



Economic implications of implementing the bureaucratic reform roadmap in the regional medium-term development plan: A strategic effort to enhance public service quality

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ABSTRACT

Background: The implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap in the Semarang City Medium-Term Development Plan is a strategic effort to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public services and achieve sustainable development goals. **Method:** The implementation and understanding of the bureaucratic roadmap can be carried out through the use of qualitative methods. This selection method is in line with the need for descriptive analysis in the entire Semarang City government. Descriptive understanding is needed to examine the overall scope of the strategy. **Findings:** The bureaucratic reform roadmap includes a number of strategies, including the development of human resource bureaucracy, strengthening governance, improving the quality of public services, and implementing information technology. To face global and local challenges, the Semarang City Government prioritizes transparency, accountability, community participation, and innovation in every step of implementation. Strengthening governance is also an important step in implementing the roadmap. **Conclusion:** Although there are still several challenges to be faced, such as limited budget allocation and obstacles from several parties to change, the bureaucratic reform roadmap in the Semarang City Regional Medium Term Development Plan/*Rencana Pembangunan Jangka Menengah Daerah* (RPJMD) shows the government's seriousness in improving the quality of public services and achieving sustainable development in the future. **Novelty/Originality of the Study:** This study provides a novel assessment of the implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap, emphasizing strategies for human resource development, improving governance, and enhancing public services. The study highlights the role of transparency, accountability, and innovation in addressing challenges in bureaucratic transformation.

KEYWORDS: bureaucratic reform; RPJMPD; roadmap.

1. Introduction

Amid increasingly complex and dynamic demands of the times, a city must be able to face various challenges and take an active role in development for the welfare of its citizens. To achieve this goal, a clear and well-directed roadmap must be designed as a guide for implementing bureaucratic reform. Bureaucratic reform has become a main focus for the Semarang City Government in its efforts to realize the vision and mission outlined in the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) (Yusriadi, 2018). The RPJMD serves as a strategic guide to direct the city's development and management over a specific period.

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Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is a transformational step toward achieving a clean, transparent, and accountable government. An effective and responsive bureaucracy will have a positive impact on regional development and community welfare (Rohayatin, 2017). The Semarang City Government is strongly committed to carrying out bureaucratic reform and addressing challenges in the implementation of the RPJMD roadmap.

The planning and implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap in the RPJMD of Semarang City is a crucial effort to enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability in governance. Bureaucratic reform aims to improve systems, processes, and bureaucratic culture in order to provide better public services to the community. However, in facing certain challenges and opportunities, several issues must be identified to achieve this goal.

The planning and implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap in the RPJMD of Semarang City faces a number of complex problems. These include unclear vision and mission, lack of resources and budget, internal resistance from bureaucratic personnel, limited inter-agency coordination, ineffective monitoring and evaluation, the COVID-19 pandemic crisis, and limited public participation. By identifying these challenges and seeking appropriate solutions, Semarang City has the potential to successfully implement bureaucratic reform and deliver improved public services to its citizens.

2. Methods

This study employs a qualitative research model with a descriptive approach. The data collection process was carried out in two stages: primary data and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through observation and field research. Secondary data were gathered through a literature review of relevant articles and books. The observational and field research model was based on the researcher's direct involvement in the process of formulating the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), which facilitated the ease of data collection. The results from field data collection were then analyzed using secondary data through a process of interpretation and description.

3. Result and Discussion

Bureaucratic reform is a series of efforts aimed at improving and transforming systems, processes, and work culture within the bureaucracy or government. The objective of bureaucratic reform is to create a more efficient, transparent, responsive, and accountable bureaucracy that is oriented toward providing high-quality public services to the community. This concept seeks to address various issues within the bureaucracy, such as inefficiency, corruption, slow bureaucratic processes, and the lack of satisfactory public service. Bureaucratic reform emphasizes the importance of transparency in all aspects of government actions. This includes transparency in decision-making, budget management, and the provision of information to the public. Bureaucratic reform demands that government officials and employees be held accountable for their actions and decisions. Accountability is essential for creating an effective and integrity-driven bureaucracy (Radiansyah, 2020).

A roadmap in the context of bureaucratic reform is a strategic plan or guide that outlines a series of steps to achieve the goals and vision of transformation within the bureaucracy. The roadmap serves as a structured and systematic guide for implementing changes and transformations in the bureaucratic system. It typically includes long-term goals, medium-term objectives, and tactical steps required to achieve the desired outcomes. The roadmap provides clear and organized direction for enacting reforms within the bureaucracy. With a roadmap, necessary changes can be more accurately identified and implemented in a gradual and structured manner (Andriani et al., 2020). The Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap of the Semarang City Government helps to identify progress, challenges, and the monitoring and evaluation of programs that have been implemented. In other words, the roadmap serves as an instrument used by the Semarang City Government to

oversee the implementation of bureaucratic reform across all levels of the city government (PERWALI Semarang, 2020).

The Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) is a strategic planning document prepared by regional governments for a specific period, typically five years. The RPJMD serves as a guideline for formulating and implementing development policies at the regional level and includes the vision, mission, objectives, targets, as well as programs and activities to be carried out by the regional government during the specified period. The RPJMD plays a crucial role in development planning as it reflects the vision and direction of development desired by the regional government. This document addresses various strategic issues and development priorities and identifies programs and activities to achieve them. The RPJMD is formulated through the involvement of various stakeholders, including the public, and is expected to reflect the aspirations and needs of the community comprehensively (Prihanto, 2012).

The RPJMD holds a central role in supporting bureaucratic reform at the regional level. Regional development planning involves multiple stakeholders in determining how to utilize and manage the available and owned resources over a certain period. This process is known as a sequence of choices or prioritization. According to the Regional Regulation of Semarang City No. 6 of 2010 concerning the Regional Long-Term Development Plan of Semarang City for 2005–2025, the RPJMD of Semarang City for 2021–2026 is the final phase of that plan (PERDA Semarang, 2021).

The vision of the Semarang City RPJPD (Regional Long-Term Development Plan) 2005–2025 is: "Semarang as a Religious, Orderly, and Cultured Metropolitan City." This vision signifies that within the period from 2005 to 2025, Semarang City aspires to become a city inhabited by a community that consistently upholds religious values, work ethics, customs, traditions, and local wisdom that are believed to be noble values. These values are to be reflected in social interactions and in the conscious exercise of rights and obligations in accordance with prevailing laws and regulations. The ultimate goal is to create a well-ordered, prosperous government and societal ecosystem supported by a primary economic cycle centered on trade, services, and industry. This is further supported by a standard of public service provision in Semarang City that meets metropolitan—even world-class—standards, capable of accommodating all activities and demands of the community in a safe, peaceful, comfortable, smooth, green, healthy, and sustainable manner.

The 2021–2026 Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) is the elaboration of the fourth or final phase of the Semarang City Regional Long-Term Development Plan (RPJPD) 2005–2025. The development theme of this RPJPD period serves as a reference for the regional head, in this case the Mayor of Semarang, in formulating the Vision and Mission of Semarang City for 2021–2026. The development vision of Semarang City for the 2021–2026 period is: "The Realization of a Greater Semarang City Based on Pancasila within the Framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) Upholding Unity in Diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika)," which implies that the city, known by its slogan Semarang Hebat (Great Semarang), will become even greater in the future (PERDA Semarang, 2021).

To realize the vision of "The Realization of a Greater Semarang City Based on Pancasila within the Framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia (NKRI) Upholding Unity in Diversity (Bhinneka Tunggal Ika)," five regional development missions have been formulated as the primary foundation for policy direction and programs.

First, to improve the quality and capacity of superior and productive human resources in order to achieve social welfare and justice. Second, to develop competitive local economic potential and promote industry-based development grounded in research and innovation, while upholding the principles of Pancasila-based economic democracy. Third, to guarantee the freedom of citizens to practice their religion, fulfill their basic rights, ensure social welfare protection, and uphold human rights in a just manner. Fourth, to establish high-quality and environmentally conscious infrastructure as the main pillar of urban advancement. Fifth, to implement dynamic bureaucratic reform and formulate legal

products aligned with Pancasila values within the framework of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

The implementation of bureaucratic reform in the Semarang City Government, as reflected in the current era, includes issues observed from three target aspects: 1) a clean and accountable bureaucracy, 2) a capable bureaucracy, and 3) a bureaucracy that delivers excellent public services. The implementation of the Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap is a critical step in realizing the vision and mission outlined in the bureaucratic reform planning. In this context, a major recurring challenge is the lack of coordination among institutions. This challenge can lead to program overlap, policy conflicts, and resource inefficiencies.

The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has become an extremely complex global challenge, causing significant disruptions in various aspects of human life, including the implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap. Amid efforts to manage the health crisis and its socio-economic impacts, bureaucratic reform initiatives in many countries have been delayed, altered, or even temporarily suspended. The COVID-19 crisis prompted governments to shift their focus toward health, economic, and social crisis management. Government priorities shifted toward saving lives, maintaining economic stability, and meeting the basic needs of the population. As a result, many bureaucratic reform roadmaps had to be postponed or redirected to address the emergency crisis (Suparman, 2021).

The pandemic crisis required substantial budget and resource allocation for health interventions, social assistance, and economic recovery. This condition limited or even cut budgets and resources previously allocated for bureaucratic reform, thus hindering its implementation. To maintain social distancing and reduce the spread of the virus, many public services had to be moved online. However, several government institutions were unprepared for this digital transition, thereby obstructing the implementation of the reform roadmap, which relies heavily on technological support and digital transformation.

Policy changes in response to the pandemic crisis can disrupt the direction of the bureaucratic reform roadmap. Previously planned policies may need to be modified or adjusted in accordance with changing public and economic needs. Limited physical access and delays in the decision-making process caused by the pandemic crisis may lead to slowdowns in the implementation of the reform roadmap. Meetings and discussions necessary for formulating reform steps may be hindered due to social restrictions. Although pandemic management remains a top priority, the government must remain committed to the bureaucratic reform roadmap. By identifying critical steps and prioritizing urgent reforms, the government can continue implementing change without overlooking existing challenges. Despite budget constraints, the government can seek ways to optimize the use of existing funds. Budget allocation should remain aligned with the needs of bureaucratic reform, and alternative funding sources may be explored through partnerships or budget restructuring (Katharina, 2021).

The COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted the importance of digital transformation in delivering more efficient and responsive public services. The government must accelerate digital transformation to support the bureaucratic reform roadmap and ensure the capacity of government institutions to provide online services. Inter-agency collaboration is key to overcoming program overlaps and policy conflicts. The government must encourage effective cooperation and coordination among institutions to ensure harmonization of reform programs and policies. Utilizing advanced communication technologies can help facilitate decision-making and inter-agency discussions, especially when physical meetings are not feasible. These technologies enable various stakeholders to remain connected and participate in the decision-making process (Katharina, 2021).

Bureaucratic reform is a transformational effort aimed at improving the bureaucratic system to enhance efficiency, transparency, and public service delivery. In the context of implementing the bureaucratic reform roadmap, active public participation plays a crucial role in achieving success. However, public involvement is often limited in both the planning and implementation stages of the reform roadmap. Active public participation in planning and implementing the bureaucratic reform roadmap provides valuable input for the change process. As users of public services, citizens possess direct experience with the bureaucracy

and can offer unique perspectives on the issues and challenges faced, as well as appropriate solutions (Said, 2018).

With public participation, the government becomes more accountable in implementing bureaucratic reform. Citizens can serve as monitors and evaluators of bureaucratic performance, thereby strengthening accountability and transparency in the delivery of public services. Public participation ensures that the interests and aspirations of the community are represented in the planning and implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap. By involving the public, the government can identify priority needs and ensure that the policies adopted align with the expectations and necessities of the community. Bureaucratic reform that incorporates active public participation is more likely to receive broader public support. Such participation helps enhance the legitimacy of reform programs and increases public trust in the government (Rahman, 2016).

However, some members of the public may not be fully aware of or understand the importance of their involvement in bureaucratic reform. This lack of awareness and understanding can lead to low levels of engagement and limited active participation in the reform process. Limited access to information regarding the planning and implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap can also hinder public involvement. Government transparency in sharing information is key to enabling effective participation. Additionally, some individuals may feel that their participation will not have a significant impact or that their input will be ignored by the government. This skepticism can reduce public interest and motivation to engage in the reform process.

Moreover, not all citizens possess sufficient capacity to participate in the planning and implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap. Barriers such as limited access to education and information, as well as a lack of skills and confidence to speak in public forums, may hinder meaningful and effective participation.

The coordination process in the implementation of the roadmap is a crucial step. Without proper coordination, various government agencies may develop similar or overlapping programs in terms of objectives and targets. This leads to resource wastage and inefficient budget utilization. Through effective coordination, government institutions can work synergistically and collaborate in efforts to achieve bureaucratic reform goals. Good coordination can help avoid duplication of tasks and efforts, enabling more efficient use of resources and faster, more effective realization of bureaucratic reform outcomes (Saputra et al., 2021).

One solution to address inter-agency coordination challenges is the formation of a coordination team comprising representatives from various government agencies involved in the bureaucratic reform roadmap. This team is tasked with aligning programs and policies and ensuring inter-agency cooperation. Each government agency participating in the roadmap's implementation must prepare a joint work plan that outlines the roles, responsibilities, and targets to be achieved. This joint work plan must be based on the overall vision and mission of bureaucratic reform (Turner et al., 2022). Effective and transparent communication is key to facilitating information exchange among agencies. The government needs to provide proper communication channels for sharing information, experiences, and lessons learned between institutions. Joint decision-making involving multiple government agencies helps to reach consensus and avoid policy conflicts. This decision-making mechanism must be grounded in the principles of transparency and accountability (Harimurti, 2010).

The bureaucratic reform roadmap needs to be regularly evaluated to measure progress and the outcomes achieved. The results of these evaluations must be used to revise and improve the plans and strategies in the roadmap's implementation (Ilyas, 2020). Monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of bureaucratic reform cannot be separated from the budgetary support provided to each Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) responsible for areas of change within the reform initiative. The instrument used to carry out the monitoring and evaluation of bureaucratic reform—both for each area of reform and for the overall implementation in the Semarang City Government—is the Self-Assessment Evaluation Worksheet (KKE) from the Ministry of Administrative and

Bureaucratic Reform (Kementerian PAN-RB), based on the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform No. 30 of 2018 concerning the Amendment to Regulation No. 14 of 2014 on Guidelines for Evaluating Bureaucratic Reform in Government Agencies. The monitoring and evaluation instrument, or Monev instrument, may also be independently developed in accordance with evolving data needs in the implementation of bureaucratic reform, and can take the form of an electronic, application-based instrument such as the e-Bureaucratic Reform system. Reports and follow-up on the results of monitoring and evaluation of bureaucratic reform implementation include the achievements of bureaucratic reform and follow-up actions to be taken within the Semarang City Government (PERWALI Semarang, 2020).

The government must therefore make efforts to raise public awareness and understanding of the importance of their participation in bureaucratic reform. Outreach campaigns and transparent information about the reform roadmap can help address this challenge. The government must be committed to improving public access to information regarding the planning, implementation, and impact of the bureaucratic reform roadmap. The use of information and communication technology can serve as an effective means of providing information widely and transparently. The government can organize training and capacity-building programs for the community to enhance their skills and understanding in participating in the bureaucratic reform process. This will empower citizens to contribute effectively to change. The government must also create inclusive and diverse participation mechanisms so that all segments of society have the opportunity to be involved. These mechanisms may include public discussions, consultations, or other participatory forums.

Furthermore, the government must value and respect the active contributions of the public in the bureaucratic reform process. The community needs to feel heard and to have a meaningful role in shaping policies and driving change (Setyasih, 2023).

4. Conclusion

Bureaucratic reform is a necessity for every local government committed to achieving high-quality, transparent, and accountable public services. The implementation of a bureaucratic reform roadmap, which involves various government agencies, requires effective coordination to achieve optimal results. A lack of coordination among agencies can lead to overlapping programs, policy conflicts, and resource inefficiencies. To address these challenges, joint efforts from multiple agencies are needed to establish coordination teams, formulate joint work plans, facilitate information exchange, create mechanisms for joint decision-making, and conduct regular evaluations. Through these measures, the implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap can proceed more efficiently and effectively, and the objectives of reform can be better achieved. The COVID-19 pandemic crisis has had a significant impact on the implementation of the bureaucratic reform roadmap. Shifting priorities, budgetary and resource constraints, and the transition to virtual environments are some of the challenges faced by governments in continuing the reform agenda. Nevertheless, by identifying appropriate steps and prioritizing critical reforms, as well as enhancing collaboration and the use of technology, governments can continue to achieve bureaucratic reform goals and improve public services amid crisis conditions. It is essential for governments to adapt to dynamic circumstances and take strategic steps to successfully carry forward the bureaucratic reform roadmap.

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