

PERFORMANCE OF THE CIVIL SERVICE POLICE UNIT IN JAYAWIJAYA REGENCY, INDONESIA: CONSTRAINTS AND ADAPTIVE STRATEGIES

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Abstract

Maintaining public order remains a persistent challenge for local governments in Indonesia's highland regions, where limited resources and difficult terrain constrain law enforcement. This study examines the performance of the Civil Service Police Unit in Jayawijaya Regency and the strategies it adopts to cope with these constraints. A descriptive qualitative approach was employed. Data were collected through in-depth interviews, supplemented by a literature review and documentation, and were analyzed using data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Performance was assessed against five indicators: productivity, service quality, responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability. The findings indicate that the unit's performance is fairly good but not yet optimal. Responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability are relatively strong: the eradication of illegal alcohol is prioritized in response to public complaints, enforcement adheres to the Regent's regulations and standard operating procedures, and strategic decisions are coordinated with the Regent. Productivity and service quality remain weak owing to shortages of personnel, funding, and infrastructure, as well as the regency's vast and mountainous terrain. The unit compensates for these constraints through joint operations with the military, the police, and customary and community leaders. The study concludes that such inter-agency collaboration serves as an adaptive strategy, but that increased budgetary, infrastructural, and staffing support is required to improve performance.

Keywords: organizational performance; Civil Service Police Unit; public order; inter-agency collaboration; Jayawijaya Regency

Introduction

The quality of public services is a central measure of how well a government fulfils its obligations to citizens. Contemporary public administration scholarship holds that public servants exist primarily to serve citizens rather than to steer society (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000), and that improvements in public services are shaped by the resources, management, and organization of the agencies that deliver them (Boyne, 2003). Organizational performance, understood as the accumulated results achieved by an institution, therefore depends on how effectively the contributions of individual employees and work units are aligned with the organization's mission (Costello, 1994). Comparative evidence further indicates that performance cannot be assessed apart from the political and administrative context in which public organizations operate (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

In Indonesia, decentralization has given regional heads broad authority to formulate and implement policies that respond to local needs, including the maintenance of public order. Under Law No. 23 of 2014 on Regional Government and Government Regulation No. 16 of 2018, the

Civil Service Police Unit is the regional apparatus mandated to enforce regional regulations and regional head regulations, maintain public order and tranquility, and provide community protection. Its officers are, in effect, street-level bureaucrats: they translate regulations into practice through direct encounters with citizens, typically with resources that fall short of the demands placed on them (Lipsky, 2010). The performance of Satpol PP is thus a direct indicator of how far local regulations are realized in everyday life.

Jayawijaya Regency, in Highland Papua Province, illustrates the difficulty of this mandate. Although the regency has a regional regulation prohibiting the production, distribution, and sale of alcoholic beverages (Regional Regulation No. 12 of 2017), the local government still finds it necessary to restate and enforce the ban (ANTARA, 2025). Local authorities have identified alcohol as the main trigger of crime and unrest and have urged residents to stop smuggling it into the regency by land and air (Efendi, 2025a). In response, the regency government formed a joint enforcement team comprising the military, the police, Satpol PP, the fire brigade, and community, youth, and customary leaders (Efendi, 2025b), while the district police destroy confiscated alcohol every three months following raids conducted with large-scale joint teams (Republika, 2025). The persistence of the problem despite repeated operations, together with public complaints about the effectiveness of Satpol PP, indicates that enforcement has not yet reached an optimal level.

Previous studies of Civil Service Police Unit consistently report that performance is constrained by limited personnel, budgets, and facilities. A study in Cirebon City found that shortages of human resources, limited budget allocations, and weak collaboration with other agencies hampered the unit's capacity (Fitra & Nurasa, 2025), while research on alcohol control in Kaimana Regency, West Papua, concluded that the unit's performance was fairly good and improving, although both supporting and inhibiting factors remained (Medika & Albab, 2025). These studies, however, focus mainly on identifying constraints. Less attention has been paid to how units adapt to them, particularly in highland regions where vast territory and difficult terrain compound resource shortages. The literature on collaborative governance suggests that agencies facing problems they cannot solve alone tend to work across organizational and sectoral boundaries (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012), yet, to the best of our knowledge, this perspective has rarely been applied to Civil Service Police Unit in Papua.

This study addresses that gap by examining the performance of Civil Service Police Unit in Jayawijaya Regency, the constraints it faces, and the strategies it adopts to cope with them. Performance is assessed using the five indicators proposed by Dwiyanto (2008), namely productivity, service quality, responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability, on the basis of in-depth interviews with unit leaders and a community member, supported by documentary sources. The study contributes empirically by providing evidence from an under-researched highland setting, and practically by offering recommendations to the regency government and other stakeholders on strengthening public order enforcement under conditions of limited resources.

Research Methodology

This study employed a qualitative descriptive design. The design was chosen because the study concerns ongoing events and present conditions and seeks a straightforward account of them that stays close to the data, rather than the testing of hypotheses (Sandelowski, 2000). Qualitative research yields descriptive data in the form of people's own written or spoken words and their observable behavior (Taylor et al., 2016), which makes it well suited to understanding how officials and residents experience and assess the work of a public agency. The research was

conducted in Jayawijaya Regency, Highland Papua Province, Indonesia, where the Civil Service Police Unit under study operates. Fieldwork was carried out from [month, year] to [month, year]. Data were collected through three techniques. First, in-depth interviews were held with three key informants: the Head of Civil Service Police Unit of Jayawijaya Regency, the Head of the Public Peace and Order Division of the same unit, and a community member. The informants were selected purposively because their positions or experience made them rich sources of information on the unit's performance (Patton, 2015). Second, a literature review provided secondary data from books, journal articles, news reports, and official documents relevant to public order enforcement in the regency. Third, documentation in the form of photographs was gathered to support the other data. Documentary materials were treated as a complementary source used to corroborate the interview data (Bowen, 2009).

The data were analyzed following Miles and Huberman (1994), who describe qualitative analysis as three concurrent flows of activity: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. In data reduction, the interview and secondary data were selected, simplified, and abstracted, and then grouped according to the five performance indicators proposed by Dwiyanto (2008): productivity, service quality, responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability. In data display, the reduced data were organized into a narrative for each indicator, supported by direct quotations from the informants. Conclusions were then drawn and verified against the research question. To strengthen the credibility of the findings, the interview data were triangulated with the secondary sources, so that statements made by officials and the community member were compared with published reports (Patton, 2015).

Results and Discussion

Productivity

Primary and secondary data point in the same direction. News reports show that the unit's output is most visible in large joint operations: Civil Service Police Unit is a member of the regency's alcohol and sharp-weapons control team alongside the military, the police, the fire brigade, and community, youth, and customary leaders (Efendi, 2025c), and it takes part in the joint raids whose confiscated goods the district police destroy every three months (Republika, 2025). Routine enforcement carried out independently by the unit is far less evident. The interviews explain why. The Head of Civil Service Police Unit acknowledged serious shortages:

"In terms of infrastructure, supporting facilities, and staff, we are seriously lacking. The budget does not match our needs, and the number of personnel is limited. Still, we try to make the most of the resources we have." (Head of Civil Service Police Unit, interview)

The Head of the Public Peace and Order Division added a geographical constraint:

"Jayawijaya is very large, and the distance from one district to another is considerable. ... Patrols need adequate fuel, but the budget does not cover it. Like it or not, we just go, because services to the community must continue." (Division Head, interview)

Productivity is therefore constrained by personnel, funding, facilities, and distance, and the unit compensates by attaching its work to joint operations.

Service Quality

The community informant, a kiosk trader, rated the unit positively but identified two unresolved problems:

"The performance of Civil Service Police Unit in Jayawijaya is already good, but some problems have not been resolved. Many drunk people are still wandering around, and they often come to extort money at the kiosks. It is not only me who feels this; all the traders complain about it." (Community member, interview)

This assessment is consistent with the secondary data. That the regency needed to form a dedicated control team (Efendi, 2025c) and that raids recur every quarter (Republika, 2025) indicate that illegal alcohol is a persistent rather than an incidental problem. The pattern is also long-standing: as early as 2020 the district police had replaced standard patrols with platoon-strength joint patrols involving Civil Service Police Unit and the military, citing local conditions and a shortage of personnel that prevented the establishment of permanent security posts (Yewun, 2020). The regency's more recent plan to recruit a Baliem customary police force from youth leaders in 40 districts, to work alongside the police and Civil Service Police Unit (Efendi, 2025a), similarly suggests that formal enforcers alone cannot cover the territory. Service quality can thus be characterized as good but not yet optimal.

Responsiveness

The unit's priorities correspond to the concerns voiced by residents. The Head of Civil Service Police Unit stated that patrols are conducted in coordination with the military and the police and that alcohol control is the unit's main focus:

"Eradicating alcohol is our focus because there are many complaints from the community about alcohol sales and drunk people. Since the Trans-Papua road opened, Jayawijaya has become a location for smuggling alcohol into Wamena and its surroundings. If we catch them, we take firm action. This is in line with the Regent's instruction." (Head of Civil Service Police Unit, interview)

The agenda of the unit is thus aligned with both public complaints and the regency government's policy, which indicates a relatively high degree of responsiveness in agenda setting, even though, as Section 3.2 shows, the outcomes do not yet fully satisfy residents.

Responsibility

Both officials emphasized that the unit works within formal rules. According to the Head of Civil Service Police Unit, all personnel carry out their duties under the Regent's regulation on the unit's tasks, functions, and working procedures, and the recruitment of non-permanent personnel follows the applicable legislation. The Division Head described enforcement as procedurally bounded:

"When we conduct sweeps we cannot act arbitrarily; we must follow the SOP. For alcohol, everything from control and sanctions to confiscation and the closure of premises is done according to the standard operating procedures. ... Otherwise we would be the ones breaking the rules and could even be sued." (Division Head, interview)

These statements indicate awareness that enforcement must be lawful and that officers are themselves exposed to legal liability.

Accountability

Dwiyanto (2008) defines accountability as the extent to which the policies and activities of a public bureaucracy are subject to elected political officials. On this definition the unit is strongly accountable. The Head of Civil Service Police Unit stated that the unit fully supports the Regent's vision and mission and enforces the regional and Regent's regulations. The Division Head described a relationship that goes beyond formal hierarchy:

"We always ask for the Regent's consideration when an important decision has to be taken in the field, because the Regent is our leader, our mentor, and our parent."
(Division Head, interview)

Discussion

Taken together, the findings show an uneven performance profile. The dimensions that depend mainly on orientation and compliance (responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability) are relatively strong, whereas those that depend on material capacity (productivity and service quality) are weak. This is consistent with earlier studies of Civil Service Police Unit, which report that limited personnel, budgets, and facilities are the principal obstacles to performance (Fitra & Nurasa, 2025) and that performance in alcohol control tends to be assessed as fairly good but incomplete (Medika & Albab, 2025). The Jayawijaya case adds that geography compounds these shortages: the same number of officers and the same fuel budget achieve less where districts are far apart.

The main contribution of this study concerns how the unit responds to these constraints. Lipsky (2010) argues that street-level bureaucrats develop coping routines when demands exceed resources. In Jayawijaya the coping is organizational rather than individual: instead of rationing services, the unit embeds its work in joint operations with the military, the police, and customary and community leaders. This corresponds to the collaborative governance literature, which holds that collaboration emerges when actors depend on one another's resources to address a problem that none can solve alone (Ansell & Gash, 2008; Emerson et al., 2012). It also contrasts with the Cirebon case, where collaboration with other agencies was found to be limited (Fitra & Nurasa, 2025). The involvement of customary leaders and the planned Baliem customary police further suggest that, in this setting, local cultural authority is treated as an enforcement resource in its own right.

Collaboration, however, has costs. Because joint operations are periodic, enforcement is episodic, which helps to explain why residents continue to encounter public drunkenness and extortion between operations. Dependence on partners may also reduce the unit's capacity to act independently and on a regular schedule. Collaboration is therefore better understood as a rational adaptation to scarcity than as a substitute for adequate resources.

The accountability findings also merit qualification. Accountability is a relationship between an actor and a forum to which the actor must explain and justify its conduct (Bovens, 2007). In this case the forum is almost exclusively the Regent, who is described in familial terms as a "parent," an orientation consistent with the paternalism that Dwiyanto (2008) identifies in Indonesian public bureaucracy. Such upward loyalty supports policy alignment, but the data contain little evidence of accountability directed toward citizens. Dwiyanto (2008) also notes that responsibility may at times conflict with responsiveness; strict adherence to procedure, while protecting citizens from arbitrary action, may slow the response to the urgent complaints described in section Service Quality.

Finally, the evidence has limits. The findings on responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability rest mainly on officials' own statements, and the community perspective is represented by a single informant. Future research should include a wider range of residents and the unit's operational records in order to test whether the practices described by officials are reflected in routine enforcement.

Conclusion

This study examined the performance of the Civil Service Police Unit (Satpol PP) in Jayawijaya Regency, the constraints it faces, and the strategies it adopts to cope with them. Assessed against Dwiyanto's (2008) five indicators, the unit's performance is fairly good but not yet optimal. Responsiveness, responsibility, and accountability are relatively strong: the unit treats the eradication of illegal alcohol as a priority in line with public complaints and the Regent's instruction, carries out its duties in accordance with the Regent's regulation and standard operating procedures so that enforcement is not arbitrary, and coordinates strategic decisions with the Regent. Productivity and service quality, by contrast, remain weak. Shortages of personnel, funding, and facilities, compounded by the regency's vast and mountainous terrain, limit independent and regularly scheduled enforcement, and residents continue to report public drunkenness and the extortion of kiosk traders despite repeated operations. The unit responds to these constraints adaptively by embedding its work in large joint operations with the military, the police, and customary and community leaders.

These findings imply that collaboration across agencies and with customary authorities is a rational adaptation to scarcity, but not a substitute for adequate capacity. The regency government should therefore strengthen the unit's budget, facilities, and staffing so that routine patrols and enforcement can be sustained between joint operations, while formalizing existing collaborative arrangements and opening channels through which residents can hold the unit to account. The study is limited by its small number of informants, in particular its reliance on a single community member, and by the absence of operational records. Future research should draw on a wider range of residents and on documentary data on patrols, raids, and resources, and could compare Jayawijaya with other highland regencies to establish how far the pattern identified here holds elsewhere.

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