

Bureaucratic Reform and its Impact on Public Service Transparency

Ignatius Septo Pramesworo^{1*}, Sidderatul Akbar³, Jackson Yumame³

Perbanas Institute, Jakarta, Indonesia¹, Universitas Lambung Mangkurat, Indonesia²,

Universitas Cenderawasih, Indonesia³

Email: ign.septo@perbanas.id^{1*}, sidderatulakbar@gmail.com², jackson_yumame@yahoo.co.id³

Abstract

This study aims to analyse the implementation of bureaucratic reform and its impact on public service transparency in Indonesia. Through a qualitative approach with a literature review, this study found that bureaucratic reforms carried out through organisational restructuring, simplification of procedures, strengthening human resources, and the use of information technology have encouraged the creation of more open and accountable public services. The digitisation of services and the public complaints system expanded public access to information and increased participation in service oversight. The results show that public service transparency has improved significantly, although challenges remain in terms of apparatus resistance and infrastructure limitations. Thus, bureaucratic reform plays an important role in realising governance that is transparent, efficient and responsive to the needs of society.

Keywords bureaucratic reform, transparency, public services, digitalisation, governance.

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reform is one of the important agendas in the effort to improve the governance system in Indonesia. Since the economic and political crisis in the late 1990s, demands for fundamental changes to the bureaucracy have become increasingly prominent. The bureaucracy, which has been known to be slow, bureaucratic, and prone to corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN), is considered unable to fulfil public expectations for fast, transparent, and accountable public services.

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia aims to create good governance with a clean, effective, efficient, and professional bureaucracy. This is realised through various strategic steps such as simplifying procedures, increasing the competence of the state civil apparatus (ASN), and implementing information technology in public services. Thus, bureaucratic reform is not only oriented towards changes in organisational structure, but also to changes in work culture and service patterns (Abyasa, 2021).

One important aspect that is the focus of bureaucratic reform is increasing transparency in public services. Transparency is crucial because it is the foundation for accountability and public trust in government. With transparency, the public can access information related to procedures, costs, and service times openly, thereby reducing opportunities for irregular practices and improving service quality (Nurmantias, 2022). However, implementing bureaucratic reform is not easy. Various obstacles such as resistance from bureaucratic officials who are accustomed to old patterns, limited resources, and less than optimal coordination between agencies are serious challenges. In addition, the transformation of bureaucratic culture that has been considered corrupt and unresponsive requires time and strong commitment from all stakeholders (Hidayat, 2022).



Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is officially regulated in Presidential Regulation No. 81/2010 on the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010-2025. This regulation is a long-term framework that sets targets for achieving a bureaucracy that is clean, accountable, and has excellent public services. Central and local governments are expected to carry out reforms gradually and sustainably in accordance with this framework (Daraba ., 2019)

In the context of public services, bureaucratic reform encourages the digitisation of services (e-government) as one way to improve transparency and efficiency. The utilisation of information technology allows the public to access services online, reduce direct contact that has the potential to lead to illegal levies, and speed up administrative processes. Thus, digitalisation is one indicator of the success of bureaucratic reform in increasing transparency (Kusuma, 2023). In addition, bureaucratic reform also emphasises the importance of strengthening oversight systems and public complaint mechanisms. This system allows the public to report complaints and irregularities in public services easily and quickly. Effective supervision can increase the accountability of the apparatus and encourage continuous improvement in services (Dariyati ., 2024)

Increased transparency through bureaucratic reform not only impacts the quality of services, but also the public's perception of the government. Transparent and accountable services can increase public trust, which in turn strengthens government legitimacy and socio-political stability. Therefore, transparency is one of the main indicators of the success of bureaucratic reform (Kairupan, n.d.).

However, there is still a gap between public expectations and the reality on the ground. Some regions and government agencies have not fully implemented the principle of transparency in public services. This is due to various factors, including a lack of competent human resources, inadequate technological infrastructure, and a bureaucratic culture that is still thick with old practices (Dwiyanto, 2021)

This research is important to assess the extent to which bureaucratic reform has succeeded in improving transparency in public services in Indonesia. By understanding the impact of these reforms, it is possible to identify supporting and inhibiting factors that need to be improved in order for bureaucratic reforms to be more effective and provide real benefits to society.

METHOD

The research method used is literature review. The literature review in this study includes theories of bureaucratic reform that emphasise changes in structure, work culture, and governance towards good governance, as well as the importance of transparency as the main principle of public services manifested through information disclosure, digitalisation of services, and strengthening of the supervisory system, as supported by the results of previous studies which show that bureaucratic reform contributes positively to improving transparency and quality of public services, although it still faces implementation challenges in the field (Elijah & Aslan, 2025) ; (Machi & McEvoy, 2016).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of Bureaucratic Reform

The implementation of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is a response to the urgent need to improve the government system that has been considered slow, inefficient, and prone to corruption, collusion, and nepotism. This reform aims to create a bureaucracy that is professional, clean, accountable, and able to provide excellent and quality public services. The government has set various policies and strategies to realise these goals, one of which is through the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010-2025 which divides the implementation into three main periods (Kusnadi, 2011)

The first step in implementing bureaucratic reform is the restructuring of government organisations. The restructuring of organisational structures is done to make them leaner, more effective and efficient, by reducing hierarchical levels and increasing the number of professional functional positions rather than structural positions. This restructuring aims to make government organisations a dynamic tool to achieve public service goals, not just an institution that maintains the status quo (Novia Bewinda, 2022). In addition to structural restructuring, bureaucratic reform also emphasises the simplification of management or business processes. Business processes and fixed operational procedures (SOPs) are developed and installed in each work unit to ensure services run according to standards that are easy, fast, and accurate. Optimising the use of information and communication technology (ICT) is key in simplifying service flow and increasing transparency (Bewinda, 2022)

The development of the human resources of the apparatus is an important focus in bureaucratic reform. The state civil apparatus is encouraged to have high competence, professionalism and integrity, as well as upholding the basic values and code of ethics of the state apparatus. Development is carried out through training, an open selection and promotion system, as well as improving employee welfare to be more service-oriented than power (Mendrofa ., 2025).

The implementation of bureaucratic reform is also realised through the development of e-government systems. Digitalisation of public services allows people to access various services online, reducing direct contact that has the potential to open loopholes for illegal levies, and accelerating the service process (Bertot et al., 2010) . This innovation also strengthens transparency and accountability in public service delivery. Improving the integrity and accountability of apparatus performance is one of the main targets of bureaucratic reform. The government implemented a clear and transparent performance measurement system and strengthened internal and external supervision to prevent abuse of authority. Public information disclosure is also an important indicator in assessing the success of bureaucratic reform (Meijer, 2013).

In implementing bureaucratic reform, the central and local governments are encouraged to develop clear planning documents and road maps, in accordance with the needs and characteristics of each region. However, implementation at the regional level often faces obstacles such as the apparatus' lack of understanding of the philosophy of reform, the adoption of programmes that are not contextualised, and implementation that is only oriented



towards meeting evaluation indicators. Stakeholder involvement is essential to support the success of bureaucratic reform. The government, the community, the business world, and supervisory institutions must work together in monitoring and evaluating the implementation of reforms in order to stay on track. Active community participation in public service oversight can also improve accountability and service quality (Lodge & Gill, 2011).

The big challenge in implementing bureaucratic reform is how to create a change in mindset and work culture of the apparatus that has tended to be bureaucratic and closed to be more open, responsive, and serving. In addition, budget limitations, infrastructure, and resistance to change are obstacles that must be overcome gradually (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007).

The government also continues to encourage public service innovation through strengthening the public complaints and consultation system. This system allows the public to report complaints or irregularities in service easily and quickly, so that it can become feedback for continuous improvement. Service innovation is one of the indicators in the public service index assessed by the Ministry of PAN-RB (Bannister & Connolly, 2011).

The implementation of bureaucratic reform in several regions has shown mixed results. Some regions have succeeded in significantly improving the quality of public services through digitalisation, information disclosure, and simplification of procedures, but others are still lagging behind due to internal and external constraints. This shows the need for continuous policy evaluation and adjustment (Osborne, 2006).

In general, bureaucratic reform has brought positive changes to governance in Indonesia. The bureaucracy has become more open, accountable, and orientated towards public services. However, to achieve a truly clean, effective and efficient bureaucracy, a strong commitment from all parties is needed as well as strengthening the monitoring and evaluation system on an ongoing basis. The success of bureaucratic reform implementation is not only measured by structural and procedural changes, but also by its impact on public satisfaction and increased public trust in government. Excellent, transparent, and accountable public services are the main indicators of the success of bureaucratic reform in the modern era.

Thus, the implementation of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is a complex and continuous process, which requires synergy between the government, apparatus, and society. Continuous evaluation and innovation are needed so that bureaucratic reform can truly realise good governance and quality public services.

The Impact of Bureaucratic Reform on Public Service Transparency in Indonesia

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has brought significant transformation in governance, especially in improving the transparency of public services. This agenda is a response to public demand for a clean, efficient and accountable bureaucracy in the post-New Order era. Its implementation includes organisational restructuring, digitalisation of services, and strengthening of oversight systems, which collectively promote public information disclosure (Kettl, 2005).

Digitalisation of public services is the backbone of increased transparency. The implementation of e-government such as e-KTP, online taxation services, and integrated licensing systems reduces direct contact between officers and the public, while minimising loopholes for corruption and illegal fees. The public can now track the status of document applications in real-time, eliminating the "behind-the-desk" practices that have obscured the service process (Peters, 2001).

Budget and financial transparency are key indicators of reform success. Portals such as the Regional Financial Information System (Sistem Informasi Keuangan Daerah, SIKD) allow the public to directly monitor the allocation of funds, budget realisation and progress of government projects. This openness promotes fiscal accountability and reduces irregularities, as every dollar spent by the government can be tracked by the public. Strengthening the public complaints system strengthens control mechanisms. Units such as the Public Service Mall (MPP) provide an official channel for the public to report complaints, irregularities, or dissatisfaction with services. This system is not only responsive but also transparent, as the status of the report can be monitored by the public until its resolution (Schillemans & Bovens, 2011).

Bureaucratic reform also increases transparency through regulatory arrangements. Simplification of procedures and standardisation of openly published SOPs (Standard Operating Procedures) allow the public to understand their rights and obligations in accessing services. The elimination of complicated procedures reduces the room for "touts" or unofficial practices that are often not transparent. Improving the quality of human resources through a meritocratic system supports transparency. Computer Assisted Test (CAT)-based recruitment and promotion based on objective performance reduce corrupt practices in personnel management. Apparatus with competence and integrity tend to be more open in providing information to the public (Andrews et al., 2011).

The Performance Measurement Index (IPK) and Evaluation of Public Service Performance (EKPPP) by the Ministry of PANRB are transparent monitoring tools. The evaluation results of government agencies are published openly, providing a comparative map of service quality between agencies and encouraging continuous improvement (Srihardjono & Restyaningrum., 2018)

Despite its positive impact, the implementation of bureaucratic reform still faces challenges. Bureaucrats' resistance to change, limited technological infrastructure in remote areas, and suboptimal inter-agency coordination hinder the expansion of transparency. In some areas, a closed culture persists despite changes in regulations. Community participation is a catalyst for transparency. Initiatives such as community-based monitoring and collaborative platforms allow citizens to be actively involved in monitoring service quality. This synergy creates an open government ecosystem where control is not only vertical but also horizontal (Dewi & Setiawan, 2024).

The economic impact of transparency can be seen in the improvement of the investment climate. The simplification of business licences through the transparent Online Single Submission (OSS) system accelerates business processes and improves the



competitiveness of the national economy. Foreign and domestic investors have more confidence in a system that can be openly monitored (Pratama & Nugroho, 2021).

Going forward, strengthening bureaucratic reform requires a sustained commitment. Expansion of digital infrastructure to underdeveloped areas, increasing the capacity of human resources apparatus, and system integration between ministries/agencies are key to deepening transparency. The rebranding of public services by the Ministry of PANRB, which focuses on citizen-centered design, will further strengthen the openness dimension (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

Bureaucratic reform has changed the paradigm of public service from closed and bureaucratic to open and participatory. Increased transparency not only reduces corruption but also builds public trust in government, which is an important foundation for strengthening democracy and good governance in Indonesia (Dunleavy et al., 2006).

With that, bureaucratic reform has made a real contribution to improving efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency in public service delivery. Through organisational restructuring, simplification of procedures, human resource development, and the use of information technology such as e-government, the service process has become more open, accessible, and can be monitored by the public. This increased transparency not only reduces opportunities for corruption and illegal levies, but also strengthens government accountability in providing services to the public.

In addition, public participation in monitoring and evaluating public services has been strengthened, both through the complaints system and direct involvement in service policy formulation. As a result, public satisfaction with public services has increased, public trust in government has increased, and governance has become more responsive and adaptive to community needs. However, challenges such as bureaucratic resistance to change, limited infrastructure, and inter-agency coordination still need to be overcome in a sustainable manner so that bureaucratic reform can run optimally and sustainably (Sarker, 2006).

Thus, bureaucratic reform must continue to be a strategic priority of the government, with a strong commitment from all stakeholders and active support from the community, in order to create a transparent, efficient, and corruption-free bureaucracy for the realisation of excellent public services and good governance in Indonesia.

CONCLUSION

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has had a significant positive impact on the transparency of public services. Through organisational restructuring, simplification of procedures, and the use of information technology such as service digitalisation and online complaint systems, the public service process has become more open, accessible, and can be monitored by the public. These efforts have reduced the room for corruption, collusion and nepotism, while increasing the accountability of government officials in carrying out their duties.

Increased transparency also encourages public participation in monitoring and evaluating public services. The public can now monitor service processes, access information related to procedures and costs, and provide feedback or complaints directly

through various official channels. This contributes to increased public trust in the government and encourages better governance that is responsive and orientated towards the needs of the community.

Nevertheless, challenges in the implementation of bureaucratic reform still need to be overcome, such as the resistance of some apparatus, limited technological infrastructure in the regions, and the need to increase the capacity of human resources. Therefore, the continued commitment of all stakeholders and the strengthening of the supervisory system are needed so that bureaucratic reform can continue to promote transparency and realise excellent public services in Indonesia.

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