

# Strengthening Local Government Capacity in Central Lombok Regency, Indonesia

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## Abstract:

Public service innovation has become an important strategy for improving government performance and enhancing service quality in the era of decentralization and digital governance. Local governments are increasingly required to develop innovative approaches to respond to growing public demands for efficient, transparent, and accessible services. This study aims to analyze the implementation of public service innovation in Central Lombok Regency, Indonesia, particularly in improving the effectiveness and accessibility of government services. The research employs a qualitative case study approach to explore the dynamics of innovation within local public service institutions. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with government officials, analysis of policy documents, and observation of service practices in relevant public service agencies. The findings reveal that public service innovation in Central Lombok is primarily manifested through administrative simplification, integrated service delivery through the One-Stop Integrated Service Office (DPMPTSP), and the adoption of digital service platforms. These innovations have contributed to improving service efficiency, reducing bureaucratic complexity, and increasing transparency in service delivery. However, the study also identifies several challenges, including limited digital infrastructure, uneven digital literacy among citizens, and constraints in human resource capacity within local government institutions. These limitations affect the sustainability and scalability of innovation initiatives. The study concludes that strengthening institutional capacity, technological infrastructure, and collaborative governance is essential to ensure the sustainability of public service innovation. The findings contribute to the broader literature on public sector innovation, particularly in the context of decentralized governance in developing countries.

**Keywords:** public service innovation; digital governance; public administration reform; local government; Central Lombok.

## 1. Introduction

Public service delivery represents one of the fundamental responsibilities of government institutions in ensuring social welfare, economic development, and citizen satisfaction. The quality of public services has increasingly become an important indicator of government performance and legitimacy in modern governance systems. Governments are expected to deliver services that are efficient, transparent, accountable, and responsive to public needs. However, many countries, particularly developing nations, still face challenges related to bureaucratic inefficiency, limited institutional capacity, and complex administrative procedures that often reduce the effectiveness of public service delivery (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Osborne & Brown, 2011).

The growing expectations of citizens toward better public services have encouraged governments to reform their administrative systems and improve governance performance. Communities today are more informed and demand public services that are not only accessible but also innovative and responsive to their needs. As a result, the concept of innovation in the public sector has become increasingly prominent in the study of public administration. Innovation in the public sector refers to the introduction and implementation of new ideas, processes, or service delivery mechanisms that significantly improve government performance and public value creation (Hartley, 2005; Bason, 2018).

Innovation plays an essential role in addressing the limitations of traditional bureaucratic systems. Traditional public administration models are often characterized by hierarchical structures, rigid procedures, and slow decision-making processes. Such characteristics can hinder the ability of government institutions to respond effectively to rapidly changing societal demands. Consequently, innovation has emerged as a strategic instrument to enhance public sector performance, improve efficiency, and increase public trust in government institutions (Mulgan, 2014; OECD, 2017).

In recent decades, public sector innovation has also been closely associated with broader governance reforms, including decentralization, digital governance, and collaborative governance. These reforms aim to transform traditional government structures into more flexible and adaptive systems capable of addressing complex societal challenges. Decentralization policies, in particular, have empowered local governments to play a more active role in delivering public services tailored to local needs and conditions (Walker, 2008; Dunleavy et al., 2006).

Indonesia has implemented various governance reforms to improve the quality of public services. Since the adoption of decentralization policies in the early 2000s, local governments have been granted broader authority in managing administrative functions and delivering services to citizens. The decentralization framework was strengthened through Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government, which provides greater autonomy for regional governments to manage local affairs and develop policies that reflect regional priorities (Pramusinto & Wicaksono, 2019).

Alongside decentralization, the Indonesian government has also implemented a national bureaucratic reform agenda aimed at improving governance effectiveness and strengthening public service delivery. One of the key objectives of bureaucratic reform is to enhance the quality, transparency, and efficiency of government services. Public service improvement has therefore become a central element in the national governance reform agenda (Dwiyanto, 2020).

Various initiatives have been introduced to encourage innovation in public service delivery across Indonesia. These initiatives include the development of public service malls (Mal Pelayanan Publik), integrated licensing systems, and digital-based government services. Such innovations aim to simplify administrative procedures, reduce service delivery time, and improve citizen satisfaction with government services (Pramusinto, 2015; Bason, 2018).

Digital transformation has also become an important driver of public service innovation. The use of digital technologies allows governments to deliver services more efficiently and transparently through online platforms. Digital governance enables citizens to access public services more easily while reducing bureaucratic complexity and administrative costs. Consequently, digital innovation has become a key strategy in modernizing public administration systems (Dunleavy et al., 2006; United Nations, 2020).

At the local government level, innovation in public service delivery is particularly important because local governments are the closest administrative institutions to citizens. Local governments are responsible for providing a wide range of essential services, including population administration, licensing, health services, and social welfare programs. Therefore, improving the quality of public services at the local level is essential for strengthening governance and promoting regional development (Walker, 2008; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

One region in Indonesia that has experienced significant socio-economic transformation in recent years is Central Lombok Regency, located in West Nusa Tenggara Province. Central Lombok has become an important regional development area, particularly after the establishment of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone (SEZ) as a strategic national tourism destination. The development of the Mandalika tourism area has significantly increased economic activities and infrastructure development in the region.

The Mandalika tourism development program has attracted both domestic and international investment and has become a major driver of economic growth in Central Lombok. The area is also the venue for several international events, including the MotoGP Mandalika, which has further increased global attention toward the region. Such developments have significantly increased the demand for efficient public services, particularly in licensing, tourism services, infrastructure management, and population administration.

Tourism statistics indicate that visitor arrivals in Central Lombok have increased significantly in recent years. Data show that tourist visits to the region reached approximately 1.2 million visitors in 2024, compared to around 827,047 visitors in 2023, reflecting substantial growth in tourism activities (BPS Lombok Tengah, 2024). The increase in tourist arrivals has created both opportunities and challenges for the local government, particularly in ensuring that public services are able to support tourism development and economic growth.

In addition to tourism growth, Central Lombok also faces increasing demographic pressures that influence public service delivery. The population of Central Lombok Regency reached approximately 1.1 million people in 2023, making it one of the most populous regencies in West Nusa Tenggara Province (BPS Lombok Tengah, 2024). Population growth and urban expansion have increased the demand for various public services, including civil registration services, licensing services, health services, and social assistance programs.

The increasing complexity of public service demands requires local governments to develop innovative approaches in service delivery. Innovation can help governments improve administrative efficiency, reduce bureaucratic barriers, and enhance service accessibility for citizens. Moreover, innovation can also strengthen institutional capacity and improve coordination among government agencies in delivering integrated public services (Osborne & Brown, 2011; Bason, 2018).

However, despite the growing importance of public service innovation, many local governments still face significant challenges in implementing sustainable innovations. Factors such as limited technological infrastructure, uneven human resource capacity, and bureaucratic resistance to organizational change often hinder the effectiveness of innovation initiatives in the public sector (Mulgan, 2014; OECD, 2017).

In regions experiencing rapid economic transformation such as Central Lombok, these challenges become even more significant. The rapid development of tourism and investment activities requires local governments to improve their administrative capacity and service delivery mechanisms. Failure to adapt public services to these changes may lead to inefficiencies, administrative bottlenecks, and reduced investor confidence.

Despite the strategic importance of Central Lombok in Indonesia's regional development agenda, academic studies examining public service innovation in this region remain limited. Most previous studies on public service innovation in Indonesia focus on large metropolitan areas such as Jakarta, Surabaya, and Bandung, where administrative capacity and technological infrastructure are relatively more advanced (Pramusinto & Wicaksono, 2019).

Therefore, examining public service innovation in Central Lombok Regency provides an important opportunity to understand how local governments adapt their service delivery systems in response to rapid socio-economic transformation. Understanding the dynamics of innovation in this context can contribute to the broader literature on local governance, public sector innovation, and regional development in emerging economies.

## 2. Literature Review

### A. Public Service Innovation

Innovation in the public sector has become a critical topic in contemporary public administration studies, particularly as governments face increasing pressure to improve the efficiency and quality of public services. Public sector innovation refers to the introduction and implementation of new ideas, processes, services, or governance mechanisms that significantly improve public value and government performance (Osborne & Brown, 2011). Unlike innovation in the private sector, which is primarily driven by profit motives, public sector innovation focuses on improving service quality, accountability, and societal welfare (Mulgan, 2014).

Hartley (2005) argues that innovation in the public sector can take several forms, including service innovation, process innovation, governance innovation, and conceptual innovation. Service innovation refers to the development of new or improved services delivered to citizens, while process innovation focuses on improving internal administrative procedures and service delivery mechanisms. Governance innovation involves new forms of collaboration between government institutions and external stakeholders, including the private sector and civil society organizations.

The importance of innovation in the public sector is also emphasized in the concept of public value creation, which highlights the role of government in generating social value through effective public service delivery. According to Moore (1995), public sector organizations must continuously adapt their strategies and operational practices to ensure that public services remain relevant to changing societal needs.

Innovation in public services is often driven by external pressures such as technological advancements, economic transformation, and increasing public expectations. As societies become more digitally connected, citizens expect faster, more transparent, and more accessible public services. This shift has encouraged governments around the world to adopt innovative approaches in delivering services, including digital government systems and integrated service platforms (Bason, 2018).

However, innovation in the public sector is often more complex than innovation in private organizations. Public sector institutions must operate within strict regulatory frameworks and are often constrained by bureaucratic structures and political accountability mechanisms. As a result, successful innovation requires strong leadership, institutional support, and organizational learning (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

### B. Local Government and Public Service Delivery

Local governments play a crucial role in delivering public services because they are the closest administrative institutions to citizens. The decentralization of government authority in many countries has increased the responsibility of local governments in managing public services and addressing local development challenges. Decentralization allows local governments to design policies and service delivery mechanisms that are more responsive to local needs and conditions (Walker, 2008).

In the Indonesian context, decentralization has significantly transformed the structure of governance and public service delivery. Since the implementation of regional autonomy policies, local governments have gained broader authority in managing administrative functions and delivering services to citizens. This policy framework aims to improve governance effectiveness and strengthen the responsiveness of government institutions to community needs (Pramusinto & Wicaksono, 2019). Local governments are responsible for delivering a wide range of essential services, including population administration, licensing, healthcare services, education services, and social welfare programs. The quality of these services directly affects citizens' perceptions of government performance and legitimacy (Dwiyanto, 2020).

However, many local governments still face significant challenges in delivering high-quality public services. These challenges include limited financial resources, inadequate human resource capacity, bureaucratic complexity, and weak coordination among government institutions. Such constraints often hinder the ability

of local governments to implement innovative service delivery mechanisms (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). To address these challenges, local governments are increasingly encouraged to adopt innovative approaches in public service delivery. Innovation can help simplify administrative procedures, reduce service delivery time, and improve transparency and accountability in government services. Furthermore, innovation can enhance the capacity of local governments to respond to emerging development challenges and improve citizen satisfaction (Osborne & Brown, 2011).

### **C. Digital Transformation in Public Services**

Digital transformation has become one of the most significant drivers of public sector innovation in recent decades. The rapid development of information and communication technologies has created new opportunities for governments to improve public service delivery through digital platforms. Digital governance enables governments to deliver services more efficiently, transparently, and inclusively (Dunleavy et al., 2006). The concept of digital-era governance emphasizes the integration of government services through digital technologies to improve administrative efficiency and enhance citizen engagement. Digital platforms allow citizens to access public services online, reducing the need for face-to-face interactions and minimizing bureaucratic procedures (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

In addition to improving service efficiency, digital transformation can also enhance transparency and accountability in public administration. Digital systems enable governments to monitor service performance, track administrative processes, and provide real-time information to citizens. These capabilities contribute to the development of more open and accountable governance systems (United Nations, 2020).

However, the implementation of digital public services also faces several challenges, particularly in developing regions. These challenges include limited technological infrastructure, unequal access to digital technologies, and limited digital literacy among citizens. Without adequate institutional capacity and technological resources, digital service initiatives may fail to achieve their intended outcomes (OECD, 2017). Therefore, the success of digital public service innovation depends not only on technological adoption but also on organizational capacity, leadership support, and effective governance frameworks.

### **D. Institutional Capacity and Innovation Sustainability**

Institutional capacity is one of the key factors influencing the success of public sector innovation. Institutional capacity refers to the ability of government organizations to effectively design, implement, and sustain policies and programs. Strong institutional capacity enables government institutions to manage complex administrative processes and respond effectively to changing societal demands (Bason, 2018). According to Osborne and Brown (2011), innovation in the public sector requires supportive institutional environments that encourage experimentation, collaboration, and organizational learning. Government institutions must develop internal capabilities such as skilled human resources, effective leadership, and adaptive organizational cultures to sustain innovation initiatives.

Leadership also plays a crucial role in promoting innovation within government organizations. Leaders who support innovation can encourage risk-taking, promote collaboration, and create organizational environments that facilitate creativity and problem-solving. In contrast, rigid bureaucratic cultures and risk-averse leadership styles can inhibit innovation and limit the ability of government institutions to adapt to new challenges (Mulgan, 2014). In addition to internal institutional factors, collaboration with external stakeholders is also important in sustaining public service innovation. Collaboration between government institutions, private sector organizations, academic institutions, and civil society groups can provide new ideas, resources, and expertise that support innovation initiatives. Such collaborative approaches are increasingly recognized as essential for addressing complex governance challenges in modern societies (Bason, 2018).

## **E. Public Service Innovation in Developing Regions**

The implementation of public service innovation in developing regions presents unique challenges and opportunities. In many developing countries, governments must deliver public services in contexts characterized by limited resources, uneven infrastructure development, and diverse socio-economic conditions. Despite these constraints, innovation can play an important role in improving governance performance in developing regions. Innovative service delivery mechanisms can help governments overcome resource limitations by improving efficiency and reducing administrative costs. Furthermore, innovation can enhance the accessibility of public services for marginalized communities and remote populations (OECD, 2017).

However, the success of innovation initiatives in developing regions often depends on the ability of local governments to adapt innovation strategies to local contexts. Local governments must consider factors such as community needs, institutional capacity, and technological infrastructure when designing and implementing innovation programs.

In the Indonesian context, several local governments have successfully implemented innovative public service programs, such as integrated service centers, digital licensing systems, and community-based service initiatives. These innovations demonstrate the potential of local governments to develop creative solutions to governance challenges. Nevertheless, empirical studies examining the dynamics of public service innovation in emerging regions—particularly regions experiencing rapid economic transformation such as Central Lombok—remain relatively limited. This limitation highlights the importance of further research to understand how innovation in public service delivery can support sustainable regional development.

## **3. Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach to analyze the implementation of public service innovation in Central Lombok Regency, Indonesia. A qualitative approach is considered appropriate because the study aims to explore the processes, institutional dynamics, and governance practices underlying public service innovation within the local government context. Qualitative research allows researchers to gain an in-depth understanding of social phenomena by examining perspectives, experiences, and interactions among actors involved in public service delivery (Creswell & Creswell, 2018).

The research adopts a case study design, focusing on Central Lombok Regency as the primary unit of analysis. Case study research enables an in-depth exploration of complex governance processes in a real-life context and allows researchers to examine how public service innovation is implemented within specific institutional environments (Yin, 2018). The selection of Central Lombok Regency as the research site is based on its strategic importance as a rapidly developing region, particularly following the development of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone and the increasing demand for efficient public services.

The research was conducted in Central Lombok Regency, West Nusa Tenggara Province, Indonesia. This region has experienced significant socio-economic transformation in recent years due to tourism development, infrastructure expansion, and increasing investment activities. These developments have significantly increased the demand for effective and innovative public services, particularly in sectors such as licensing, population administration, and investment services.

Several government institutions involved in public service delivery were included in this study, particularly agencies responsible for administrative and licensing services. These institutions play a key role in implementing innovation initiatives aimed at improving service efficiency and accessibility.

## 4. Results

### A. Overview of Public Service Innovation in Central Lombok Regency

The findings of this study indicate that the local government of Central Lombok Regency has implemented several public service innovations aimed at improving service efficiency, accessibility, and administrative transparency. These innovations have emerged as a response to increasing public demands for faster and more accessible government services, particularly in the context of regional economic growth and tourism development in the Mandalika area.

Public service innovation in Central Lombok is primarily implemented through administrative simplification, the establishment of integrated service centers, and the adoption of digital technologies in public service delivery. These innovations reflect the broader national agenda of bureaucratic reform and public service improvement implemented by the Indonesian government (Dwiyanto, 2020).

The development of public service innovation in Central Lombok is also influenced by increasing pressure to improve administrative efficiency and attract investment, particularly after the development of the Mandalika Special Economic Zone. As economic activities expand, the local government must ensure that public services—especially licensing and administrative services—can effectively support regional development.

### B. Administrative Service Innovation

One of the most significant innovations identified in this study is the simplification of administrative procedures in public service delivery. Administrative services such as population registration, licensing, and civil documentation have been redesigned to reduce bureaucratic complexity and improve service accessibility. The Population and Civil Registration Office (Disdukcapil) of Central Lombok has introduced several innovations aimed at improving population administration services, including faster processing of identity cards, birth certificates, and family cards. These initiatives aim to reduce waiting times and simplify service procedures for citizens.

Administrative simplification is an important component of public service innovation because traditional bureaucratic systems are often characterized by lengthy procedures and excessive administrative requirements. Simplifying administrative procedures can significantly improve service efficiency and increase citizen satisfaction (Osborne & Brown, 2011).

The findings indicate that citizens perceive administrative simplification as one of the most important improvements in local public service delivery. Shorter processing times and clearer administrative requirements have contributed to increased public trust in government services.

### C. Integrated Public Service System

Another major innovation implemented in Central Lombok is the development of an integrated public service system through the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Service Office (DPMPTSP). This integrated service system aims to provide multiple government services in a single administrative platform. The integrated service approach allows citizens and investors to access various services—such as business licensing, investment permits, and administrative documents—through a centralized service system. This approach reduces bureaucratic fragmentation and improves coordination among government agencies.

Integrated public service systems have been widely recognized as an effective strategy for improving service efficiency and reducing administrative burdens. By consolidating multiple services into a single institutional framework, governments can streamline administrative procedures and improve service delivery outcomes (Pramusinto, 2015). The implementation of integrated service systems in Central Lombok has also contributed to improving the investment climate in the region. Simplified licensing procedures and faster administrative processing have made it easier for investors to establish businesses and participate in regional

economic development. However, the findings also indicate that institutional coordination remains a challenge in the implementation of integrated services. Some government agencies still maintain sectoral administrative practices that limit the effectiveness of service integration.

#### **D. Digital Innovation in Public Services**

Digital transformation has also become an important component of public service innovation in Central Lombok. Several government agencies have begun to adopt digital technologies to improve service accessibility and administrative efficiency. Digital-based services allow citizens to access certain public services through online platforms, reducing the need for physical visits to government offices. These services include online administrative applications, digital licensing systems, and electronic documentation processes.

The adoption of digital technologies in public service delivery reflects broader trends in digital governance, where governments use information and communication technologies to improve service efficiency and transparency (Dunleavy et al., 2006). Digital service innovation provides several advantages for both government institutions and citizens. For government agencies, digital systems help improve administrative efficiency, reduce operational costs, and enhance service monitoring. For citizens, digital services provide greater convenience and accessibility.

However, the implementation of digital services also faces several challenges. The study found that limited digital literacy among some citizens and uneven internet infrastructure in rural areas can hinder the effectiveness of digital service initiatives. These findings are consistent with previous studies indicating that technological infrastructure and human resource capacity are critical factors influencing the success of digital public services (OECD, 2017).

#### **E. Institutional Capacity and Leadership in Innovation**

Institutional capacity plays a crucial role in supporting the sustainability of public service innovation in Central Lombok. The findings indicate that leadership commitment and organizational support are important factors influencing the success of innovation initiatives. Government leaders who support innovation can create an organizational environment that encourages experimentation, collaboration, and continuous improvement in public service delivery. Leadership support is particularly important in overcoming bureaucratic resistance to organizational change.

According to Bason (2018), leadership is a key driver of public sector innovation because it shapes organizational culture and influences the willingness of government institutions to adopt new ideas and practices. In the case of Central Lombok, leadership commitment at the regional government level has encouraged several government agencies to develop innovative service programs. However, the sustainability of these innovations still depends on the development of institutional capacity, including human resource development and organizational learning.

#### **F. Challenges in Implementing Public Service Innovation**

Despite the progress made in public service innovation, the findings of this study indicate that several challenges remain in the implementation of innovation initiatives in Central Lombok. One of the major challenges is limited human resource capacity in managing innovative service systems. Some government officials still lack adequate technical skills and digital competencies required to operate digital service platforms effectively.

Another challenge is the uneven development of technological infrastructure across the region. While digital services are increasingly adopted in urban areas, citizens in rural areas may face difficulties accessing online services due to limited internet connectivity. Bureaucratic culture also remains a challenge in the implementation of innovation initiatives. Traditional administrative practices and hierarchical decision-making structures can slow down the adoption of new service delivery mechanisms.

These challenges highlight the importance of strengthening institutional capacity, improving digital infrastructure, and promoting organizational culture change to ensure the sustainability of public service innovation.

### **G. Implications for Local Governance**

The findings of this study provide several important implications for improving governance and public service delivery in Central Lombok and similar regions. **First**, public service innovation can significantly improve administrative efficiency and service accessibility when supported by strong institutional commitment and leadership. **Second**, digital transformation offers significant opportunities for improving public service delivery, but its success depends on the availability of technological infrastructure and digital literacy among citizens. **Third**, integrated service systems can improve coordination among government agencies and reduce bureaucratic complexity, but effective implementation requires strong institutional collaboration.

Overall, the experience of Central Lombok demonstrates that innovation in public service delivery can play an important role in supporting regional development and improving governance performance in emerging regions.

## **5. Conclusion**

This study examined the implementation of public service innovation in Central Lombok Regency, Indonesia, particularly in the context of regional economic transformation and increasing demand for efficient public services. The findings indicate that the local government has implemented several innovations aimed at improving service accessibility, administrative efficiency, and transparency in public service delivery.

One of the most prominent forms of innovation identified in this study is the simplification of administrative procedures in public services such as population administration and civil registration. Administrative simplification has helped reduce bureaucratic complexity and improve service efficiency, enabling citizens to access government services more easily and quickly. These findings support previous studies that highlight the importance of administrative reform in improving public service performance (Osborne & Brown, 2011).

Another important innovation is the development of integrated public service systems through the Investment and One-Stop Integrated Service Office (DPMPSTSP). The integrated service approach allows multiple administrative services to be provided through a single institutional platform, thereby reducing bureaucratic fragmentation and improving coordination among government agencies. This approach has contributed to improving the investment climate in Central Lombok by simplifying licensing procedures and reducing administrative barriers for businesses (Pramusinto, 2015).

The study also finds that digital transformation has become an important driver of public service innovation in the region. Several government agencies have adopted digital platforms to provide administrative services more efficiently and transparently. Digital service innovations enable citizens to access services online, thereby reducing the need for physical visits to government offices and improving service convenience. These findings are consistent with the broader trend of digital governance, which emphasizes the use of information technology to enhance government performance and service delivery (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

However, despite the progress made in public service innovation, several challenges remain. These challenges include limited digital infrastructure in certain areas, uneven digital literacy among citizens, and limited human resource capacity in managing digital service systems. In addition, bureaucratic culture and institutional coordination issues can also hinder the sustainability of innovation initiatives.

The findings of this study highlight the importance of strengthening institutional capacity and leadership commitment in supporting sustainable public service innovation. Local governments must continue to develop human resource capabilities, improve technological infrastructure, and promote collaborative governance practices to ensure that innovation initiatives can effectively address the evolving needs of citizens.

Overall, this research demonstrates that public service innovation can play a crucial role in improving governance performance and supporting regional development in emerging regions such as Central Lombok. Future research may further explore comparative cases of public service innovation in other regions to deepen understanding of governance innovation in decentralized administrative systems.

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