BUILDING PILLARS OF BUREAUCRATIC REFORM: THE STUDY OF IMPLEMENTATION OF INTEGRITY ZONE POLICY IN GORONTALO

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo Province, with a focus on the development of integrity zones towards Corruption-Free and Clean and Serving Bureaucratic Areas. The research method used is a qualitative descriptive approach with data collection techniques through interviews, observations, and studies documentation. The results of the study indicate that the implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo has had a positive impact, such as improving the quality of public services, The efficiency, and strengthening the accountability of the apparatus. However, there are significant obstacles, including resistance to change, budget constraints, and lack of coordination between work units. On the other hand, support from regional leaders, commitment of the apparatus, and the existence of clear technical guidelines are supporting factors in the implementation of this policy. The recommended strategies are strengthening the capacity of implementers, decentralizing decision-making, digitalizing public services, intensive socialization to the community, and data-based policy evaluation. With the implementation of this strategy, it is hoped that bureaucratic reform in Gorontalo can run more effectively, producing a bureaucracy that is professional, transparent, and responsive to the needs of the community.

Keywords: *reform, bureaucracy, zone, integrity, Gorontalo*

INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reform is one of the government's priority agendas in order to improve the performance and integrity of government institutions. This reform aims to create good, effective, transparent, and accountable governance. Within this framework, the development of reform areas is one of the main strategies to create an area free from corruption practices and a clean and serving bureaucracy. This step is expected to be a solid pillar in supporting comprehensive bureaucratic transformation, especially at the local government level.

As a part of an effort to support the national agenda, The Gorontalo Provincial Government has taken concrete steps in implementing the reform program. This step is very important considering that bureaucracy is the main instrument in the provision of public services (Hamzah & Yusuf, 2023). With this reform area, the government is committed to creating a work environment that is free from deviant practices and improving the quality of service to the community. However, the implementation of this policy faces various challenges, both from internal organizational aspects and external dynamics that influence the implementation process.

The development of the reform area is based on the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (Permenpan RB) Number 10 of 2019 concerning Guidelines for the Development of Integrity Zones Towards Corruption-Free Areas and Clean Serving Bureaucratic Areas. In this regulation, there are six areas of change that are the focus of development, namely change management, governance, human resource management (HR) system, strengthening accountability, strengthening supervision, and improving the quality of public services. These six areas of change are integrated with each other and aim to create significant changes in the bureaucratic work culture (Dian Ambarisiwi et al., 2023). The implementation of this policy cannot be separated from the policy implementation theory approach. One relevant theory is the policy implementation theory put forward by Merilee S. Grindle.(Grindle, 2017) Grindle explains that the success of policy implementation is influenced by two main aspects, namely "Content of Policy" and "Context of Implementation". The "Content of Policy" aspect includes the interests affected by the policy, the type of benefits, the degree of expected change, the location of decision-making, program implementers, and the resources involved. Meanwhile, the "Context of Implementation" includes the power, interests, and strategies of the actors involved, the characteristics of institutions and rulers, and the compliance and responsiveness of the implementers (Pratiwi et al., 2022).

In the context of the Gorontalo Provincial Government, the implementation of policies towards an area free from corruption and bureaucratic service requires an in-depth analysis of both aspects (Thoharotun Nisa, 2023). The policy aspect is important to ensure that the policies formulated have relevance and real benefits for all stakeholders. Meanwhile, the implementation aspect needs to be considered to understand the political, social, and cultural

dynamics that influence policy implementation at the local level (Safroni, 2021)

The local context of Gorontalo provides challenges as well as opportunities for the successful implementation of the reform area. As a region with unique cultural and social characteristics, the policy implementation approach must consider the local values that develop in society. In addition, support from various parties, including local governments, the private sector, and civil society, is needed to create a conducive environment for the success of this program (Akny, 2014)

It is undeniable that the success of bureaucratic reform is highly dependent on the commitment and integrity of stakeholders (Agger & Sørensen, 2018) Without a strong commitment from the leadership of the organization and full support from all employees, this change effort will only be a formality without real impact. Therefore, changing work culture is one of the main keys to creating a clean, transparent, and serving bureaucracy.

On the other hand, the success of developing the reform area must also be measured based on its impact on society (Erniyanti, 2023) Corruption-free areas and serving bureaucracy are not only about creating a clean bureaucracy, but also about ensuring that public services can be accessed easily, quickly, and with quality. In this case, the perspective of the community as service users is an important indicator for assessing the effectiveness of policy implementation (Dennis J.M. Rompas, 2023). The Gorontalo Provincial Government needs to ensure that every step taken in this program is oriented towards improving community welfare. (Petrenko et al., 2019)

In addition, this study also attempts to formulate an appropriate policy implementation model to achieve the predicate of a region that is free from corruption and a serving bureaucracy. This model is expected to be a guide for local governments in implementing policies effectively and efficiently (Dani, 2022). Thus, this study not only provides theoretical contributions in the field of public policy, but also provides practical recommendations that can be implemented by local governments (Nugroho, 2018)

Specifically, this study will answer two main questions, namely: (1) How is the implementation of the reform area development policy towards a region that is free from corruption and a serving bureaucracy in the Gorontalo Provincial Government in terms of policy content and implementation context? and (2) What is the appropriate policy implementation model to achieve this predicate in the Gorontalo Provincial Government? These questions will be answered through a qualitative approach with a case study method. Data will be obtained through in-depth interviews, observations, and document analysis related to reform policies in the Gorontalo Provincial Government.

The results of this study are expected to provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of reform area development policies at the local government level. Furthermore, this research is also expected to be a reference for other local governments in implementing bureaucratic reform and building reform areas. Thus, this research is not only

relevant to the Gorontalo Provincial Government, but also has strategic value in supporting the national bureaucratic reform agenda. The development of reform areas is a real step in realizing sustainable bureaucratic reform (Afifuddin, 2012). However, its success requires collaboration from various parties and a commitment to make fundamental changes. The Gorontalo Provincial Government has a great opportunity to become a successful example in implementing this policy. With the right approach and full support from all stakeholders, Gorontalo Province can achieve the expected predicate and become a pioneer in bureaucratic reform in Indonesia.

METHOD

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to understand the implementation of the reform area development policy in the Gorontalo Provincial Government in depth. This approach allows researchers to explore the process, dynamics, and factors that influence the success or obstacles to policy implementation. The research location in the Gorontalo Provincial Government was chosen because of its relevance and social, cultural, and political characteristics.

Data collection was carried out through in-depth interviews with government officials and related staff, direct observation of program implementation, and analysis of documents such as regulations and implementation reports. Data were analyzed using thematic analysis with the stages of organizing data, coding to identify main themes, compiling categories, and interpretation to answer research questions based on Merilee S. Grindle's policy implementation theory.

To ensure validity and reliability, this study uses data triangulation from various sources, member checking to confirm interview results, and audit trails to document the research process. With this method, the study is expected to provide a comprehensive picture of the implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo and offer recommendations to improve the effectiveness of its implementation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Policy Analysis

The bureaucratic reform policy in Gorontalo is a strategic step to improve governance with the main objective of improving the quality of public services, transparency, and accountability of state apparatus. This reform is designed to respond to the needs of the community for faster, more efficient services, and free from corrupt practices. However, its implementation presents diverse dynamics, with a number of main dimensions that influence the effectiveness of the policy.

One dimension of concern is the interest groups affected by this policy. The main target of bureaucratic reform is to create services that are more efficient and responsive to the needs of

the community. Government apparatus, as the main implementers of the policy, have mostly understood the importance of this change. However, the process of socialization to the general public is still less than optimal. This has caused several levels of society to not fully feel the positive impact of the bureaucratic reform that has been planned.

The real impact of this policy can be seen in the types of benefits it produces. Among them are the acceleration of the administrative process, the reduction of complicated bureaucratic procedures, and the improvement of the quality of services in various agencies. Some concrete examples include shorter document processing times and simpler service processes, so that the public can feel real improvements in their interactions with government institutions. However, broader strategic benefits, such as building public trust in the government, still require a more planned and consistent approach.

The transformation expected from this bureaucratic reform policy includes changes in the work culture of government officials. This policy requires a shift in the mindset and attitude of civil servants towards higher professionalism, where the work orientation is no longer centered on administrative routines, but on real results and impacts felt by the public. Although there are a number of agencies that have shown progress in adopting these values, resistance to change remains a major challenge. This is especially evident in groups of employees who have long worked in the traditional bureaucratic system and are comfortable with the old way of working.

In addition, decision-making in the implementation of this policy still tends to be centralized at the leadership level. The top-down decision-making model often becomes an obstacle for work units at lower levels to implement policies with flexibility that is in accordance with local conditions. The need for decentralization of decision-making is becoming increasingly urgent, especially to provide more autonomy to work units in designing implementation strategies that are relevant to the situation in the field.

Policy implementers, namely state civil servants (ASN), also play a crucial role in the success of this reform. Although most ASN have received relevant training and provision, there are significant differences in their levels of competence and commitment. Some employees are able to adapt well to change, while others still need further guidance and evaluation to ensure that policy implementation is in accordance with its original objectives. Performance evaluation based on measurable indicators is very important to maintain the consistency of the implementation of this policy in various work units. The resource dimension is another factor that cannot be ignored. The implementation of bureaucratic reform policies requires adequate budget support, sophisticated technology, and competent workers. In the Gorontalo region, the main obstacles often arise in the form of limited budget and technology infrastructure, especially in areas that do not yet have adequate internet access. This inequality causes uneven policy implementation, where work units with better resources tend to adapt faster, while others are left behind. The use of digital technology is a great opportunity that can overcome

this challenge, but its implementation requires careful planning and adequate infrastructure support.

Overall, the bureaucratic reform policy in Gorontalo has shown some positive results, especially in improving the efficiency and quality of public services. However, challenges related to resistance to change, centralization of decision-making, variation in implementer competencies, and limited resources still require more attention. To ensure the success of this reform, strategic steps such as strengthening ASN training, decentralizing the decision-making process, and accelerating the digitalization of services need to be continuously carried out. Thus, bureaucratic reform in Gorontalo can not only meet the needs of the community today, but also become the foundation for a more transparent, accountable, and professional government in the future.

2. Policy Implementation

The implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo is greatly influenced by various interrelated contextual factors, such as power, the interests of the actors involved, the characteristics of institutions, and the implementer's response to the policy. The successful implementation of this reform requires cooperation between various parties, including local governments, communities, and supervisory institutions. Each actor has a strategic role in ensuring that the policy runs according to its objectives, although in practice coordination between actors often faces obstacles. Differences in interests, priorities, and perceptions about policy objectives can cause friction that hinders synergy in policy implementation.

One important dimension in bureaucratic reform is the characteristics of government institutions in Gorontalo. At the leadership level, there is a strong spirit of reform, which is demonstrated through a commitment to encourage systemic change. Visionary and participatory leadership is the main driving force in bringing this policy in a better direction. Participatory leaders not only set a vision, but also involve various parties, including staff, in the decision-making process. This approach helps create a sense of ownership of the policy and increases the chances of successful implementation.

However, challenges arise at the staff level, where conservative mindsets and resistance to change are still quite strong. Many employees who have long worked in the traditional bureaucratic system tend to maintain the old way of working that is more comfortable for them. This often hinders the innovation and renewal desired by the reform policy. To overcome this problem, a more inclusive and dialogue-based leadership approach is needed. Leaders who are able to listen to staff aspirations, provide motivation, and offer concrete solutions will help encourage the active involvement of all levels of employees in implementing policies.

Compliance with the bureaucratic reform policy in Gorontalo is relatively high, especially because of the existence of fairly strict internal and external monitoring mechanisms. Internal supervision is carried out through routine evaluations by leaders, while external supervision involves an independent supervisory institution tasked with ensuring accountability for policy

implementation. The presence of this supervisory institution provides positive pressure for work units to implement policies in accordance with applicable regulations. However, although the level of compliance is quite good, the responsiveness of implementers to changes and dynamics in the field still needs to be improved. In some cases, work units have difficulty responding to community needs quickly and appropriately, especially when faced with unexpected situations.

One solution that can be applied to improve the responsiveness of implementers is the development of a technology-based reporting and evaluation system. Digital technology allows for faster, more transparent, and more accurate reporting, thus facilitating the decision-making process. In addition, technology-based systems also enable real-time monitoring of policy implementation, so that emerging problems can be immediately identified and addressed. Thus, the government can be more responsive to the needs of the community while increasing efficiency in policy implementation.

Furthermore, the success of bureaucratic reform is also influenced by the quality of the relationship between local governments and the community. The community as users of public services has an important role in providing feedback on policy implementation. Therefore, involving the community in the policy implementation process, for example through discussion forums or satisfaction surveys, can help the government understand the needs and expectations of the community in more depth. This approach not only strengthens government accountability but also helps build trust between the government and the community.

Overall, the implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo shows great potential to create a more transparent, accountable, and responsive government. However, to realize these goals, ongoing efforts are needed to overcome existing challenges. Coordination between actors needs to be improved through more intensive dialogue and strengthening synergy between the government, the community, and supervisory institutions. In addition, the transformation of work culture at the staff level is a priority that must be carried out immediately by providing relevant training, an inclusive leadership approach, and the use of technology to support policy implementation. With these steps, it is hoped that bureaucratic reform in Gorontalo can provide a broader and more sustainable impact on regional development and community welfare.

3. Barriers and Supporting Factors

This study reveals a number of major obstacles that hinder the implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo. One of the biggest challenges is resistance to change, especially among employees who have long worked in the old bureaucratic system. A conservative mindset and a tendency to maintain traditional ways of working often become barriers to innovation and the application of new principles in governance.

In addition, budget and technological infrastructure limitations are also significant inhibiting factors. In some areas, the allocation of funds for reform programs is insufficient to

support the desired changes, while technological infrastructure, such as adequate internet access, is still limited. This causes the process of digitizing services to run slowly, especially in remote areas that require special attention.

Another obstacle found is the lack of coordination between work units. Often, policy implementation faces delays due to lack of synchronization of communication and collaboration between the various parties involved. Disagreements in the division of tasks and responsibilities cause inefficiencies in the implementation of reform programs.

However, this study also found a number of supporting factors that helped the implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo. One of the main factors is the support of regional leaders who have a high commitment to reform. Visionary and change-oriented leadership provides moral support and clear direction for policy implementers. This support is an important foundation in creating an environment conducive to reform. In addition, the existence of clear technical guidelines helps provide concrete direction for policy implementers in the field. These guidelines make it easier for work units to understand the steps that must be taken and ensure alignment between the policy vision and its implementation. The commitment of the majority of state civil servants to the principles of good governance is also an important capital in driving the success of this policy.

4. Strategic Recommendations

Based on the identified obstacles and supporting factors, this study suggests several strategic recommendations to improve the effectiveness of the implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo:

1. Strengthening the capacity of government officials through ongoing training and mentoring is the main step. This training should include improving technical skills, utilizing digital technology, and an in-depth understanding of the principles of good governance. Routine mentoring is also needed to help officials face challenges in the field.

2. Decentralization is an important step to provide flexibility to work units at the local level. By distributing decision-making authority, work units can be more responsive in adjusting policies to local conditions. This can also accelerate policy implementation and reduce the burden on bureaucracy at the central level.

3. Digitalization of services must be a top priority to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability. The development of technology-based applications can help accelerate the administration process and services to the community. In addition, digitalization also allows for real-time monitoring and evaluation of policies, so that problems that arise can be addressed immediately.

4. More intensive socialization to the community regarding the benefits of bureaucratic reform is needed. Effective public campaigns, both through conventional and digital media, can increase public understanding of the importance of this reform. This will also help build public trust in the government.

5. Systematic and data-based evaluations must be conducted periodically to identify weaknesses in policy implementation. This evaluation not only serves as a tool to measure performance, but also as a basis for designing future improvement steps. By using data analytics technology, the government can obtain a more accurate picture of the effectiveness of the policy.

By adopting these recommendations, it is hoped that the bureaucratic reform policy in Gorontalo can run more effectively and have a real impact on the community. The resulting transformation will not only improve the quality of public services, but also create a government that is cleaner, more professional, and more responsive to the needs of the community. Ultimately, this bureaucratic reform is expected to strengthen public trust and support sustainable development in Gorontalo.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of bureaucratic reform policies in Gorontalo shows challenges and opportunities that need to be managed strategically. The main challenges such as resistance to change, limited budget and technological infrastructure, and lack of coordination between work units are still obstacles in realizing optimal reform. On the other hand, strong support from regional leaders, the existence of clear technical guidelines, and the commitment of the apparatus to the principles of good governance are important supporting factors that can be the main capital in implementing this policy.

To overcome these obstacles and maximize the benefits of bureaucratic reform, strategic steps are needed which include strengthening the capacity of implementers, decentralizing decision-making, accelerating the digitalization of public services, intensifying socialization to the community, and implementing periodic data-based evaluations. By integrating these strategies, bureaucratic reform in Gorontalo is expected to be able to create significant changes, both in the efficiency of public services, transparency, and government accountability.

Ultimately, the success of this bureaucratic reform will not only improve the quality of governance in Gorontalo but also strengthen public trust in the government, create a more professional service environment, and support sustainable regional development.

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