



The Impact of Bureaucracy Simplification: The Experience of Lumajang District

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ABSTRACT

One of the efforts to make bureaucracy more effective and efficient is by simplifying the bureaucracy. This effort to simplify the bureaucracy was conveyed by Indonesian President Joko Widodo during his inauguration as the President of Indonesia for the second term on October 20, 2019. The simplification of bureaucracy involves reducing the bureaucratic span from 5 (five) levels to just 2 (two) levels. The Lumajang Regency Government, as one of the government institutions, has also implemented this bureaucratic simplification. There are 3 (three) sequential stages carried out, namely Simplification of Organizational Structure, Position Equalization, and Work System Adjustment. This research aims to describe the process, consistency, and impact of the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy within the Lumajang Regency Government. The theory used is the public policy implementation theory by Paul A. Sabatier and Daniel A. Mazmanian. This research employs a qualitative descriptive method with data collection techniques through interviews and documentation. The results of the study show that impact of implementing the bureaucratic simplification were found between the objectives and their operationalization, for example, the issuance of Ministerial Regulation PAN and RB Number 1 of 2023 concerning Functional Positions, which accommodates the conversion of SKP (employee performance targets) values into credit scores. This has led to functional officials no longer being professional in their fields. Regarding the impact of policy implementation, one of the negative impacts is that some functional officials cannot receive functional allowances in accordance with their functional positions because these positions should not be at the Regional Government level.

Key word: Public Policy Implementation, Impact of Public Policy Implementation, Bureaucracy Simplification.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The current government bureaucracy is often perceived as rigid, poorly organized, lacking coordination, deficient in innovation, and inflexible. Therefore, reforming government bureaucracy has become an inevitable necessity (a condition sine qua non) to make it more adaptive and flexible (Zauhar, 2019). Additionally, the bloated nature of government bureaucracy has also been identified as a factor impeding or stalling the implementation of bureaucratic accountability and responsibility to the public. This is due to the complexity of the management chain, which hampers information connectivity, resource distribution, and weakens control in service delivery (Sbai & Berrado, 2020).

The rigid condition of government bureaucracy in Indonesia is a legacy of the Dutch Colonial Government, which adhered to a Weberian-style bureaucracy. The push to reform the face of bureaucracy in Indonesia has been discussed for over a decade (Situmorang, 2019). This significant transformation, at the very least, began with the enactment of Presidential Regulation Number 81 of 2010 concerning the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010-2025.

The ratio of the number of civil servants (ASN) to the population in Lumajang Regency in 2024 is not ideal. The number of Lumajang Regency Government civil servants (ASN) as of December 2024 is 6,957 people, consisting of 5,114 PNS¹ and 1,843 PPPK². Meanwhile, the population of Lumajang Regency in the first semester of 2024 was 1,112,977 people, comprising 552,367 males and 560,610 females³. Based on the above data, it can be seen that the ratio of the number of civil servants (ASN) to the population in Lumajang Regency in 2024 is 0.62%. However, according to Yuddy Chrisnandi, the then Minister of State Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform, the ideal ratio of civil servants (ASN) to the population is 1.5% (Budilaksono, 2016).

Although the ratio appears insufficient, as highlighted by the then Deputy Minister of State Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform, Eko Prasajo, Civil Servants (ASN) often seem excessively numerous. This perception arises because many ASN members lack professionalism due to inadequate educational qualifications (HUMASMENPAN, 2013). Aligning with this, as of December 2024, 32.41% of civil servants (ASN) in Lumajang Regency still held educational qualifications below a D4/S1 degree. Furthermore, in terms of age, 37.93% of ASN members as of December 2024 were over 50 years old. According to an article published on bareksa.com, the age of 50 marks mid-life, a phase where individuals tend to be less driven by materialism, experience physical decline, and harbor fears about approaching death. Consequently, it can be inferred that the bureaucratic operations of the Lumajang Regency Government during this period likely face a slowdown.

This slowdown is evident from the sluggish progress in the bureaucratic reform index within the Lumajang Regency Government during the 2020–2023 period compared to the Probolinggo Regency Government. The slow pace of change is illustrated in Table 1. Data on the Bureaucratic Reform Index in 5 Regencies during the period 2020–2023 are as follows.

Table 1. Data on the Bureaucratic Reform Index in 5 Regencies during the period 2020–2023

Year	Bureaucratic Reform Index ⁴				
	Lumajang Regency	Probolinggo Regency	Jember Regency	Situbondo Regency	Bondowoso Regency
2020	56.66	65.72	56.6	68.74	65
2021	58.94	62.82	55.87	69.08	66.35

¹ <https://bkd.lumajangkab.go.id/news/statistik/pns/?tahun=2024&bulan=12> (accessed on March 9 2025)

² <https://bkd.lumajangkab.go.id/news/statistik/pppk/?tahun=2024&bulan=12> (accessed on March 9 2025)

³ https://data.lumajangkab.go.id/main/lihat_file/amlqcg%3D%3D (accessed on March 9 2025)

⁴ <https://ro-organisasi.jatimprov.go.id/dashboard/rb> (accessed on March 9 2025)

2022	60.22	63.05	62.28	68.83	65.01
2023	72.86	77.26	66.61	70.14	66.3

Based on the above data, it can be observed that Lumajang Regency has consistently experienced an increase in its bureaucratic reform index achievement compared to the other four regencies. This indicates that the path toward realizing bureaucratic reform is on the correct and positive trajectory. This serves as the first rationale for the researcher to conduct the study in Lumajang Regency. Notably, Lumajang Regency's bureaucratic reform index surged significantly in 2023, increasing by 12.64 points. This remarkable surge was partly driven by changes in the bureaucratic reform evaluation mechanism, as outlined in Ministerial Circular Letter Number 15 of 2023 from the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (PAN-RB). One key change was the inclusion of bureaucracy simplification implementation in the assessment criteria

Another factor suspected to contribute to the sluggish bureaucracy in the Lumajang Regency Government is the excessive number of structural positions. Prior to bureaucratic simplification, there were 765 structural positions available, spanning from Echelon II to Echelon IV. Compared to the total number of civil servants (ASN) before the simplification, structural officials accounted for 11.97% of the entire ASN workforce. However, only 86.98% of these structural positions were occupied by definitive officials at the time. Furthermore, the composition of structural positions relative to functional positions before bureaucratic simplification was strikingly disproportionate.

Following the bureaucratic simplification, the number of structural positions decreased. This occurred due to the elimination of 302 structural positions. The removal was implemented in accordance with the model outlined by the Ministry of Home Affairs (Kementerian Dalam Negeri) in Letter No. 800/3484/OTDA, dated May 31, 2021, regarding the Simplification of Organizational Structures within Regional Governments as a follow-up to Ministerial Regulation of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (PAN-RB) No. 17 of 2021 and Ministerial Regulation PAN-RB No. 25 of 2021. The 302 eliminated positions were Echelon IVa structural roles, reducing the total number of structural positions post-simplification (from Echelon II to Echelon III) to 363—a decrease of 39.48%.

In addition to the ratio and the predominance of civil servants (ASN) aged over 50, another factor suspected to contribute to bureaucratic sluggishness in the Lumajang Regency Government is the excessive number of structural positions. According to data from the same period (2021), there were at least 765 structural positions within the regency government, ranging from echelon II to echelon IV. Compared to the total number of ASN during that period, structural officials accounted for 11.97% of all ASN. However, as of November 2021, only 86.98% of these positions were filled.

Referring to Government Regulation Number 18 of 2016 concerning Regional Apparatus, as last amended by Government Regulation Number 72 of 2019, it is established that the hierarchical levels of positions within a Regency's Regional Apparatus consist of four tiers: Echelon II (Primary High Leadership Position), Echelon III (Administrator), Echelon IV (Supervisor), and Echelon V / Staff (Implementer). The number of Echelon II, III, and IV positions as of June 2021 is as follows:

Table 2. Number of Echelon Types in Lumajang District (Source: Processed from the Organization Section of the Regional Secretariat of Lumajang District)

No	Type of Echelon	Number
1	IIa	1
2	IIb	34
3	IIIa	66
4	IIIb	123
5	Iva	458
6	IVb	83

The bureaucratic simplification implemented by the Lumajang Regency Government is a follow-up to President Joko Widodo's inaugural speech on October 20, 2019. President Joko Widodo emphasized the need for bureaucratic overhaul. His expectation was to streamline bureaucracy by reducing the echelon system, which was deemed overly complex at the time, and simplifying it to just two (2) levels. Additionally, the President instructed that structural positions be replaced with functional roles that prioritize employee expertise and competencies (Aida, 2019).

The Lumajang Regency Government has been known to have implemented all stages of bureaucratic simplification. It began with the streamlining of the organizational structure for 51 (fifty-one) regional government agencies (OPD). This was followed by position equalization through the inauguration of 262 structural officials who were reassigned as functional officials (Alvioniza, 2021). The final stage was the issuance of Lumajang Regent Regulation No. 15 of 2024 on the Work System for Bureaucratic Simplification. Thus, by the end of 2024, the Lumajang Regency Government has completed all stages of bureaucratic simplification.

However, despite having implemented all stages of bureaucratic simplification, by the end of 2023, at least 60% of the functional officials resulting from position equalization remained. This was due to some functional officials retiring or transitioning back to structural positions, either at echelon III or echelon IV levels. In fact, just three days after the inauguration of functional officials from the position equalization process, specifically on January 3, 2022, three of them were promoted back to structural positions. Thus, it can be assumed that President Joko Widodo's expectation of prioritizing functional officials was not fully realized. Several previous studies have indicated that the implementation of bureaucratic simplification still faces various challenges. For instance: the transition from structural to functional positions has not had a direct impact on the career development of civil servants (Marthalina, 2021; Rakhmawanto, 2021), there is still no established career development framework for existing types of functional positions (Gumay et al., 2021; Marthalina, 2021), a proportional organizational design has yet to be realized (Marthalina, 2021; Rusliandy, 2022), there are competency gaps and suboptimal patterns of working relationships (Marista et al., 2022; Nisa et al., 2022; Rusliandy, 2022), inconsistencies in regulations remain a significant issue (Gumay et al., 2021; Nuviantra & Kustanto, 2023). According to that, that is the reason why the researcher was motivated to study the impact of the Bureaucratic Simplification within the Lumajang Regency Government. In accordance with the number of problem statements, the objective of this study is to describe, explain, and analyze the impact of the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy within the Lumajang Regency Government.

2. METHOD

In this study, the author using a qualitative approach. For the research method, the researcher employs a descriptive method. Research using the descriptive method is aimed at describing and illustrating existing phenomena, both natural and man-made, with a focus on the characteristics, quality, and interrelationships among activities (Sukmadinata, 2011). The research location is the Lumajang Regency Government, specifically in Bagian Organisasi and Badan Kepegawaian Daerah (BKD). The research period spans 3 months, starting in November 2024 through January 2025.

In practice, this study emphasizes an in-depth exploration of a phenomenon through direct engagement in interviews, documentation studies, and observations (Moleong, 2000). The data obtained from in-depth interviews with the informants aims to determine the extent to which the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy within the Lumajang Regency Government has achieved the impact as envisioned by the President at the time. Additional data to be collected includes

secondary data in the form of documents related to bureaucratic simplification, such as: bureaucratic simplification regulations, technical guidelines or implementation instructions from the Ministry of Home Affairs and the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (PAN-RB), also other administrative documents issued by the Lumajang Regency Government regarding the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy. The researcher also conducted observations within the Lumajang Regency Government environment to gain a comprehensive understanding of the bureaucratic simplification policy's implementation.

The technique for selecting informants as mentioned above is done by purposive sampling. The informants which selected by researchers is the informants who could provide information according to the situation and conditions in the research setting and understand the implementing of bureaucracy simplification in Lumajang Regency Government. The informants selected by the researcher are officials directly involved in the bureaucratic simplification process in Lumajang Regency in 2021, namely the Head of the Institutional Sub-Division in Bagian Organisasi and the Head of the Mutation Sub-Division in Badan Kepegawaian Daerah. Additionally, one informant with a career history as both a functional official (as a nurse) and structural official (as a Section Head of Toddler, Youth, Elderly and Family Resilience—before being reassigned again as a functional official (as a Self-help Activator)—was included. This additional informant was necessary to compare their experiences when serving as a pure functional official versus when they became a functional official resulting from bureaucratic simplification.

The data analysis techniques involve processes to simplify data, making it easier to implement and understand, thereby rendering the gathered information clear and explicit. The researcher employs a data analysis technique comprising four stages: data collection, data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles & Huberman, 1984 in Sugiyono, 2021). To test the data, researchers use the source of triangulation technique by comparing what the informant said with other informants and also repeat the same question at the different times. Checking data with source triangulation can be useful for strengthening research results. The scope of analysis in this study focuses on the impact of the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy within the Lumajang district government.

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The expected impact of the bureaucratic simplification policy, as conveyed by Indonesian President Joko Widodo during his inauguration on October 20, 2019, is to create an effective and efficient bureaucracy and a system that better values skills or expertise. However, in reality, these positive impacts have yet to be felt even three years after its implementation. If we analyze it using the theory of public policy implementation from Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, the positive impacts of implementing bureaucratic simplification have not been achieved.

There were negative impacts from the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy in Lumajang Regency, namely:

1. There are functional positions that have been inaugurated, it turns out that they should not exist at the Regency (read: Regional) level, but must be at the Central Government level. The functional position is a State Budget Financial Management Analyst. There are 2 (two) functional officials within the Lumajang District Government who hold the position of State Budget Financial Management Analyst. The impact is that these functional officials, until now, certainly do not have the duties and functions as their functional positions because they do not handle the State Budget. The Lumajang District Government has tried to make adjustments, but the Central Government rejected it because the adjustment policy is no longer in effect. Consequently, the

functional position allowances, they currently receive, are identical to their previous Echelon IV structural allowances. In fact, the allowances they received should be greater than the allowances they currently received. The Regency Government hesitate to provide the proper functional position allowances, as such roles should not exist within the Regional Government structure.

This is in line with the results of previous research which states that one of the problems in equalizing positions is that functional positions are not yet available in some agencies (Tuasamu et al., 2022). Despite being misidentified, and having an impact on the uncertainty of their career path, the 2 (two) functional officials were not resistant. This is in line with one of the indicators in the policy environment variable conveyed by Daniel Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, that policy implementation can run smoothly if the attitude of the voting group, in this case the affected functional officials, is not resistant (Subarsono, 2022).

2. The budget burden for personnel expenditure will be greater in 2024, when compared to the previous year. This is because the functional position allowances of functional officials resulting from equalization of positions are adjusted to the functional position allowances as mandated by article 2 paragraph (5) of Presidential Regulation Number 50 of 2022 concerning Income for Administrative Officials Affected by Bureaucratic Structuring. Even though the work done now is exactly the same as before. That is, there are no significant differences, including services to the community. The projection of the personnel expenditure budget burden, which is based on secondary data, shows that the additional budget burden is Rp. 665,556,000.00 for 12 months. The burden is intended for 39 types of functional positions whose functional position allowances have increased as mandated by article 5 paragraph (2) of Presidential Regulation Number 50 of 2022 concerning Income for Administrative Officials Affected by Bureaucratic Structuring.
3. The goals and expectations of the bureaucratic simplification policy have not been met with the current conditions. This means that the objectives of the bureaucratic simplification policy, which expect an effective and efficient bureaucracy, including valuing certain expertise and skills, have not been realized for $\pm$ 3 years. It even tends to lead to non-realization, due to regulatory inconsistencies. This is because bureaucratic simplification policies are more likely to "change clothes".

Of course, this is in line with one of the indicators on the problem characteristics variable conveyed by Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, that policy implementation can run if the scope of behavior change is only directed at the level of knowledge, not changes in attitude or behavior (Subarsono, 2022). In fact, the goal of simplifying the bureaucracy is to change the attitudes and behavior of ASN to be more professional and flexible.

4. There has been no change in the scope of expected behaviour. The findings are that functional officials resulting from equalization of positions are still carrying out their previous work. Even in certain conditions, implementing officials or staff must still pass the person concerned before being submitted to echelon III. It is as if the person concerned is still an echelon IV structural official.

The presentation of the data above is in line with previous research which states that there is limited knowledge and understanding regarding their capacity as functional officials because there has been no competency mapping conducted through competency tests (Abdullah, 2023; Jesaja, 2024; Laila, 2023; Lukman, 2022). Of course, this is in line with one of the indicators in the policy characteristics

variable conveyed by Daniel Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, that policy implementation can run smoothly if the content of a policy is clear (Subarsono, 2022).

The above conditions are due to the negligence and inability of policymakers to identify all the problems that (may) arise after the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy. This shows that the level of technical difficulty of a problem affects policy implementation. This is certainly in line with what was conveyed by Daniel Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier (Subarsono, 2022).

Although some negative impacts of the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy have occurred, it does not mean that the bureaucratic simplification policy is not working. Referring to the 5 (five) stages of the implementation process, according to Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier, the stage of implementing the bureaucratic simplification policy is only at the 2nd stage, namely compliance with policy outputs according to the target group.

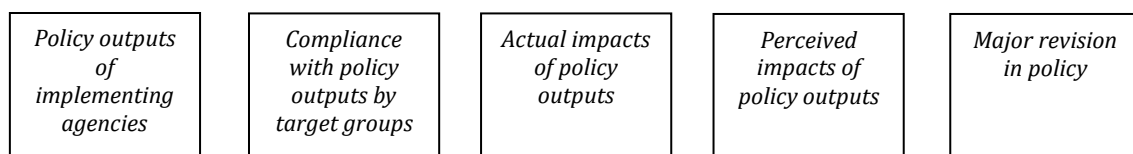


Figure 1. Five stages of policy implementation success according to Daniel A. Mazmanian and Paul A. Sabatier

5. CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis and discussion of the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy within the Lumajang Regency Government—examined from the perspectives of policy impact—it can be concluded that, in terms of policy impact, no significant effect has been achieved because:

1. The bureaucratic simplification policy is merely a "change clothes." This implies that the policy has not yet resulted in an improvement in the quality of public services, given that the functional officials who have undergone job equivalency continue to perform the exact same duties as when they were structural officials.
2. There is a limited number of available functional positions. Some of the negative impacts include:
 - a. The functional position allowances do not meet the expected standards, as the duties and functions of these positions exist only at the central government level.
 - b. There have been delays of several months in promotions because, at that time, there was no regulation governing promotions for functional officials who underwent job equivalency.
3. There is a lack of knowledge among the structural officials regarding the functional positions they have chosen.
4. There is increasing inefficiency in terms of budget burden. This is because the allowances for 39 functional positions are higher than those for Echelon IV structural positions. The projected increase in the budget burden—calculated by comparing what was previously received as an Echelon IV official with what is received as a functional official in accordance with the Presidential Regulation on functional position allowances—is IDR 665,556,000.00.

In this context, the recommendations pertain to what should be done and how the Central Government and the Lumajang Regency Government should proceed, with the aim of ensuring that the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy runs optimally in accordance with its noble

ideals—namely, an effective and efficient bureaucracy that values expertise and skills. Based on the research conclusions above, the researcher recommends the following improvements:

1. Revise the Ministerial Regulation of PAN and RB No. 1 of 2023 on Functional Positions so that functional officials become more professional in line with the original objectives of the bureaucratic simplification policy.
2. Develop information technology systems that support performance, specifically by facilitating the implementation of the work system.
3. Develop career development plans for each functional official—whether a purely functional official or one who has undergone job equivalency—so that their career progression remains secure.
4. The Central Government should conduct periodic measurements—at least annually—regarding the implementation of bureaucratic simplification to assess its level of success.

The Central Government should formulate a mid-term and long-term plan (Grand Design) for the implementation of the bureaucratic simplification policy, applicable at both the central and regional levels

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