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The huge potential of Regional Owned Enterprises (BUMD) in the education sector: Exploring opportunities for local economic and fiscal diversification

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to determine the extent of the potential of Regionally-Owned Enterprises (BUMD) to conduct business in the education sector. This can strengthen regional finances and, through collaboration with the private sector, improve the quality of human resources. BUMD is recommended to increase regional income by running a variety of educational businesses, such as course institutions, vocational skills schools, or as developers of online learning applications, which are the objectives of this study. Based on research in Sentral, the conditions of budget efficiency carried out by several government institutions running BUMD in the education sector present a new opportunity for local governments, provided that it is carried out professionally, transparently, and with high accountability. This study, as mentioned above, uses the concept of public private partnerships as a tool to present the results and discussions in the study. Simply put, public-private partnerships in dis BUMD projects can reduce the burden of initial capital and exchange information. This study was conducted using a descriptive qualitative method accompanied by a case study approach.

Keywords: Regionally Owned Enterprises (BUMD); Public Private Partnerships (PPP); education; fiscal; decentralization

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RESEARCH & PUBLISHING



1. INTRODUCTION

Education is a significant investment for society, particularly in Indonesia. It is inseparable from long-term projections and industrial needs. Furthermore, educational investment serves as a bridge to address significant gaps in social inequality (AMIT, 2021). In fact, the country's five-year development plan, the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN), legally states that the Golden Indonesia 2045 vision can only be achieved through advanced education, a goal mandated by the constitution (Bappenas, 2025). However, it is well known that education in Indonesia faces several challenges, including differences in schooling opportunities across regions, suboptimal teacher quality, and ineffective management of regional government funds for education (OECD, 2025). These conditions necessitate the diversification of regional government finances to generate additional regional revenues to address several challenges, including education.

The clean water, public transportation, and banking sectors, which are considered major businesses in the economy for local governments, still dominate conventional concepts in the management of regionally owned enterprises (BUMD). A report (Kemendagri, 2023) records nearly 1,000 regional BUMDs across all provinces, regencies, and cities in Indonesia. The data show that the education sector is still overlooked by many BUMDs across Indonesia, even though, based on legality (Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning regional government), local governments certainly have the authority to establish BUMDs in the education sector because it is a primary need for the community and has economic value if managed properly. Education is a strong industry that should be considered by local governments because many economic actors have gained extraordinary profits from engaging in the education business.

Numerous examples around the world demonstrate how governments have built education business ecosystems that generate significant profits, either directly through taxes, through government-affiliated education service companies, or through lucrative public-private partnerships. In India and the People's Republic of China, local businesses are collaborating with the government to create educational service institutions that generate profits for both parties by adapting to industry and labor market needs (OECD, 2025). In Indonesia, local governments have yet to consider business innovation and creativity. However, public interest in additional education, vocational courses, and competency recognition has increased sharply as industry competition has intensified, requiring people to possess strong skills (Arsyad, 2021).

The fact that using digital technology has become a normalized aspect of education, along with increasingly affordable and effective technology costs, presents a significant opportunity for regional governments to BUMD in the education sector. Data (UNESCO, 2022) show that more than 80 percent of students in ASEAN countries used online learning applications during the pandemic. A report from (Mckinsey, 2023) indicates that the online learning industry in Indonesia is growing rapidly, with a predicted value of over 30 trillion Rupiah by 2025. This situation should also open up opportunities for regional governments to immediately conduct market research related to BUMD projects in the education sector, especially those capable of operating as low-cost edutech developers, so that more markets can be reached for financial gain, while the quality of the Indonesian workforce also improves through BUMD participation.

Indeed, it must be acknowledged that there are some obstacles, such as the lack of specific regulations or national government programs that do not encourage local governments to run BUMD in the education sector. As is known, the majority of bureaucrats are very rigid in executing ideas, so these things are felt to be one of the reasons why there are still very few non-conventional BUMDs, including in the education sector. Another obstacle is that BUMD management needs to be more skilled and professional. As the focus has been on conventional regional businesses, if local governments want to seriously build an education business through BUMD, creativity and adaptation of innovation, as above, need to be emphasized (Septartiani, 2023). This is because the education industry is a highly competitive field with many large education companies and economic actors, such as potential new tutoring institutions and technology companies that have the experience and strong capital to compete in developing digital education platforms.

Returning to the topic of regional government fiscal decentralization, public policy views the role of BUMD in education as part of Indonesia's fiscal decentralization efforts, which involve distributing financial allocations to regional governments. The goal is for regional governments to utilize their own assets and fiscal management authority for the betterment of their citizens. According to Rondinelli (2022), the division of power necessary for successful decentralization will run smoothly if regional governments have strong financial support and reliable organizations, including BUMDs that contribute to increasing regional revenue. BUMDs have two important functions in the education sector. They can provide access to education for the wider community, serving as the initial core of the education industry and a source of regional revenue. Imagine a BUMD with flexible teaching methods, adapting to current developments, utilizing technology as its primary tool, and possessing exceptional marketing skills on social media; it would certainly attract the public, especially students, its primary target audience.

It is important to remember, according to the National Medium Term Development Plan (RPJMN) and the SDGs programs, both programs 4 and 8, that the education industry plays a crucial role in poverty reduction through human resource development and driving the economy by reducing unemployment. This can be accommodated through BUMD in the education sector. If successful, local governments can use the profits to fund poverty alleviation programs in the region, eliminating dependence on the central government and recruiting workers as a first step in reducing unemployment. If organized as a sound business, the education industry ecosystem driven by regional companies or BUMDs can help achieve these targets, particularly in the surrounding areas and nationally. OECD research in 2022 showed that government-owned enterprises, both regional and central, that care about social issues are generally capable of collecting data to meet the needs of residents who are out of reach of conventional businesses.

The background above objectively demonstrates that BUMD play a crucial role in education. As is well known, the market, particularly for students, still requires increasingly innovative educational institutions, while the options remain limited. Therefore, this sector offers opportunities for regional governments to become pioneers of innovation and potential newcomers to the education services business, whether in the form of tutoring institutions, vocational training schools, or developers of digital education platforms utilizing technology. However, regulations and specific institutional capabilities need to be established, as well as serve as guidelines for regional governments to project BUMDs in the education sector and face fierce competition. Therefore, it is essential to research the potential of BUMDs in the education sector. This is not simply a matter of adding books or articles but rather helping the government create a sound and sustainable plan with a sound business concept. This way, we can find the best way for these BUMDs to contribute to improving the quality of human resources, driving the economy, and increasing local revenue to finance regional government programs and policies.

2. METHOD

This study aims to analyze the potential for the formation and growth of BUMD in the education sector. The mission is to find effective ways to increase regional revenue through BUMD in the education sector, emphasizing the concept of Private Public Partnerships (PPP). Qualitative research methods were chosen to fully understand the dynamics of collaboration between local governments and the business sector in providing better education services, as well as the social, institutional, and economic factors that shape these partnerships (Creswell, 2003).

This study analyzes local governments in Indonesia in general and how BUMD can identify business opportunities in the education sector, such as skills or vocational schools, innovative digital learning applications, and tutoring institutions with attractive teaching methods. A case study approach is part of the research because it provides a comprehensive overview of the concept of public-private partnerships, including the detailed implications of various socio-political aspects for local governments in Indonesia (Yin, 2018). The analysis is conducted through three key aspects: (1) The fiscal condition of local governments related to the potential of BUMD to generate Regional Original Revenue (PAD); (2) The concept of public-private partnerships as a business path for BUMDs in education services; (3) The

belief that collaboration within this concept will generate new ideas, particularly the transfer of data and knowledge for both entities for mutual benefit in the long term.

This research required both primary and secondary information. Primary sources came directly from parties related to the research object and from existing records. The research also drew on several government officials, private sector stakeholders such as entrepreneurs, and expert opinions from academics in related fields regarding the potential for implementing public-private partnerships in regional companies or BUMD focused on education (Kvale, 2007). Secondary sources, as mentioned above, were obtained from government documents, such as regional financial data in Indonesia, several legal documents, and scientific journals that support the potential of BUMDs in education and their positive impact on the success of fiscally sound decentralization.

This research sought to understand how collaboration between the government and the private sector impacts regional finances. Data was analyzed by identifying common threads important patterns related to how these partnerships work, particularly in relation to improving regional finances. The process involved sorting and then grouping the collected information to identify common themes, such as division of responsibilities, cost efficiency, and performance evaluation. The goal To find out whether the basic idea of cooperation is suitable for implementation in regional schools so that they are more financially independent and able to offer more creative public services.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Theoretical Framework: Public private partnership

Regarding the concept of government cooperation with the private sector in its application to the potential of BUMD in the field of education, it is necessary to see the natural explanation of the theory and concept. According to (Hodg & Greve, 2007) Government cooperation with the private sector can be likened to the government entering into a partnership with the private sector with the hope that the projects they are working on are capable of being related to social, political, and business can achieve the expected targets with a neat and consistent strategy. PPP emerged in the world of government management, initially a concept in the business world. In essence, by collaborating and partnering with the private sector, the government can implement joint projects with several positive things such as private funding assistance, innovation, and authentic capabilities from the private business world that many human resources who serve in the government do not have.

BUMD that puts the concept of public private partnership in trying to achieve its core objectives is certainly a very good step. That way, BUMD projected in the Education business will have a lighter burden in collecting capital because as is known, the majority of local governments in Indonesia do not necessarily have large capital in building BUMD, then by partnering with the private sector according to World Bank will also make the company's operations better and more systematic, of course in this case is a BUMD. The concept of public private partnership also gives BUMD to move more freely without bureaucratic rigidity so that its operations will be very innovative and creative so that it can provide benefits for the local government as the owner of BUMD and the private sector who joins the project.

The form of government and private cooperation also not only builds independence and fiscal decentralization, but can also be a guideline for local governments to plan their own education programs without being too dependent on the central government in terms of capital and teaching methods. Contemporary that local governments also rely on themselves in terms of educational facilities and infrastructure to the central government due to lack of funds to fund it therefore regionally owned companies that collaborate with the private sector in managing businesses in the field of education that have prospects can certainly finance the development of infrastructure not only with profits generated by partnerships between BUMD and the private sector in managing educational businesses such as tutoring services, vocational schools and other types of businesses, but also local governments are able to obtain CSR funds or Corporate social responsibility if the partnership is also able to grow the private business and make them invest in the administrative area of the local government.

The success and strategy of achieving business targets in the field of education for BUMD, is very strongly related to the accountability and professionalism of the business management, in order for the

business to be free from problematic matters, there needs to be coordination and a sense of mutual supervision in accordance with the concept of public private partnership between local governments, private sector, even the community as taxpayers because by supervising each other will eliminate the sense of power and abuse of authority in the business operation. In addition, coordination and supervision not only avoid negative things as above but also there will be fresh ideas emerging that have implications for improving the quality of the education service business owned by BUMD.

BUMD that focuses on Public-Private Partnerships (PPP) can trigger new ideas and innovations that emerge in the community due to the community's desire to participate and conduct innovation research related to educational service business projects. Not only that, BUMD in the education sector that can progress and grow can also trigger people in the region to compete to improve their abilities and skills to be recruited as teaching staff or professionals who are able to run BUMD businesses in the education sector.

3.2. How Strategic Potential of Regional-Owned Enterprises (BUMD) in the Education Sector

BUMD in the education sector can play a significant role in advancing education and meeting their profit targets. According to (IMARC, 2024) This could be achieved through the private-public partnership investments described above, or by empowering local school partners as target markets to keep local government finances flowing. The fact is that significant business potential and variety, particularly through private public partnerships, exist, with several techniques and more detailed business tactics that can be negotiated.

According to Bray (2023), regional companies, particularly regionally owned enterprises (BUMD), should indeed compete to meet the growing demand for tutoring institutions and other educational services, which are increasingly in demand compared to the availability of these services. The latest data shows that the Indonesian education market, specifically for learning support technology, has reached US\$3.5 billion this year, and it is believed that this figure will continue to increase until 2030. This data is due to the development of the internet in supporting online learning systems, which provides extraordinary assistance and continues to innovate to provide this convenience continuously. Conditions like this prove that education is a very suitable business area for BUMDs in the education sector, combining it with research and adaptation in the field of technology.

Many parties such as franchises and individuals have built educational service businesses in the regions and continue to thrive. According to Bray (2023), tutoring and tutoring businesses are considered promising, especially in the regions because the quality of education in the regions is still below the expectations of parents and students as a market that does not get enough comprehensive knowledge and knowledge so that this gap becomes a strong opportunity for local governments to build educational businesses through BUMD that can partner with the private sector. This can utilize direct or offline or online classes so that more markets can be made into customers so that even though the BUMD Education is a regional company, it is still able to get customers from all over Indonesia. Research from (Zhang & Zhu, 2016) explains that the combination of direct and distance learning has high effectiveness in success in the world of education business. The internet as explained above is the core, the report (APJII, 2023) said that around 78.19% in 2023 throughout Indonesia were internet users. So, hybrid learning is a positive thing that regional companies can look at because its effectiveness and efficiency can help achieve targets and can reduce operational costs that are too high if only run conventionally.

Vocational schools, not just tutoring or private lessons, also offer a valuable opportunity for local companies to contribute. Such schools are considered capable of absorbing graduates and helping industry acquire truly work-ready professionals. Research shows that practical skills and vocational skills are crucial as a filter for the difference between what is taught in college and what the industry actually seeks. According to (Yahya, 2015), BUMD have the opportunity to establish vocational schools, or more micro-scale training centers, specifically for fields that are directly needed by industry and attract a large number of interested parties, such as tourism, agriculture, or information technology operators. By implementing the concept of a private-public partnership, BUMDs not only reduce the capital and operational costs of running a vocational school business but also effectively assist their customers, namely students, in being absorbed directly into the industrial world. Private sector partners, as is known, are business entities with

extensive industrial networks, thus being able to help graduates be well absorbed and build the image of vocational schools in the public eye.

Furthermore, regionally owned companies can participate in creating online learning applications that utilize a variety of digital innovations. Distance learning is increasingly popular because it can be accessed anytime and anywhere, thus recognizing its flexibility, especially since Covid-19 hit the world. Recent research shows that the global technology education business continues to grow rapidly thanks to updates in artificial intelligence, the development of big data, and increasingly sophisticated electronic devices. Regionally owned companies have a significant opportunity to develop premium or paid online applications or platforms, thereby generating regional income from monthly subscriber fees, access to premium paid learning materials, or special electronic certifications. If properly managed, regionally owned companies will be easily trusted because they are guaranteed by the government. Furthermore, they have the facilities from their assets, so they don't need to build from scratch like a typical start-up. Umar (2024) argues that school digitization is important because it helps regional governments reach more students while creating new profits. Furthermore, BUMD in the education sector, if they are able to be more innovative and have good proposals, have the opportunity to receive additional funding from the Ministry of Home Affairs, which is rumored to create a new institution, namely the Directorate General of BUMD, to assist BUMDs that can strengthen the fiscal decentralization of regional governments. The above argument is also supported by the idea that if BUMDs are able to run digital education platforms well and generate profits, they will certainly be able to diversify in more detail by technically renting digital platforms to newly existing MSMEs or providing digital platform development services for smaller regional tutoring schools.

Despite the promising prospects, regional companies or BUMD that decide to enter the education sector still face market challenges. Fierce competition comes from well-known private tutoring institutions and newcomers to the educational technology sector, particularly in Indonesia. This includes several Indonesian educational technology startups with extensive brands and easy market penetration due to their abundant funding from years of operations. For example, Ruangguru, Zenius, and Pahamify have more than 22 million customers in 2021 (Jordan, 2021). The market conditions they dominate make it difficult for new regional companies to compete. This is because the technology they have created as innovations and market dominance with maintained popularity. Therefore, BUMDs wishing to compete in this business competition must offer new innovations that better suit customer needs. Local governments, with their more comprehensive data, can combine data with product innovation strategies, especially to achieve targets in the region's first. Meanwhile, the development of educational technology by Regionally Owned Enterprises is hampered by the unequal distribution of digital infrastructure across Indonesia and the lack of human resources in the IT sector who are not necessarily capable of developing such projects, especially in areas outside Java. So, to overcome this problem, according to (Gonzales & Dentchev, 2022), the success of an educational institution, including as a business entity, is very dependent on multi-party partnerships. Therefore, regionally owned enterprises should actively seek partnerships through PPP schemes with the private sector, the Ministry as a mentor, as well as the community so that the educational business strategy is able to answer every need of the community as a market according to the data.

Education is a potential source of income for regions, especially if run by BUMD or in partnership with the private sector. This year alone, the educational technology business in Indonesia is estimated to be worth three point two billion US dollars. This figure could double in the next six years, promising substantial profits. Discussing vocational education as a profitable business naturally raises the question of why not simply build a traditional university business. According to Dharendra (2024), vocational schools generate profits through multiple revenue streams, including government funding, tuition fees, and partnerships with companies for training and placement. They generate profits by directly providing students and industry with in-demand skills that can rapidly increase graduate employment and income levels, and by offering programs that are more cost-effective and time-efficient than traditional four-year colleges.

It's not just about money; BUMD activities in the education sector have significant non-financial goals that have social, political, and health impacts, such as reducing unemployment through job creation, making local governments more institutionally independent in politics and government, and possibly providing healthcare workers through vocational schools. According to data BPS (2023), unemployment among vocational school graduates reached 8.63%. This data is very uncomfortable to know when compared to public schools, which is 5.86%. This is due to the weak strength of the educational entity in an industry and the still very weak cooperation between local governments and the private sector. Therefore, BUMDs in the education sector that implement the concept of private-public partnerships are able to strengthen this cooperation because both parties have the goal of mutual benefit. In addition, as stated by McGrath (2024), vocational schools that focus on community issues and strong commercialization are better able to achieve business targets for their owners and make their graduates more quickly absorbed into the industry. Research by Andy et al. (2024) shows that adopting digital learning methods by BUMD in the education sector can be more profitable due to two factors: first, it is known that conventional campus businesses are very expensive, especially in terms of operational costs such as electricity, water, and building maintenance. However, implementing an online university concept will further reduce these operational costs and provide significant margins for the business. Second, the concept of digital education for vocational schools will also provide experiences to familiarize students with adapting to technology.

Hodge, Greve, and Grene (2017) found that the concept of public-private partnerships or Private Public Partnerships in the education business can make everything more efficient, high-quality, and easy to understand because risks and funds are shared by the government and other parties, thus minimizing deficits or financial crises in BUMD. Meanwhile, this scheme reduces initial costs for regionally-owned companies, so it is highly recommended that BUMDs in the education sector collaborate with private companies operating in the banking sector because they have excellent capital and financial knowledge.

To ensure long-term sustainability of the education business, regional companies focused on education need to have strategic thinking. Two key steps must be taken: Collaborating with universities across the country: This way, BUMD will gain comprehensive knowledge of educational management, gain access to campuses facilities, and universities, as larger entities, will be able to supervise the development of teaching methods. Partnerships with state and private universities are also believed to enhance the credibility of BUMDs operating in the education sector. Research (Dang, Rammal, & Nguyen, 2024) shows that collaboration between businesses and universities accelerates new discoveries, makes education relevant to industrial research, and even generates income for BUMDs aiming to strengthen regional fiscal policy. CSR funding from state-owned or private companies partnering with BUMDs is one effective way: to utilize corporate social assistance as a new funding source to reduce the burden on BUMD business development costs. For example, building laboratories, subsidizing new customers, or creating educational videos using existing technology.

BUMD in the education sector, representing local government businesses, have contributed significant revenue to regional coffers in several case studies. Some interesting examples from other countries can be considered in this research. One example is Denmark; there is COK, a training institution owned by the Copenhagen city government. Previously operating without profit with the aim of developing human resources, they now generate income through training and consulting services, thereby fulfilling all of the local government's financial and non-financial visions and missions. This is based on data (OECD, 2025). This suggests that such a business entity might be worth exploring for local governments. Another example is in Belgium, where a group of ethnic Germans has their own approach: the local government established a job training center for adults. The operational costs are the result of a collaboration with local companies, and the BUMD that runs the training company covers half. An estimated two thirds of its revenue comes from student registration fees. This demonstrates that community managed educational institutions can contribute financially to the region while also contributing to solving local issues. Therefore, these two examples are considered facts that local governments can consider in establishing profitable BUMDs in the education sector.

4. CONCLUSION

First, the education sector can be a significant source of regional revenue and boost Regional Original Income (PAD) if managed creatively through Regionally-Owned Enterprises (BUMD) focused on education. Unlike the old model, which relied heavily on transfers from the central government (Transfer to Regions or TKD), this BUMD model allows local governments to directly participate in the education industry, from formal, informal, and digital services that bring both economic and social value. By managing local tutoring centers, vocational schools, and edutech platforms, BUMDs can meet human resource development needs while generating a stable revenue stream in line with long-term regional development goals. As noted by the World Bank and the OECD (2022), local government investment in education, particularly in vocational and skills training, directly supports local economic growth and fiscal independence.

Furthermore, examples from developed countries like Denmark, Finland, and Belgium demonstrate that public education companies can successfully combine a social mission with a profitable business model. For example, the Center for Offentlig Kompetenceudvikling (COK) in Denmark and the vocational education center for the German community in Belgium run professional training courses, vocational programs, and digital learning services on a fee-for-service basis. The profits are channeled back to the local government budget as the primary shareholder, while expanding access to education. This demonstrates that public ownership does not hinder innovation or efficiency. In fact, a flexible and effective regionally-owned enterprise (BUMD) structure can encourage collaboration with universities, the private sector, and national programs, in accordance with Public Private Partnership (PPP) principles.

Ultimately, the potential of regionally owned enterprises (BUMD) in education extends beyond fiscal and economic considerations, including improving human resource quality, reducing unemployment, and strengthening the research and innovation ecosystem. Through collaborative strategies such as partnerships with local universities, leveraging CSR funds from state-owned enterprises (SOEs) and the private sectors, and digital transformation initiatives, BUMDs can drive knowledge-based economic transformation. However, this success requires adaptive regional regulations for education digitalization, transparent management practices, and robust performance measurement systems. If local governments can emulate the efficiency and professionalism of public education companies in developed countries, education-focused BUMDs have the potential to become strategic projects that strengthen regional fiscal autonomy while simultaneously improving the quality and competitiveness of Indonesian education in the digital era.

Ethical Approval

Not Applicable

Informed Consent Statement

Not Applicable

Authors' Contributions

Not Applicable.

Disclosure Statement

The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

Data Availability Statement

The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author for privacy.

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Notes on Contributors

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