



## Original Article

# Public Service Innovation Driven by Community Participation in Local Government Institutions

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### Abstract:

Public service innovation is a strategic issue in public sector management and local government business, especially in the midst of increasing demands for efficiency, responsiveness, and public value creation. However, most studies still position innovation as the result of internal policies of government organizations, while the role of community participation is often treated as a supporting factor, rather than a primary driver of innovation. This research aims to analyze how community participation functions as the main driver of public service innovation in local government institutions, by placing the interaction between public actors and the community as the core of the service value creation process. This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design on the Banjarmasin City Government. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with 15 informants consisting of local government officials, community representatives, and public service users, and supported by analysis of policy documents and observation of service processes. The data were analyzed using thematic analysis to identify participation patterns, collaboration mechanisms, and forms of innovation produced. The results of the study show that community participation not only contributes to service improvement, but actively shapes the direction, design, and implementation of public service innovations through feedback mechanisms, community initiatives, and collaborative problem-solving. These findings show that public service innovation is co-productive and depends on the capacity of institutions to strategically manage community participation. This research makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the perspective of public business management through the affirmation of community participation as a source of innovation, as well as practical contributions for local governments in designing sustainable public service innovation models based on public values.

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## Introduction

Public service innovation has become a strategic agenda in public administration reform in various countries, in line with the increasing public demand for efficient, responsive, and value-creating services. Globally, local governments are faced with pressure to adapt to social dynamics, technological developments, and the complexity of the increasingly diverse needs of citizens ([Gasco-Hernandez et al., 2022](#); [Krueger et al., 2022](#)). In this context, innovation is no longer understood solely as a procedural update or application of technology, but rather as a process of transforming service governance involving various actors. International reports show that sustainable public sector innovation tends to emerge from interactions between government and society, rather than from internal policies alone ([Cinar et al., 2021](#)). This condition emphasizes the urgency of the study of public service innovation that places the community as an integral part of the innovation process.

The development of public administration theory also shows a paradigm shift from a bureaucratic approach to a collaborative governance model that emphasizes the involvement of non-governmental actors. The New Public Governance approach emphasizes that public value creation is the result of interaction between government, society, and other sectors in a collaborative network ([Torfing et al., 2021](#)). In this framework, public participation is seen as a source of knowledge, legitimacy, and innovation that is important for improving the quality of public services. Recent research confirms that citizen involvement can strengthen the government's capacity to respond to public issues in a contextual and adaptive manner ([Sánchez-Hernández, 2024](#)). However, the implementation of this paradigm at the local government level still shows significant variations, especially in developing countries.

A number of previous studies have discussed public service innovation and community participation, but most still position participation as a supporting factor or instrument of policy legitimacy. Agger & Tortzen, (2023) emphasizes the role of citizens in the co-production of services, but follow-up studies show that participation is often limited to the consultation stage, rather than as a key driver of innovation ([Ciepielewska-Kowalik, 2025](#)). Other studies highlight that public service innovation is more fueled by internal leadership, regulatory pressures, or the adoption of digital technology ([Mergel, 2021](#)). As a result, the concrete mechanism of how community participation encourages substantive public service innovation is still not explored in depth. This gap shows the need for research that focuses on community participation as the main driver of innovation, not just a complementary variable.

In the context of local government in Indonesia, the study of public service innovation generally focuses on the description of innovative programs or the evaluation of service performance. Some research shows that regional innovation is often top-down and not fully integrated with the needs of local communities ([Eicken et al., 2021](#); [Zhou et al., 2023](#)) In fact, the social and cultural characteristics of Indonesian society open up a large space for community-based participatory practices. Recent studies confirm that the failure of public service innovation at the local level is often caused by weak institutionalization of community participation in the decision-making process ([Rafique et al., 2023](#)). Thus, there is a significant research gap related to the role of community participation in shaping the direction and sustainability of public service innovation in local governments.

This research specifically takes the context of the Banjarmasin City Government as a case study location because of its unique regional characteristics and social dynamics.

The city of Banjarmasin has a strong community tradition, especially in environmental management and locality-based services, which has the potential to be a source of public service innovation. However, there has not been much empirical research that examines how community participation in this city directly contributes to the process of public service innovation. Some studies are still limited to inventorying regional innovations without tracing the role of community actors behind these innovations. Therefore, this context is relevant to enrich theoretical and empirical understanding of participation-based public service innovation.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze how community participation plays a role as the main driver of public service innovation in local government institutions, with a case study on the Banjarmasin City Government. This research explicitly focuses on the mechanism of community involvement, the form of collaboration between citizens and the government, and the process of forming public service innovations. Using a qualitative approach, this study seeks to explore the dynamics of interaction between actors that cannot be explained through a quantitative approach alone. This goal is expected to answer the research gap related to the strategic position of community participation in public sector innovation. Thus, this research not only sheds light on the phenomenon, but also offers a deeper analytical understanding.

This research makes a theoretical contribution by expanding the perspective of public business management and public administration through the affirmation of community participation as the main source of public service innovation. The findings of this study strengthen the co-production and participatory governance approach in the context of local governments in developing countries. Practically, this research provides policy implications for local governments in designing more strategic and sustainable participation mechanisms. The results of the research can also be a reference for public service practitioners in integrating community input into the design and implementation of service innovations. Thus, this research is expected to be able to bridge the gap between the theory and practice of public value-based public service innovation.

## Method

### Types and Approaches to Research

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to deeply understand the role of community participation in encouraging public service innovation in local government institutions ([Muzari et al., 2022](#)). The qualitative approach was chosen because this study focuses on exploring the process, meaning, and dynamics of interaction between government actors and society that cannot be reduced to a purely quantitative variable. The case study design allows researchers to analyze the phenomenon of public service innovation contextually and holistically in one specific unit of analysis, namely the Banjarmasin City Government. This approach is in line with the view that public sector innovation is a social process formed through relationships between actors and collaborative practices ([Criado & Guevara-Gómez, 2021](#)). In addition, qualitative case studies are considered appropriate to uncover the mechanisms of co-production and public value creation based on community participation ([McMullin, 2023](#)).

### Research Location and Analysis Unit

The location of the research was determined in the Banjarmasin City Government, South Kalimantan, with the consideration that this city has strong community social characteristics and has implemented various forms of public service innovations based on

local needs. The analysis units in this study include local government institutions as public service providers, as well as community communities as participatory actors in the innovation process. The focus of the analysis is directed at the interaction between government apparatus and the community in planning, implementing, and evaluating public service innovations. The selection of this location is also based on its relevance to the issue of participatory governance and strengthening public values at the local government level.

### **Population, Participants, and Sampling Techniques**

The population of this study includes actors who are directly involved in the process of public service innovation in the city of Banjarmasin. The sampling technique used is non-probability sampling with the purposive sampling method, which is the selection of informants based on certain criteria that are relevant to the research objectives. This research involved 15 informants who were selected purposively, consisting of six local government officials who handle public services, five community representatives or community organizations, and four public service users who have direct experience of service innovation in the city of Banjarmasin. The number of informants is considered adequate for qualitative research because it has met the principles of information adequacy and data saturation ([Braun & Clarke, 2021](#)). The selection of informants is based on their level of involvement, experience, and knowledge related to public service participation practices and innovations.

### **Data Collection Techniques and Instruments**

Research data was collected through in-depth interviews, direct observation, and document analysis. In-depth interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner to allow the exploration of informants' views, experiences, and perceptions related to the role of community participation in public service innovation. The interview guide is based on a theoretical framework on community participation, service co-production, and public sector innovation developed by Torfing et al., (2021) and Lee & Na, (2024). Observations are carried out to directly understand the service process and interaction between the apparatus and the community. In addition, analysis of policy documents, internal reports, and public service regulations was used to strengthen the validity of findings through triangulation of data sources ([Bans-Akutey & Tiimub, 2021](#)).

### **Research Implementation Procedure**

The research procedure was carried out systematically and gradually. The initial stage begins with a literature study to establish a conceptual framework and draft research instruments. The next stage is the collection of field data through interviews, observations, and documentation that are carried out simultaneously. All interviews are recorded and transcribed to ensure data accuracy. Next, the researcher carried out the process of organizing and coding the data before entering the analysis stage. This procedure is designed to guarantee data traceability and consistency of analysis.

### **Data Analysis Techniques**

Data analysis is carried out using thematic analysis, which aims to identify patterns, themes, and meanings that emerge from qualitative data. The analysis process begins with repeated reading of the interview transcript, followed by open coding to find the initial theme. These themes are then categorized and interpreted according to the

research objectives, especially related to the form of community participation, collaboration mechanisms, and the results of public service innovations. The analysis was carried out iteratively to ensure the depth of interpretation and consistency of the findings. NVivo software is used as a data management and coding tool to improve the transparency and traceability of analysis ([Kraiwanit et al., 2023](#)).

### **Data Validity and Research Ethics**

The validity of the data is guaranteed through triangulation techniques of sources and methods, as well as member checking to several key informants. Triangulation is carried out by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and official documents to ensure the consistency of the findings. In addition, researchers maintain the principles of research ethics by obtaining the consent of informants, maintaining identity confidentiality, and using data solely for academic purposes. This ethical approach is important to maintain the credibility of the research and the trust of participants ([Lindheim, 2022](#)). Thus, this research methodology is designed to produce findings that are valid, reliable, and scientifically accountable.

## **Results**

### **1. Patterns of Community Participation in the Public Service Innovation Process**

The results of the thematic analysis show that community participation in Banjarmasin City is not passive, but is manifested in a pattern of continuous and contextual engagement. Based on interviews, observations, and document analysis, community participation emerged from the initial stage of identifying service problems to evaluating the innovations that have been implemented. Local government officials view community input as a crucial initial source of information in understanding the real needs on the ground, as reflected in the following statement: *"We often receive feedback from citizens, either through official forums or in person, and that is usually the starting material for improving or creating new services."* (APD-02, October 2025).

This view is in line with the experience of community representatives who consider that the participation provided does not stop at consultative formalities, but really influences the direction of service policies. This was revealed by one of the community informants who stated: *"Our participation is not only asked for their opinions, but really heard, especially when we convey problems that are often experienced by residents."* (PK-01, October 2025). From the government's internal side, the recognition of the importance of community participation also appears as a reflection of the limitations of the bureaucratic perspective, as conveyed by the following informants: *"If there is no input from the public, the government may not know the detailed problems in the field"* (APD-04, October 2025).

Community involvement from the early stages of innovation is also felt directly by the community who actively interact with the local government. One of the informants confirmed that the participation room was opened before the program started, not after the decision was made, stating: *"We were involved from the beginning, not just after the program was running"* (PK-03, October 2025). A similar perception was conveyed by public service users who felt a direct connection between the aspirations of the community and the changes in the services implemented, as stated: *"As a service user, I feel that the service change does come from complaints and proposals from residents"* (PL-01, October 2025). These findings show that community participation forms a consistent pattern of interaction between the government and citizens, so that public service innovation develops contextually and is rooted in local needs.

### **2. Community Feedback Mechanism as Innovation Directors**

The second theme shows that the community feedback mechanism plays an

important role in directing the design and adjustment of public service innovation. Feedback is obtained through various channels, such as dialogue forums, service complaints, and informal communication between residents and officials. From the perspective of local government officials, the feedback is not only understood as evaluation material, but also as the basis for concrete changes in the service system. This is reflected in the following statement: *"We use public complaints and suggestions as a basis to change the flow of services that are felt to be less effective"* (APD-01, October 2025).

The effectiveness of this feedback mechanism was also felt by community representatives, who assessed that the input submitted did not stop at administrative records, but was followed up in real terms. A community informant said: *"Usually after we submit input, there is a real follow-up from the government"* (PK-02, October 2025). From the internal bureaucratic side, public feedback is seen as a means to see service weaknesses that are not always detected through formal procedures, as expressed by the following informants: *"Citizen feedback helps us see service shortcomings that are not visible from the internal side"* (APD-05, October 2025).

The experience of public service users also strengthens this finding, especially related to the sense of involvement in the service improvement process. One user stated: *"We feel involved because every input is always responded to"* (PL-02, October 2025). This process, according to other community representatives, often takes place through joint discussion and evaluation that then gives birth to new service innovations, as noted: *"From our experience, the innovation emerged after a joint discussion and evaluation"* (PK-04, October 2025). These findings confirm that the public feedback mechanism is not just an administrative formality, but an integral part that actively directs the public service innovation process.

### 3. Community Initiatives as a Trigger for Public Service Innovation

The results of the study show that community initiatives are one of the main triggers for the emergence of public service innovations. The community not only submits complaints, but also offers solutions to the service problems they face. Local government officials acknowledge that ideas that come from the community often open up new perspectives in service design, as stated by one informant: *"Some of the innovation ideas actually come from communities that understand the conditions on the ground very well"* (APD-03, October 2025).

The community's awareness to actively contribute is reflected in their efforts to propose new ways to make services more accessible to the wider community. This was conveyed by a community representative who stated: *"We often propose new ways to make services more accessible to citizens"* (PK-05, October 2025). The impact of the initiative was also felt by public service users, who assessed that government responses become faster when communities are actively involved, as expressed: *"When communities are active, the government responds faster"* (PL-03, October 2025).

From the perspective of local government officials, community initiatives provide significant support in designing services that are more targeted. An informant stated: *"Community initiatives really help us in designing more targeted services"* (APD-06, October 2025). This active participation also forms a sense of belonging among the community, which no longer positions itself as passive recipients of services, as expressed: *"We feel like we are part of the solution, not just the recipient of the service"* (PK-01, October 2025). These findings show that public service innovation develops bottom-up and is triggered by community initiatives facilitated by local governments.

### 4. Collaborative Problem Solving between Government and Society

This theme shows that public service innovation in Banjarmasin City develops through a collaborative problem-solving process. Local government officials are aware that the complexity of service problems cannot be solved unilaterally, as expressed by the following informants: *"We can't solve service problems on our own without involving the community"* (APD-02, October 2025).

This view is reinforced by the experience of the community which assesses that discussions with the government produce more realistic and applicable solutions. One of the community informants stated: "*Discussions with the government make the resulting solutions more realistic*" (PK-03, October 2025). This collaborative process also builds a sense of shared responsibility among service users, as expressed by the following informants: "*We feel responsible for the innovations we made together*" (PL-04, October 2025).

From the side of the apparatus, collaboration with the community is considered to be able to create a more open and trusting relationship, as stated: "*This collaboration makes the relationship between the government and the community more open*" (APD-01, October 2025). This has an impact on the effectiveness of resolving service issues, which the community finds becomes faster when discussed together, as expressed: "*Service problems are resolved faster if discussed together*" (PK-02, October 2025). These findings show that public service innovation is the result of a collaborative problem-solving process that involves various actors equally.

## 5. Public Service Innovation as a Co-Production Process of Public Value

The last theme emphasizes that public service innovation in Banjarmasin City is co-productive and depends on the capacity of institutions in managing community participation. Local government officials emphasized the importance of synergy between the government and the community in producing sustainable innovations, as expressed: "*Innovation will run well if the government and the community complement each other*" (APD-04, October 2025).

This view is in line with the perception of the community that sees public service innovation as the result of joint work, not solely a government program. An informant stated: "*We feel that innovation belongs to the community, not just a government program*" (PK-04, October 2025). From the perspective of service users, innovations produced through the co-production process are considered easier to accept and use by the wider community, as expressed: "*Jointly produced services are easier to accept by the community*" (PL-01, October 2025).

Local government officials also emphasized that the success of innovation is highly determined by the ability of institutions to manage community participation systematically. This is reflected in the statement: "*The key to innovation is in the government's ability to manage citizen participation*" (APD-05, October 2025). This view is reinforced by the community that assesses that community involvement contributes to the sustainability of innovation, as conveyed: "*If the community is involved, innovation can last longer*" (PK-05, October 2025). These results confirm that public service innovation is a process of co-production of public value that depends on the strategic management of community participation by local government institutions.

## Discussion

The results of the study show that community participation in public service innovation in the Banjarmasin City Government takes place proactively, sustainably, and contextually, from the stage of problem identification to service evaluation. This pattern of engagement confirms that the community is not just a "recipient of services", but a collaborative actor who contributes to the dynamics of public innovation. These findings are in line with a collaborative governance framework that emphasizes the importance of multi-stakeholder engagement in generating public service value ([Thabit et al., 2025](#)). Moreover, this pattern supports the idea that participation should be understood as a relational process that continues to evolve as citizens and governments interact, not just formal participation ([Waheduzzaman & Khandaker, 2022; Coelho et al., 2022](#)). This shows that local governments need to strengthen communication channels and dialogue forums that are continuous, not episodic, to ensure that citizen involvement is not only symbolic but also substantive in the

formulation of service solutions.

The public feedback mechanism has been proven to play an important role in directing the design and adjustment of public service innovations, not just an evaluative function. Participation in the form of feedback is a source of empirical information that helps the bureaucracy understand service weaknesses that are not always visible to internal systems. Previous research has shown that this kind of feedback can improve the quality of services and public trust when the government's response to citizens' criticism can be acted upon in real terms ([Liu et al., 2022](#)). Thus, feedback is not only a form of one-way communication, but is a strategic tool to trigger organizational learning and innovation that is oriented to the needs of the community. Consequently, local governments need to develop accessible and responsive feedback channels, including leveraging information technology to accelerate response and accountability.

Findings regarding community initiatives as a trigger for public service innovation show that citizens are not only criticizing the existing system, but actively offering solutions based on real experiences. This is in line with the participatory literature that places people as a rich source of innovative ideas due to their experience in the daily use of services ([Abidin, 2024](#)). These community initiatives show that public innovation can be bottom-up, in contrast to traditional models that are often top-down and bureaucratic. This condition confirms that the community is able to bring a new perspective that may escape the government's internal view. Therefore, public apparatus needs to create structural spaces that facilitate the collection of community ideas, such as innovation forums, collaborative workshops, and crowdsourcing platforms for ideas, to strengthen innovative cultures in local government.

The problem-solving process carried out collaboratively between the government and the community shows that public service innovation is not just an administrative program but a social co-production practice. This collaboration builds mutual trust and legitimacy towards the resulting innovations, which are important conditions for the sustainability of innovation ([Adomako & Nguyen, 2024](#)). These findings also reinforce the findings of other studies that emphasize that collaboration between government and citizens contributes to more accurate and contextually relevant service outcomes ([Zhang et al., 2022](#)). Furthermore, this kind of collaboration helps to transcend the limitations of traditional bureaucracy that tends to be linear and separate from the needs of citizens. Thus, collaborative approaches need to be enriched through training of apparatus, strengthening community capacity, and regulations that accommodate multi-stakeholder dialogue in each phase of innovation.

This research found that public service innovations in the city of Banjarmasin are co-production of public value, which is the result of complementary interaction between the government and the community in order to create more meaningful and widely accepted services. This concept is reinforced by the literature that affirms that public innovation is a joint process between the bureaucracy and citizens to produce authentic "public value" ([Mei & Yang, 2025](#)). These empirical findings extend the application of the theory in the context of Indonesian local government, where local culture and community mobilization are important factors in the dynamics of public innovation.

However, the implementation of community participation in the public service innovation process faces challenges such as limited resources, differences in citizen capacity, and irregularities in inter-stakeholder coordination. These barriers reflect research findings that show that organizational structural and cultural constraints can slow down the innovation process despite participatory support ([Kiss et al., 2022](#)). Local governments need to develop institutional mechanisms that are able to overcome these barriers, for example through strengthening institutional capacity, increasing public literacy, and providing

collaborative incentives. The imbalance in capacity between actors also demands more inclusive intervention strategies, such as citizen education, apparatus training, and the formation of representative innovation coordination teams.

Finally, this research makes an important contribution to the development of public administration science and public service management, especially in understanding the strategic role of community participation in public service innovation at the local level. Theoretically, these findings expand the participatory study and co-production of services with empirical evidence from the context of local government in Indonesia that emphasizes the dynamics of bottom-up innovation. In practical terms, this study recommends the development of a sustainable participatory system, including responsive feedback mechanisms, systematic collaboration spaces, and institutional capacity that is adaptive to citizen input. Further research can explore the role of digital technology in expanding participation and overcoming structural participatory barriers.

## Conclusion

This study concludes that community participation plays a role as the main driver of public service innovation in local government institutions, not just as a supporting element of internal policies. Through a qualitative approach of a case study in the Banjarmasin City Government, this study shows that community involvement takes place actively and sustainably from the stage of problem identification, solution formulation, to evaluation of service innovation. Feedback mechanisms, community initiatives, and collaborative problem-solving have been proven to shape the direction, design, and implementation of public service innovations substantively. These findings confirm that public service innovation is a co-productive social process, where public value is generated through interaction and collaboration between government apparatus and the community. Thus, the capacity of government institutions in managing community participation strategically is a key factor in the success and sustainability of public service innovation.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of the study of public business management and public administration by strengthening the perspective of participatory governance and service co-production in the context of local government. The results of the study broaden the understanding that community participation not only increases the legitimacy of policies, but also becomes a source of knowledge, creativity, and innovation that is relevant to local needs. In practical terms, these findings provide important implications for local governments to design public service innovation models that are more inclusive, adaptive, and oriented towards public value creation. This study recommends strengthening institutional, responsive, and sustainable participation mechanisms to ensure that public service innovation is not temporary, but is able to respond to the dynamics of community needs in the long term.

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