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DECENTRALIZATION IN IMPROVING THE EFFICIENCY OF PUBLIC SERVICES: A LITERATURE REVIEW OF THE TERAS MADUKARA PROGRAM IN PURWAKARTA REGENCY

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Abstract

Decentralization has become a key strategy for improving public service delivery by enabling local governments to design services that are better suited to local needs and regional conditions. However, empirical evidence on how decentralized service innovations can improve public service efficiency—particularly in areas with geographical constraints—remains fragmented. This study examines the contribution of decentralization to public service efficiency through the Teras Madukara program in Purwakarta Regency, Indonesia. Using Dennis A. Rondinelli's "Public of Choice" perspective, this analysis focuses on three dimensions: institutional responsiveness, capacity to meet public service demand, and the provision of satisfactory public services. This study employs a qualitative approach in the form of a "Systematic Literature Review" (SLR), synthesizing evidence from peer-reviewed journal articles, government policy documents, official reports, and relevant academic publications. The study's findings indicate that Teras Madukara is an adaptive decentralized service model capable of overcoming geographical barriers by providing 407 integrated public services across five subdistricts, including previously underserved rural areas. This program has improved service accessibility and operational efficiency, while achieving a public satisfaction index of 87.69% and receiving institutional recognition through the "Mal Pelayanan Publik Prima" award from the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform. A comparative analysis with similar initiatives in Wonosobo and Tuban further demonstrates that Teras Madukara offers a more comprehensive service integration model by institutionalizing the concept of sub-district-based mini public service malls. These findings contribute to the literature on decentralization by demonstrating that adaptive local governance innovations can enhance service efficiency, accessibility, and citizen-oriented public administration in regions with diverse geographical characteristics.

Keywords: decentralization; public service innovation; public service efficiency; local governance; Teras Madukara; systematic literature review.

Introduction

The public has equal rights to voice their opinions, assemble, interact, and advocate for their interests in a free manner, without any pressure or discrimination. Public spaces and public goods are interrelated; public spaces are areas that accommodate the public interest and are open spaces accessible to all segments of society. This aligns with the definition of public space provided by Kusumawijaya in (Hendrastuti, 2017), who states that public space is a public area or site where people can engage in functional public activities as well as other ancillary activities that can foster community cohesion, whether through daily routines or periodic events (Hendrastuti, 2017:31).

Habermas, as cited in Supriadi (2017), states that there are three criteria for public space in society. First, they set aside social status and promote the principles of solidarity and equality as the spirit guiding their gatherings; second, public spaces open up discourses that have never been questioned before, such as the state's and the church's monopoly on the interpretation of truth in texts; third, the gathering of individuals within the public space of literature has transformed culture into a commodity. The culture Habermas refers to is written culture (journals and pamphlets), as well as music and theater. Thus, from these two perspectives, it can be said that the public sphere is an open space that guarantees the rights of every member of society equally, regardless of social status. The existence of the public sphere holds a significant position in a democratic system, particularly in reflecting the quality of public participation and the state's openness to public aspirations.

A public good can be defined as a service provided for the benefit of the broader public, and the provision of this public good is carried out by the government. It can be understood that a public good is a good available for public use without any additional cost. In contrast to public goods, private goods are goods that can only be enjoyed by specific members of society; thus, by their very nature, private goods cannot be enjoyed by the entire population. Prasetya, as cited in Mardiyanti (2024), states that public goods can be enjoyed by many people simultaneously, while private goods can only be enjoyed by a single individual at any given time. Therefore, the government must take on the role of producing public goods, as they are essential for society. This is because people face varying circumstances, making the provision of public goods indispensable. Consequently, the government must play a role in supplying public goods (Mardiyanti et al., 2024:41). Prasetya, as cited in Mardiyanti (2024), states that public goods possess two main characteristics that define them. Among these are that public goods are non-rivalrous, meaning that the consumption of a public good can be shared by many consumers without reducing the amount available to other consumers; and public goods are non-exclusive, meaning that no individual can be excluded from enjoying the benefits of the public good. Although some individuals may not want others to enjoy public goods, they cannot prevent it (Mardiyanti et al., 2024:42).

Thus, it can be seen that the connection between public spaces and public goods lies in their shared social function of supporting democratic life and ensuring equitable access for all segments of society. It is within this context that public services emerge as a manifestation of public goods delivered through public spaces.

In line with this, since the enactment of Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, there have been significant impacts on the administration of government. The implementation of decentralization policies has fostered new approaches to organizing authority more effectively and efficiently, while granting

greater authority to local governments to manage governmental affairs—including the provision of public services tailored to the characteristics of their respective regions. This means that governance can be carried out democratically, and regions have the authority to formulate local policies to provide services, enhance community participation, initiative, and empowerment, all aimed at improving the welfare of the people (Amin, 2024:1). Decentralization can be described as a tool used to achieve national objectives, particularly in providing better public services and fostering democratic decision-making (Mega Christia & Ispriyarso, 2019).

From a liberal democratic perspective, liberal democracy supports decentralization because it fosters democracy at two levels. First, it makes a positive contribution to the development of democracy, as local governments can serve as a means of creating a healthy democracy. This aligns with Hoessein's view, as cited in Muluk (2009), who states that the concept of autonomy entails the freedom to take the initiative in making decisions based on the aspirations of the community that holds such status, without direct control by the central government. Second, local government is able to provide benefits to the community, as , which is cited by Hoessein in Muluk (2009), who states that local government and local autonomy are not defined as regions or governments but rather as the local community. The benefits of local government are also mentioned by Antoft & Novack in Muluk (2009), who note that the benefits of local government include several aspects, namely: *accountability, accessibility, responsiveness, opportunity for experimentation, public choice, the distribution of power, and democratic values* (Muluk, 2009: 4–9).

As public awareness of the need to have their rights fulfilled and their aspirations heard continues to grow, there is a demand for continuous improvement in the quality of public spaces. One indicator that a local government has successfully provided public spaces to the community is the ease and speed with which the public receives services, as well as the affordability of access to these services, which ultimately leads to the desired level of public satisfaction. In this modern era, expectations for public spaces capable of fulfilling public rights are increasingly high, demanding that the bureaucracy be adaptive, innovative, and responsive, particularly in public services (Solong & Muliadi, 2020). Therefore, the relationship between public spaces, public goods, and public services is mutually supportive. This is because when the government succeeds in creating open and participatory public spaces and providing high-quality public goods, effective public services that meet the public's expectations will be created.

The goal of public service itself is to meet and satisfy the demands and aspirations of society as a whole. In order for the expected goals to be achieved, public services must be optimal and aligned with the needs of the community. This is in line with the Decree of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment No. 62 of 2003 concerning the Implementation of Public Services, which states that the procedures for public services must be uncomplicated, easy to understand, and easily accessible to all segments of society; furthermore, accessibility must be considered—from location and size to service facilities—to ensure they are easily accessible to all residents (Choirunnisa et al., 2023:76).

Purwakarta Regency has a varied topography, with many hilly and remote areas, and it comprises 17 subdistricts, 9 urban villages, and 183 villages; this poses a major challenge in ensuring equitable access to public services. Particularly with the implementation of decentralization, local governments must be able to introduce innovations that provide services with access that is reachable by all segments of society, especially in remote areas.(Permata & Indra Komala, 2020)

One concrete manifestation of the decentralization policies implemented by the Purwakarta Regency government is the launch of the Teras Madukara program in Purwakarta Regency. This program is a public service innovation that prioritizes a participatory approach and direct engagement with the community. Teras Madukara is one of the flagship programs of the MPP Bale Madukara in Purwakarta Regency, which was officially launched on October 5, 2021. It is present in every subdistrict and, to date, has been established in five subdistricts: Plered, Wanayasa, Campaka, Jatiluhur, and Maniis (Purwakartakab, 2024). Its purpose is to provide maximum service by bringing various services closer to the community; Teras Madukara has reached areas throughout Purwakarta Regency, even in the most remote areas (Purwakartakab, 2021).

Numerous studies have examined the impact of decentralization on public services. One of them (Melinda et al., 2020) highlights the importance of innovation in public services, because with decentralization, service innovation must be carried out by autonomous local governments, as this will yield numerous benefits, ranging from the effective and efficient use of resources to innovations that align with community needs. (Dema et al., 2021) note that the role of decentralization in creating good and innovative governance is essential, because through decentralization—local governments can tailor their administration to the region's potential and the needs of its community in a targeted manner. (Anjani & Malawat, 2023) highlight e-government as a form of local government innovation in improving public services, as it represents the implementation of decentralization. Decentralization aims to improve the welfare, prosperity, and self-reliance of both the community and the region. Therefore, local governments today cannot provide services solely through physical (offline) means but must also utilize non-physical (online) channels to reach all segments of society. Furthermore, a recent study (Edi & Tjenreng B.Z., 2025) highlights that decentralization plays a crucial role in improving the quality of public services; by strengthening decentralization, it is hoped that efficiency, transparency, and accountability in local government can be enhanced. However, the success of decentralization depends on the readiness of infrastructure, the quality of human resources, and effective governance by local governments.

In contrast to previous research which suggest that decentralization leads to higher-quality public services, (Haning et al., 2016) highlight that the decentralization of authority in public services, particularly at the subdistrict level in Pangkep Regency, has not yet functioned effectively due to the high level of sectoral ego among the respective local government agencies (SKPDs) and the responses of some officials from various SKPDs, who stated that subdistricts—as SKPDs granted authority to carry out delegated responsibilities—have not been fully supported by qualified civil service personnel, as well as constraints in funding and infrastructure needed to support the implementation of delegated authority. (Surya et al., 2021) state that decentralization has, in fact, not yet been able to maximize control over public services, achieve equitable service delivery across the entire nation, or foster democratic public welfare—particularly in terms of service delivery.

Therefore, to gain a deeper understanding of the extent to which decentralization implemented by the Purwakarta Regency government has been effective, one influential theoretical approach for understanding decentralization is to apply Dennis A. Rondinelli's public choice perspective, which identifies three indicators: the responsiveness of public agencies, the ability to meet the demand for public goods, and, finally, the provision of satisfactory public goods (Muluk, 2009).

Applying Dennis A. Roudinelli's public choice theory will help determine to what extent the decentralization policies implemented by the Purwakarta Regency government influence service efficiency.

1.

2. Research Method

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach using a literature review method. Data were collected from various secondary sources, such as scientific journals, books, government documents, news articles, and relevant academic publications. Moleong states that the descriptive method involves collecting data in the form of words and images, rather than numbers. Such data may come from interview transcripts, field notes, photographs, videotapes, personal documents, notes or memos, and other official documents. (Moleong, 2017:11). Therefore, this study will focus primarily on secondary data, as data collection involves reviewing books, journals, articles, or laws and regulations related to the chosen research topic.

3. Results and Discussion

4.

The implementation of decentralization policies by local governments is essentially aimed at bringing services closer to the community, especially those in remote areas. Purwakarta Regency has a territory that is quite difficult to access; although Purwakarta is a small regency, its geographical characteristics include hilly terrain and remote areas. This poses a real challenge in ensuring equitable access to public services. To address this issue, the Purwakarta Regency government launched the Teras Madukara program as a solution and innovation designed to prioritize the principles of accessibility and efficiency in service delivery so that services can be reached by all segments of the community.

Teras Madukara is a service provided directly in remote subdistricts across Purwakarta Regency. This program is designed to expand the reach of the Bale Madukara Public Service Mall (MPP). It offers easy access— and —to meet the public's need for fast, simple services and streamlined administrative processes. The responsiveness of public agencies reflects the government's ability to respond quickly and appropriately to the needs and aspirations of the community (Muluk, 2009). The Teras Madukara program was established by the local government to overcome geographical barriers—such as hilly and remote areas—by providing services that reach the community, particularly in remote areas. The Teras Madukara Program is a concrete initiative undertaken by the Purwakarta Regency government in response to the needs of residents who face difficulties accessing public services. Prior to this program, residents—especially those in remote areas—struggled to access services because the Bale Madukara Public Service Mall was located in the city center; this made it difficult for residents to access services, as the distance to the city center was quite far (Rizal, 2023).

By way of comparison, a similar program was also implemented by the Wonosobo Regency Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil) in collaboration with the Wonosobo Branch of PT Pos Indonesia, establishing a document delivery service for the public. This service innovation is named "Dokkar

Salman,” an acronym for “we deliver your civil registration documents safely to your address.” Just like the Teras Madukara program, this initiative emerged from a desire to maximize service delivery to the public. This initiative was inspired by and . Before the launch of “Dokkar Salman,” document retrieval was still done in person, which posed difficulties for the public—especially in remote areas. Therefore, this program was launched with the hope of making it easier for the public to receive the documents they requested, such as family cards (KK), birth certificates, ID cards (KTP), and others. With the Dokkar Salman program, the process of obtaining any type of document has become much easier; residents simply need to register online, wait for the documents to be processed, and the completed documents will be delivered directly to their specified address. Each document delivery per address, regardless of the number of documents, is charged a flat fee of just Rp. 10,000. In each subdistrict of Wonosobo, there are already 3–4 postal office employees (Diki, 2023).

Therefore, the Teras Madukara program can be said to align with Rondinelli’s approach to local government responsiveness. This can also be compared to another local government—Wonosobo Regency—which has developed a public service innovation called Dokkar Salman. Like the Teras Madukara program, Dokkar Salman shares the same goals and objectives: to facilitate public access to services, both in urban areas and in remote regions. Ultimately, this program will result in the equitable distribution of services to the entire community, and all segments of society will be able to enjoy access to the services provided by the local government.

An agency’s ability to meet the demand for public goods reflects its efficiency and effectiveness in managing its resources to provide targeted services that address community needs. Indicators of a well-functioning agency include the ability to identify community needs, plan services through participatory processes, and distribute services equitably to all segments of society (Muluk, 2009). Teras Madukara has already implemented these principles, as evidenced by the Teras Madukara program, which is currently active in five subdistricts in Purwakarta Regency—namely Plered, Wanayasa, Campaka, Jatiluhur, and Maniis—all of which are geographically remote areas, particularly Maniis. (Investasi Purwakarta, 2023)

In addition, Teras Madukara also provides 407 services, including passport issuance; specifically, there are 342 business licensing services, 48 non-business licensing services, 4 information services, 3 online district court hearing services, 2 religious court services, 2 immigration services, and 6 Taspen services (Firmansyah, 2023). This initiative by the Purwakarta Regency government represents an effective use of resources to address accessibility challenges and respond to the aspirations of the community, particularly in remote areas. Thus, it can be said that the local government not only provides services but also brings public services closer to the community so that the community’s service needs can be met optimally and are easily accessible. Notably, the Bale Madukara One-Stop Service Center (MPP) is now open on weekends—Saturdays and Sundays—from 8:00 AM to 12:00 PM WIB. This initiative is driven by the increasing demand from the residents of Purwakarta Regency for public services. Moreover, these weekend services are not limited to the Bale Madukara MPP but also apply to the Teras Madukara service points located in the subdistricts (Purwakartakab, 2025). This demonstrates that the Purwakarta Regency government is utilizing decentralization policies as part of its ongoing effort to meet the needs of its residents, particularly regarding public services.

In line with the Teras Madukara program, there is a similar program for comparison implemented by the local government of another regency: the Cedak Mas

program—an acronym for “Cepat, Dekat Masyarakat” (Fast, Close to the Community)—which is carried out by the Population and Civil Registration Office of Tuban Regency. The Cedak Mas program is a population administration service program of the Tuban Regency Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil), aimed at simplifying and bringing services closer to the community; from the creation to the printing of population documents, these can be completed solely at the sub-district Integrated Service Units (Widyaningtyas & Noviyanti, 2023:151). Thus, the public does not have to visit the Disdukcapil office or the Public Service Mall in person. Before this program was implemented, residents had to make multiple trips to complete the requirements if they were not met. Similar to Purwakarta Regency, Tuban Regency also faces distinct geographical challenges. Therefore, the local government Tuban Tuban has developed a new innovation called “Cedak Mas.” With this program, services—ranging from the issuance of documents such as Birth/Death Certificates, Family Cards, e-ID cards, Child Identity Cards (KIA), and other civil registration documents can be processed at the Subdistrict Integrated Service Units (UPT). Residents no longer need to visit the Dispendukcapil office or the Public Service Mall located in the city center (Widyaningtyas & Noviyanti, 2023:155).

The establishment of Teras Madukara and Cedak Mas represents a concrete initiative undertaken by the local government through decentralization policies, enabling the local government to meet the demand for public services effectively and efficiently. This is because both facilities adhere to the principles of equitable access, resource efficiency, and adaptation to their respective geographical conditions. Teras Madukara can be considered superior to Cedak Mas because it offers a wider range of services by utilizing a mini-MPP scheme at the subdistrict level. Meanwhile, Cedak Mas stands out more for its streamlining of bureaucracy in population services and its structured approach through subdistrict technical implementation units (UPT).

The quality of a public service cannot be measured solely by the number of services provided, but must also be assessed based on the level of public satisfaction with those services (Muluk, 2009:8). Teras Madukara can be said to have been quite effective in increasing public satisfaction with the services and access provided, especially for communities living far from the city center. This can be seen in the expansion of the Teras Madukara program, which initially covered only three subdistricts—Plered, Wanayasa, and Campaka—and has now been expanded to five with the addition of Jatiluhur and Maniis subdistricts (Purwakartakab, 2024). The expansion of the Teras Madukara program is not merely an increase in the number of locations; rather, it has received a positive response from the community because residents feel assisted by this program, as they no longer need to travel long distances to the Public Service Mall located in the city center. This is evident from the community satisfaction index (Source: Investasi Purwakarta, 2023)

Based on this index, public satisfaction with the services provided by Teras Madukara stands at 87.69%, indicating that the program has been well-received by the public as service users. This index not only reflects the physical aspects of service delivery but also demonstrates that the public feels they are being served appropriately and fairly. In addition to this index result, the Bale Madukara Public Service Center (MPP) also received the highest rating from the Indonesian Ombudsman in 2022 with a score of 95.76 (Purwakartakab, 2025). Furthermore, the Bale Madukara Public Service Center was awarded the title of “Excellent Public Service Center.” This award was granted based on Decision of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform of the Republic of Indonesia regarding the Results of the 2024 MPP Implementation Evaluation; out of a total of 20 MPPs that

successfully earned the “Excellent” designation, the Bale Madukara MPP was one of those selected and received this designation (Bale Madukara MPP, 2025). This demonstrates that the public services provided by the Bale Madukara Public Service Mall—particularly in conjunction with the Teras Madukara program, which assists in serving remote areas—represent a strong commitment to delivering fast, efficient, and high-quality services to the community.

5. Conclusion

The Teras Madukara program can be considered a new breakthrough in the implementation of decentralization policies carried out by the Purwakarta Regency government. This program aims to improve efficiency, accessibility, and the quality of public services, particularly given the geographical challenges of Purwakarta Regency, which is characterized by hilly terrain and remote areas. The Teras Madukara program has successfully addressed the community’s aspirations for faster and more accessible services.

A comparison with other service innovation programs from different regions—such as Dokkar Salman from Wonosobo Regency and Cedak Mas from Tuban Regency—shows that the Teras Madukara program holds greater value than both of those programs. This is because the scope of the Teras Madukara service itself is a mini-service model of the sub-district-based MPP Bale Madukara. This makes Teras Madukara one of the service innovations that can serve as an example in implementing decentralization policies at the local level. However, this does not rule out the possibility of shortcomings, such as a lack of public outreach; even though the program has reached remote areas, it is still possible that some residents remain unaware of these services. Similarly to Teras Madukara, programs in other regions—such as Dokkar Salman and Cedak Mas—face the same shortcoming: insufficient public outreach regarding the services provided. Thus, it can be said that in the implementation of decentralization policies by each local government—particularly in bringing services closer to the people—it is certainly possible that some residents remain unaware of the service programs being offered. This is because each region—including Purwakarta, Wonosobo, and Tuban Regencies—faces the same challenge: their geographical terrain, which includes hilly and remote areas.

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