

Research Article

Challenges to Local Public Service in the Post Pandemic

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Abstract.

The relevance of New Public Administration (NPA) Paradigm initiated by Frederickson shows its increasing power. Although this paradigm appeared far before the change in global post-pandemic condition, the New Public Administration (NPA) Paradigm is capable of guiding the public administrative measures to respond to challenge of post-pandemic social change, especially in the public service administration aspect. Public service before the pandemic, especially at local government level, had found form and quality issues. The public service at local level is attempting to respond to public needs and social changes that are always a big challenge for public administration. The pandemic suddenly worsened and was a blow to the process of public administration adjustment to the changes. The public service that needed modernization was badly hit by the pandemic. Therefore, this article aims to identify challenges to public administration in the context of post-pandemic changes in public service. This research used focus group discussion method with stakeholders and documentation as the secondary data. This article successfully shows the important position of amplification of changes and responsiveness in public administration, especially in public service delivery.

Keywords: new public administration, public service delivery, policy change, post pandemic era, responsiveness

1. Introduction

Decentralization of government's authority to local government and village government contributes to changes in public service governance. There is also decentralization of public service to be administered by village government. Service decentralization is deemed important in order to have services closer to the people. The decentralization of public service is, however, faced with constraints and challenges. According to the National Academy of Public Administration, USA modernizes and Reinvigorates the Public Service that is one of the 12 grand challenges in public administration [1]. This means that the form and quality issues of public service are a big challenge for public administration due to crisis of human resource and public service governance [2,3].

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Indonesia and the world have been struck by the Covid-19 pandemic from the day it was officially announced in March 2020. Some sectors of public service were influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic, including economic sector in which the people's purchasing power declined and many traditional markets were forcefully closed. Besides, there was also turbulence in health sector leading to restriction of direct health service. In addition, licensing and administrative sectors were also greatly influenced by the Covid-19 pandemic that many officers of service administration were required to Work From Home. This demanded drastic and significant changes in every aspect of public and nation life, especially in public service. Various institutions providing public service were temporarily closed at the beginning of pandemic. Consequently, the people as public service users found it difficult to access public services. The pandemic was one factor striking and worsening the condition. Public service that needs to be modernized was otherwise worsened. Through Circular of Minister of Public Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform of the Republic of Indonesia Number 34 of 2020 on Adjustment of Public Civil Apparatus's Working System in Effort to Prevent Covid-19 Transmission in Government Institutions, the instruction demanded public service administrators to assure effective process of public service distribution. Therefore, public service innovation was needed, including optimizing information technology utilization (online) [4]. Therefore, pandemic demanded changes in public service behaviors and management. From other perspective, however, this pandemic was a momentum for changes to better public service. Pandemic is a momentum of changes, thus it is to assure that the changes will run continuously after pandemic. That is why, an administrative framework or procedure which may assure continued process of changes is needed. Public service is any activities performed by the government for a number of people with any activities beneficial for a group or unity, and offering satisfaction even if the outcome is not physically bound by a product [5,6]. Meanwhile, the aspects as the determinant of a public service can at least be classified into three main factors: institutional aspect, human resource aspect and service system aspect [5,7–9]. From the perspective of institutional aspect, public service administration will run well when it is organized in a good condition. The institutional aspect of Public Service includes organizational structure, job description, public service system, etc. Organizational structure defines tasks to be distributed, who reporting to whom, formal coordination mechanism and interaction pattern to be followed [10,11]. From the perspective of human resource aspect of Public Service, government apparatus is a group of people serving the state's and government's interests, and are public servants. Government apparatus is expected to have good ability in the form of sufficient knowledge, skill and behavior, in line

with what is demanded for service and development. With regard to public service quality, government apparatus's ability greatly plays a role in determining the quality of public service. From the perspective of Public Service Facilities and Infrastructures Aspect, Facilities are anything that can be used as the instrument to achieve the aims or goals, while infrastructures are anything supporting a process. Public service facilities and infrastructures are classified into two: (a) Main facilities and infrastructures, and (b) Supporting facilities and infrastructures, are ones that support the quality of public service. Administration is a process of preparing implementation policy, procedure and decision making to assure performance of service [12]. Public administration process is a series of process, structure, function, method and procedure, and formulation of implementation policy related to the process [13]. Therefore, this article aims to identify challenges in public administration in the context of post-pandemic changes in public service. The challenges in public administration in the context of post-pandemic changes in public service are focused on two dimensions: Public Servants and Public Service Governance.

2. Method

The data were collected using data mining techniques for social science [14,15]. The research design was case study in social sector, especially public administration [16,17], and a quantitative method was used. The research population was all research objects with certain quantity and characteristics defined by the researcher for learning and conclusion making [18]. The research population was all villages in Banyumas Regency. Banyumas Regency, as the research location, had 27 districts, 30 sub-districts and 301 villages. The high quantity of the research population would make it difficult to take the whole existing population. Therefore, the use of samples was expected to more effectively and efficiently produce the data needed. Samples are part of population with the same characteristics as those of population [19]. For representative samples, due to varied geographic and typological conditions, the sampling was conducted through multistage random sampling [15,19,20]. Due to the wide coverage of research area, the first measure to do was cluster sampling [19] from the research population. The 27 districts were classified into 7 areas based on the distance to the central government in Purwokerto, including: South Banyumas, Southwest Banyumas, West Banyumas, Central Banyumas, North Banyumas, Sub-Urban and Urban Areas. Out of the clustering 15 districts were taken to represent the whole existing population (over 50% of the existing districts). A simple random sampling was conducted on the 15 districts to determine the

number of villages as samples using Slovin’s sampling technique. Based on the Slovin’s formula above, the following samples were obtained:

$$n = \frac{301}{1+301(10\%)^2}$$

$$n = \frac{301}{4,01}$$

$$n = 75,06$$

With 301 villages and tolerance percentage 10% and level of confidence 95%, the result was 75 villages as the samples. The number of villages as the research samples can be observed in the table below:

TABLE 1: Research Location Sampling.

Cluster	District	Name of Villages	Number of Samples
Southwest Banyumas	Lumbir	Cingebul, Cirahab, Dermaji, Kedunggede, Lumbir,	5
	Wangon	Cikakak, Jambu, , Klapagading, Pangadegan, Wangon,	5
	Rawalo	Banjarparakan, Pesawahan, Rawalo, Sidamulih, Tipar	5
South Banyumas	Kemranjen	Alasmalang, , Kebarongan, Kecila, Pageralang, Sirau	5
	Tambak	Karangpucung, Prembun, Buniayu, Watuagung, Gumelar Lor,	5
Central Banyumas	Kalibagor	Kalibagor, Kalicupak Lor, Kaliori, Pekaja, Suro,	5
	Banyumas	Binangun, Kalisube, Kedunguter, Pekunden, Sudagaran	5
	Patikraja	Kedungrandu, Kedungwringin, Notog, , Sidabowa, Sokawera Kidul	5
West Banyumas	Ajibarang	Ajibarang Wetan, Darmakradenan, Lesmana, Pancasa, Pancurendang	5
	Pekuncen	Candinegara, Cikembulan, Pasiraman Kidul, Pekuncen, Petahunan	5
	Cilongok	Gununglurah, Jatisaba, Kalisari, Pageraji, Pernasidi	5
Sub Urban	Sokaraja	Banjaranyar, Kalikidang, Kedondong, Pamijen, Sokaraja Lor,	5
	Kembaran	Dukuhwaluh, Ledug, Linggasari, Pliken, Purbadana	5
North Banyumas	Baturaden	Karang Tengah, Kebumen, Ketenger, Pandak, Purwosari	5
	Kedung Banteng	Beji, Karangnangka, Kedung Banteng, Kutaliman, Melung,	5
	Total		75

3. Results and Discussion

TABLE 2: Dimensions of Governmental Processes in The Public Service Context.

Dimensions	Public Service Context
Mision	Membuat platform atau haluan pelayanan publik
Policy	Membuat substansi kebijakan dan program strategis terkait pelayanan publik
Administration	Membuat kebijakan pelaksanaan, prosedur dan membuat keputusan untuk memastikan pelayanan dapat berjalan
Management	Membuat alokasi sumber daya untuk mendukung berjalannya proses pelayanan

Source: adaptation from [12].

The table above is adapted from the model of Dimensions of Governmental Processes presented by Frederickson [12,21], later translated into the context of public service administration context. The table above shows underlying and substantial differences between the mission, policy, administration and management in public organization. Mission determining process is made by political top leaders assigned to determine public service platform or direction. Policy process is made by public official politically chosen to determine the substance of policy and strategic program related to public service. Administrative process is implemented by political appointment official assigned to determine the policy of implementation, procedure and decision making to assure service performance. Meanwhile, management process is implemented by official to determine allocation of resources in support of performance of public service process [12,22,23].

The research results show that after the pandemic there were changes in the public service administration mechanism, as may be reviewed in the table below.

The data show that there are changes in some aspects in public service administration after the pandemic.

1. Adaptation of Service Officers' Ethics and Behaviors.

Service officers' ethics and behaviors changed after the pandemic. Services were previously performed face-to-face and directly, but changed to indirect service and without non-physical contact. Even if there was direct contact, it was restricted by the strict health protocol, only for certain, urgent activities.

2. Adaptation of Service Officers' Competence.

After the pandemic, the service officers were demanded to improve their competence and skills for the services, especially supporting skills in the field of

TABLE 3: Results of Survey on the Level of Changes in Public Service.

Public Service Aspect	Level of Change		
	High	Medium	Low
Public Servants			
Adaptation of Service Officers' Ethics and Behaviors	61%	34%	5%
Adaptation of Service Officers' Competence	73%	5%	2%
Demand for creativity and innovation	35%	43%	22%
Public Service Governance			
Use of Information Technology and Digitalization	82%	16%	2%
Change in service management and procedure	63%	21%	16%
Efficiency in service administration	58%	23%	19%

Source: processed primary data, 2022.

information and communication technology. This was an absolute condition in administering any public services.

3. Demand for creativity and innovation.

After the pandemic, the service officers were demanded to develop their creativity and innovation in assuring effective public service by utilizing information and communication technology. The innovations made by the public service administrators in performance of their duties and functions during the pandemic included: providing services through WhatsApp application and optimizing services online.

4. Use of Information Technology and Digitalization.

After the pandemic, the public service administration system moved towards use of information technology and digitalization. For example, registration form completion and queue were not performed manually, but using digital devices and applications.

5. Change in service management and procedure.

After the pandemic, there were changes in the service management and procedure from offline at service office to online or at least blended method, in which there were procedures that could be performed offline and online.

6. Efficiency in service administration.

After the pandemic, service administration was performed more efficiently, since not many office facilities were used in service administration, that digital instruments were used more.

TABLE 4: Changes and Responsiveness in New Public Administration.

From	To
Change is correcting what is wrong	Change is institutionalization of procedures
Social change is a sporadic phenomenon, that requires adaptation	Social change is a continuous (and even everlasting) phenomenon, that needs to be utilized
Responsiveness requires detailed observation of open information in the organization	Responsiveness requires effective observation of clients and citizens
Technology can solve problems caused by political process	Politics can solve problem caused by technology

Source: adaptation from [24]

Over time and along with adaptability of institutions that administer public services to the pandemic, services started to be given online. This was addressed to giving quality public services to the people. The table above shows the interpretation of the concept of Changes and Responsiveness in the New Public Administration paradigm. Frederickson [24] gives behavior guide on public administration in response to social changes and redefine the concept of responsiveness in order to be able to any challenges of social changes all the time. Through the New Public Administration (NPA) Paradigm, Frederickson [24] also gives an overview to public administration of measures to take in response to challenges of social changes after the pandemic, especially in the public service administration aspect.

TABLE 5: Administrative Change Direction in Public Service Post-Pandemic.

Public Service	Challenges to Public Administration	
	Pre-Pandemic	Post-Pandemic
Public Servants	Adaptation to social changes for improved services	Utilizing and advocating social changes for improved services
	Compliance with procedures	Creativity and innovation
	Adjustment of number of Human Resources	Control of circulation of the need for Human Resources
	Policy on-organic public servants	Policy on non-organic public servants
	Operating Technology in Services	Controlling technology for optimized services
Public Service Governance	Office or online based service system	Service system that responds to clients' and citizens' needs
	Archive documentation or cloud documentation	Dynamic and integrated documentation system
	Relatively low technology cost, but with relatively high service cost	Efficiency in Service Cost, but with increased technology cost
	Standardization of Service Procedures	Dynamic Service Procedures
	Regular transparency and accountability	Real-time transparency and accountability

Public administration is defined as an effort to utilize administrative, political and economic powers to solve public issues more comprehensively, especially in public service delivery. Public administration agencies work to respond to public issues, public interest and public service. The shift from the classic public administration paradigm to the new public administration (NPA) paradigm eventually demands Public administrators to be open to any social changes in the community, including in the post-pandemic condition. Public Servants and Public Service Governance must be innovative and creative in advocating social changes, that are the momentum of the changes.

4. Conclusion

After the pandemic, public services at local level are demanded to be provided responsively and advocate social changes as the momentum of fundamental changes in public service administration. The New Public Administration (NPA) Paradigm especially guides the measures of public administration to respond to post-pandemic social changes, especially in the public service administration aspect. Public service at local government level faces the following challenges: (1) Utilizing and advocating social changes for improved services; (2) Creativity and innovation; (3) Controlling circulation of the need for Human Resources; (4) Non-organic policy for public servants; (5) Controlling technology for optimized services; (6) Service system that responds to clients' and citizens' needs; (7) Dynamic and integrated documenting system; (8) Efficiency in Service Cost, but with increased technology cost; (9) Dynamic Service Procedure; (10) Real-time transparency and accountability. In conclusion, amplification of changes and responsiveness in public administration is needed, especially in public service delivery.

Conflict of Interest

The author hereby declares that there is no conflict of interest contained in the publication of this article.

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