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Decentralization and Public Service Provision: A Case Study of the Education Sector in Jayawijaya District, Papua, Indonesia

TRI EFRIANDI, OSCAR COUWENBERG and RONALD L. HOLZHACKER

For decades, Indonesia's sovereignty over Papua has been contested, resulting in violent conflicts. In 2001, the introduction of Papua's special autonomy emerged as an integrative approach both to resolve conflicts and to accelerate development in the province. One of the key problems to be addressed was the improvement of the education sector. However, after more than a decade following its implementation, and despite

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increased financial support from the central government, the educational development in Papua has been disappointing. This article analyses the factors that have shaped the development of primary education in Jayawijaya, a highland district in Papua. By gathering qualitative data from policy studies and in-depth interviews, this article identifies and examines three major challenges that have affected the development of primary education in Jayawijaya after decentralization: the uniformity of policy, the problem with incentives, and poor monitoring due to the misalignment of territorial and functional structures. These findings demonstrate that the lack of awareness to recognize the variety of local contexts is counterproductive and could lead to policy failures. Papua's special autonomy as an instrument of asymmetric decentralization has been attenuated by the continuation of "one-size-fits-all" top-down policies at the national level.

Keywords: Jayawijaya, Papua, decentralization, public service provision, education.

In 2001, Indonesian Law 21/2001 granted special autonomy status to Papua province. This status provided the provincial government of Papua with greater authority than other provinces, and increased financial support from the central government. From 2009 to 2017, as much as Rp40 trillion (approximately US\$2.8 billion) was allocated to Papua in support of its special autonomy.¹ One of the aims of special autonomy for Papua was to improve the provision of education in the province. However, the degree to which better educational levels have been accomplished has been disappointing. Development indicators in Papua still lag behind Indonesia's other provinces, including the low mean years of schooling. The maximum number of school years in Indonesia is 15, but Papua had a mean of just 6.3 years in 2017, which compares unfavourably to the national level of 8.1 years.² However, this outcome is not due to the lack of schools or teachers, but rather the high rates of teacher absenteeism that has contributed to the high proportion of student dropouts.³

The aim of this article is to explain why the public service provision of primary education in Jayawijaya is still underperforming despite the extra resources allocated by the central government through decentralization. By employing a qualitative case study design and combining data from the literature, policy studies and in-depth interviews, the article identifies three major barriers which hinder the delivery of primary education services in Jayawijaya: first, the uniformity of national educational policies and standards that fail to recognize and accommodate local circumstances; second, the ineffectiveness of incentive structures to meet the local needs

of schools and teachers; and third, the problem of monitoring due to the lack of coordination between the local government's territorial and functional administrations. These findings contribute to the existing literature on multi-level governance by showing the emergence of vertical and horizontal governance problems between district governments, schools as service providers, and subdistrict governments. In addition, this article enriches agency theory by applying the theory to analyse state policy implementation, particularly in the provision of public services.

The article first lays out the definition and concepts of decentralization, multi-level governance and agency theory as the framework for analysis, followed by a discussion of the article's research design. It goes on to analyse the empirical findings based upon the results of interviews. Finally, the conclusion summarizes the research findings and offers recommendations for policymakers and further research.

Theoretical Background

Decentralization: Definition, Concept and Practice

Decentralization is one of the key instruments for reforming the governance structure of a nation. It changes the relationship between the central and local governments by transferring authority, resources and responsibility from the central government to local governments.⁴ As decentralization implies a movement away from the centre, it raises questions over what and how authority should be distributed. Taking a broad view, decentralization can be classified into two categories: the *degree* and the *type* of authority devolved.⁵ The former category classifies decentralization according to the distribution of power and/or functions to local governments. Three classes can be discerned: de-concentration, delegation and devolution.⁶ The second category of decentralization is the *type* of authority transferred to local governments. Three types are defined: political decentralization, administrative decentralization and fiscal decentralization.⁷

Decentralization has become an important issue for both academics and policymakers in many countries. Bringing the government closer to the people is widely believed to generate benefits to governance and development, particularly in the provision of public services. Advocates of decentralization argue that devolving authority to the local government increases government accountability and

responsiveness to citizens.⁸ This is because decentralization opens up greater opportunities for local citizens to participate in policy design and decision-making processes that affect them.⁹ It is asserted that development plans and programmes on public service delivery will be tailored and be more responsive to the specific needs of heterogeneous regions and groups.¹⁰

In practice, however, decentralization can also be hampered by the problem of recentralization.¹¹ In Uganda, for example, decentralization has suffered from a lack of independence from central government control due to strong ties between the national party and local governments, which has led to a lack of effectiveness in the provision of high-quality public services.¹² Recentralization also emerged in China as the central government's commitment to decentralize the educational system was in conflict with its desire to maintain control while simultaneously being responsive to the needs of the new market economy.¹³ The tendencies to recentralize indicate that decentralization is not an end point in reforming. Since decentralization empowers local people and local politicians at the expense of national politicians and bureaucrats, it results in the central government being reluctant to transfer their authority or a desire to regain it because it might attenuate the reforms.¹⁴ However, recentralization is not only due to the motivation of the central authorities to regain powers that have been transferred. The inadequacy of capacity at the local level, local fiscal dependency on the central government, the risk of local elite capture and local decision-makers' lack of accountability provide incentives for the central government to reassert control over local governments.¹⁵

Another crucial factor that affects the fluctuation between recentralization and decentralization is the trade-off "between uniformity of national standards and territorial variations", particularly in the provision of public services.¹⁶ On the one hand, the establishment of standards or common sets by the central government is intended to ensure the equality of public services for citizens in different regions. On the other hand, there are various circumstances at the local level in terms of geographical conditions, cultural diversity and socio-economic development that affect the capacity of the local institutions to meet those national standards.¹⁷ Detailed central rules that diminish local discretion might hinder the local government's effort to customize public service provision to local needs and conditions.¹⁸

Multi-level Governance

As decentralization distributes authority from the central government to local governments, the question of how such a reallocation of authority should be organized in a governance structure arises. In addressing this question, multi-level governance (MLG) theory offers a conceptual basis. MLG refers to “the explicit or implicit sharing of policy-making authority, responsibility, development and implementation at different administrative and territorial levels”.¹⁹ The arrangement of MLG can take the form of either a vertical or horizontal relationship.²⁰

The vertical relationship relates to the distribution of authority in a hierarchical administrative system.²¹ In decentralization, this vertical dimension is often closely related to the territorial characteristics of a country where authority allocation is based on a hierarchical territorial-oriented structure. Authority is distributed to a level of government that is geographically closer to public service providers and clients; for example, from the central government to the provincial, district or city, subdistrict or village governments.²² Liesbet Hooghe and Garry Mark define such government structures as Type I MLG which has several distinct characteristics.²³ First, there is a government unit at each level that exercises a wide range of functions and responsibilities, but is limited by territorial boundaries. Second, due to these boundaries, the unit’s jurisdiction does not intersect with others.

The second form is a horizontal relationship, which refers to the distribution of authority among government units that are at equal administrative levels. This relationship can be classified into two types based on the two different levels of government. The first is upper horizontal, which involves the distribution of tasks and functions to different ministries and/or public agencies at the central government level. The second is lower horizontal, which is the distribution of tasks and functions to different departments or agencies at local government levels.²⁴ The horizontal relationship also relates to functional governance in which authority is designated to a particular agency or department to manage a particular government function. The horizontal relationship emphasizes the governmental function rather than the geographical arrangement of the administration.²⁵ In the dichotomy of MLG, Hooghe and Marks classify horizontal relationship as Type II MLG because, first, the jurisdiction of ministries/local government agencies is “not aligned on just a few levels but operate at numerous territorial scales”.²⁶

For instance, at the national level, the territorial jurisdiction of a ministry may overlap with the administrative border of the provincial or municipal (district/city) governments, while at the district/city level, the territorial jurisdiction of local government departments or agencies may cross the administrative border of the subdistricts and village governments. Secondly, the task and function of each government unit are designed around a particular service or policy problem, such as transport, education or healthcare.²⁷

While Type I and Type II MLG may have different characteristics, they can co-exist. In Indonesia, for example, the territory of a district government is divided into three layers: the district, subdistrict and village. Each level has a specific and durable territorial boundary within which government units are established. The devolution of formal authority is restricted to the district or city level, meaning that only the district government has the authority to manage government functions, such as education, health or infrastructure, while the subdistrict governments are the territorial units of the district government. The subdistrict or village governments can thus be classified as belonging to Type I MLG, characterized by a vertical authority relationship. Next, as the district government is allocated the authority to manage the local government functions, it organizes these functions into departments or agencies. In general, all of these are based in the district capital. Each department has a specific function to manage a particular local service. Consequently, these departments or agencies are fitting of the Type II MLG typology and are thus considered as a horizontal relationship.

Decentralization and Agency Problems

In an agent-principal relationship, a principal hires another individual or institution as an agent that would perform services and/or make a decision on behalf of the principal.²⁸ This involves two main features: the delegation of authority and the mechanism of control of a principal over an agent.²⁹ For the agent to act on behalf of the principal, the agent needs the delegated authority of the principal in order to perform the assigned task, while the principal needs a control system to verify that the agent is doing what he is supposed to do. With the assumptions of information asymmetry and opportunism on behalf of the agent, agency-related problems can develop. As the agent is presumed to know more than the principal about the specific delegated task and the effort required for it, the agent can opportunistically exploit his position,

for instance, by minimizing time and effort.³⁰ The principal may minimize this problem by monitoring the actions of the agent and specifying an incentive scheme that rewards good behaviour. However, due to the difficulties in gathering information on the agent's performance and also because the incentive is not equivalent to the agent's self-interests, this control system becomes imperfect and a residual welfare loss will inevitably remain.³¹

Agency theory allows us to view decentralization in terms of an agency relationship. In decentralization, the central government acts as a principal which delegates some governmental functions, authority and responsibilities to local governments as the agents. Furthermore, the principal-agent relationship in decentralization is not only limited to the central government and the local government. At the local level, there is also an agency relationship between elected officials (governors, district heads/city mayors, local legislators) as local principals and local government bureaucrats as the agents. Concerning the provision of public services, in particular, this agency relationship exists between local governments (principal) that delegates authority to public service providers (agent) to deliver various public services such as education, health or clean water.³² The resulting agency problem is how the principals can ensure that the agents are properly implementing their objectives and policies.

To this end, monitoring and incentives are used as mechanisms to control an agent's behaviour by the principal. In decentralization settings, however, establishing monitoring and providing incentive schemes are often ineffective in improving an agent's performance. This is due to three main reasons. The first involves the creation of multiple principals (national and local) and the emergence of additional agency problems when conflicts of interest arise between the different levels of principals. This happens, for instance, when there is a lack of consensus among principals concerning what aspects of the agents' performance should be monitored.³³ Second, distance can adversely affect monitoring systems as the lack of communication technology and poor transportation infrastructures can render it challenging for a principal to monitor an agent in a large government territory.³⁴ This condition is further complicated by the lack of coordination between government structures at different spatial levels.³⁵ Third, despite differing circumstances at the local level, incentive schemes from the central government are often implemented uniformly. Due to their unresponsiveness

to local needs, such incentives may prove counterproductive in improving the agents' performance. Agency theory, therefore, helps analyse the impact of decentralization on public service provision by examining agency problems in the relationship between the central government and the district government as well as between the district government and the service providers.

Research Design

The Case Study of Jayawijaya District, Papua

Indonesia has five administrative and territorial divisions at the central, provincial, district/city, subdistrict and village/*kelurahan* (urban community) levels. After the introduction of decentralization as a national policy in 1999, autonomy was devolved primarily to the district/city levels. The subdistrict and villages/*kelurahan* were created as agents of the district/city governments, although it should be noted that villages tend to have a greater degree of autonomy than *kelurahan* due to their origins and customary rights. One of the decentralized responsibilities of the district/city governments is the provision of primary education. Although the central government plays a major role in setting norms and standards, the district government is the one that administers primary education according to the standards established by the central government. To operationalize the provision of primary education, the district government sets up a local education department to manage primary schools, including managing teachers, establishing school facilities, developing school infrastructures and arranging school supervision and monitoring.

For this research, the Jayawijaya district in Papua was chosen as the case study. Jayawijaya is located in the middle of Papua Island and is characterized by its highland topography, with most of the territory located at an altitude between 1,500 and 2,500 metres above sea level. Demographically, the total district population in 2017 was 268,137, with a population density of 1 per 25 square kilometres.³⁶ Culturally, this highland region is dominated by the Dani tribe, located in the customary region (*wilayah adat*) of La Pago. There are also some settlers from the eastern part of Indonesia, such as Sulawesi and Maluku, who are mainly domiciled in the district's capital, Wamena. The economy in this district is dominated by the agricultural sector, although the trading and transport sectors are becoming more important due to the opening of an airport in

Wamena in 2015 and the development of the trans-Papua road connecting Jayawijaya with the neighbouring districts. The district of Jayawijaya has a total area of 7,030 square kilometres, divided into 40 subdistricts, 328 villages and four *kelurahan*.³⁷ Primary schools are mainly located in the subdistrict capitals, whereas almost all secondary schools are located in Wamena, the district capital.

Historically, education in Papua was introduced by the church and missionary groups from 1828 to 1961 during the period of Dutch colonization.³⁸ The primary purpose of literacy was so that local people could read the Bible.³⁹ After gaining independence in 1945, the responsibility of education was taken over by the central government, which thus transformed the churches' educational role to religious educational foundations that still exists today. Due to this transition, teachers who had previously worked for religious foundations became government employees and the foundation schools were required to adopt the national curriculum.⁴⁰ Until recently, Papua had two types of schools: public schools managed by the government and private schools managed by the religious foundations. However, both types of schools employ civil service teachers who receive salaries from the government.

In 2001, the central government granted Papua special autonomy status. From a political perspective, the sovereignty of Indonesia over Papua has been contested since Indonesia proclaimed its independence in 1945.⁴¹ Both repressive and accommodative approaches have been implemented by the government to respond to secessionist challenges in the region, and, in many cases, the repressive approach has ended in widespread violence.⁴² The central government granted Papua special autonomy status as an accommodative policy to address the failure of development there, particularly in terms of the provision of basic services.⁴³ The law on special autonomy stipulated an allocation of a minimum of 30 per cent of the special autonomy revenues to the education sector and empowered religious educational foundations to promote education in Papua. However, its full realization is far from complete. The illiteracy rate in Papua was 27 per cent in 2013, compared to the national average rate of 6 per cent.⁴⁴ Moreover, the mean years of schooling in the province was a mere 6.3 years, which is mostly driven by high scores from a select few districts. In some districts, particularly those in the highland region, the mean years of schooling is significantly lower. In Jayawijaya, in 2017 the mean years of schooling was only five years.⁴⁵ This indicates that many

adults aged 25 years or older in this district did not finish primary school. Furthermore, from 2013 to 2017, the mean years of schooling in Jayawijaya increased by only 0.16. In the national medium-term development plan for 2014–19, the Indonesian central government has targeted the mean years of schooling to reach 8.8 years by 2019. At the current rate, Jayawijaya would need 24 years to achieve that national target. Therefore, using Jayawijaya as a case study helps us understand how the implementation of decentralization can actually facilitate or hinder educational development in a periphery region.

Methodology

This research uses a case study approach in which Jayawijaya district is the object of the study. The study started with a review of policy documents (see Table 1), previous studies, newspapers and official statistical reports related to decentralization and educational development in Papua in general and Jayawijaya in particular. Further, during a fieldwork trip from January to April 2018, twelve semi-structured interviews with key informants from the national government, district government and scholars were conducted. The interviews also included representatives from the four educational foundations in Jayawijaya: the Christian Education Foundation (*Yayasan Pendidikan Kristen*, YPK); the Catholic Education and School Foundation (*Yayasan Pendidikan dan Persekolahan Katolik*,

Table 1
Policy Documents

<i>Title</i>	<i>Type of Documents</i>	<i>Year</i>
Regional Autonomy	Law No. 5	1974
Regional Autonomy	Law No. 22	1999
Special Autonomy for Papua Province	Law No. 21	2001
Regional Autonomy	Law No. 32	2004
Teacher and Lecturer	Law No. 14	2005
Regional Autonomy	Law No. 23	2014

Table 1 (continued)

<i>Title</i>	<i>Type of Documents</i>	<i>Year</i>
Professional Allowance for Teacher and Lecturer, Special Allowance for Teacher and Lecturer, and Honorary Allowance for Professor	Government Regulation No. 41	2009
Local Government Work Unit Structure	Government Regulation No. 18	2016
Minimum Service Standard	Government Regulation No. 2	2018
Subdistrict	Government Regulation No. 17	2018
Additional Allowance for Civil Service Teachers	Presidential Decree No. 52	2009
Minimum Service Standard for Primary Education	Minister of Education Decree No. 15	2010
Minimum Service Standard for Primary Education	Minister of Education Decree No. 23	2013
Technical Guidance of School Operational Assistance	Minister of Education Decree No. 8	2017
Technical Guidance of School Operational Assistance	Minister of Education Decree No. 1	2018
Educational Management	Papua Provincial Regulation No. 2	2013
Regional Education Report	Annual Report 2017	2018

YPPK); the Islamic Education Foundation (*Yayasan Pendidikan Islam*, YAPIS); and the Wamena Christian Foundation (*Yayasan Kristen Wamena*, YKW) (see Table 2). The interviews were transcribed, compiled, interpreted and analysed using Atlas.ti software to uncover the major challenges related to the provision of primary education in the district.

Table 2
Interview Data Collection

<i>Interviewee(s)</i>	<i>Organizations</i>	<i>Government Level</i>	<i>Interview Date</i>	<i>Location</i>
1. Director of Regional Autonomy	Ministry of National Development Planning/National Development Planning Agency	National	7-2-2018	Jakarta
2. Head of Sub-Directorate of Papua and West Papua Province	Ministry of Home Affairs	National	8-2-2018	Jakarta
3. Director & Policy Trainer	Center for Capacity Building and Networking, Faculty of Social and Politics, Gadjah Mada University	Academic Scholars	15-2-2018	Yogyakarta
4. Head of Planning Section	Local Education Department of Jayawijaya District	District	12-3-2018	Wamena
5. Chairman	Christian Education Foundation	Non-Government	7-3-2018	Jayapura
6. Chairman	Islamic Education Foundation of Jayawijaya	Non-Government	12-3-2018	Wamena
7. Chairman	Christian Education Foundation of Jayawijaya	Non-Government	13-3-2018	Wamena
8. Trustee	Social Foundation for Remote Community	Non-Government	12-3-2018	Wamena
9. Trustee	Wamena Christian Foundation	Non-Government	14-3-2018	Wamena
10. Teacher & Foundation Trustee	Catholic Education and School Foundation of Jayawijaya	Non-Government	12-3-2018	Wamena
11. Teacher	Wamena Christian Foundation	Non-Government	14-3-2018	Wamena
12. Teacher	Social Foundation for Remote Community	Non-Government	12-3-2018	Wamena

Social and Scientific Significance

This research aims to contribute to existing literature on multi-level governance in at least three ways. First, it enriches the research on multi-level governance by not only discussing the vertical relationship between the central and local government, but also by examining the relationship between district governments, schools as service providers and subdistrict governments. Several previous studies on multi-level governance have drawn on a range of literature on federalism, local governments and public policies to examine the pattern of relationships among each level of government when the decision-making authority of the central government has been transferred to a different layer of government.⁴⁶ However, these studies mainly focused on the vertical interactions between national, provincial and district/city governments and the horizontal relationships between governments at the same level, while little attention has been paid to the lower administrative structures under the district or city government levels. Second, this research also employs agency theory to examine governance problems in the provision of public services. Agency theory has been mainly applied in economics and organization theory. However, little is known about the importance of a principal-agent relationship in state policy implementation, particularly in the provision of public services.⁴⁷ Thus, this research looks at agency problems that emerge in a particular public governance structure and analyses their impact on public service delivery. Third, this research provides empirical evidence important for policymakers in designing tailor-made policies which reflect local needs and accommodate local conditions.

Analysis

Uniformity of Policy

The first problem that the decentralization of education has to overcome is the uniformity of policy. Although the responsibility to administer primary education has been decentralized to the district government, the curriculum and educational outputs and outcomes are still determined by the central government. The authority of the district government revolves around determining the annual budget for primary education and undertaking decisions on human resources and infrastructure, in other words, overseeing teacher deployment and providing education facilities.⁴⁸

One of the centrally set uniform policies is the Minimum Service Standard (MSS). These standards regulate the minimum

type and quality of basic public services to be provided by local governments for citizens. The establishment of these standards has two objectives.⁴⁹ First, these standards ensure the quality and accessibility of the public service provision from the local government. Second, these standards become a benchmark for measuring the performance of the local government in delivering public services. The central government has the authority to impose sanctions if local governments are not able to show sufficient results in meeting these standards.⁵⁰ When observed through the lens of agency theory, these standards represent a set of goals/objectives from the central government (principal) to be implemented by the agent (local governments).

For local governments, problems arise when the standards fail to recognize the differing, and sometimes difficult, conditions at the local level. This is evident in the Jayawijaya district. The MSS specifies, for example, that primary schools should be established within the maximum walking distance of three kilometres from permanent residential areas.⁵¹ In Jayawijaya, it is impossible to comply with this criterion due to the particular conditions in this region. The district has a large territory with mountainous terrain, scattered and sparsely populated settlement areas and a lack of proper road and transportation infrastructure. One of the causes of this policy incompatibility is the lack of information about local conditions. An official from the local education department argued that the monitoring and evaluation processes of the central government are often ineffective in gathering data because central government officials only visited Jayapura, the provincial capital, and not the more remote districts.⁵²

Furthermore, the local education department official stated that achieving the minimum standards of education requires a large budget.⁵³ However, the district government and legislative council have not yet elevated education into a policy and budgetary priority. They have not allocated the mandated 30 per cent of the local budget to the education sector as stipulated by both the 1945 Constitution and the Law 20/2003 on the National Education System. In 2017, the allocation of the district government's budget for education in Jayawijaya was the lowest out of the 29 districts in Papua, amounting to only 0.95 per cent of the total local government budget of Rp1.6 trillion (approximately US\$114 million).⁵⁴ The low budget for education can be explained by the characteristics of the relationship between the local government and the local legislative

council. Under decentralization, in order to create checks and balances, the local legislative council has three main functions: legislating, budgeting and monitoring. Together with the local government, the local legislative council establishes local regulations, discusses and approves local government spending, and evaluates the performance of the local government. Due to this division of authority, the local government has to bargain with the local legislative council on local-level policies such as budget allocation. In many cases, however, local politicians (elected local government leaders and legislative council members) tend to favour short-term goals by allocating a large amount of the budget for physical infrastructure rather than investing in long-term goals such as educational development. In the words of one interviewee from YKW, “the local government is more focused on constructing the school buildings rather than improving the quality of education. I think we already have a sufficient number of school buildings, now we need more budget to provide school facilities such as laboratories or textbooks and to promote the quality of teachers.”⁵⁵

This phenomenon can be understood as a conflict of interest between national and local principals. This occurs when the interests of the local principal undermines the efforts of the national principal to encourage the local government to achieve national goals.⁵⁶ In this case, the local legislative council stands in as the local principal because the local government is accountable for their actions not only to the central government but also to the local legislative council. As noted previously, a problem arises when interests between the various principals are not aligned. Although the central government has established uniform standards to improve the quality, equality and equity of education services in all regions in Indonesia, at the implementation stage, due to the dynamics of the local political process, local politicians may have different goals, which derail the efforts of the central government to improve the development of education services.

Another one-size-fits-all policy that has been implemented is the uniform curriculum. Despite the diversity of culture, language and development levels, the central government forces all schools to use the same learning materials such as textbooks that are based on the national curriculum. The use of national textbooks is problematic in Jayawijaya because the learning materials in national textbooks are too advanced for primary school students, particularly for those in the first to third grades. A teacher from YPPK explained that “it is

difficult here for us to apply the national curriculum and also the national education standard. Here, we are more focused on how students can read, write and understand basic maths.”⁵⁷ Furthermore, a teacher from YKW pointed out that “dictionaries and terminologies in the national books are hard to comprehend by pupils. National textbooks use some objects that have never been found in students’ daily lives such as trains, horses or Mount Bromo. These things are alien words for elementary school students here.”⁵⁸ In an effort to deal with this problem, YKW has developed the Papua Contextual Textbook (*Buku Paket Kontekstual Papua*, BPKP) to teach Bahasa Indonesia and mathematics to first, second and third grade students at primary schools. A trustee from YKW involved in compiling the book explained that “this contextual textbook is not only adapted to our local cultures, which are closer to students’ daily lives such as sweet potatoes, Habema Lake or Jayawijaya Mountain, but ... also accommodate the learning objectives that are to be achieved in the national curriculum”.⁵⁹ The teacher from YKW further added that “the book is used only until the third grade because we want to strengthen the basic knowledge of students, with expectations that when they reach fourth grade, they have a better understanding to follow learning materials in the national textbooks. Thus, this book functions as a basis for preparing students to use the national textbooks.”⁶⁰ They also argued that by using the contextual book, students exhibit more signs of progress when they are promoted to the next grade compared to using the national textbooks from the first grade.

Nevertheless, incorporating such contextual learning materials into the curriculum is problematic. Despite the benefits of using these books, some schools refuse to use them because they are not regulated by the education policy. YKW has tried to get support from the central and local governments to incorporate this learning method into the education policy. However, due to the complexity of the bureaucratic and political processes, their efforts have been unsuccessful. They also approached donor agencies in the hope of receiving funding to disseminate the materials and provide training for teachers using these learning materials. However, the support from donor agencies was only offered for a limited period. When the funding ceased once the contract was over, their programmes and activities ended. Thus, the foundation needs to rely on sustainable funding from the government to support its programmes and activities in disseminating the contextual learning materials.

The Problems with Incentives

Teacher absenteeism is not a new phenomenon in Indonesia, particularly in Papua. The problem of geographical accessibility is one of the factors which explains teachers' reluctance to attend school. Other related factors, such as limited salary and the lack of infrastructure and support in terms of transportation, housing, healthcare and assistance for teachers in remote areas, have further perpetuated the problem of teacher absenteeism.⁶¹ In Jayawijaya, based on on-site observations and interviews, many schools in rural and remote subdistricts are not fully operational. Although school buildings are available in each subdistrict and the student-teacher ratio is sufficient on paper, the actual teaching and learning activities in the classrooms are often improperly conducted as a result of teacher absenteeism.⁶² According to the interviewees, civil service teachers are absent more often compared to contract or non-permanent teachers. This is also in line with findings from a 2012 report by UNICEF⁶³ which revealed that teacher absenteeism is influenced by the employment status of teachers, with non-permanent teachers less likely to be absent than civil service teachers. This problem is even more severe in private schools because the teachers, as civil servants, are not directly accountable to the foundations.⁶⁴

Various approaches have been tried by the central government to solve this problem, including offering financial incentives for schools and teachers in remote areas. Two major financial incentives from the central government to improve the quality of educational outcomes are school operational grants (*bantuan operasional sekolah*, BOS) and teacher allowances (*tunjangan guru*). BOS is a school-based management programme introduced in 2005. The central government implemented this programme to support schools' operational costs by delivering funding directly to the schools and giving them autonomy to manage these funds together with the participation of parents and related stakeholders. Despite the benefits of this assistance programme in expanding education access and improving the quality of education,⁶⁵ there were shortcomings in its implementation. One major problem is the rigid uniform standard in determining the amount of funding. The total funding is calculated by the total number of students in a school. For a primary school, the funding is Rp800,000 (approximately US\$55) per student per year.⁶⁶ This rule is applied without considering local circumstances. For example, schools in a remote area may

have fewer pupils but sometimes need more funding due to the geographical cost differences.

A trustee from YPPK said that a problem with BOS funding arises when there is an imbalance in the number of civil service teachers and non-permanent teachers. While the civil service teachers receive their salary from the government, the salary for the non-permanent teachers is paid through BOS funding. The more non-permanent teachers, the larger the portion of the BOS budget is needed for salaries. To make matters worse, with BOS funding, private schools are no longer allowed to collect tuition fees from parents. This means that the salaries for non-permanent teachers can only be covered by the BOS budget. However, only 15 per cent of the total BOS funding can be used for non-permanent teacher salaries. With these restraints, the foundation is only able to pay the minimum salary for a small number of additional non-civil service teachers. Consequently, it is difficult for the foundations to hire non-permanent teachers, particularly those who are willing to work in an isolated area.⁶⁷ On the other hand, the attendance of civil service teachers assigned to private schools cannot be easily supervised and monitored by the foundation. As an interviewee of YPPK stated, “the civil service teachers argue that they are paid by the government, not by the foundation. Thus, the foundation has no right to control us [the civil service teachers], because we are responsible to the government not to the foundation.”⁶⁸ Therefore, on top of the difficulty in hiring temporary teachers, the absenteeism of civil service teachers further complicates the efforts to provide education in remote areas in Jayawijaya.

For the teachers, various forms of allowances are available. Aside from their regular salary, three different forms of allowances are provided in the hope of improving teacher performance. These are the professional allowance (*tunjangan profesi*), special allowance (*tunjangan khusus*) and additional allowance (*tambahan penghasilan*).⁶⁹ In Jayawijaya, due to poor monitoring, the allowances have not encouraged teachers to turn up for work, even though one of the requirements to obtain the allowance is the fulfilment of certain workloads. It is the local education department’s responsibility to manage, supervise and remunerate the civil service teachers. However, in many cases, the supervision and monitoring from the local education department is ineffective since it is located in the district capital while schools are widely dispersed in the subdistricts.

The above examples show that financial incentive schemes become ineffective with regard to improving teacher and school performance for three reasons. First, financial incentives have been uniformly set by the central government without recognizing various local needs and problems. Second, the local government acts as an intermediary for the central government. It has no authority in determining and adjusting the incentives for schools and teachers based on local conditions. Third, the lack of monitoring due to geographical and administrative distance prevents a proper evaluation of the effectiveness of incentives on school and teacher performance.

Poor Monitoring and the Misalignment of Territorial and Functional Structures

In Jayawijaya, due to the large territory, difficult terrain and lack of infrastructure and transport facilities, distance becomes the biggest problem for monitoring schools and teachers in subdistricts. Max Weber, as cited by Edgar Kiser, argued that “monitoring problems increase with distance, the farther the officials got from the ruler, the more they ‘evaded the ruler’s influence’”.⁷⁰ A 2012 report by UNICEF on teacher absenteeism found that distance is an important determinant of absenteeism.⁷¹ One in two teachers in the highland districts of Papua was absent compared to one in four teachers in easy-to-access lowland districts. UNICEF also found that teachers in schools that are monitored frequently have lower absentee rates and recommended that the national government should empower the subdistrict government in monitoring teachers’ attendance and performance in order to mitigate the absenteeism problem in Papua.

Decentralization has also had a devastating effect on the quality of monitoring. First, various decentralization laws enacted over time have allocated authority to different governmental institutions. For instance, the authority to coordinate and monitor all government activities at the subdistrict level was initially allocated to the subdistrict administration in 1974 (Law 5/1974) but retracted in 1999 (Law 22/1999) when autonomy was instead placed at the district level. In 2004, this was reversed by Law 32/2004, but at the same time a new governmental unit (*unit pelaksana teknis dinas*, UPTD) was also set up to monitor schools. This unit was to report to the district level and not to the subdistrict level. In 2014, the enactment of Law 23/2014 abolished this unit and

placed monitoring at the school level, which means that the school principal is to report to the local education department. Second, the UNICEF report also discussed school principal absenteeism. It was found that principals in highland districts attended their schools far less frequently than teachers, with seven out of ten principals absent.⁷² Third, monitoring is not easy in Jayawijaya district as it has 117 schools in 40 subdistricts that are all hard to reach. Thus, empowering the 40 subdistrict governments to support and monitor primary schools in their territory might become an alternative strategy. However, the question then is how the local education department and subdistrict governments can work together, since they have distinctive functions and operate at different territorial scales with no hierarchical accountability relationships.⁷³

From a multi-level governance point perspective, the district education department can be categorized as a Type II institution. First, it is established to manage a particular function, namely educational services. Second, its jurisdictional level intersects and is not limited to only a given region as the authority of the district education department crosses the territorial boundary of the subdistricts. While the district education department is a Type II institution, the subdistrict government can be classified as a Type I institution. On the one hand, the subdistrict has a general-purpose management function, and, unlike the district education department, does not provide only one particular public service. On the other hand, its jurisdiction does not intersect with others and its authority is limited by its territorial boundaries. A coordination problem therefore emerges from the existence of two different multi-level governance types in one governmental structure.

In managing schools, this problem arises when schools are located within a specific territory of a subdistrict government, but accountable to the non-territorial but function-specific district education department. As shown above, in Jayawijaya, distance is a major barrier for the district education department to monitor school activities. Although subdistrict governments are geographically closer to the location of the schools, the law has afforded them no authority to supervise and monitor school activities. Furthermore, school principals are to report to the distant head of the education department, rather than the subdistrict government. This institutional set-up facilitates poor monitoring and in part gives rise to the problem of teacher absenteeism.

Conclusion

This study aims to identify and examine the obstacles that prevent the development of the education sector in Jayawijaya district after decentralization in Indonesia. The results of this study indicated three different but interrelated factors: first, the rigid uniformity of policy; second, the failure of incentives; and third, poor monitoring mechanisms due to a misalignment between the territorial and functional structures administering the district. When considered together, these findings contribute significantly to our understanding of why the various decentralized governance arrangements lead to undesired outcomes.

The developments in Jayawijaya have shown how the failure to recognize local circumstances leads to counterproductive behaviour in the educational sector. In this case, the idea that decentralization would make education provision more responsive to local needs is severely constrained by the imposition of “one-size-fits-all” top-down policies by the central government, represented in terms of minimum service standards and curriculum standards. Furthermore, the problem of uniformity also arises with the implementation of incentive policies. Various monetary incentive schemes from the central government are ineffective in improving teachers’ performance, particularly with respect to the problem of teacher absenteeism. This is due to the insufficiency of budgets, poor monitoring and the lack of a mechanism to evaluate the effectiveness of such a policy. The problem of poor monitoring is exacerbated by the coordination problem that arises between the subdistrict government and the district education department. These findings suggest that, despite legal stipulations, Papua’s autonomous status is in practice hindered by the uniformity of national policies that persist over time and eventually percolate down to the local level.

Furthermore, the findings of this study have a number of practical implications, particularly for policymakers. First, designing a policy as a development strategy requires an understanding of local diversity. Not recognizing the varied local contexts is counterproductive and may lead to policy failures. Second, the central government should consider increasing the relevance of territorial and administrative divisions below the district level, namely the subdistricts and villages. If decentralization aims to bring the government closer to the people, then the subdistrict and village levels should play a more important role in community development, particularly in the

delivery of public services. Finally, policymakers need to solve the coordination problem between territorial and functional government structures in Indonesia

NOTES

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