

# Collaborative Governance and the Urgency of Digitizing Public Services: Encouraging Licensing and Legalization of Local Businesses

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## Abstract

This study aims to analyze licensing and local business legalization, collaborative governance, and simultaneous digitization of public services. This study takes a case study in Barru District, South Sulawesi. The reason for choosing this case study is because Barru Regency is one of the regencies that has implemented breakthrough innovations in the field of business licensing and has been recognized nationally. This research uses a qualitative approach by relying on online research methods (ORMs) to collect data and information through official government websites. The analysis tool used is Nvivo 12 Plus for data coding. The findings of this study indicate that the Government of Barru District has adopted the concept of collaborative governance and digitization of public services to encourage licensing and legalization of local businesses. It involves the involvement of local governments, the private sector and the general public in a more transparent, accountable and efficient licensing process and business management. The government has also explicitly set up a licensing agency to personally visit business actors. In addition, the government also initiated website-based digital services. The government's official website in Barru District has positively contributed to providing easy and fast access to public services, such as information on business licensing applications, investment opportunities, service standards, and sectoral data mapping. Complaint services and call centres are also available to assist the community in providing input and complaints related to public services regarding licensing and legalization of local businesses.

**Keywords:** *Local Business; Collaborative Governance; Digitization; Public Service; Government Website.*



## A. INTRODUCTION

Licensing and business legalization issues are often an obstacle for local entrepreneurs because they are often related to complex policies and regulations, slow licensing processes, and high costs (Bradley et al., 2021). The existence of complex regulations and requirements can make the business licensing process challenging to understand and require much money. In addition, a slow and ineffective licensing process can also slow the birth of new products and services in the market, which can affect local businesses' growth and development (Issa, 2022; Teo & Koon, 2010). In this situation, efforts are needed to simplify the business licensing process, increase transparency and accountability, and improve regulations to support local business development. Apart from the problem of regulatory complexity, slow licensing processes, and high costs, several other problems often encountered in local business

licensing are the need for coordination between authorities (Kadarisman, 2019; Maulana & Iskandar, 2023).

Poor coordination between authorities, such as local governments, related agencies and other institutions, can complicate and slow down the process of business licensing and legalization. The problem of lack of coordination between authorities in licensing and legalization of local businesses can be overcome by using a collaborative governance approach (Emerson et al., 2015; Purdy, 2012). Collaborative governance is an approach to decision-making and public policy implementation that involves active participation and cooperation between the parties involved, including the government, society, and the private sector (Arantes et al., 2017; Batory & Svensson, 2020; Mok & Jiang, 2020). Through a collaborative governance approach, the parties involved can learn from each other and understand each other's interests to reach mutually beneficial agreements. In addition to the collaborative governance approach, digitization can also be a solution to address licensing and local business legalization issues. In business licensing, digitization can help speed up the licensing process, increase efficiency, and reduce administrative costs (Ershova et al., 2019; Khan et al., 2023).

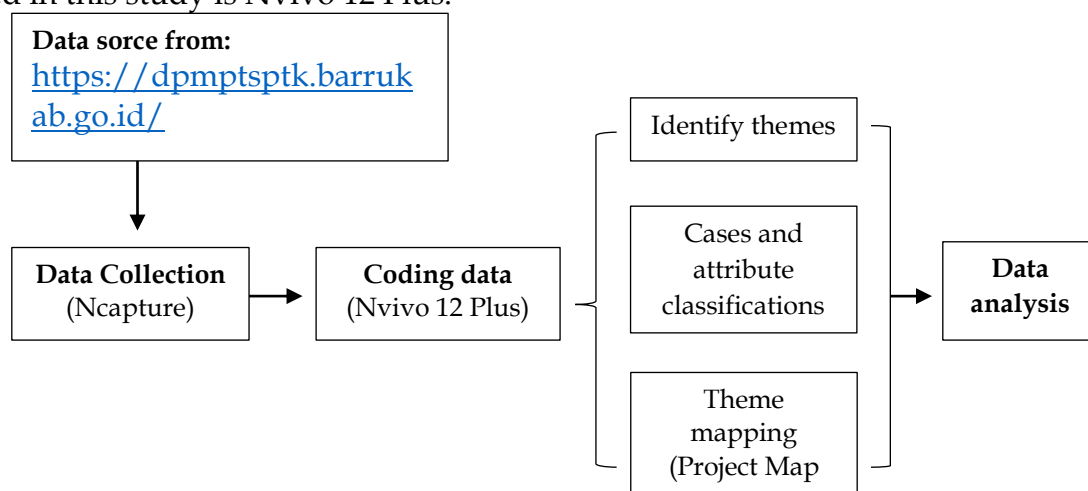
Much research has been done on licensing and business legalization. However, there are still very few studies that specifically and simultaneously analyze these topics by considering approaches to collaborative governance and digitizing public services simultaneously, especially assessing cases at the local level. However, several previous studies are considered quite relevant. *First*, licensing and legalization are administrative processes that ensure that the business being carried out meets applicable regulatory requirements (Tunio et al., 2021). *Second*, collaborative governance can be realized through various activities, such as public consultations, dialogue forums between related parties, and the formation of cross-sector work teams (Page et al., 2015; Woldesenbet, 2020). *Third*, digitalizing public services seeks to change traditional public services to be more effective and responsive to community needs (Criado & Gil-garcia, 2019; Lindgren et al., 2019). *Fourth*, the digitalization of public services can be done through various technological innovations, such as mobile applications, websites, or cloud-based information systems (Burkart & Leijonhufvud, 2019; Donders, 2019; Treiblmaier & Sillaber, 2020).

This study aims to fill the gaps in previous research by conducting an analysis related to licensing and legalization of local businesses, collaborative governance, and digitalization of public services simultaneously. This study takes a case study in Barru District, South Sulawesi. The reason for choosing this case study is because Barru Regency is one of the regencies that has implemented breakthrough innovations in the field of business licensing and has been recognized nationally. This research question is described as follows. (1) How can the collaborative governance approach assist in permitting and legalizing local businesses in Barru District? (2) How can the digitalization of public services assist in permitting and legalizing local businesses in Barru District? Both answers to these questions make it possible to find out how

collaborative governance and digitalization of public services contribute to licensing and legalization of local businesses.

## B. METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach by relying on Online Research Methods (ORMs) to collect data and information via the Internet and other digital technologies. The ORMs in this study include the data retrieval results from official government websites. Data was collected from the government's official website at the One-Stop Integrated Service Investment Service (DPMPTSP) of Barru Regency (<https://dpmptsptk.barrukab.go.id/>). The reason for choosing ORMs is that they are more flexible and accommodating in answering research questions. The analytical tool used in this study is Nvivo 12 Plus.



**Figure 1. Data Analysis Process**

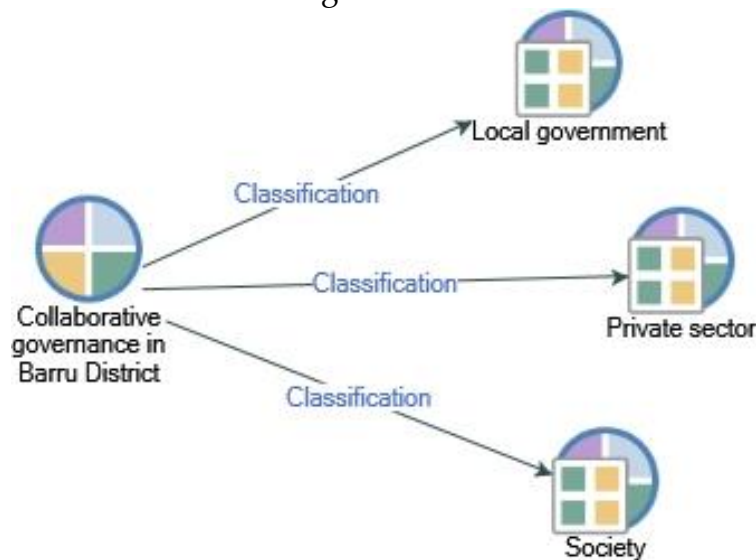
Figure 1 shows the analysis process starting with the data collection stage with relevant data sources on the official website of the One-Stop Integrated Service Investment Service (DPMPTSP) of Barru Regency. Data collection relies on Ncapture in Google Chrome. The collected data is then transferred to an analysis tool for data coding. The analysis tool relies on the Nvivo 12 Plus analysis software. The data coding process maximizes the analysis features available on Nvivo 12 Plus: identifying themes, Cases and attribute classifications, and Theme mapping (Project Map Tool). Identifying themes help to identify the information contained on the official website. Cases and attribute classifications are maximized to categorize the data collected on the official website. Theme mapping helps map the overall results of coding data that have previously been categorized. The data collection and coding results were then analyzed and described to answer research questions.

## C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Collaborative governance: Encouraging licensing and legalization of local businesses

Collaborative governance related to business licensing and legalization involves local governments, the private sector, and the community in the decision-

making process and implementation of business licensing and legalization policies. The collaboration between the three parties aims to create a conducive business environment and facilitate sustainable economic growth in Barru District. The form of government collaboration is seen in Figure 2.



**Figure 2. Collaborative governance in Barru District**

Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2023

Local governments have an essential role in collaborative governance, which refers to cooperation between the government, the private sector, and the community in making decisions and implementing policies that impact people's welfare. In addition, local governments are responsible for providing clear and transparent regulations in business licensing and legalization. The local government also seeks and ensures that the business licensing and legalization processes dash efficiently and avoid unfavourable practices. Some of the things that the regional government of Barru Regency has done in this regard is to provide transparent information and guidelines regarding licensing procedures and business legalization in the Barru Regency area. The public and the private sector can access this information through official websites and existing government offices.

Apart from that, the regional government of Barru Regency also continues to ensure that business licensing and legalization processes are carried out in an open and non-discriminatory manner. The Government of Barru Regency also involves the community and the private sector in decision-making regarding business licensing and legalization. Public involvement in governance is a process in which the public or citizens are actively involved in making decisions and implementing public policies. This is important to ensure that government policies and programs meet society's needs and can achieve the desired goals (Gao & Yu, 2020; Renn, 2015). The regional government of Barru Regency regularly holds meetings or discussion forums with the public and the private sector to discuss licensing and business legalization policies. Some of these experiences are seen in Figure 3.



**Figure 3. Socialization to Entrepreneurs and the Community by DPMPTSP**

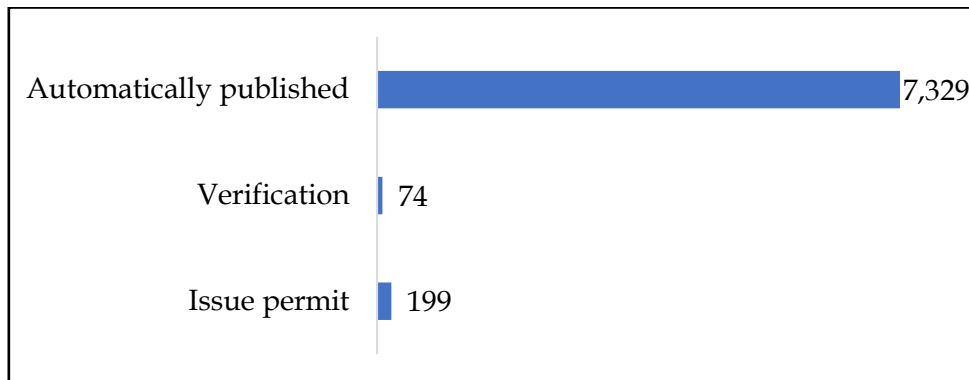
Source: rakyatku.com, 2022

Figure 3 shows that the government continues to make outreach efforts to support the smooth process of permitting and legalizing local businesses in the Barru District. Socialization helps provide complete and easy-to-understand information regarding licensing procedures and business legalization. This information can generally be presented in brochures, leaflets or infographics and accessed by the public or business actors in Barru Regency. The information that the public and business actors can review includes the traces of licensing applications. The permit application is published on the website, making it easier for the public to be involved in observing the stages of public service (Local Government, 2023).

Several studies have shown that the publication of information and the status of business licensing applications can be beneficial for supporting public services (Edmiston, 2003). Some benefits of publishing this information are to support openness and transparency, time and cost efficiency, public trust, and ease of access to information (Baharuddin et al., 2022). By publishing information and the status of business licensing applications, the public can monitor the licensing process more transparently and with accountability. This can help prevent corruption and nepotism in the granting of business licenses. In this case, the publication of information and the status of business licensing applications is essential to support better public services. This can also assist the community in accessing business permits and opening up investment opportunities in the area.

To maximize the potential of local businesses in the Barru District, the government has also formed a licensing agency to assist business actors (Bantuka boss). The idea was influenced by the distance from the village to the city centre, which is far away, so the long travel time makes obtaining permits expensive. In addition, the level of public understanding of service information and how to access licensing services still needs to be higher, which impacts the low level of business legalization. This program is supported through a collaborative government approach through partnerships between DPMPTSP, village/kelurahan governments, financial institutions, NGOs, and BPJS Employment. The impact of the existence of this

licensing agent shows a positive contribution to the increase in the number of licensing issuance statuses.



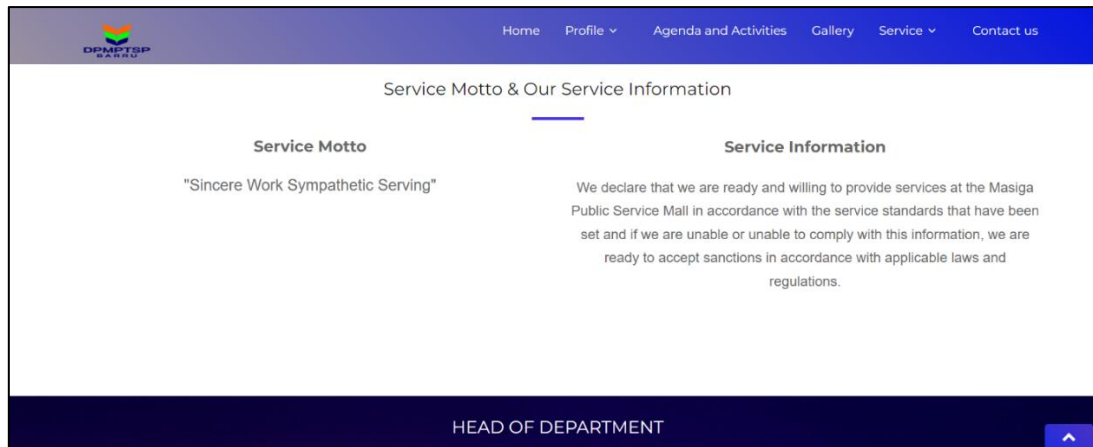
**Figure 4. Business Licensing Status in Barru Regency 2021-2023**

*Source: OSS Dashboard by Barru District, 2023*

The existence of innovation and involvement of the local government, private sector, and the general public in Barru Regency in collaborative governance related to licensing and business legalization, is expected to create a conducive business climate and support sustainable economic growth in Barru Regency. The involvement of the local government, the private sector, and the general public in collaborative governance related to permits and business legalization in Barru Regency is an approach that can provide various benefits for all parties involved. Several studies have confirmed that the benefits of collaborative governance can increase effectiveness, coordination, participation, and public trust (Bianchi et al., 2021; Huang, 2020).

## **2. Digital Public Service: Encouraging Licensing and Legalization of Local Businesses**

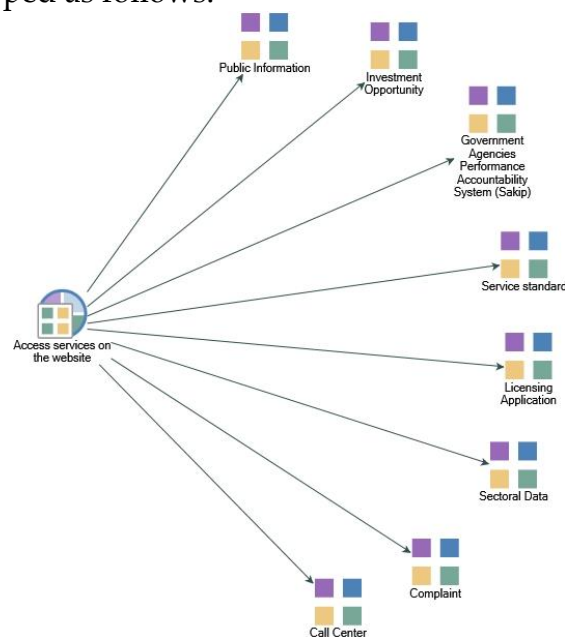
The Barru District Government has also adopted digital services to simplify local business licensing and legalization processes and stages. One way to optimize digitalization is through the website (Local Government, 2023). Websites are currently one of the tools used in digitizing public services by many governments worldwide (Butt et al., 2019; J. B. Lee & Porumbescu, 2019). In the context of public services, websites can be used as platforms to facilitate online public services (Lee-Geiller & Lee, 2019). The following is a sample display from the government's website, DPMPTSPTK, Barru Regency.



**Figure 5. Display of the government's official website, DPMPTSPTK Barru Regency**

*Source: DPMPTSPTK Barru Regency, 2023*

Figure 5 shows that to support the digitization of public services, the government has adopted websites to facilitate services and information dissemination to the public (Local Government, 2023). The trend of using websites in government continues to increase along with the development of technology and people who are increasingly accustomed to using the Internet (B. K. Lee et al., 2022; T. Lee et al., 2020). Many governments today are increasingly paying attention to the importance of having an official website as a platform for providing information to the public. These websites often contain information related to government programs, public services, policies and regulations that apply (Adjei-Bamfo et al., 2019). In the context of Barru District, the website shown has easy access to public services, primarily to facilitate access to licensing and legalization of local businesses. Ease of access to each of these services has been mapped as follows:



**Figure 6. Access Services on the Government's Official Website, DPMPTSPTK Barru District**

*Source: Processed by researchers using Nvivo 12 Plus, 2023*

Figure 6 shows that access to services, primarily related to licensing and legalising local businesses in Barru District, can be reviewed through the government's website in real-time. Some of the ease of access to these services include public information, investment opportunities, Government Agency Performance Accountability Systems (Sakip), service standards, licensing applications, sectoral data, complaints, and call centres (Local Government, 2023). Ease of access to services on official government websites related to public information can increase public participation in government processes and increase government transparency and accountability. Ease of access to services on official government websites is also related to investment opportunities which are very important for investors who want to invest in an area (Peng et al., 2022).

Government Agencies Performance Accountability System (Sakip) is integrated with government websites to show information and performance of government agencies open to the public. Some of Sakip's information on government websites includes strategic plans, work plans, performance indicators, performance targets, achievements and performance evaluations (Local Government, 2023). In other studies, it is also considered that work plans and performance evaluations from government agencies can be published on government websites to provide information regarding the direction and priority of policies to be implemented by government agencies, as well as inform aspects that are considered for evaluation so that they continue to support optimal public services (Wang & Shepherd, 2020; Weerakkody et al., 2017).

In addition, ease of access to other services is related to service standards. In this context, the government of Barru Regency provides Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) for licensing and non-licensing issuance. Standard Operating Procedures (SOP) are written documents containing guidelines for a process or activity (Fitch & Bays, 2022). SOPs ensure that a job is carried out consistently, effectively, efficiently, and by established quality standards (Mishra et al., 2021). SOPs are usually used in government and private agencies as a reference in carrying out duties and responsibilities (Katoch et al., 2017). In its application in Barru District, SOPs are displayed on a helpful website for easy access and understanding by all parties involved in processes or activities related to licensing and legalization of local businesses.

Apart from SOPs, easy access to other services is provided through data and information on permit applications (Local Government, 2023). Access to services provided in the form of data and information on licensing applications on the website helps facilitate the process of monitoring the status of licensing applications. With access to data and information on licensing applications, the public can determine whether the submitted permit application is being processed or has been processed. This can help the community know the progress of the proposed licensing application so that the community can take the necessary actions if there are problems in submitting a permit application. In addition, this information can also assist the public

in preparing the documents and requirements needed for submitting permit applications.

In the sectoral data provided on the website, the Barru Regency government also provides data mapping in the form of marketing and potential consumers, economic and financial, social and environmental, and others (Local Government, 2023). The data mapping provided by the government of Barru Regency is essential and valuable information for business actors and the general public in making business decisions or planning business strategies in Barru Regency. Available data mapping can assist business actors in understanding market conditions and potential so that they can estimate demand and competition in the market. In addition, data mapping can also provide an overview of economic conditions, such as the potential for a developing sector and the amount of potential income (Brodeur et al., 2021).

In this case, the government must provide accurate and up-to-date data easily accessible to the public and business actors. This will help the community and businesses make the right decisions and maximize the opportunities in Barru District. With complete and accurate data mapping, it is hoped that the government can support the development of the business sector in the Barru Regency and improve people's welfare through economic development. To support this, the Barru Regency government also provides a complaint service and a call centre (Local Government, 2023). Complaint services and call centres are a form of public service that is very important in providing access and convenience for the public to submit complaints or problems encountered, especially in obtaining maximum local business licensing and legalization services.

The tendency to use digitalization services by the government is increasing. This is because digitalization can help improve efficiency and effectiveness in government, as well as provide convenience and accessibility for the public in obtaining public services (Butt et al., 2019; B. K. Lee et al., 2022; Wang & Shepherd, 2020). Official government websites can provide public information, provide access to public services online, and make it easier for the public to communicate with the government (Mishra et al., 2021; Weerakkody et al., 2017). In addition, official government websites can also help increase transparency and accountability in government. Many governments and the private sector in the world are currently trying to improve services through websites designed to be easily accessed through various devices, including desktops, laptops, tablets and smartphones (Ortega-Rodríguez et al., 2020). It helps in digitally optimizing public services.

Digitalization of public services aims to change how traditional public services become more modern and efficient by utilizing digital technology. Digitalization can help speed up and simplify online public services, upload documents, and monitor application statuses in real time (Kuziemski & Misuraca, 2020; Mergel et al., 2019). In this case, it is hoped that the tendency to utilize digitalization services for the government will help improve the quality and efficiency of public services, as well as bring more significant benefits to the community and the government, especially in

Barru District in terms of licensing services and local business legalization in the future.

#### D. CONCLUSION

This study indicates that the Government of Barru District has adopted the concept of collaborative governance and digitization of public services to encourage licensing and legalization of local businesses. It involves the involvement of local governments, the private sector and the general public in a more transparent, accountable and efficient licensing process and business management. The government has also explicitly set up a licensing agency to personally visit business actors. In addition, the government also initiated website-based digital services. The government's official website in Barru District has positively contributed to providing easy and fast access to public services, such as information on business licensing applications, investment opportunities, service standards, and sectoral data mapping. Complaint services and call centres are also available to assist the community in providing input and complaints related to public services regarding licensing and legalization of local businesses.

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