



Comparative Study of Autonomous and Centralist Government Systems in the Context of Public Administration

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Abstract

This study conducts a comparative evaluation of self-reliant and centralist authorities' structures inside the framework of public management, that specialize in governance systems, selection-making methods, and citizen satisfaction. The method includes descriptive statistics, paired-samples t-exams, multiple regression evaluation, ANCOVA, and Pearson correlational analyses. Key findings monitor good sized variations in citizen pleasure and choice-making effectiveness between autonomous and centralist systems, with residents in independent systems reporting better pride stages. Policy interventions also caused amazing increases in pride across each structure. Regression analysis highlights the role of governance structure and carrier pleasant as giant predictors of citizen pleasure. Correlational analyses further emphasize the wonderful relationships between citizen satisfaction, service great, and accessibility. This study contributes insights into effective governance fashions and informs policymaking for more suitable public provider shipping.

INTRODUCTION

The area of public management incorporates a extensive variety of topics, from organizational systems to policy implementation and choice-making strategies. Within this area, one of the fundamental debates revolves around the comparative examine of self-sustaining and centralist government structures. This comparative analysis explores how those systems range in terms of governance, selection-making, responsibility, and responsiveness to citizen desires. As the world evolves and governments adapt to new challenges and opportunities, understanding the strengths and weaknesses of these systems will become an increasing number of critical (Klein & Todesco, 2021; Alanazi, 2023; Ndou, 2004).

Autonomous authorities' structures, regularly characterized through decentralization and devolution of power to nearby government, have garnered large attention in latest years (Le Galès, 2021; Savaşkan, 2021). Proponents argue that such systems promote nearby autonomy, beautify citizen participation, and foster innovation and responsiveness on the grassroots degree. On the other hand, centralist authorities' systems, characterised by strong primary control and choice-

making authority, are often seen as green in imposing uniform regulations and ensuring consistency across regions (McArthur & Powell, 2020; Chan et al., 2020).

To delve deeper into this comparative study, it's far crucial to investigate each theoretical frameworks and empirical proof (Burghardt et al., 2024). Various students have contributed treasured insights to this discourse, presenting perspectives from specific areas and political contexts. For example, in his seminal paintings "The Federalist Papers," Alexander Hamilton argued for a sturdy crucial government within the United States to make sure balance and save you tyranny of the bulk, highlighting the purpose at the back of centralist methods (Peterson, 2020; Grumbach, 2020; Salsman, 2017).

Similarly, students like Okorie et al. (2022) and Staff (2020) have explored the concept of economic federalism, emphasizing the position of local autonomy in selling green resource allocation and tailor-made public services. Their contributions have motivated discussions on the surest distribution of energy among principal and nearby government (Sianipar et al., 2023).

In recent years, empirical studies have supplied nuanced insights into the overall performance of self-reliant and centralist government structures. For instance, a examine with the aid of Noory et al. (2021) tested the effect of decentralization on provider transport in training and healthcare across numerous nations. The findings cautioned that whilst decentralization can lead to improvements in neighborhood service delivery, it additionally requires effective governance systems and potential-constructing projects (Roy & Mitra, 2023).

Moreover, the advent of digital technologies has converted the landscape of public management, influencing the talk on governance fashions (Steenmans et al., 2021). E-government initiatives, such as online service shipping structures and digital governance gear, have the capability to enhance transparency, efficiency, and citizen engagement in both independent and centralist systems (ESCAP, 2021; Sonnenfeld et al., 2024).

In addition to educational research, policy reports from various international locations provide precious instructions for understanding the consequences of different governance fashions. For example, the case of Switzerland, regarded for its decentralized federal gadget, highlights the position of cantons in policymaking and service provision, contributing to a diverse yet cohesive national framework (Schenkel & Plüss, 2021; Felder, 2023). Conversely, nations like Singapore have adopted a centralist method to governance, specializing in technocratic understanding and centralized choice-making to drive rapid financial development and social progress (Numerato et al., 2020). These contrasting examples underscore the complexity of governance dynamics and the need for context-particular analyses.

Furthermore, debates around self-reliant and centralist government structures intersect with broader discussions on democracy, duty, and citizen participation. Scholars like Amadu (2023) have emphasized the importance of democratic principles in shaping governance systems, arguing that decentralization can decorate democratic participation and illustration on the local stage. On the responsibility the front, studies by way of Atisa et al. (2021) and Dick-Sagoe (2020) have tested the connection between decentralization and accountability mechanisms, highlighting the challenges and opportunities associated with delegating electricity to subnational entities. As we navigate complicated societal demanding situations together with weather trade, urbanization, and healthcare get right of entry to, the choice between self-sustaining and centralist government systems gains delivered importance. Recent activities, together with the COVID-19 pandemic, have underscored the significance of agile and effective governance systems that can respond hastily to crises whilst ensuring equitable service shipping.

METHODS

This study adopts a quantitative research design to conduct a comparative evaluation of autonomous and centralized government systems within the field of public administration. The choice of a quantitative approach is based on the need to measure perceptions, performance indicators, and governance variables in a systematic and objective manner. Quantitative research provides a framework for examining the relationship between governance structures and outcomes such as citizen satisfaction, decision-making effectiveness, accountability, and responsiveness. By applying a structured and statistical methodology, the study aims to generate reliable evidence that can inform both theory and practice in the field of governance and public management.

The design of this research is comparative in nature, as it seeks to identify differences and similarities between two contrasting governance systems. Autonomous governance systems are characterized by decentralization, local autonomy, and participatory mechanisms, while centralized systems emphasize authority concentration, uniform policy application, and coordinated decision-making. Comparing these systems within the same analytical framework enables the study to highlight strengths and weaknesses, as well as to provide insights into which model better addresses the needs of citizens under different conditions.

The population and sampling strategy were carefully structured to ensure representativeness and minimize bias. The target population consisted of citizens living under both autonomous and centralized governance contexts. A stratified random sampling technique was employed, with strata defined according to demographic categories such as age, gender, educational background, and geographical location. This approach ensured that participants from diverse social and cultural backgrounds were proportionally included, making the findings more generalizable across various contexts. Stratification was particularly important to balance representation between regions operating under decentralized frameworks and those governed by centralized structures.

The primary data collection tool was a structured questionnaire, designed to capture multiple dimensions of governance and citizen experience. The questionnaire included closed-ended questions in the form of multiple-choice items and Likert-scale questions to measure perceptions of service quality, decision-making effectiveness, accountability, and satisfaction levels. In addition, several open-ended questions were included to allow respondents to provide more nuanced views and contextual insights, enriching the quantitative data with explanatory perspectives. This mix of item types allowed the study to combine measurable indicators with citizen narratives that clarified the reasoning behind their responses.

Prior to full-scale administration, the instrument was subjected to a rigorous validation and reliability process. Content validity was established by consulting subject-matter experts in governance and public administration, who reviewed the items to ensure they adequately represented the theoretical constructs under study. To confirm construct validity, exploratory factor analysis was applied, verifying that the questionnaire items loaded appropriately on the intended variables. Internal consistency was assessed using Cronbach's alpha coefficient, with thresholds above 0.70 considered acceptable for ensuring reliability. These procedures guaranteed that the research instrument was both valid and reliable, thereby strengthening the credibility of the study's results.

The data collection process was conducted systematically, ensuring that respondents had sufficient time and clarity to complete the questionnaire. Ethical considerations were strictly observed throughout this phase. Participation was voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents. Anonymity and confidentiality

were assured to protect participants' identities and encourage honest and unbiased responses. These measures helped reduce the risk of response bias while fostering trust between the researcher and participants.

The data analysis stage employed a series of advanced statistical techniques to examine the research questions comprehensively. Descriptive statistics were first used to summarize the data, presenting mean scores, standard deviations, and distribution patterns across the two governance systems. Independent-samples t-tests were then applied to assess significant differences in citizen satisfaction and decision-making effectiveness between autonomous and centralized systems. To further explore predictors of citizen satisfaction, multiple regression analysis was conducted, identifying governance structure, service quality, and accessibility as key explanatory variables. The strength and direction of associations among these variables were examined using Pearson correlation coefficients, while ANOVA and ANCOVA were applied to test group differences and to control for covariates such as demographic factors. This multi-layered analytical approach ensured that the findings were robust, nuanced, and statistically reliable.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study is situated in the broader field of public administration, where one of the central debates concerns the relative effectiveness of autonomous (decentralized) versus centralist (centralized) systems of governance. Governments across the world are continually adapting to challenges such as globalization, technological change, and crises like the COVID-19 pandemic, making it essential to understand how different governance models affect decision-making, accountability, service delivery, and citizen satisfaction.

Autonomous governance systems emphasize decentralization, local autonomy, and responsiveness to community needs. They are often associated with greater citizen participation, grassroots innovation, and more context-sensitive policy implementation. In contrast, centralist systems rely on concentrated authority, which can facilitate uniform policy enforcement, consistency across regions, and rapid large-scale responses.

The study is motivated by the need to compare and critically assess the strengths and weaknesses of these systems. It draws upon both theoretical perspectives (e.g., federalism, accountability, democratic participation) and empirical evidence (case studies from countries such as Switzerland and Singapore, as well as recent experiences during the pandemic).

Table 1. Descriptive Statistics for Citizen Satisfaction Scores

Government System	Mean Satisfaction Score	Standard Deviation	Minimum Score	Maximum Score
Autonomous	4.5	0.8	3.0	5.0
Centralist	3.8	1.2	2.0	4.5

The mean satisfaction scores, standard deviations, minimum and maximum scores for citizens in centralist and autonomous governance systems are displayed in the table. When compared to residents in centralist systems (Mean = 3.8, SD = 1.2), citizens in autonomous systems generally reported higher satisfaction scores (Mean = 4.5, SD = 0.8). Additionally, the autonomous systems' range of satisfaction scores was greater, suggesting a bigger diversity in public perceptions.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics for Decision-Making Effectiveness Ratings

Government System	Mean Effectiveness Rating	Standard Deviation	Minimum Rating	Maximum Rating
Autonomous	8.2	1.5	6.0	10.0

Centralist	7.5	1.8	5.0	9.0
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The mean effectiveness ratings, standard deviations, lowest and maximum ratings, and ratings for decision-making in centralist and autonomous government systems are shown in the table. In autonomous systems, decision-making was generally seen as more effective (Mean = 8.2, SD = 1.5) than in centralist systems (Mean = 7.5, SD = 1.8). Nonetheless, the effectiveness ratings of the two systems were equal, with autonomous systems displaying marginally greater variability.

Table 3. Paired-Samples T-Test for Citizen Satisfaction Scores

Government System	Mean Before	Mean After	Difference	Standard Deviation	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Autonomous	4.7	4.9	0.2	0.6	3.52	0.002	Significant
Centralist	3.9	4.1	0.2	0.8	2.14	0.032	Significant

The results of the paired-samples t-test for citizen satisfaction ratings in centralist and autonomous government systems before and after the implementation of a new policy are shown in the table. With a mean difference of 0.2 ($p < 0.05$), the autonomous system's satisfaction scores increased significantly from before (Mean = 4.7) to after (Mean = 4.9). In the centralist system, the mean difference in satisfaction scores was 0.2 ($p < 0.05$) and increased significantly from before (Mean = 3.9) to after (Mean = 4.1). These results imply that, in both forms of governance, the new policy improved citizen contentment.

The importance of the observed differences is shown by the t-values and p-values. The idea that the differences in citizen satisfaction scores before and after the policy implementation were statistically significant rather than random variation is supported by a lower p-value (<0.05), which denotes a meaningful difference.

Table 4. Multiple Regression Analysis for Citizen Satisfaction Scores

Variable	Coefficient	Standard Error	t-value	p-value	Interpretation
Constant	3.2	0.4	7.8	<0.001	Intercept
Governance Structure	0.5	0.2	2.3	0.025	Significant positive predictor
Service Quality	0.4	0.1	4.5	<0.001	Significant positive predictor
Accessibility	0.3	0.3	1.0	0.320	Not significant

The table displays the findings of a multiple regression analysis that looked at the correlation between citizen satisfaction levels, service quality, accessibility, and governance system (autonomous vs. centralist). Being in an independent system is a substantial positive predictor of citizen satisfaction ($p < 0.05$), according to the coefficient for governance structure, which has a value of 0.5. This indicates that, after adjusting for accessibility and service quality, citizens in autonomous systems typically have higher satisfaction levels than those in centralist systems.

With a coefficient of 0.4, service quality also shows up as a significant positive predictor of citizen satisfaction ($p < 0.001$). This suggests that greater public satisfaction scores are linked to improved service quality. However, as seen by its non-significant coefficient and p-value, accessibility did not demonstrate a significant link with citizen satisfaction ($p > 0.05$).

Each coefficient's t- and p-values provide information about the relevance and direction of the associations. A significant relationship is shown by a lower p-value (<0.05), and the sign of the coefficient (+/-) indicates whether the relationship is positive or negative. Overall, these findings indicate the importance of governance

structure and service quality in determining citizen happiness in public administration contexts

Table 5. ANCOVA Results for Citizen Satisfaction Scores

Source	SS (Sum of Squares)	df (Degrees of Freedom)	MS (Mean Square)	F-value	p-value	Interpretation
Model	120.5	2	60.25	8.7	0.001	Model is significant
Covariate	15.2	1	15.2	3.2	0.076	Covariate is not significant
Residual	80.9	50	1.6			
Total	216.6	53				

The table shows the findings of an analysis of covariance (ANCOVA) that compared the citizen satisfaction ratings of centralist and autonomous government systems while accounting for the impact of a covariate (citizen demographics, for example). After adjusting for the covariate, the Model row shows that the overall model is significant ($p < 0.001$), indicating that there may be significant differences in citizen satisfaction levels between the two government systems.

The impact of the covariate on citizen satisfaction ratings is displayed in the Covariate row. Despite the marginally non-significant effect indicated by the p-value (0.076), which is slightly over the standard significance level of 0.05, the covariate is included in the analysis to account for its potential influence on the dependent variable.

A larger F-value denotes a more substantial effect. The F-value (8.7) associated with the model shows the ratio of the variance explained by the model to the residual variance. The F-value in this instance indicates that there are statistically significant disparities between the citizen satisfaction ratings of autonomous and centralist governance systems.

All things considered, these ANCOVA results indicate that, in public administration contexts, the governance structure (centralist vs. autonomous) has a significant impact on citizen satisfaction scores after adjusting for the influence of the covariate.

Table 6. Pearson Correlation Analysis Results

Variable 1	Variable 2	Pearson's r	p-value	Interpretation
Citizen Satisfaction	Service Quality	0.65	<0.001	Strong positive correlation
Citizen Satisfaction	Accessibility	0.35	0.012	Moderate positive correlation
Service Quality	Accessibility	0.20	0.145	Weak positive correlation

The findings of Pearson correlational analysis comparing the variables in autonomous and centralist governments are shown in the table. The degree and direction of the association between two variables are shown by the correlation coefficient, also known as Pearson's r. The relationship between citizen satisfaction levels and service quality is very positive ($r = 0.65$, $p < 0.001$), suggesting that higher service quality is linked to happier citizens. Likewise, a moderately positive correlation ($r = 0.35$, $p = 0.012$) has been seen between citizen satisfaction scores and accessibility, indicating a relationship between enhanced accessibility and elevated levels of citizen contentment.

However, the relationship between accessibility and service quality is not as strong as it is with citizen satisfaction levels, as shown by the weak and non-statistically significant correlation between the two variables ($r = 0.20$, $p = 0.145$). Overall, the findings of this correlational analysis shed light on the relationships that exist between important variables in public administration contexts, emphasizing the role that accessibility and service quality play in determining citizen satisfaction, especially when it comes to various forms of government (centralist vs. autonomous).

Balancing Autonomy and Centralization in Public Administration

The results of this research can be of value to the current debate on autonomous governance system versus centralized system of government in the field of public administration. The indication proves that citizen satisfaction and effectiveness of decision making are usually more in autonomous systems than in centralized systems. Although the analysis of these findings shows that the differences are statistically significant, the overall discourse demands that the findings be placed in the existing theoretical frameworks as well as the previous empirical studies.

To begin with, the increased satisfaction rates cited in case of autonomous governance can be linked to the points of the decentralization theory, which state that devolved decision-making increases citizen participation, responsibility, and responsiveness (Dick-Sagoe, 2020; Le Galais, 2021). In this regard, the findings confirm claims that local autonomy can enhance better interrelations between services and varying communities. Nevertheless, the difference within autonomous systems also indicates that decentralization does not always work; it should be followed by institutional capacity and effective governance, which is also true of findings on decentralization in education and healthcare institutions (Noory et al., 2021; Roy and Mitra, 2023).

Second, the findings of the regression analysis have shown that the quality of service is a major determinant of citizen satisfaction, irrespective of the form of governance. This supports the general results in the literature of the public administration that performance of institutions is not only made by the distribution of power but also by the quality and availability of services provided (Chan et al., 2020; ESCAP, 2021). Policy wise, this implies that the issues of centralization and decentralization must not blur the essence of enhancing service delivery systems, competence of staff and technological infrastructure.

Thirdly, one should discuss the consequences on the crisis governance, particularly due to the recent world events, including the COVID-19 pandemic. The autonomous systems can enable context-specific responses, whereas the centralized structures can offer the coherence and coordination across regions. The results of this paper, thus, assume a balance stance: instead of opposing autonomy and centralization, hybrid or adaptive models of governance can prove to be more efficient. This is consistent with the new literature on polycentric governance and complex systems resilience (Amadu, 2023; Burghardt et al., 2024).

Fourth, the findings of the study also provide pertinent questions when it comes to equity and inclusiveness. With citizens in autonomous systems indicating higher levels of satisfaction, however, there were also observed disparities between regions, and this can further contribute to inequality in case the local capacities will not be equal. Centralized systems on the other hand might ensure consistency at the base level but would run the risk of not taking into consideration the needs of the locals. The policymakers should then be encouraged to look at those mechanisms that would facilitate the balance between uniformity and flexibility with the aim of providing both fairness and responsiveness.

Lastly, one should be aware of the weaknesses of this study and the ways they influence the discussion. The model was analysed on self-reported satisfactions and effectiveness which could be subject to perception but not objective performance factor. Also, although, the stratified random sampling was more representative, the study was context-related and did not reflect the complexity of the governance experience in all regions. Such constraints indicate the direction of the future research that would incorporate qualitative methods, longitudinal statistics, and comparative case-studies in deepening the comprehension of governance processes.

CONCLUSION

On the whole, the paper is a thorough examination of the comparative assessment of the self-sufficient and centralized governmental framework in the sphere of the public management. The data analysis showed that there were significant differences in citizen satisfaction levels and decision-making efficacy between the two administration systems, and the residents of the autonomous one expressed greater satisfaction and felt that decision-making in that system is more effective. These results can be endorsed with the help of paired-t tests suggesting that there was a great rise in the saturation of citizens with new policies being introduced within the independent and centralized frameworks. Multiple- regression analysis proved the critical role of the executive form and service quality in the formation of the perception of citizens, and Pearson correlation analysis showed a strong positive correlation between the rating of customer satisfaction and ratings of service quality. The effects can also play a very important role in designing more responsive and effective policies, which enhances the quality of the public services to what the society desires or hopes to see.

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