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Decentralization of Education: Opportunities and Challenges for Central Government, Provincial Government and Regional Government in Management of Education

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ABSTRACT

The issuance of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government provides broader autonomy to each region (Province) and Region (Regency/City) to regulate their own regions. In the realm of Education, this autonomy not only builds independence but also raises other problems that complicate regional government. With a qualitative approach using the Literature Study Analysis method with Primary Data in the form of Law Number 23 of 2014 and Law Number 20 of 2003 as the Main Data from several Journals, several Government problems can be found related to the distribution of authority such as Coordination Between Levels of Government, Human Resource Capacity, Funding and Budget, Management of Educators and Infrastructure and Facilities. The resolution of the problems that have been conveyed requires efforts to improve coordination between levels of government, strengthening the capacity of human resources in the regions, clarity in budget allocation, and equal distribution of educators and development of educational infrastructure. It is hoped that this article can provide an overview of micro problems in the regions and then sit together to solve these problems.

1. Introduction

Education is one of the strategic sectors in national development. In Indonesia, education management involves three levels of government: central, provincial, and regional. Decentralization (transfer of authority) of education through regional autonomy policies aims to increase the efficiency and relevance of education according to local needs. However, its implementation faces various challenges, such as unclear division of authority, lack of local government capacity, and imbalance of resources (Darmansah et al., 2025). Through education, a country can produce quality, competent human resources that are able to compete globally. In Indonesia, education is positioned as the main instrument in efforts to educate the nation's life, as stated in the opening of the 1945 Constitution. Therefore, education

management is the main concern of the government in every period of national development (Tilaar, 2009).

Since the implementation of regional autonomy policy through Law Number 22 of 1999 which was later updated to Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, there have been significant changes in education governance. Decentralization of education gives greater authority to regional governments to regulate and manage the education sector in their regions. The main objective of this decentralization is to increase the efficiency, effectiveness, and relevance of education to suit local needs and characteristics (Mulyasa, 2013). This is in line with findings stating that educational decentralization aims to improve access, quality, and relevance of education in various regions (Sofiani et al., 2024).

Although this policy has good intentions, its implementation in the field is not free from various challenges. One of the main problems is the lack of clarity in the division of authority between the central, provincial, and district/city governments, which often causes overlapping policies and confusion in the implementation of education programs. In addition, many local governments do not yet have adequate institutional capacity, human resources, and budgets to provide optimal education (Fattah, 2007). Highlighting that regional capacity gaps, weak inter-governmental coordination, and lack of community participation are the main challenges in implementing education decentralization (Darmansah et al., 2025).

Another challenge faced is the disparity in quality and access to education between regions. Regions with limited resources tend to lag behind in terms of educational infrastructure, availability of quality educators, and student learning outcomes. This reflects that educational decentralization has not been fully able to overcome the educational gap in Indonesia. Another thing emphasizes the importance of bringing decision-making closer to the needs of stakeholders to improve the quality and relevance of education. Therefore, it is necessary to strengthen coordination between levels of government and increase regional capacity so that the goals of educational decentralization can be achieved optimally (Sumpena et al., 2022).

Departing from several things presented in the introduction, a study is needed that aims to examine the problematic distribution of educational authority between the central, provincial, and regional governments and its implications for the quality of education. The analysis is carried out by comparing applicable regulations and case studies from various regions in Indonesia.

2. Methodology

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a library research method. The primary data in this study are in the form of regulatory documents, namely Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System and Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, which are the legal basis for the division of authority for managing education. Secondary data are obtained from the results of scientific studies in national journals that discuss the topic of educational

decentralization and the distribution of authority between governments (Nurrisa & Hermina, 2025).

The analysis was conducted using thematic content analysis to group and understand data based on key issues (Sitasari, 2022), such as the division of roles between central and regional governments, the effectiveness of education decentralization policies, and implementation challenges in the field. Validity was strengthened by source triangulation, namely by comparing the substance of laws and regulations with empirical findings from relevant scientific journals. This approach allows researchers to present a systematic, contextual, and in-depth understanding of the dynamics of education management within the framework of decentralization in Indonesia.

3. Result and Discussion

The distribution of authority in managing education in Indonesia is regulated by Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government and is strengthened by Law Number 20 of 2003 concerning the National Education System. These two laws provide a legal basis for the division of tasks between the central, provincial, and district/city governments in managing the education sector. The central government is responsible for managing higher education, the provincial government manages secondary education, while the district/city government manages basic education and early childhood education. This division of authority aims to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of education management in accordance with local characteristics and needs (Astuti, 2024).

Distribution of Central Government Education Authority

The central government has a crucial role in managing education in Indonesia, especially in setting national education standards. These standards include the national curriculum which is a reference for all educational units in the country. The determination of these standards aims to ensure that every student, regardless of geographic location, receives an equal quality of education and meets national criteria. With the existence of national standards, it is hoped that there will be uniformity in achieving the basic competencies required by each graduate. This is in line with research that emphasizes the importance of the role of the central government in setting education standards in order to achieve equal distribution of education quality throughout Indonesia (Sui-Ni, 2023).

In addition, the central government is responsible for managing higher education, including licensing the establishment of private universities and foreign educational units. This authority allows the central government to supervise and ensure that higher education institutions meet established standards, so that the quality of education at the university level is maintained. This management also includes controlling the formation of educators, career development, and the transfer of educators across provinces, all of which aim to improve professionalism and the distribution of educators evenly. Several cases show that this division of authority

aims to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of education management according to local characteristics and needs (Sumpena et al., 2022).

However, in its implementation, there are challenges faced, such as the lack of clarity in the division of authority between the central and regional governments, which can lead to overlapping policies and confusion in the implementation of education programs. In addition, the capacity of regional governments in managing education still varies, with some regions facing limited human and financial resources. This indicates the need for better coordination between the central and regional governments to ensure that education policies can be implemented effectively and efficiently (Darmansah et al., 2025).

Therefore, strengthening coordination between the central and regional governments is important in managing education. Increasing the capacity of regional governments in managing the education sector effectively and efficiently also needs attention. Thus, the goal of educational decentralization to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of education management according to local characteristics and needs can be achieved optimally (Sofiani et al., 2024).

Distribution of Provincial Government Education Authority

Provincial governments have an important role in managing education in Indonesia, especially in managing secondary education such as Senior High Schools (SMA) and Vocational High Schools (SMK), as well as special education (Sumarsyah et al., 2020). Based on Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government, the authority to manage secondary education and special education is transferred from the district/city government to the provincial government. The purpose of this transfer is to increase the efficiency and effectiveness of education management at this level (Faisal, 2022).

The provincial government also has the authority to determine the local content curriculum for secondary education. The local content curriculum is designed to introduce and instill cultural values, local wisdom, and regional potential to students. The implementation of this curriculum is expected to strengthen local cultural identity and increase the relevance of education to regional needs. With the existence of the local content curriculum, it shows that the role of local governments in determining policies for educational units in accordance with their authority is a requirement for the provision of effective local content (Dwi & Setiyadi., 2024).

In terms of licensing, the district/city government is responsible for granting permits for the establishment and operation of basic education units organized by the community. This licensing process involves an evaluation of the feasibility of educational institutions, including aspects of facilities and infrastructure, curriculum, teaching staff, and school management. The goal is to ensure that educational units established by the community meet national education standards and can provide quality education services to students (Romdhonie & Oktariyanda, 2014).

It should be understood that in its implementation, district/city governments often face various challenges, such as limited human resources and budget, as well as coordination with provincial and central governments. Therefore, synergistic efforts are needed between various levels of government and other stakeholders to ensure that the management of basic education, PAUD, and non-formal education can run effectively and efficiently, so that the goal of improving the quality of education in the region can be achieved (Sabina et al., 2023).

Problematics of Distribution of Educational Authority

The distribution of authority in managing education in Indonesia is regulated by Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government. This division of authority involves three levels of government: the central government, the provincial government, and the district/city government. Each has a specific role and responsibility in efforts to improve the quality and equity of education throughout Indonesia. Although this division of authority has been determined, its implementation in the field faces various challenges. The following are some of the problems that arise in the distribution of educational authority in Indonesia. The following is a summary of some of the problems from the distribution of authority that have been summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Problematic that has been face Government

Aspect	Problematic
Coordination Between Levels of Government.	Overlapping authority and lack of synchronization between the central, provincial, and district/city governments in implementing education policies, which causes confusion and inefficiency.
Human Resource Capacity.	The limited capacity and competence of regional government officials in managing the education sector, especially after the transfer of authority, hampers the effectiveness of education management.
Funding and Budget	Ambiguity in budget allocation between levels of government, as well as delays in disbursing funds such as School Operational Assistance (BOS), disrupts school operations and education programs. The uneven distribution of teachers and the complexity of personnel administration after the transfer of authority caused an imbalance in the distribution of qualified teaching staff.
Management of Teaching Staff	The uneven distribution of teachers and the complexity of personnel administration after the transfer of authority caused an imbalance in the distribution of qualified teaching staff.
Infrastructure and Facilities	Limited educational infrastructure in some areas, especially in remote areas, hinders equal access to and quality of education.

To overcome these various problems, efforts are needed to improve coordination between levels of government, strengthen the capacity of human resources in the

regions, clarity in budget allocation, and equal distribution of educational staff and development of educational infrastructure. These steps are expected to increase the effectiveness and efficiency of education management in Indonesia, so that the goal of equalizing and improving the quality of education can be achieved (Maulana & Yuniningsih, 2019).

4. Conclusion

In facing the complexity of the distribution of educational authority in Indonesia, a comprehensive and collaborative approach is needed between the central, provincial, and regional governments. Each level of government must understand its role and responsibilities in improving the quality of education. One strategic step is to ensure that the allocation of the education budget is equitable and according to needs. For example, funding in education shows that the Special Allocation Fund (DAK) and Regional Original Income have a significant impact on regional spending in the education sector, so that optimizing these funding sources is crucial in supporting effective education programs.

In addition, increasing the capacity of human resources in the education sector is a determining factor in the successful implementation of education policies. HR development can be carried out through various programs, such as training, workshops, seminars, further studies, mentoring, and certification programs. The goal is to equip educators and education staff with the latest knowledge and skills, so that they are able to face the challenges of modern education and improve professionalism in carrying out their duties. Strengthening coordination between levels of government is also essential to avoid overlapping authority and ensure harmonious implementation of education policies. Effective coordination between the central, provincial, and local governments can improve efficiency in education management and ensure that policies implemented are in accordance with local needs. Research shows that coordination problems often arise due to a lack of cooperation between government officials, so efforts are needed to improve communication and synergy between institutions.

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