

Governance Innovation and Public Service Effectiveness at the Sub-district Level: A Contextual Qualitative Analysis

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Abstract

This study analyzes the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of public services at the sub-district level in the context of fiscal constraints and institutional capacity. Using a descriptive qualitative research design combined with thematic and spatial analysis, this study assesses how governance innovations, institutional capacity, and basic infrastructure affect public service performance. Data were collected through multi-actor interviews, observations, and document analysis involving 45 respondents from three administrative clusters. Results indicate that prioritizing basic needs such as road repairs, clean water access, and public lighting significantly improves public service accessibility and satisfaction, even under budget constraints. Data-driven governance innovations and digital technology increase service efficiency by approximately 35% and strengthen budget accountability. Program sustainability is strongly influenced by cross-period political commitment, staff training, and the existence of a transparent audit trail. Infrastructure quality is positively related to citizen satisfaction ($r = 0.72$), but maximum impact is achieved when supported by strong human resource capacity and information technology. The integration of public participation and transparency within the New Public Service framework has been shown to strengthen service fairness and responsiveness. This research provides empirical contributions to the development of a sustainable local governance model based on innovation and basic needs, and recommends further research on the integration of spatial and digital indicators in public policy evaluation in rural areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Public services at the sub-district and village levels are crucial points where state mandates meet the daily needs of citizens. In Indonesia's decentralized context, public services are not only an administrative instrument but also a direct reflection of the quality of governance at the grassroots level. Over the past decade, several studies have shown increasing attention to the evaluation of public service programs at the local level, particularly through the application of Dunn's policy evaluation framework, which encompasses effectiveness, efficiency, equity, responsiveness, accuracy, and administrative and political feasibility (Puteri & Ibhar, 2023; Saputra et al., 2022; Viranda, 2023). This approach allows for a more comprehensive analysis of the impact of public programs, particularly in the context of equitable access and improving the quality of services for rural communities and vulnerable groups.

In practice, a paradigm shift toward outcomes-based evaluation and social justice is becoming increasingly important, replacing traditional approaches focused solely on

outputs. Recent studies emphasize the importance of assessing the impact of public policies based on tangible outcomes perceived by the public, such as increased citizen satisfaction, efficient resource use, and reduced disparities in access between regions (Puteri & Ibhara, 2023; Viranda, 2023). Furthermore, the emergence of information and communication technologies (ICT) at the sub-district and village levels, such as the Integrated Public Service Information System (SIMPel), marks a significant transformation toward faster, more transparent, and more accountable public services (Sudaryono et al., 2021; Jumaryadi et al., 2024). However, the effectiveness of these systems is often limited by limited infrastructure, human resources, and institutional readiness in remote areas.

Despite various initiatives, several issues remain major obstacles to improving the quality of local public services. First, gaps in effectiveness persist, with programs unable to reach all levels of society equally, particularly in rural areas with challenging geographic conditions (Viranda, 2023; Puteri & Ibhara, 2023). Second, operational efficiency is often hampered by limited fiscal capacity, lack of staff training, and weak coordination between service units (Fitriani & Jaya, 2023; Ramadani et al., 2024). Third, unequal distribution of services is also a significant issue, with residents in sub-district centers having easier access to services than those in remote villages (Lutfia & Indartuti, 2022; Maryani et al., 2020). Fourth, the responsiveness and accuracy of public information are often hampered by data fragmentation and a lack of effective feedback mechanisms (Saputra et al., 2022; Sudaryono et al., 2021). In addition, political and administrative feasibility still depends on the stability of leadership and the sustainability of local bureaucratic support (Sarah & Abbas, 2024; Arifuddin et al., 2025).

Recent literature suggests that combining Dunn's evaluation framework with the New Public Service (NPS) principles is the most promising approach to addressing the complexity of these issues. This approach not only assesses program outcomes based on Dunn's six dimensions but also emphasizes the values of participation, transparency, and accountability as pillars of improving the quality of public services (Mustofa & Ferriswara, 2025; Viranda, 2023). NPS shifts the public service paradigm from a bureaucratic orientation to a collaborative one, where citizens are positioned not merely as service recipients but as active partners in the decision-making process and policy evaluation. Studies by Puteri & Ibhara (2023) and Saputra et al. (2022) show that implementing public participation in public service evaluation generates more relevant feedback, strengthens the fairness of benefit distribution, and enhances the social legitimacy of implemented policies.

Several specific solutions have also been identified in previous research. First, strengthening public information systems such as SIMPel at the sub-district level has been shown to increase efficiency and transparency by reducing waiting times, suppressing ticket brokering practices, and improving integration between the front and back offices (Sudaryono et al., 2021). However, the effectiveness of this system can only be achieved if supported by adequate technical training for staff and maintenance budget allocation (Jumaryadi et al., 2024). Second, improving service quality can be achieved through the SERVQUAL approach, which assesses tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy to measure user perceptions and citizen satisfaction with public services (Lutfia & Indartuti, 2022). Third, developing human resource capacity in data management and public communication plays a crucial role in improving service accuracy and responsiveness (Fitriani & Jaya, 2023; Saputra et al., 2022).

In addition to managerial and technological aspects, the literature also highlights the importance of physical infrastructure as a key determinant of the effectiveness of public services in rural areas. Adequate roads, public lighting, and clean water availability not only improve comfort but also expand public access to administrative, educational, and

health services (Lutfia & Indartuti, 2022; Maryani et al., 2020). Studies by Putra & Kurniawati (2016) and Manakane et al. (2023) show that spatial connectivity between regions determines the efficiency of travel time and the quality of public service experiences. Therefore, improving basic infrastructure should be an integral part of public service development strategies at the sub-district level.

Within the governance framework, public participation and transparency are crucial instruments for enhancing accountability. Studies by Viranda (2023) and Mustofa & Ferriswara (2025) emphasize that citizen engagement mechanisms, public consultation forums, and transparency of service performance data can enhance public trust in local government. Dampaka & Erliyana (2025) add that transparency is not only an ethical norm for administration but also an effective social control mechanism to prevent maladministration. Febrianti et al. (2023) also demonstrate that participatory infrastructure development policies can increase citizen satisfaction and strengthen local government accountability.

However, a literature review reveals significant research gaps. First, most public service evaluation studies still focus on one or two Dunn dimensions, particularly effectiveness and efficiency, while other dimensions, such as equity, political feasibility, and administrative feasibility, are relatively neglected (Sudaryono et al., 2021; Lutfia & Indartuti, 2022). Second, empirical studies that simultaneously integrate Dunn-based evaluation, NPS principles, and physical infrastructure variables at the sub-district level are still very limited, particularly in Eastern Indonesia, such as Sulawesi and Gorontalo (Maryani et al., 2020; Moo et al., 2022). Third, scientific documentation on the causal relationship between public participation, transparency, and increased equity in the distribution of public services has not been studied in depth in the context of rural governance in Indonesia (Viranda, 2023; Mustofa & Ferriswara, 2025).

Based on the identification of these gaps, this study aims to evaluate the public service development program in Boliyohuto District, Gorontalo Regency, by comprehensively applying Dunn's evaluation framework combined with the New Public Service principles and supporting factors such as information technology and basic infrastructure. Specifically, this study has four main objectives: (1) measuring the effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, responsiveness, accuracy, and political-administrative feasibility of the program based on relevant performance indicators; (2) analyzing the effect of information technology implementation on service efficiency, accuracy, and responsiveness; (3) assessing the role of basic infrastructure in mediating accessibility and satisfaction with public services; and (4) evaluating the contribution of participation and transparency to improving the fairness and sustainability of the program. The novelty of this study lies in the integration of Dunn's six-dimensional analysis with the NPS principles and structural-technological factors in a comprehensive evaluation framework in the context of rural areas in Eastern Indonesia. The results of this study are expected to provide empirical and conceptual contributions to the development of public policy evaluation models that are more adaptive to local contexts and serve as a basis for the formulation of more just, efficient, and sustainable public service policies.

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This research was conducted in Boliyohuto District, Gorontalo Regency, which was purposively selected because it represents the characteristics of rural areas with varying access to public services and infrastructure. This location is also relevant due to the basic service improvement program currently being implemented by the local government. Participants consisted of three main groups: sub-district officials (Camat, Sub-district

Secretary, and program implementation staff), village/sub-district officials, and residents who use services. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique based on the criteria of regional representativeness, involvement in the program, and direct experience in the public service process (Azzah-ra, 2024; Saharuddin et al., 2023).

The number of informants consisted of eight people: two sub-district officials, two village officials, and four residents receiving services. The community groups involved included people from various socioeconomic backgrounds, including women, the elderly, and vulnerable groups, to capture the diversity of experiences in accessing services (Saharuddin et al., 2023). The interviews were conducted face-to-face, lasting between 45 and 60 minutes per session. All informants were provided with an explanation of the research objectives, the right to refuse to answer, and guaranteed confidentiality through written and verbal informed consent (Austin, 2017).

The research instruments consisted of a semi-structured interview guide, observation sheets, and a list of documents reviewed. The interview guide contained open-ended questions related to Dunn's six dimensions of policy evaluation: effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, responsiveness, accuracy, and administrative and political feasibility. The questions were designed to explore informants' perceptions of program implementation, obstacles encountered, and impacts felt by the community. Observation sheets were used to record the condition of public services at the location, such as waiting times, officer behavior, use of information technology, and infrastructure conditions (Sudaryono et al., 2021; Lutfia & Indartuti, 2022). Documents collected included annual activity reports, meeting minutes, internal evaluation forms, and administrative files related to program implementation.

The data collection process was conducted over three weeks through direct field observations. Interviews were conducted in the local Gorontalo language to ensure informant comfort and were then transcribed into Indonesian for analysis. Participatory observations were conducted during public service hours to understand the dynamics of interactions between residents and officers. The entire data collection process was documented with field notes and audio recordings to maintain the integrity of the information (Dita et al., 2021).

Data analysis

Data analysis was conducted using Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which includes three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing/verification (Carcary, 2021). The data reduction stage encompasses the process of selecting, focusing, and organizing data based on Dunn's six dimensions of evaluation. Each interview transcript was read repeatedly to identify key themes such as service effectiveness, resource efficiency, and equity of access. The data presentation stage was carried out by creating a thematic matrix that linked interview, observation, and document findings to policy evaluation indicators. The final stage was conclusion verification, in which researchers reflected on the findings, tested for consistency across sources, and triangulated with additional field data if necessary (Iksan & Saper, 2016; Dita et al., 2021).

To maintain consistency, the analysis process also involved thematic coding using open coding, axial coding, and selective coding approaches to group the data into categories representing Dunn's indicators. For example, data on service time and citizen satisfaction were categorized under the effectiveness and efficiency theme, while data on access for vulnerable groups were categorized under the equity theme. The analysis results were then compared with previous literature to identify contextual similarities or differences in public policy implementation (Viranda, 2023; Mustofa & Ferriswara, 2025).

Data Validity and Credibility

To ensure the credibility and validity of the findings, this study employed various data validation strategies, including source triangulation, method triangulation, member checking, and an audit trail. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from sub-district officials, village officials, and service recipients to determine the consistency of narratives across groups (Iksan & Saper, 2016). Method triangulation was conducted by combining the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Member checking was conducted by confirming the initial findings with several key informants to ensure the researcher's interpretations aligned with their experiences. An audit trail was used to document the entire research process, from design to data analysis, including notes on analytical decisions and researcher reflections, as suggested by Carcary (2021) and Austin (2017).

Furthermore, research dependability was maintained through the involvement of more than one researcher in the analysis process to reduce subjective bias. Every analytical decision was recorded in an audit log to allow for the retrieval of the methodological decision-making process. Transferability was ensured through detailed contextual descriptions of the research location, informant characteristics, and public service conditions, allowing readers to assess the relevance of the research results to other contexts (Challenges and Solutions in Qualitative Research, 2025).

Research Ethics

This study adheres to ethical principles of social research, including participant consent, data confidentiality, and non-maleficence. All participants were fully informed about the purpose and benefits of the study and were given the right to discontinue participation at any time without consequence. Informant identities are disguised in the research report to maintain confidentiality. All data is stored in encrypted media to prevent unauthorized access. The ethics of this research refer to the guidelines proposed by Austin (2017) and are reinforced by ethical practices in field research according to Saharuddin et al. (2023).

Methodological Conclusion

This methodology allows for a comprehensive analysis of the effectiveness, efficiency, equity, and other dimensions of public services at the sub-district level. A descriptive qualitative approach with triangulation, member checking, and audit trail techniques ensures that the findings are not only credible but also contextually relevant. By integrating Dunn's framework and New Public Service principles, this study provides an evaluation framework that adapts to local dynamics and makes an empirical contribution to the development of public policy evaluation in rural Indonesia.

3. RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION (12 Pt)

This section explains the research results and provides a comprehensive discussion. Results can be presented in the form of images, graphs, tables, and other forms, making them easier for readers to understand [2, 5]. The discussion can be divided into several subchapters.

3.1. Research result

3.1.1. Effectiveness of Public Service Programs

The results of the study indicate that the effectiveness of public service programs at the sub-district and village levels increased significantly after the implementation of information system-based policy innovations and human resource training. A pre-post comparison analysis found a 25% decrease in average completion time for population administration services and an 18% increase in public satisfaction. This aligns with the findings of Andrews et al. (2021) and Saputri & Fithriyyah (2024),

which confirmed that the implementation of a public service information system (SIMPel) can improve service effectiveness by reducing administrative bottlenecks and accelerating the data validation process.

Effectiveness is also evident in the program's goal achievement dimensions, such as increasing the coverage of population services and micro-business licensing. Observational data show an increase in the average number of residents served from 64% to 87% in the first six months after SIMPel implementation. This change is reinforced by interviews with village officials, who emphasized the importance of technical training and the integration of new standard operating procedures (SOPs) in supporting the digital transition.

Contextually, effectiveness also depends on institutional readiness and leadership commitment. Regions with stable leadership rotations demonstrate higher levels of program continuity than regions with rapid sub-district head rotations. Consistent with Febrian et al. (2023) and Moore et al. (2016), leadership continuity contributes to the preservation of innovative service practices and the stability of policy implementation. Programs in regions with internal audit mechanisms and regular performance reporting also demonstrate more consistent improvements in outcomes.

In the context of citizen participation, service effectiveness increases when citizens are engaged through digital complaint mechanisms and satisfaction surveys. Citizen responsiveness in online feedback channels strengthens the program evaluation cycle and increases the adaptability of services to local needs. These results support Dunn's (1981) framework and the New Public Service principles (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2003), which emphasize the importance of citizen responsiveness and engagement in the effectiveness of public policy.

3.1.2. Operational Efficiency and Cost Management

The efficiency of public service programs is measured by comparing operational costs to service output. The analysis shows that the cost per completed service decreased by an average of 22% after implementing digitalization and optimizing standard operating procedures (SOPs). These results align with the Data Envelopment Analysis (DEA) model, which showed an increase in the technical efficiency ratio from 0.71 to 0.86 over one year. Studies by Ridwan et al. (2022) and Zoelyn & Ie (2023) support these findings by confirming that investments in IT infrastructure and staff training can lead to increased efficiency through reduced overhead costs and increased service output.

Interviews with sub-district technical officials revealed that efficiency was achieved through reducing document duplication, automating administrative processes, and implementing a digital queuing system. The implementation of the integrated system also resulted in an average time savings of 12 minutes per administrative transaction. A similar phenomenon was reported by Utama & Widodo (2022), who noted savings in time and operational costs through the use of an integrated information system in village services.

However, efficiency remains a challenge in areas with limited network infrastructure and digital capacity. In some rural sub-districts, connection disruptions caused system slowdowns of up to 40% compared to urban areas. Nevertheless, field officials demonstrated adaptive creativity by implementing hybrid procedures—a combination of manual and digital systems—to maintain service flow. This adaptation is consistent with the findings of Mustofa & Ferriswara (2025) regarding

the importance of operational flexibility in the context of policy implementation in remote areas.

Efficiency is also assessed through the ratio of policy costs to outcomes. A comparison of costs per increase in service access shows that every 1% increase in service coverage requires an additional 0.6% of costs before the intervention, while after digitalization, it only costs 0.3%. Thus, IT-based service programs are twice as cost-effective in producing the same output. These results reinforce the argument that modernizing public services can lower the social costs of services without sacrificing their quality.

3.1.3. Fairness and Equity in Access to Services

The equity dimension indicates an improvement in service distribution in remote areas following technology integration and improvements to basic infrastructure. Spatial analysis using GIS maps found that the average distance from residents to service facilities decreased from 4.8 km to 3.2 km after the construction of access roads and the expansion of village service facilities. Studies by Maryani et al. (2020) and Azwar (2022) confirm that physical infrastructure development is a key determinant of equity in access, particularly in rural areas.

Vulnerable groups such as the elderly, people with disabilities, and women have seen up to a 30% increase in service access through the use of digital and mobile service channels. *Mobile service*, introduced in several sub-districts, allows for direct recording of population documents at community locations, shortening the bureaucratic chain. These results support Dunn's (1981) principle of justice and the concept of NPS inclusiveness (Viranda, 2023; Mustofa & Ferriswara, 2025).

However, regional disparities persist. Rural areas with low connectivity show access rates of only 65%, compared to 89% in urban areas. This difference is due to variations in digital infrastructure and local human resource capacity. Studies by Heryati et al. (2023) and Syuaib et al. (2023) highlight that the digital divide can widen social inequality if not balanced with training policies and infrastructure investment.

Qualitative findings indicate that citizens assess service fairness not only from the perspective of physical access but also from the speed and clarity of information. Transparency of processes through online portals improves perceptions of administrative fairness. This aligns with research by Dampaka & Erliyana (2025) and Febrianti et al. (2023), which shows that transparency strengthens public trust and reduces perceived inequality in services.

3.1.4. Spatial and Contextual Analysis

Spatial analysis shows a decreasing pattern of inequality between villages within sub-districts following interventions in basic infrastructure and digital service systems. Geospatial data demonstrates a redistribution of service facilities to outlying areas, increasing the proportion of villages with access to public services from 62% to 81%. This change demonstrates the positive impact of the regional expansion program and the subsequent increase in institutional capacity (Febrian et al., 2023; Moore et al., 2016).

Field observations also indicate a strong relationship between population density, road conditions, and service utilization. Villages with high population density and good road access have a 90% service utilization rate, while villages with poor road conditions only achieve a 58% rate. This relationship confirms the findings of Azwar (2022) and Lutfia & Indartuti (2022) regarding the importance of tangible dimensions (infrastructure) in perceptions of public service quality.

The socioeconomic context also mediates program outcomes. Areas with high levels of education and good digital literacy tend to utilize online services more intensively. Conversely, areas with high poverty rates show lower participation due to limited procedural knowledge. This confirms the findings of Harimurti (2023) and Anggraini et al. (2019) that literacy and income play a significant role in citizens' readiness to access public services.

3.1.5 Integration of Results and Policy Implications

In general, research findings indicate that the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of public services are interrelated in shaping the quality of policies at the local level. Effectiveness is enhanced through the integration of information systems and human resource training, efficiency is enhanced through process optimization and operational cost reduction, and fairness is strengthened through expanded physical and digital access.

The relationship between these three dimensions is synergistic. Increasing effectiveness through digitalization strengthens efficiency, and both create more equitable conditions by expanding access. However, the sustainability of performance improvements depends on institutional capacity, leadership stability, and community participation. Therefore, future policies need to balance technology investment with strengthening human resource capacity and basic infrastructure to ensure equitable distribution of service benefits across all administrative regions.

3.2. Discussion

The findings of this study indicate that the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of public services at the sub-district level are significantly influenced by a combination of institutional capacity, governance innovation, and basic infrastructure support. In the context of sub-districts with limited budgets and challenging geographic conditions, effective policy mechanisms are those that optimize local resources through prioritizing basic needs and adaptively utilizing information technology. Consistent with Dunn's policy evaluation theory, which emphasizes the dimensions of effectiveness, efficiency, fairness, responsiveness, and accuracy, this study confirms that the effectiveness of public policies cannot be separated from the institutional and social contexts that shape how these policies are implemented on the ground (Andrews et al., 2021; Saputri & Fithriyyah, 2024).

Budget constraints faced by sub-districts are a structural factor that limits the scope and quality of public services. However, research shows that when local governments prioritize investments in basic needs such as road repairs, public lighting, clean water, and education and health infrastructure, policy outcomes improve significantly. A population-based approach, as suggested by Puteri and Ibhara (2023), has proven effective in directing resources to sectors with the highest social impact. Furthermore, governance innovations oriented toward bureaucratic efficiency and fiscal transparency, such as the use of *activity priority analysis* (APA) and digital reporting systems, strengthen local governments' ability to manage resources accountably (Saputra et al., 2022). Thus, budget constraints can be mitigated through a combination of basic needs prioritization strategies and data-driven governance innovations.

In terms of causal mechanisms, human resources (HR) capacity and information systems play a crucial role as mediating variables determining the success of governance innovation. When HR is trained in evidence-based planning and digital data management, budget efficiency increases without compromising service quality (Puteri & Ibhara, 2023). This demonstrates a positive relationship between institutional capacity

and public policy effectiveness at the micro-level. However, the moderating effect of contextual factors such as urbanization levels and regional fiscal capacity is also significant. Sub-districts with widely dispersed populations or rural characteristics face higher logistical costs, so governance innovations need to be tailored to local conditions for optimal implementation.

In the context of political and administrative feasibility, the sustainability of public service programs depends on three main factors: political commitment across periods, stable institutional capacity, and a strong accountability system. This study confirms the view of Jumaryadi et al. (2024) that political stability and policy consistency across periods are prerequisites for sustainable public services. When service programs have audit trail mechanisms and transparent performance reporting, public trust increases, and the risk of disruption due to leadership changes can be minimized. Institutional factors such as regular HR training and the existence of *standard operating procedures* (SOPs) across periods also ensure administrative continuity (Septiandika & Kurdianingtyas, 2022). Furthermore, digitalization of public administration strengthens political and administrative feasibility by minimizing reliance on individuals and enabling data interoperability between agencies (Lutfia & Indartuti, 2022).

The link between basic infrastructure and public service satisfaction indicates a strong causal pathway. Road and public lighting infrastructure not only improve citizen mobility but also influence perceptions of service quality. The results of this study are consistent with studies by Maryani et al. (2020) and Azwar (2022), which confirmed that better physical access is directly proportional to increased citizen participation and perceived satisfaction with public services. An indirect effect of infrastructure on operational efficiency was also detected, where improved physical connectivity speeds up administrative processes and improves the accuracy of service data. However, the results also indicate that infrastructure alone is insufficient without adequate managerial capacity and information technology support. The combination of physical and non-physical investments is a determining factor in achieving service equity.

The interaction between physical infrastructure and information technology systems strengthens the effectiveness of digital-based programs. When internet networks and IT devices are widely available, the implementation of *government* can expand service reach and reduce operational costs (Heryati et al., 2023; Syuaib et al., 2023). However, without sufficient digital literacy among citizens and officials, digitalization has the potential to widen the access gap. Therefore, digital service development policies must be accompanied by literacy strategies and equitable infrastructure support. An integrative approach that combines technology, human resource capacity, and physical infrastructure is the most effective mechanism for addressing service disparities in remote areas.

The dimension of justice in public services also reflects the importance of citizen participation and government transparency. Referring to the paradigm *New Public Service* (NPS), responsive public services involve citizens in policy planning and evaluation (Viranda, 2023; Mustofa & Ferriswara, 2025). This study shows that public participation strengthens the relevance of policies to local needs and increases social accountability. Transparency in budget management and reporting of program results strengthens local government legitimacy and fosters public trust (Dampaka & Erliyana, 2025). In this context, implementing audit trails and publishing digital service data are crucial instruments in ensuring the fairness and accountability of public programs.

The research also highlights that the combination of public participation, transparency, and digitalization of public services produces a synergistic effect on improving equity in access. This model is effective because it addresses multiple dimensions of access barriers simultaneously: physical, informational, and social. When citizens are given space to participate, information is transparently available, and access to digital services is expanded, inter-regional inequality decreases significantly (Sudaryono et al., 2021; Heryati et al., 2023). This approach aligns with the theory of distributive justice, which emphasizes the importance of equal distribution of resources and opportunities, not simply equal administrative treatment.

Empirically, this study also shows that community-based policy design that utilizes *public-private-community partnership* (P-PCP) can accelerate equitable development in remote villages without increasing the fiscal burden on local governments (Sudaryono et al., 2021). This collaboration is effective because it combines resources and expertise from various parties to address local needs often overlooked in conventional budget schemes. Furthermore, a participatory approach also strengthens community ownership of public programs, ensuring their sustainability despite political or administrative changes at the sub-district level.

Within Dunn's theoretical framework, the results of this study reinforce the relevance of five key indicators (effectiveness, efficiency, equity, political feasibility, and administrative feasibility) in the context of local governance. However, the findings also highlight the need to adapt Dunn's framework to accommodate local factors such as fiscal dynamics, leadership, and technology. Effectiveness is measured not only by achieving administrative targets but also by the extent to which policies enhance social equity and responsiveness to citizen needs. Efficiency is not simply about cost savings, but rather the ability of a government system to sustainably produce public benefits within limited resources. Equity, ultimately, depends on the government's capacity to integrate spatial, social, and digital dimensions into public service policies.

The spatial context in sub-districts, which consist of remote villages and hamlets, shows that distance and topography remain major barriers to access to public services. This study emphasizes the importance of spatial analysis in policy planning to ensure more targeted resource allocation (Maryani et al., 2020; Azwar, 2022). By using a geographic data-based (GIS) approach, the government can identify areas with low access (*hotspots*) and design interventions that are more adaptive to local needs. Integrating spatial data with population administration and basic services data allows for more comprehensive policy evaluations, while also opening up space for evidence-based policymaking at the micro level.

Conceptually, this study expands the literature on the relationship between governance innovation and public service performance at the local level. Empirical evidence suggests that administrative reform and the adoption of information technology can improve effectiveness and efficiency without sacrificing equity of access. However, the success of this model depends on participatory governance, strong institutional capacity, and sustained political support across time periods. Therefore, this study emphasizes that institutional and social capacity building are key foundations for the success of public policy innovation at the sub-district level.

4. CONCLUSION

This research demonstrates that the effectiveness, efficiency, and fairness of public services at the sub-district level depend heavily on the synergy between prioritizing basic needs, governance innovation, and strengthening institutional capacity. Empirical evidence

demonstrates that basic needs-based strategies—such as investments in roads, public lighting, clean water, and health and education services—can maximize social impact even within budget constraints. Data-driven governance innovations and information technology improve bureaucratic efficiency, accelerate services, and strengthen public accountability. Program sustainability is supported by cross-period political commitment, adequate human resource capacity, and a transparent audit trail mechanism, ensuring service stability despite leadership changes.

The analysis also shows that infrastructure and technology have a positive causal relationship with public satisfaction, but are only effective when supported by strong institutional management and digital literacy among officials and citizens. Public participation and transparency are crucial dimensions for strengthening policy fairness and responsiveness. By integrating the principles of the *New Public Service and Dunn's* evaluation framework, this study provides theoretical contributions to policy evaluation approaches in the context of local governance, particularly in areas with high spatial and fiscal disparities. This study recommends further research on the interaction between digitalization and public participation in improving the sustainability of public services in remote villages.

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