas Nunkoo et al. (2012) link stronger institutional trust with greater public support. Responsive service can also contribute to favorable public responses because timely and appropriate actions are directly experienced by citizens. However, empirical findings are not entirely consistent. Turesson et al. (2026) indicate that response time does not influence satisfaction across all types of rescue services, Hutahaean et al. (2023) report no significant effect of responsiveness on trust, and Ghasemi et al. (2020) suggest that trust in agency competence does not necessarily lead to mitigation behavior.

Research on volunteer firefighters and community-based emergency services has largely focused on service sustainability, volunteer motivation, community preparedness, and stakeholder participation (Colibaba et al., 2021; Kozjek et al., 2025; Urbina L et al., 2025; Xu et al., 2026). In the Banjarmasin context, previous research has also emphasized the social and civic roles of fire-service communities rather than examining how citizens' evaluations of service performance develop into trust and support (Rosyadi, 2019). These conditions indicate the need to examine not only the direct effects of perceived service competence and responsiveness on citizen support but also the role of public trust in connecting these service evaluations with supportive responses. Therefore, this study examines the effects of perceived service competence and responsiveness on public trust and citizen support, as well as the mediating role of public trust in these relationships. By positioning citizens as key stakeholders, this study

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extends the management perspective on community-based fire services through Stakeholder Theory.

LITERATURE REVIEW

PERCEIVED SERVICE COMPETENCE AND PUBLIC TRUST

In emergency situations, citizens consider the capability of service providers when determining whether they can be trusted. Houston & Harding (2013) regard competence as an important cognitive basis for trust because it reflects the ability of service providers to achieve their objectives and demonstrate reliable performance. In rescue services, operational capability is particularly relevant because it determines the level of protection available to citizens (Nilson & Mankell, 2022). Lim & Kwak (2022) indicate that perceived service effectiveness contributes to public trust. Similarly, effective service performance can strengthen citizens' confidence in safety-related service providers (Abdi & Hashi, 2024). Therefore, perceptions of community-based fire services as competent, effective, and professional can provide an important basis for developing public trust.

H1: Perceived service competence has a positive effect on public trust.

RESPONSIVENESS AND PUBLIC TRUST

Responsiveness is highly important in emergency services because citizens expect firefighters to respond quickly, pay attention to community needs, and provide appropriate assistance. Lanin & Hermanto (2019) identify response speed as an important aspect of public service evaluation because citizens expect assistance within a reasonable period. Attention to citizens' needs and concerns can also foster more positive relationships with service providers (Huang et al., 2020). Beshi & Kaur (2020) associate attention to public needs with the development of trust, while Mansoor (2021) emphasizes the importance of responsiveness when citizens' concerns are addressed appropriately. Thus, the greater the responsiveness of community-based fire services, the stronger the public trust that can be developed.

H2: Responsiveness has a positive effect on public trust.

PERCEIVED SERVICE COMPETENCE AND CITIZEN SUPPORT

Citizens' evaluations of service competence can influence their willingness to support community-based fire services. According to Askim et al. (2025), alignment between expertise

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and responsibility can strengthen perceptions of an actor's ability to perform assigned duties effectively. Relevant knowledge and skills are also important for handling complex responsibilities in emergency situations (Palomo-Vélez et al., 2024). Kitt et al. (2021) found that perceptions of institutional competence are associated with more favorable public responses. Public acceptance also tends to be stronger when responsible actors are perceived as possessing the knowledge and expertise required to perform their duties effectively (Liu et al., 2020). On this basis, perceptions of service competence can encourage citizens' willingness to cooperate with and support community-based fire services.

H3: Perceived service competence has a positive effect on citizen support.

RESPONSIVENESS AND CITIZEN SUPPORT

Responsiveness can strengthen citizen support when fire services demonstrate attentiveness and readiness to address community needs. Askim et al. (2025) emphasize the importance of responding to public needs as part of meeting citizens' expectations. Listening to citizens and providing appropriate explanations can also increase public acceptance (Esaiasson et al., 2017). Responsive actions are associated with greater goodwill and willingness to support public service providers (Linde & Peters, 2020). Appropriate responses to public concerns can also provide an important basis for developing support (Chen et al., 2023). Therefore, the ability of BPK to respond quickly and appropriately to community needs can encourage the development of citizen support.

H4: Responsiveness has a positive effect on citizen support.

PUBLIC TRUST AND CITIZEN SUPPORT

Public trust plays an important role in shaping citizen support because citizens often depend on firefighters' judgments and actions during emergencies. Greater trust can encourage public participation and strengthen relationships between citizens and service providers (Taufiqurokhman et al., 2024). Qin et al. (2025) highlight the relationship between citizens' evaluations of public service performance, their level of trust, and their subsequent responses to the services received. Higher levels of trust can also develop into cooperation, loyalty, and continued support for service providers (Zulganef et al., 2024). Nunkoo et al. (2012) found that stronger institutional trust is associated with greater public support. Therefore, the stronger the public trust, the greater the citizen support for community-based fire services.

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H5: Public trust has a positive effect on citizen support.

MEDIATING ROLE OF PUBLIC TRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN PERCEIVED SERVICE COMPETENCE AND CITIZEN SUPPORT

Perceived service competence can encourage citizen support through citizens' trust in community-based fire services. Hendriana et al. (2022) link cognitive trust with competence evaluations, indicating that perceptions of capability can contribute to building positive relationships between citizens and service providers. In fire-management settings, trust in agencies is closely associated with perceptions of their capability and competence (Rasch & McCaffrey, 2019). Trust can subsequently serve as a mechanism through which favorable evaluations develop into cooperative responses. Zhang & Zhou (2018) position trust as an important link between favorable evaluations and cooperation intentions, while Liu et al. (2024) provide similar evidence regarding its role in developing public support. Based on these relationships, perceived service competence can encourage citizen support through the development of public trust.

H6: Public trust mediates the relationship between perceived service competence and citizen support.

MEDIATING ROLE OF PUBLIC TRUST IN THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN RESPONSIVENESS AND CITIZEN SUPPORT

The relationship between responsiveness and citizen support can develop through public trust in community-based fire services. Timely and responsive services can strengthen citizens' confidence in service providers (Fardan et al., 2026). In fire-management settings, Lijeblad et al. (2009) identify responsiveness as one of the attributes contributing to public trust. Trust developed through positive service experiences can subsequently encourage more favorable behavioral responses toward service providers (Anggraini & Sobari, 2023). Guo et al. (2025) also suggest that trust can serve as a mechanism linking immediate feedback with public engagement, indicating that timely responses can encourage stronger public engagement through the trust they generate. This relationship suggests that responsiveness can encourage citizen support both through the service experience itself and through the public trust developed from that experience.

H7: Public trust mediates the relationship between responsiveness and citizen support.

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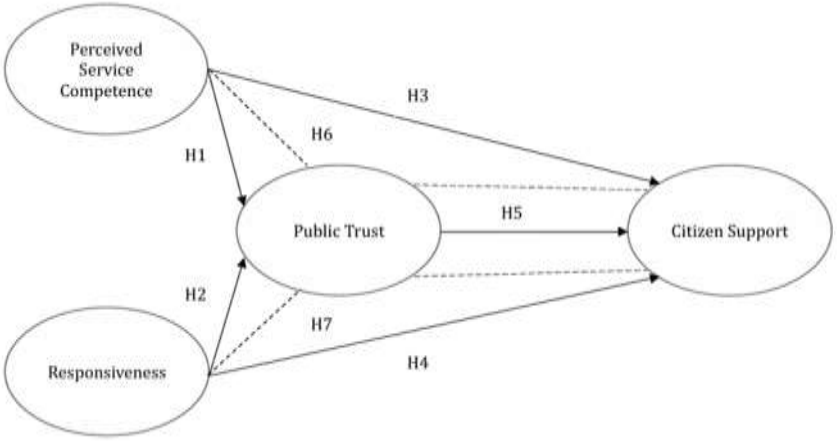


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative explanatory design to examine the effects of perceived service competence and responsiveness on citizen support, with public trust as a mediating variable in the context of community-based fire services in Banjarmasin. The population consisted of residents of Banjarmasin City across all five districts. Respondents were selected using purposive sampling based on predetermined eligibility criteria, including being at least 17 years old, residing in Banjarmasin City, and having knowledge of or exposure to the activities of community-based Fire Brigades (*Barisan Pemadam Kebakaran* or BPK).

Perceived service competence, responsiveness, public trust, and citizen support were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (*strongly disagree*) to 5 (*strongly agree*). The measurement items were adapted from relevant previous studies. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 3.0. The analysis included the assessment of the measurement model, structural model, direct effects, and the mediating role of public trust.

RESULT

DATA COLLECTION

Data were collected through an online questionnaire distributed using Google Forms. The data collection process was conducted for approximately one month, from early September to

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early October 2026. A total of 82 completed questionnaires met the eligibility criteria and were included in the final analysis.

Respondents were distributed across all five districts of Banjarmasin City. Their characteristics were classified based on gender, age, education level, occupation, and district of residence, as presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Respondents Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	39	47.56%
	Female	43	52.44%
Age	17 - 21	35	42.68%
	22-30	38	46.34%
	31-40	6	7.32%
	41-50	1	1.22%
	>50	2	2.44%
Education	High school/equivalent or lower	33	40.24%
	Diploma	2	2.44%
	Bachelor's degree	40	48.78%
	Postgraduate degree	7	8.54%
Occupation	Student	39	47.56%
	Civil servant/Public sector employee	5	6.10%
	Private sector employee	12	14.63%
	Self-employed/Entrepreneur	9	10.98%
	Unemployed/Not currently working	10	12.20%
	Others	7	8.54%
District of Residence in Banjarmasin City	South Banjarmasin	27	32.93%
	East Banjarmasin	7	8.54%

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	West Banjarmasin	10	12.20%
	Central Banjarmasin	9	10.98%
	North Banjarmasin	29	35.37%

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

Table 1 shows that male and female respondents accounted for 47.56% and 52.44%, respectively. The majority of respondents were aged 22–30 years (46.34%), followed by those aged 17–21 years (42.68%). In terms of education, most respondents held a Bachelor's degree (48.78%), while 40.24% had a high school/equivalent education or lower.

Regarding occupation, students constituted the largest proportion of respondents (47.56%), followed by private sector employees (14.63%) and respondents who were unemployed or not currently working (12.20%). Respondents were distributed across all five districts of Banjarmasin City, with the largest proportions residing in North Banjarmasin (35.37%) and South Banjarmasin (32.93%). Overall, the respondent profile provides coverage across different demographic characteristics and residential areas within Banjarmasin City, making it suitable for examining citizens' perceptions of community-based fire services.

Outer Model Evaluation

Outer Loading

The outer model was evaluated by examining the outer loading values of each indicator for the variables included in this study, as presented below.

Table 2. Outer Loading

	Perceived Service Competence (X1)	Responsiveness (X2)	Public Trust (Z1)	Citizen Support (Y1)
PSC (X1.1)	0.850			
PSC (X1.2)	0.899			
PSC (X1.3)	0.891			
PSC (X1.4)	0.901			
PSC (X1.5)	0.885			
PSC (X1.6)	0.799			

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Resp (X2.2)		0.889		
Resp (X2.3)		0.843		
Resp (X2.4)		0.812		
Resp (X2.5)		0.788		
Resp (X2.6)		0.842		
PT (Z1.1)			0.795	
PT (Z1.2)			0.851	
PT (Z1.3)			0.862	
PT (Z1.4)			0.903	
PT (Z1.5)			0.842	
PT (Z1.6)			0.777	
CS (Y1.1)				0.728
CS (Y1.2)				0.793
CS (Y1.3)				0.788
CS (Y1.4)				0.809
CS (Y1.5)				0.785
CS (Y1.6)				0.757

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

Based on the outer loading results presented in Table 2, one indicator of responsiveness (X2.1) was removed from the measurement model because its outer loading value was below the recommended threshold. Hair et al. (2021) recommend outer loading values of approximately 0.708 or higher to establish adequate indicator reliability. After removing the indicator that did not meet this criterion, all remaining indicators demonstrated acceptable outer loading values and were retained for further analysis.

AVERAGE VARIANCE EXTRACTED (AVE)

Table 3. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Description
Perceived Service Competence (X1)	0.760	Valid

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Responsiveness (X2)	0.698	Valid
Public Trust (Z1)	0.705	Valid
Citizen Support (Y1)	0.604	Valid

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all constructs exceeded the recommended threshold of 0.50. The AVE values were 0.760 for perceived service competence (X1), 0.698 for responsiveness (X2), 0.705 for public trust (Z1), and 0.604 for citizen support (Y1). These values indicate that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance in its indicators. Therefore, all constructs meet the criterion for convergent validity and are suitable for further structural analysis.

FORNELL-LACKER CRITERION

Table 4. Fornell-Lacker Criterion

	Citizen Support (Y1)	**Perceived Service Competence (X1)**	**Public Trust (Z1)**	**Responsiveness (X2)**
Citizen Support (Y1)	0.777			
Perceived Service Competence (X1)	0.508	0.872		
Public Trust (Z1)	0.692	0.745	0.839	
Responsiveness (X2)	0.687	0.700	0.725	0.836

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

Table 4 shows that citizen support has a value of 0.777, while perceived service competence, public trust, and responsiveness have values of 0.872, 0.839, and 0.836, respectively. Each of these values is higher than the corresponding correlations with the other

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constructs. This indicates that each construct is sufficiently distinct from the others. Therefore, all constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity.

HETEROTRAIT-MONOTRAIT RATIO (HTMT)

Table 5. Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

	Citizen Support (Y1)	Perceived Service Competence (X1)	Public Trust (Z1)	Responsiveness (X2)
Citizen Support (Y1)				
Perceived Service Competence (X1)	0.556			
Public Trust (Z1)	0.772	0.800		
Responsiveness (X2)	0.768	0.770	0.802	

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

Table 5 shows that all Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) values are below the threshold of 0.90. This indicates that the correlations among the constructs remain within the acceptable limit. Therefore, all constructs meet the criteria for discriminant validity and can be considered sufficiently distinct from one another.

RELIABILITY

Reliability was assessed using cronbach's alpha and composite reliability. All constructs showed composite reliability values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating adequate internal consistency. Cronbach's Alpha values also exceeded the minimum acceptable level, confirming the consistency of the measurement items. Therefore, perceived service competence, responsiveness, public trust, and citizen support can be considered reliable constructs and are suitable for further structural analysis.

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INNER MODEL EVALUATION

R-SQUARE (R^2)

Table 6. R-Square (R^2)

Variable	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Public Trust	0.636	0.626
Citizen Support	0.564	0.547

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

The structural model produced an R^2 value of 0.636 for public trust and 0.564 for citizen support. This indicates that perceived service competence and responsiveness explain 63.6% of the variance in public trust, while perceived service competence, responsiveness, and public trust explain 56.4% of the variance in citizen support. The remaining 36.4% of the variance in public trust and 43.6% in citizen support are not explained by the model and may be associated with other factors outside the constructs examined in this study. Overall, these results indicate that the model provides a moderate level of explanatory power for both endogenous constructs.

PREDICTIVE RELEVANCE (Q^2)

Table 7. Q-Square (Q^2)

Variable	Q^2 (=1-SSE/SSO)
Citizen Support	0.312
Public Trust	0.430

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

The Q^2 values were 0.312 for citizen support and 0.430 for public trust. Since both values are greater than zero, the model demonstrates predictive relevance for the two endogenous constructs. These results indicate that the model has adequate predictive capability in explaining citizen support and public trust.

EFFECT SIZE (F^2)

Table 8. F-Square (F^2)

Variable	F-Square
PSC -> PT	0.303
Resp -> PT	0.223
PSC -> CS	0.029

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Resp -> CS	0.196
PT -> CS	0.207

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

The f^2 results show that perceived service competence has a moderate effect on public trust (0.303), while its effect on citizen support is small (0.029). Responsiveness demonstrates moderate effects on both public trust (0.223) and citizen support (0.196). Similarly, public trust has a moderate effect on citizen support (0.207). Overall, most relationships in the structural model demonstrate moderate effect sizes, except for the effect of perceived service competence on citizen support, which is relatively small.

HYPOTHESIS TEST RESUTS

DIRECT EFFECT

Table 9. Path Coefficient Value (Direct Effect)

	Hyphotesis	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Value	Explanation
H1	PSC (X1) -> Public Trust (Z1)	0.465	0.109	4.278	0.000	**Accepted**
H2	Resp (X2) -> Public Trust (Z1)	0.399	0.105	3.800	0.000	**Accepted**
H3	PSC (X1) -> Citizen Support (Y1)	-0.186	0.170	1.060	0.290	**Rejected**
H4	Resp (X2) -> Citizen Support (Y1)	0.453	0.160	2.830	0.005	**Accepted**
H5	Public Trust (Z1) -> Citizen Support (Y1)	0.497	0.146	3.410	0.001	**Accepted**

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

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INDIRECT EFFECT

Table 10. Path Coefficient Value (Indirect Effect)

	Hyphotesis	Original Sample	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Value	Explanation
H6	PSC (X1) -> Public Trust -> (Z1) Citizen Support (Y1)	0.231	0.082	2.812	0.005	**Accepted**
H7	Resp (X2) -> Public Trust -> (Z1) Citizen Support (Y1)	0.199	0.089	2.224	0.027	**Accepted**

Source: Primary data processed by the researcher (2026).

H1: The effect of perceived service competence on public trust.

Perceived service competence had a significant positive effect on public trust, with a path coefficient of 0.465, a t-statistic of 4.278, and a p-value below 0.001. The positive coefficient indicates that higher perceptions of firefighters' competence are associated with stronger public trust in community-based fire services. Since the p-value was below 0.05, the relationship was statistically significant. Therefore, H1 was accepted.

H2: The effect of responsiveness on public trust.

Responsiveness had a significant positive effect on public trust, with a path coefficient of 0.399, a t-statistic of 3.800, and a p-value below 0.001. The positive coefficient indicates that higher levels of responsiveness are associated with stronger public trust. This suggests that timely and appropriate responses contribute to citizens' confidence in community-based fire services. Therefore, H2 was accepted.

H3: The effect of perceived service competence on citizen support.

Perceived service competence did not have a significant effect on citizen support, with a path coefficient of -0.186, a t-statistic of 1.060, and a p-value of 0.290. The negative coefficient indicates that the direction of the relationship was negative, but the effect was not statistically significant because the p-value exceeded 0.05. Thus, differences in citizens' perceptions of service competence did not significantly influence their support for community-based fire services. Therefore, H3 was rejected.

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H4: The effect of responsiveness on citizen support.

Responsiveness had a significant positive effect on citizen support, with a path coefficient of 0.453, a t-statistic of 2.830, and a p-value of 0.005. The positive coefficient indicates that higher levels of responsiveness are associated with stronger citizen support. Since the p-value was below 0.05, the relationship was statistically significant. Therefore, H4 was accepted.

H5: The effect of public trust on citizen support.

Public trust had a significant positive effect on citizen support, with a path coefficient of 0.497, a t-statistic of 3.410, and a p-value of 0.001. The positive coefficient indicates that higher levels of public trust are associated with stronger citizen support for community-based fire services. Since the relationship was statistically significant, H5 was accepted.

H6: The mediating role of public trust in the relationship between perceived service competence and citizen support.

Public trust significantly mediated the relationship between perceived service competence and citizen support, with an indirect effect coefficient of 0.231, a t-statistic of 2.812, and a p-value of 0.005. Although the direct effect of perceived service competence on citizen support was not significant, its indirect effect through public trust was statistically significant. This indicates that perceived service competence contributes to citizen support through the development of public trust. Therefore, H6 was accepted.

H7: The mediating role of public trust in the relationship between responsiveness and citizen support.

Public trust significantly mediated the relationship between responsiveness and citizen support, with an indirect effect coefficient of 0.199, a t-statistic of 2.224, and a p-value of 0.027. Responsiveness also had a significant direct effect on citizen support, indicating that its influence occurs both directly and indirectly through public trust. Thus, responsive service can strengthen citizen support directly while also contributing to greater support through the development of public trust. Therefore, H7 was accepted.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that perceived service competence contributes positively to public trust. Citizens develop stronger trust when firefighters are perceived as knowledgeable, capable, and able to perform their responsibilities effectively. Houston & Harding (2013) regard competence as an important cognitive basis for trust because it reflects the ability of service

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providers to achieve their objectives and demonstrate reliable performance. Perceived service effectiveness has also been associated with stronger public trust (Lim & Kwak, 2022), while effective service performance can strengthen citizens' confidence in safety-related service providers (Abdi & Hashi, 2024). In the context of community-based fire services, competence provides citizens with confidence that firefighters possess the knowledge and capability required to handle emergency situations. This finding confirms that evaluations of firefighters' competence play an important role in developing public trust in BPK.

Responsiveness also contributes positively to public trust. Timely assistance and attention to community needs provide observable evidence that firefighters are dependable and prepared to respond when needed. Beshi & Kaur (2020) associate attention to public needs with the development of trust, while Mansoor (2021) emphasizes the importance of responsiveness when citizens' concerns are addressed appropriately. In emergency services, responsiveness is particularly important because citizens depend on service providers to act quickly under uncertain and potentially dangerous conditions. A timely and appropriate response can therefore strengthen confidence that BPK is prepared to provide assistance when required. These findings indicate that public trust develops not only from perceptions of firefighters' capability but also from how promptly and appropriately that capability is demonstrated.

In contrast, perceived service competence does not have a positive and significant direct effect on citizen support. Citizens' perceptions of firefighters' knowledge, expertise, and capability are therefore not sufficient to directly encourage stronger support for community-based fire services. This result differs from Kitt et al. (2021), who associate perceptions of institutional competence with more favorable public responses, while Liu et al. (2020) indicate that public acceptance can increase when responsible actors are perceived as having appropriate expertise. In the context of BPK, competence may be viewed as a basic requirement that firefighters are already expected to possess. Citizens may consequently place greater emphasis on how quickly and appropriately assistance is provided during an emergency than on their perceptions of firefighters' technical capability. Fire emergencies require immediate action, making response speed and readiness more visible and directly relevant to citizens. Competence therefore remains essential for service delivery, but it does not directly determine whether citizens are willing to provide stronger support for BPK.

Responsiveness, on the other hand, contributes positively to citizen support. Citizens can directly observe whether firefighters arrive promptly, provide appropriate assistance, and

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respond to community needs, making responsiveness a tangible aspect of service performance. Responsive actions can generate goodwill and strengthen willingness to support public service providers (Linde & Peters, 2020). Appropriate responses to public concerns can also provide an important basis for developing public support (Chen et al., 2023). In emergency situations, the speed and appropriateness of assistance are directly experienced by citizens and may therefore carry greater weight in shaping their supportive responses. This helps explain why responsiveness contributes to citizen support whereas perceived service competence does not demonstrate a positive and significant direct effect.

Public trust also contributes positively to citizen support. Citizens who regard BPK as dependable and trustworthy are more willing to support its services and activities because trust reduces uncertainty regarding whether firefighters can be relied upon when assistance is required. Greater trust can encourage public participation and strengthen relationships between citizens and service providers (Taufiqurokhman et al., 2024). Nunkoo et al. (2012) similarly associate stronger institutional trust with greater public support. This relationship is particularly relevant to community-based fire services because BPK depends on interaction and cooperation with the community. When citizens believe that BPK is reliable, they may be more willing to cooperate, participate in preventive activities, encourage others to support BPK, and maintain positive relationships with fire-service organizations. Public trust therefore provides an important foundation for developing citizen support.

The mediating role of public trust further clarifies the relationship between perceived service competence and citizen support. Although perceived service competence does not directly generate stronger citizen support, perceptions of firefighters' capability can strengthen citizens' confidence in BPK, and this confidence subsequently becomes a basis for support. In fire-management settings, trust in agencies is closely associated with perceptions of their capability and competence (Rasch & McCaffrey, 2019). Trust can therefore function as a mechanism through which favorable evaluations of competence develop into more positive behavioral responses. Zhang & Zhou (2018) position trust as an important link between favorable evaluations and cooperation intentions, while Liu et al. (2024) provide similar evidence regarding its role in developing public support. Perceptions of knowledge and technical ability do not automatically translate into stronger citizen support for BPK. Competence becomes more relevant to citizen support when it strengthens citizens' confidence that BPK can be relied upon to perform effectively in critical situations.

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Public trust also mediates the relationship between responsiveness and citizen support. Unlike perceived service competence, responsiveness contributes to citizen support both directly and through the trust developed among citizens. This distinction reflects the characteristics of emergency services, where citizens can directly observe whether firefighters arrive promptly, respond appropriately, and pay attention to community needs. In fire-management settings, Lijeblad et al. (2009) identify responsiveness as one of the attributes contributing to public trust. Positive service experiences can subsequently encourage more favorable behavioral responses toward service providers through the trust they create (Anggraini & Sobari, 2023). Guo et al. (2025) also found that trust mediates the relationship between immediate feedback and public engagement, illustrating how timely responses can encourage stronger engagement through trust. Overall, the findings position public trust as an important mechanism connecting citizens' evaluations of BPK services with their willingness to provide support. From the perspective of Stakeholder Theory, citizens are not merely recipients of emergency services but key stakeholders whose perceptions, trust, cooperation, and support are important for maintaining constructive relationships and sustaining community-based fire services.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the effects of perceived service competence and responsiveness on citizen support through public trust in community-based fire services in Banjarmasin. The findings indicate that perceived service competence and responsiveness both contribute positively to public trust. However, perceived service competence does not have a positive and significant direct effect on citizen support, whereas responsiveness contributes positively to citizen support. This difference suggests that competence may be regarded as a basic capability that firefighters are expected to possess, while the speed, readiness, and appropriateness of the response are more directly experienced by citizens. Public trust also contributes positively to citizen support, confirming its importance in encouraging supportive responses toward BPK.

Public trust plays an important mediating role in the model. Perceived service competence contributes to citizen support through the development of trust, indicating that technical capability becomes more relevant to support when it strengthens citizens' confidence that firefighters can be relied upon in critical situations. Responsiveness contributes to citizen support both directly and through public trust, suggesting that timely and appropriate responses can address citizens' immediate needs while simultaneously strengthening their confidence in

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BPK. From the perspective of Stakeholder Theory, these findings reinforce the position of citizens as key stakeholders whose evaluations, trust, and support contribute to constructive relationships and the sustainability of community-based fire services.

In practice, BPK organizations should maintain strong service competence while placing particular emphasis on responsiveness and trust-building. Knowledge, preparedness, and technical capability remain essential, but these capabilities should be demonstrated through timely and appropriate actions that can be directly recognized by the community. Rapid responses, attention to community needs, reliable service performance, and consistent communication can strengthen citizens' confidence and encourage continued support. Future research may examine additional factors associated with citizen support, such as satisfaction, perceived service effectiveness, previous experience with emergency services, community attachment, and perceived service accessibility, while also extending the analysis to broader samples and different community-based emergency-service contexts.

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