

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION MANAGEMENT IN DEVELOPMENT PLANNING AT BAPPEDA GORONTALO CITY

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the management of public participation in the formulation of development planning at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Gorontalo City. The study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design, enabling an in-depth exploration of processes, actor dynamics, and institutional contexts in the implementation of public participation. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation, and analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña. The findings reveal that the management of public participation is carried out through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation with follow-up actions. At the planning stage, Bappeda conducts stakeholder mapping and develops participation mechanisms based on regulatory frameworks. During the implementation stage, participation is facilitated through Musrenbang (Development Planning Deliberation) and public consultation forums, although challenges remain in terms of representation and the quality of participation. At the evaluation stage, some community proposals are accommodated in planning documents; however, feedback mechanisms remain suboptimal. This study concludes that public participation is still at a consultative level and has not yet fully achieved substantive participation. Therefore, strengthening institutional capacity, improving the quality of facilitation, and developing more inclusive and transparent participation mechanisms are necessary to enhance the effectiveness of regional development planning.

Keywords: Public Participation Management; Regional Development Planning; Deliberation; Collaborative Governance

INTRODUCTION

Public participation is a fundamental principle in modern governance, particularly within the framework of good governance. In the context of public administration, public participation is not merely understood as citizen involvement in decision-making processes, but also as a mechanism to enhance policy quality through the integration of public aspirations into development planning processes. Various studies have demonstrated that public participation plays a significant role in improving transparency, accountability, and policy legitimacy at the local government level, thereby making development planning more responsive to community needs[1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8]. In Indonesia's development planning system, public participation has been institutionalized through formal mechanisms such as the Development

Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang), which is conducted in a hierarchical manner from the village to the national level.

From a theoretical perspective, public participation is closely associated with the concept of collaborative governance, which emphasizes the importance of collaboration among government, society, and non-governmental actors in policymaking processes. Recent literature indicates that citizen involvement in development planning contributes to improved policy outcomes by aligning local needs with regional development priorities [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8]. Furthermore, advances in information technology have expanded participatory spaces through digital platforms such as e-Musrenbang, enabling broader and more inclusive public engagement. However, the effectiveness of public participation is not solely determined by the existence of formal mechanisms, but also by the quality of deliberative processes, actor capacity, and supporting institutional structures.

Despite its normative importance, the implementation of public participation in development planning still faces several fundamental challenges. One of the primary issues is the low quality of participation, characterized by the dominance of certain actors, limited representation of marginalized groups, and the lack of capacity among citizens to articulate substantive inputs [3], [4], [5], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14]. Additionally, there is often a gap between the aspirations expressed in participatory forums and the final policy decisions, resulting in participation that is merely procedural and lacking substantive impact on development planning outcomes.

Another critical issue is the weak integration between participatory mechanisms and the broader development planning system. In many cases, community proposals collected through Musrenbang are not fully incorporated into planning documents such as the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD) or the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD). This is due to budget constraints, top-down policy priorities, and bureaucratic dominance in decision-making processes [3], [4], [5], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14]. These conditions indicate that the success of public participation depends not only on citizen involvement but also on how the process is systematically managed within an effective managerial framework.

To address these challenges, the literature suggests several general solutions, including strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing transparency, and developing more inclusive participation mechanisms. Strengthening the capacity of local government officials is crucial for effectively managing participatory processes, particularly in translating community aspirations into operational and measurable policies. In addition, improving access to information and transparency in planning processes is essential to promote more meaningful and accountable participation [3], [4], [5], [9], [10], [11], [12], [13], [14].

More specifically, several studies highlight the importance of applying a management approach to public participation, encompassing planning, organizing, implementation, and control functions. This approach enables participatory processes to move beyond procedural compliance toward strategic contributions to development goals. Moreover, the use of information technology, such as e-planning and e-Musrenbang, is considered a viable solution to improve efficiency and expand participation coverage, although its implementation still faces challenges related to infrastructure and human resource capacity [1], [2], [3], [4], [5], [6], [7], [8].

However, despite these identified solutions, there remains a limitation in the literature that specifically examines the management of public participation within the context of regional development planning. Most studies focus on the normative aspects

of participation or evaluate the implementation of Musrenbang without deeply analyzing how participatory processes are managed within a systematic managerial framework. Furthermore, empirical studies linking participation management processes with the quality of development planning outcomes remain limited, particularly in the Indonesian regional context.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the management of public participation in the formulation of development planning at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Gorontalo City. This study offers novelty by integrating a public management perspective into the analysis of participation, thereby not only examining the level of participation but also how the process is planned, organized, implemented, and evaluated. The scope of the study focuses on regional development planning processes, particularly public participation mechanisms facilitated by Bappeda, taking into account institutional factors, human resources, and the dynamics of interactions among involved actors

METHOD AND ANALYSIS

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the management of public participation in the formulation of development planning at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Gorontalo City. The qualitative approach is selected as it enables an in-depth understanding of processes, actor dynamics, and the social context influencing the implementation of public participation in development planning. In the field of public administration, this approach facilitates the exploration of how participatory mechanisms, such as the Development Planning Deliberation (Musrenbang), function as deliberative processes involving multiple actors with diverse interests [3], [4], [9], [15]. Furthermore, the case study design allows for contextual analysis of public participation practices at the local level, including variations in implementation across regions and institutional dynamics[6], [11].

The case study design is utilized to address the "how" and "why" questions related to the management of public participation in regional development planning. It enables a comprehensive examination of interactions among government, communities, and non-governmental actors in the planning process, as well as the identification of factors influencing the effectiveness of public participation. This is consistent with the literature, which highlights that the effectiveness of public participation is shaped by local context, institutional capacity, and power dynamics within planning processes [2], [10], [14].

The research was conducted at Bappeda of Gorontalo City, which plays a strategic role in coordinating regional development planning. The selection of this site is based on the consideration that Bappeda is the primary actor responsible for managing public participation processes through various planning forums, including Musrenbang. The research subjects consist of key actors directly involved in the process, including Bappeda officials, representatives of regional government organizations (OPD), community leaders, and other relevant stakeholders.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby participants are chosen based on specific criteria relevant to the research objectives. This technique allows the researcher to obtain in-depth information from individuals who possess direct knowledge and experience regarding public participation processes. Informants were selected based on their involvement in Musrenbang and the formulation of development planning documents. This approach aligns with qualitative research practices in public administration, which emphasize the importance of selecting information-rich participants [5], [11], [12].

Data collection techniques include in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation. In-depth interviews are used to explore the perceptions, experiences, and perspectives of informants regarding public participation processes, including how community aspirations are incorporated into development planning. This technique is effective in understanding internal dynamics and actor strategies in managing participation [5], [11], [12]. Observation is conducted to directly examine Musrenbang processes and interactions among actors, enabling the researcher to capture deliberative dynamics, communication patterns, and informal practices occurring during the process [9], [15]. Documentation is used to analyze planning documents such as the Regional Government Work Plan (RKPD), the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), and Musrenbang reports to understand how public input is translated into policy [3], [5], [12].

These techniques are applied in an integrated manner through triangulation to enhance the validity and reliability of the data. Triangulation enables the comparison of findings from multiple sources and methods, providing a more comprehensive understanding of public participation processes. In this study, triangulation is conducted by comparing interview results, observational data, and document analysis to identify consistency and discrepancies [5], [11], [12].

Data analysis follows the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which consists of data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. During data reduction, the researcher selects, simplifies, and categorizes data into relevant themes such as participation representativeness, quality of public input, and decision-making dynamics. Data display is conducted through descriptive narratives, tables, and diagrams to facilitate interpretation. Conclusions are drawn iteratively by linking empirical findings with the theoretical framework employed in the study.

In the analytical process, coding techniques are also applied to identify patterns and relationships among concepts. Coding is conducted in stages, starting with open coding to identify initial categories, followed by axial coding to establish relationships among categories, and selective coding to develop core themes. This approach integrates inductive data-driven analysis with deductive theory-based analysis, resulting in more comprehensive and systematic findings.

To ensure data validity, this study applies several strategies, including source and method triangulation, member checking, and audit trail. Triangulation involves comparing data from various informants and collection techniques. Member checking is conducted by confirming findings with informants, while audit trails are maintained

through systematic documentation of the research process. These strategies are essential to ensure the credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the research findings.

Through this methodological approach, the study aims to provide an in-depth understanding of how public participation management is implemented in regional development planning, as well as the factors influencing its effectiveness. Furthermore, this research is expected to contribute both empirically and theoretically to the field of public administration, particularly in relation to the management of public participation in regional development planning contexts.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Findings

The findings indicate that the management of public participation in development planning at Bappeda Gorontalo City is implemented through three main stages: planning, implementation, and evaluation with follow-up. During the planning stage, Bappeda conducts stakeholder identification and mapping involving both internal government actors and external stakeholders such as communities, academics, and the private sector. This process ensures broad participation in development planning forums such as Musrenbang and public consultations, supported by regulatory frameworks that institutionalize public participation.

Table 1. Summary of Public Participation Management Findings

Stage	Key Aspects	Practices at Bappeda Gorontalo City	Main Constraints	Outputs/Implications
Planning	Stakeholder mapping; regulation; scheduling; data provision; socialization	Identification of OPDs & external actors; Musrenbang agenda setting; information dissemination	Limited human resources; low public understanding; budget constraints	Readiness of participatory forums; baseline issues and priorities
Implementation	Facilitation; representation; methods of collecting proposals	Musrenbang & public consultation forums; group discussions; documentation of proposals	Unequal participation; conflicting interests; limited time	Community proposals; input for RKPD/RPJMD priorities
Evaluation & Follow-up	Assessment of proposals; integration into documents; feedback	Review of proposal relevance; partial integration into planning	Limited feedback mechanisms; budget constraints; prioritization	Partial alignment of proposals with planning documents; need for improved transparency

		documents; publication of results	issues	
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During the implementation stage, public participation is realized through Musrenbang and consultation forums involving diverse community groups. Bappeda acts as a facilitator, managing deliberative processes and ensuring that community aspirations are articulated. Input is collected through group discussions, formal documentation, and structured recording of proposals. However, implementation still faces challenges such as uneven participation, competing interests, and limited time allocation.

In the evaluation and follow-up stage, Bappeda assesses the effectiveness of participation based on the quantity and quality of proposals and their relevance to development priorities. Some community proposals are incorporated into planning documents such as RKPD and RPJMD, although not all are realized due to budget constraints and policy priorities. Feedback mechanisms remain limited, indicating a need to improve transparency and accountability.

Overall, the findings suggest that public participation management has been implemented systematically; however, its effectiveness is influenced by institutional capacity, human resources, and the dynamics of actor interaction.

4.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that public participation in development planning at Bappeda Gorontalo City remains at a consultative level, where citizens are given the opportunity to express their views but have limited influence on final decision-making. This aligns with participation theory, which suggests that participation often remains at the level of tokenism rather than genuine partnership [16], [17]. This reflects a gap between normative and substantive participation.

From a collaborative governance perspective, the interaction between government and society reflects an emerging collaborative process facilitated by Bappeda as a central actor. Bappeda's role as coordinator and facilitator is crucial in ensuring inclusive and accountable deliberation. However, the effectiveness of collaboration depends on institutional capacity, information accessibility, and public trust [6], [13].

From a management perspective, public participation reflects the application of planning, organizing, actuating, and controlling functions. While planning, organizing, and implementation functions have been relatively well executed, the controlling function—particularly in terms of feedback and transparency—remains weak [5], [12].

The implications of this study suggest that improving public participation requires strengthening institutional capacity, enhancing facilitation quality, and developing more inclusive and transparent mechanisms. The use of digital platforms such as e-Musrenbang offers opportunities to expand participation, although it requires improved public capacity to access and utilize such technologies [7], [8].

5. Conclusion

This study concludes that public participation management in development planning at Bappeda Gorontalo City has been systematically implemented through planning, implementation, and evaluation stages. However, participation remains largely consultative rather than substantive, indicating a gap between formal mechanisms and actual influence on decision-making.

The findings emphasize that the effectiveness of public participation depends not only on formal institutional mechanisms but also on the quality of process management, institutional capacity, and actor interaction dynamics. Therefore, strengthening Bappeda's facilitative capacity, improving deliberative quality, and developing more inclusive and transparent participation systems are essential. These efforts are expected to transform public participation from a procedural requirement into a strategic instrument for improving the quality of regional development planning.

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