Bureaucratic Reform and Public Governance

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Abstract

This study examines the implementation of Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services, Law No. 5 of 2014 on the State Civil Apparatus, and Law No. 30 of 2014 on Government Administration as the core legal foundations of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia. Using a case study approach based on online data, the research identifies two major findings: implementation phenomena and structural challenges that shape the effectiveness of policy. Results indicate progress in procedural standardization, merit-based human resource management, transparency through public complaint mechanisms, and the expansion of digital public services. However, these improvements remain uneven due to capacity gaps, organizational cultural resistance, limited technological infrastructure, and weak oversight and enforcement. The analysis highlights the urgency of policy reconstruction that includes institutional capacity-building, regulatory harmonization, inclusive digitalization, leadership strengthening, and the development of performance-based incentives. The study concludes that bureaucratic reform is a long-term process requiring consistent integration of regulatory, technical, and cultural elements. These findings offer insights for designing more responsive and integrity-driven public governance strategies.

1. Introduction

Governance reform places the bureaucracy at the center of the structural and functional changes necessary to realize effective, accountable, and responsive governance. Since the enactment of key legal instruments, especially Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus (*Aparatur Sipil Negara*/ASN), and Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, expectations of professionalism, transparency, and public accountability mechanisms have increased significantly in policy discourse and administrative practices.[1] [2] The three laws form a normative framework that affirms minimum service standards, organizes the structure and process of merit-based human resource management, and establishes an administrative dispute resolution mechanism so that government actions run in accordance with the general principles of good governance. This legal foundation is expected to be a fundamental foothold to encourage comprehensive bureaucratic transformation.

However, the empirical literature in the last five years shows that the existence of regulations does not automatically lead to homogeneity of implementation at all levels of the bureaucracy. Several studies show that there has been formal progress in aspects such as the preparation of service operational standards, the development of public complaint channels, and the implementation of competency assessments

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[1] Laode Machdani Afala. "Pasang surut reformasi birokrasi dalam transisi demokrasi Indonesia." *Jurnal Transformative* 3, no. 1 (2017): 15-39.

[2] Abd Rohman and Willy Tri Trihardianto. *Reformasi Birokrasi dan Good Governance*. Intrans Publishing, 2019.

in the recruitment process that directly reflect the mandate of the law.[3] [4] The implementation of the merit system regulated by the ASN Law, for example, has resulted in procedural changes in the selection and promotion of administrative positions, providing a stronger foundation to minimize nepotism and reduce the politicization of positions. This change marks a shift from traditional bureaucratic practices to a more measurable, performance-based modern management model.

On the other hand, structural and cultural barriers continue to be significant challenges. Case studies and policy studies show that organizational resistance, limited technical capacity, and disparity in resources between regions cause uneven policy implementation. As a result, the results of the reform are seen to be unequal between agencies that have better institutional readiness and agencies that still face obstacles in infrastructure, competence, and leadership.[5] [6] In addition, the problems of integrity and corruption that are still found in various academic and investigative reports confirm that the strengthening of supervision and law enforcement mechanisms must go hand in hand with administrative reform so that governance goals can be realized consistently.[7] The imbalance between progressive regulation and limited implementation capacity is often the cause of systemic change being hampered.

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[3] Renita Kushartiningsih and Ikhsan Budi Riharjo. "Pengaruh akuntabilitas, transparansi dan pengawasan terhadap kinerja pelayanan publik." *Jurnal Ilmu dan Riset Akuntansi (JIRA)* 10, no. 3 (2021).

[4] Halifa Nurnadhifa and Lilie Syahrina. "Implementasi Sistem Merit dalam Manajemen Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia." *Widya Manajemen* 3, no. 2 (2021): 138-149.

[5] Annisa Amir, Joyce Rares, and Salmin Dengo. "Pengaruh Reformasi Birokrasi Terhadap Kualitas Pelayanan Publik di Dinas Kependudukan Dan Pencatatan Sipil Kota Manado." *Jurnal Administrasi Publik* 5, no. 75 (2019).

[6] Prijono Tjiptoherijanto. "Civil service reform in Indonesia: Redefining the ethics." *Management* 7, no. 5 (2019): 435-442.

[7] Indra Kertati. "Reformasi Birokrasi Dan Perilaku Anti Korupsi." *Jurnal Media Administrasi* 3, no. 1 (2021): 1-7.

The development of government technology is an important variable in the dynamics of contemporary bureaucratic reform. The digitization of public administration services provides a great opportunity to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability. A number of online service initiatives have been proven to shorten service times, reduce the potential for direct interaction that is vulnerable to abuse of authority, and provide wider and easier access to information for the public.[8] However, the adoption of this technology brings its own challenges, including the need for human resource training, ensuring public data security and protection, and equitable distribution of digital infrastructure that has not been achieved across the region. These factors greatly influence the extent to which the provisions in the Public Service Law and the Government Administration Law can be translated into truly inclusive and effective practices.

Against this background, studies that connect legal norms (Law 25/2009; Law 5/2014; Law 30/2014) with the phenomenon of bureaucratic implementation is very important. This kind of approach not only identifies technical achievements, but also explores structural barriers, the need for policy reconstruction, and the urgency of more strategic interventions. This research is then directed to answer two main questions that complement each other: (1) how the phenomenon of bureaucratic implementation is seen based on the provisions of the Law on Government Administration, Civil Servants, and Public Services; and (2) what are the main

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[8] Sitti Aminah and Herie Saksono. "Digital transformation of the government: A case study in Indonesia." *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 2 (2021): 272-288.

challenges in the implementation of the law as well as the urgency and alternatives of policy reconstruction to improve the effectiveness of governance.

2. Methods

This study uses a case study approach by utilizing secondary data available online. This approach was chosen because it provides space to examine the phenomenon of the implementation of bureaucratic reform in depth based on the applicable legal framework, namely Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, and Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration. All data collected focused on empirical representations, policy documentation, and academic analysis that described the dynamics of governance in the period 2017 to 2021. By utilizing online open sources, this research seeks to capture a diversity of perspectives, ranging from official government reports, academic publications, analytical articles, to descriptive data on bureaucratic practices at various levels of government.

The first stage of data collection was carried out through systematic searches on scientific publication platforms, government information portals, and institutional report databases. The selection of documents was carried out based on three main criteria: relevance to the theme of bureaucratic reform, direct relevance to the implementation of one of the three laws above, and up-to-date information in the research time span. The selected data were then classified into thematic categories such as public service implementation, ASN management, government

administration, bureaucratic supervision, service digitization, and socio-cultural factors that affect policy implementation.

The second stage is the data analysis process using content analysis techniques and thematic analysis. Content analysis is used to identify key patterns in policy narratives, while thematic analysis is used to compile key themes that describe the phenomenon of implementation and challenges of law implementation. By combining these two techniques, research can systematically review the relationship between legal norms and bureaucratic reality. Furthermore, findings from various sources are compared through triangulation in order to obtain a more reliable picture of the suitability of practices with legal mandates.

The third stage is the interpretation of results through the integration of empirical findings with theoretical concepts regarding governance, public bureaucracy, and institutional reform. This interpretation serves to draw conclusions about the character of the bureaucratic phenomenon, the effectiveness of policy implementation, and the need for regulatory reconstruction or implementation strategies. Thus, this online data-based case study approach not only explains the situation that occurred, but also provides a comprehensive picture that can be used as a basis for evaluation and recommendations for future administrative policies.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Presenting tables and figures

The implementation of normative provisions contained in Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil

Apparatus (*Aparatur Sipil Negara*/ASN), and Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration shows clear but not uniform patterns of administrative transformation throughout the bureaucracy. In general, the literature of the last five years notes a formal shift towards standardization of service procedures, a more structured public complaint mechanism, and the adoption of merit-based HR management instruments that are direct implementation of the law's mandates.[9] Many government agencies have begun to standardize service operational standards and require the publication of service indicators that were previously ad hoc, so that at the level of administrative output, there is an increase in documentation, accountability of service processes, and orderliness in the implementation of public service obligations.[10]

In the realm of ASN management, the implementation of the merit principle regulated by Law No. 5/2014 has triggered more procedural recruitment and promotion practices. The use of competency assessments, indicator-based performance assessments, and position mapping has begun to be applied as the basis for personnel decisions. Empirical research reports that organizational units with better bureaucratic capacity show higher levels of adherence to merit mechanisms, while units with fewer resources tend to maintain old practices influenced by local political relations and patronage patterns.[11] [12] Thus, the implementation of merit

[9] Abd Rohman and Willy Tri Trihardianto. *Reformasi Birokrasi dan Good Governance*. Intrans Publishing, 2019.

[10] Renita Kushartiningsih and Ikhsan Budi Riharjo. "Pengaruh akuntabilitas, transparansi dan pengawasan terhadap kinerja pelayanan publik." *Jurnal Ilmu dan Riset Akuntansi (JIRA)* 10, no. 3 (2021).

[11] Halifa Nurnadhifa and Lilie Syahrina. "Implementasi Sistem Merit dalam Manajemen Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia." *Widya Manajemen* 3, no. 2 (2021): 138-149.

[12] Prijono Tjiptoherijanto. "Civil service reform in Indonesia: Redefining the ethics." *Management* 7, no. 5 (2019): 435-442.

norms shows results at the procedural level but still faces practical obstacles in the form of capacity inequality between units, lack of certified professionals, and organizational cultural resistance that affects implementation readiness.

Service digitization is recorded as one of the most prominent phenomena in the translation of the mandate of the Public Service Law and the Government Administration Law. Online service initiatives, the use of integrated service portals, and the implementation of an electronic-based administrative management system have increased the speed of the process, minimized direct contact that has the potential to become a channel of corruption, and expanded access to information for the public.[13] The positive impact on user satisfaction indicators was recorded in locations that implemented digitalization comprehensively, especially those with sufficient budget and infrastructure support. However, the literature also highlights the problem of unequal digital access, gaps in technology understanding among employees, and the need for technical training as a prerequisite for successful technology adoption.[14] [15] This situation shows that technological developments have not completely closed the bureaucratic gap, but rather confirm the need for a more inclusive digital strategy.

The mechanism for supervision and settlement of administrative disputes affirmed by Law No. 30/2014 also shows important developments. The existence

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[13] Sitti Aminah and Herie Saksono. "Digital transformation of the government: A case study in Indonesia." *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 2 (2021): 272-288.

[14] Hayat Hayat. "Peneguhan Reformasi Birokrasi melalui Penilaian Kinerja Pelayanan Publik." *Jurnal Ilmu Sosial Dan Ilmu Politik* 20, no. 2 (2017): 175-188.

[15] Sitti Aminah and Herie Saksono. "Digital transformation of the government: A case study in Indonesia." *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 2 (2021): 272-288.

of a more structured and transparent public complaint channel through online applications and formal channels of supervisory institutions has enabled the public to demand accountability and put pressure on service providers who violate the provisions. However, the effectiveness of administrative supervision is often limited by the capacity of supervisory institutions, lack of investigative resources, and slow enforcement processes, so that the expected sanctions or remedies are not always consistently realized.[16] [17] The indecisiveness of the application of sanctions can reduce the deterrent effect and make the complaint mechanism lose its function as an instrument of changing bureaucratic behavior.

Moreover, studies examining the impact of administrative reforms underscore that regulatory changes alone are not enough to transform bureaucratic culture. Reformist leadership, organizational incentives, and institutional learning are key factors that determine whether legal norms can serve as catalysts for long-term behavior change.[18] [19] In many cases, successful policy interventions are those that combine technical aspects such as SOPs, digitalization, and standardization of workflows with non-technical aspects such as socialization, change management, reward systems, and the formation of an adaptive work culture. The combination of the two allows for more sustainable change than efforts that focus solely on administrative regulation.

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[16] Annisa Amir, Joyce Rares, and Salmin Dengo. "Pengaruh Reformasi Birokrasi Terhadap Kualitas Pelayanan Publik di Dinas Kependudukan Dan Pencatatan Sipil Kota Manado." *Jurnal Administrasi Publik* 5, no. 75 (2019).

[17] Indra Kertati. "Reformasi Birokrasi Dan Perilaku Anti Korupsi." *Jurnal Media Administrasi* 3, no. 1 (2021): 1-7.

[18] Laode Machdani Afala. "Pasang surut reformasi birokrasi dalam transisi demokrasi Indonesia." *Jurnal Transformative* 3, no. 1 (2017): 15-39.

[19] Andi Cudai Nur and Muhammad Guntur. "Analisis Kebijakan Publik." Makassar: Publisher UNM (2019).

In summary, the implementation phenomenon shows real progress in terms of standardization of procedures, the application of merit principles, the adoption of digitalization, and the development of complaint mechanisms all refer directly to the provisions of Law 25/2009, Law 5/2014, and Law 30/2014. However, these achievements are not even and are still limited by capacity inequality, differences in contexts between regions, technological challenges, and the need to strengthen leadership and organizational incentives to internalize governance values. The literature of the last five years concludes that in order for the objectives of the law to be achieved more broadly, reform must be comprehensive by incorporating regulatory improvements, technical capacity building, organizational culture transformation, and strengthening enforcement mechanisms.

3.2. Policy Implementation Challenges, Urgency, and Reconstruction

The implementation of Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning ASN, and Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration face various structural, institutional, technical, and cultural challenges. First, limited institutional capacity and human resources are fundamental obstacles. Although the ASN Law requires a merit system, many organizational units at the regional level lack the managerial capacity to carry out the recruitment process and competency-based performance appraisal consistently.[20] This capacity gap increases the risk of implementation inequality between more capable central

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[20] Halifa Nurnadhifa and Lilie Syahrina. "Implementasi Sistem Merit dalam Manajemen Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia." *Widya Manajemen* 3, no. 2 (2021): 138-149.

agencies and regional units with limited infrastructure.[21] As a result, the goals of meritocracy and service standards mandated by law have not been fully realized equally.

Second, cultural barriers and internal organizational resistance often hinder the internalization of new norms. Regulatory changes do not automatically change entrenched bureaucratic practices; Without strong change management, the right incentives, and reformist leadership, employees tend to maintain old routines that are influenced by patronage networks or administrative habits.[22] Studies show that weak leadership and a lack of attention to non-technical aspects, such as soft-skill training and the formation of a culture of accountability, reduce the effectiveness of regulation-based reforms.[23]

Third, the issue of integrity and law enforcement remains a critical issue. Administrative and service laws provide complaints and administrative sanction mechanisms, but the effectiveness of enforcement is often hampered by lengthy processes, low investigative capacity, and political intervention in some cases.[24] Without certainty of sanctions and a quick resolution, the complaint mechanism does not guarantee a change in bureaucratic behavior, so the public loses confidence in the administrative settlement system.

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[21] Prijono Tjiptoherijanto. "Civil service reform in Indonesia: Redefining the ethics." *Management* 7, no. 5 (2019): 435-442.

[22] Laode Machdani Afala. "Pasang surut reformasi birokrasi dalam transisi demokrasi Indonesia." *Jurnal Transformative* 3, no. 1 (2017): 15-39.

[23] Andi Cudai Nur and Muhammad Guntur. "Analisis Kebijakan Publik." Makassar: Publisher UNM (2019).

[24] Indra Kertati. "Reformasi Birokrasi Dan Perilaku Anti Korupsi." *Jurnal Media Administrasi* 3, no. 1 (2021): 1-7.

Fourth, technical challenges and digital infrastructure are slowing down the potential transformation promised by digital governance. Although digitalization can improve efficiency and transparency, its implementation encounters obstacles such as uneven IT infrastructure, limited human resources in operating new systems, and inter-institutional data interoperability issues.[25] The digital divide between regions also risks deepening inequality in access to public services, contrary to the inclusivity goals mandated by the Public Service Law.

Fifth, coordination between levels of government and overlapping regulations are a source of confusion in implementation. Many technical policies and implementing regulations were produced after the law of interpretive confusion between central and regional authorities, resulting in fragmented implementation in the field.[26] Overlapping authority and lack of procedural synchronization often lead to inefficiencies and inconsistent administrative practices. Sixth, budget constraints and fiscal priorities affect implementation capabilities. Reform requires investment in training, IT system development, and strengthening investment supervision mechanisms that are not always guaranteed in the budget allocation of the regions or ministries concerned. Without adequate budget support, reform programs tend to be partial and difficult to maintain.[27]

Given these challenges, the urgency of reconstructing policies and implementation strategies is very high. First, there needs to be institutional capacity

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[27] Annisa Amir, Joyce Rares, and Salmin Dengo. "Pengaruh Reformasi Birokrasi Terhadap Kualitas Pelayanan Publik di Dinas Kependudukan Dan Pencatatan Sipil Kota Manado." *Jurnal Administrasi Publik* 5, no. 75 (2019).

strengthening through structured training programs, technical assistance, and the establishment of reform units that focus on change management at the organizational level. Second, regulatory harmonization and increased legal certainty must be strengthened so that implementing regulations provide clear operational guidelines between the central and regional governments.[28] Third, enforcement and supervision mechanisms need to be strengthened, including increasing the capacity of the Ombudsman, KASN, and internal audit units so that public complaints can be responded to quickly and sanctions are applied consistently to build a deterrent effect.[29]

Furthermore, reconstruction must include an inclusive digital strategy: in addition to infrastructure investment, reconstruction programs must prioritize human resource training, data standardization, and system interoperability so that digitalization supports equitable access to services.[30] Changes in organizational incentives are also important: a clear and performance-based reward and punishment scheme can accelerate the internalization of merit and accountability practices. Finally, increased public participation and transparency of policy processes can strengthen external accountability and legitimacy of reforms.[31]

Successful policy reconstruction must be multisectoral: combining capacity building, regulatory harmonization, inclusive digitalization, strengthening

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[28] Renita Kushartiningsih and Ikhsan Budi Riharjo. "Pengaruh akuntabilitas, transparansi dan pengawasan terhadap kinerja pelayanan publik." *Jurnal Ilmu dan Riset Akuntansi (JIRA)* 10, no. 3 (2021).

[29] Indra Kertati. "Reformasi Birokrasi Dan Perilaku Anti Korupsi." *Jurnal Media Administrasi* 3, no. 1 (2021): 1-7.

[30] Sitti Aminah and Herie Saksono. "Digital transformation of the government: A case study in Indonesia." *Jurnal Komunikasi: Malaysian Journal of Communication* 37, no. 2 (2021): 272-288.

[31] Abd Rohman and Willy Tri Trihardianto. *Reformasi Birokrasi dan Good Governance.* Intrans Publishing, 2019.

enforcement, and incentive reform. This kind of effort is not just to close the gap between norms and practices, but to redesign the bureaucratic ecosystem so that Law No. 25/2009, Law No. 5/2014, and Law No. 30/2014 can function as an effective instrument to realize integrity and responsive governance in all state administrative areas.[32] [33] [34]

4. Conclusion

The bureaucratic reform mandated by Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning ASN, and Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration shows that the regulatory framework has provided an important foundation for efforts to improve the quality of governance. The implementation phenomenon in recent years has shown improvements in the aspects of standardization of procedures, the application of the merit principle, the establishment of a public complaint mechanism, and the development of service digitalization. However, these achievements have not been even and still face obstacles stemming from capacity inequality, organizational cultural resistance, limited infrastructure, and weak oversight mechanisms that are supposed to ensure the effectiveness of policy implementation. The findings of the study indicate that bureaucratic reform requires a more comprehensive approach than just regulatory changes.

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[32] Halifa Nurnadhifa and Lilie Syahrina. "Implementasi Sistem Merit dalam Manajemen Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Kementerian Keuangan Republik Indonesia." *Widya Manajemen* 3, no. 2 (2021): 138-149.

[33] Andi Cudai Nur and Muhammad Guntur. "Analisis Kebijakan Publik." Makassar: Publisher UNM (2019).

[34] Annisa Amir, Joyce Rares, and Salmin Dengo. "Pengaruh Reformasi Birokrasi Terhadap Kualitas Pelayanan Publik di Dinas Kependudukan Dan Pencatatan Sipil Kota Manado." *Jurnal Administrasi Publik* 5, no. 75 (2019).

Bureaucratic transformation can only be effective if it is accompanied by investment in strengthening human resource capacity, improving coordination mechanisms between levels of government, improving institutional integrity, and using inclusive technology. In addition, the role of leadership and change management is a decisive factor in overcoming resistance, harmonizing administrative practices, and building a sustainable culture of accountability. The effectiveness of the implementation of the three laws confirms that bureaucratic reform is a long-term process that requires consistency, political commitment, and public support. Policy reconstruction and strengthening implementation instruments are imperative so that the bureaucracy is able to function as the main pillar of modern, responsive, and high-integrity governance.

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