

Managerial Competence of Functional Position: Implementation Study of Position Equalisation Policy

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ABSTRACT

The North Padang Lawas District Government has implemented a bureaucratic simplification policy to simplify the organizational structure and equalize administrative positions into functional positions. However, this policy faces resistance and discomfort among employees, especially functional officials. This study aims to determine the managerial competence of functional civil servants at the Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency of North Padang Lawas Regency. The research method used is descriptive qualitative, collecting data through interviews, observation, and document analysis. The results showed that the implementation of the policy has not resulted in significant changes; besides that, there has yet to be integration of the collaboration work system, which is only limited to working on their respective roles and functions. The stages of simplifying the bureaucracy are still being adapted and transitioned.

INTRODUCTION

Governments worldwide often implement bureaucratic reform programs to change the structure and culture of public organizations. These programs attract new governments as they increase electability and popularity. One common strategy is to downsize organizational bodies and reduce headcount. Bureaucratic reform programs involve structural adjustments and changes, such as privatization and performance-based employment practices. The bureaucratic reform policy in Indonesia is outlined in Presidential Regulation No. 81/2010, which aims to achieve world-class governance through rapid and spectacular leaps. This requires an ideal bureaucratic organization system supported by professional, high-integrity, and service-oriented personnel (Seno, 2020; Kim & Han, 2015).

Implementing the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform in Indonesia until the current conditions have been in stage III, stated in Permenpan RB Number 25 of 2019 concerning the Bureaucratic Reform Road Map (2020-2024). The regulation contains eight areas of change consisting of 1) Change Management, 2) Policy Deregulation, 3) Organisational Structuring, 4) Organisational Structuring, 5) Apparatus HR Structuring, 6) Strengthening Accountability, 7) Strengthening Supervision, and 8) Improving the Quality of Public Services.

The target of bureaucratic reform is large-scale government organizations that tend to be rigid, conservative, and slow (Muhammad Thamrin, 2021). The reform approach taken is downsizing, which rationalizes the size of the bureaucratic structure to reduce state budget expenditure (Irfan, 2013). Downsizing is necessary because many tasks are performed collectively by many people rather than by one person, causing inefficiency and ineffective performance (Rakhmawanto, 2021). This was done in response to public dissatisfaction with the wasteful budget managed by the government. The aim is to create a simple yet function-rich organizational structure through debureaucratization (Seno, 2020). However, when looking at examples of bureaucratic reform in Malaysia and South Korea, it was found that the changes made were only procedural and did not lead to structural and cultural changes. The bureaucrats could control the reform process and increase their power as the reform authority (Kim & Han, 2015).

According to data from the National Civil Service Agency (BKN), as of December 2019, there were 4,189,121 civil servants in Indonesia. Civil servant positions comprise 11% structural officials, 50.4% functional officials, and 38.5% general functional officials. Most functional officials are teachers and health workers, who comprise 70% of the total. The growth in functional officials between 2011 and 2019 was only 5.86%, indicating a need for more interest and development in these positions. In contrast, the number of structural positions increased significantly by 103.68% over the same period. This data shows that bureaucratic organizations in Indonesia are run mainly by administrative positions, resulting in wasted state budgets and slower public service processes. Many administrative workers need specialized expertise and skills, making

public services inefficient. In addition, many conventional types of work are still performed using conservative methods in public service activities.

Based on the data presented, it is clear that there has been a significant increase in the number of structural positions within the organization. This growth has resulted in larger bureaucratic bodies that are rich in structure but need to improve in function. As a result, this has led to decision-making inertia, miscommunication, and miscoordination. The current organizational structure is no longer suitable for implementing policy change, as it works in silos and lacks coordination between departments. The government has implemented a streamlining strategy known as bureaucratic simplification (debureaucratization) to address these issues. This involves cutting the organizational structure into two levels and transferring lower-level structural positions into functional positions (Car-Pušić et al., 2020; Seno, 2020).

The practice of debureaucratization in Indonesia differs from other countries because it uses the rightsizing method, which involves re-organizing organizational resources to achieve high performance in a competitive environment (Rakhmawanto, 2021). The goal of debureaucratization is not to eliminate bureaucracy but to eliminate dysfunction and reduce intermediary activities between the public and bureaucrats, leading to improved public services (Seno, 2020). Debureaucratization is applied to overcome inaction, incompetence, and inefficiency in state administration and prevent the development of bureaucracy (Caiden, 2009). It also improves bureaucratic performance and enhances service quality (Hardjosukarto, 1994). Simplifying the bureaucracy by creating more functional positions and reducing high-ranking positions aims to improve government accountability, minimize corruption, and prevent abuse of power (Gobble, 2019).

The North Padang Lawas Regency Government Agency has implemented a bureaucratic simplification policy that begins with simplifying the organizational structure. They were then followed by equalizing administrative positions into functional positions, which have been approved by the Minister of Home Affairs through the Approval Letter for Position Equalisation from the Minister of Home Affairs Number 800/8845/OTDA. As a result, 238 people were appointed as Junior Expert Functional Officials. However, the impact of this policy could have gone better, with challenges in aspects such as organizational management, governance, and apparatus competence. These challenges include optimizing the role of functional position holders, managing coordinator/sub-coordinator duties, and meeting competency standards.

Implementing the policy of equalizing Administrative Positions into Functional Positions in the Government of North Padang Lawas Regency caused discomfort and resistance among employees. They feel insecure because they were previously in the comfort zone of their old positions and assume that career development only exists in structural positions. In addition, the unfamiliar matrix organizational form for new officials needs to be clarified for accountability and increased task involvement. Senior employees used to working in a structural model also needed help adapting to the functional

model. Overall, it takes a strong effort from employees to transform and accept change (Rakhmawanto, 2021).

The impact of implementing a large-scale position equalization policy in the Government Agencies of North Padang Lawas Regency has even reached the competency aspect for functional officials. It has dramatically affected career development patterns as functional officials, and even confusion has hit functional position holders in understanding new duties and responsibilities. Meanwhile, the aspects of competency development and career development for every ASN employee are the rights and obligations of ASN (Lembaga Administrasi Negara, 2022).

Based on the background that has been described, the author has an interest in conducting research, especially to be able to see and examine the extent to which the mastery of managerial competence of Civil Servants Functional Position Equalisation positions such as paradigm shifts and expectations versus the reality of policy results in the field, especially at the Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency (BPKPSDM) of North Padang Lawas Regency.

THEORETICAL REVIEW

According to Marthalina (2021), the transfer of structural positions to functional positions at the Ministry of PAN RB has yet to impact career development significantly. This is due to the obstacles and challenges in adjusting business processes, organizational structures, and ASN behavior. The pattern of career development for functional positions has yet to be fully established, and organizational design needs to be agile to support career development. The new organizational design structure will influence ASN career development in the Ministry of PAN RB. According to Nurhestitunggal and Muhlisin (2020), their research on simplifying the organizational structure and the policy of eliminating Echelon III and IV found that implementing bureaucratic reform has experienced some progress. However, its success is uncertain because indicators that reflect the bureaucracy's ability have yet to be achieved. Challenges that remain include institutional issues, organizational culture, apparatus professionalism, governance, and ethics in public services.

Bureaucratic reform has provided positive progress in public administration by achieving "small wins." However, more is needed to change the dominance of the Old Public Management Patronage model in the Indonesian bureaucracy. The theoretical importance of simplifying the bureaucratic structure can be seen from the incompatibility of its overly bureaucratic characteristics with the public administration paradigm and the current period of public sector governance reforms, including decentralization. Empirically, structural changes are needed to overcome the obstacles to improving the professionalism of the apparatus, which is reflected in the symptoms of plutocracy and consultocracy. Through restructuring as part of a comprehensive reform effort of the Indonesian bureaucracy, it is hoped that the bureaucracy's task can be more effective in designing programs that provide

direct benefits so that people can enjoy optimal services and development outcomes.

Bureaucratic reform, in general, is an essential agenda in improving and fixing the administration of government or administrative system, especially concerning institutional aspects (organization), management, and human resources of the apparatus (Haning, 2015). The purpose of bureaucratic reform is to rebuild public trust in the bureaucracy so that it can be good (Delly, 2014).

METHODOLOGY

This research uses a type of qualitative research. According to Creswell (2019), qualitative research explores and understands meaning in several individuals or groups of people who come from social problems. According to Miles et al. (2014), qualitative data is a source of broad descriptions and explains the processes within the local scope. With qualitative data, you can follow and understand the flow of events chronologically, assess cause and effect within the scope of people's minds, and obtain in-depth explanations. Qualitative data collection and analysis at this stage get a detailed description of the position, duties, and functions of Civil Servants who occupy positions as Functional Positions due to the position equalization policy.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The policy of equalizing positions is regulated in Government Regulation Number 17 of 2020, as amended by Government Regulation 11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management and Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation Number 17 of 2021 concerning Equalization of Administrative Positions into Functional Positions. Equalization of Administrative Positions into Functional Positions, from now on referred to as Position Equalization, is the appointment of Administrative Officials into Functional Positions through Adjustment / passing in equivalent functional positions whose purpose is to create a more dynamic and professional bureaucracy as an effort to increase effectiveness and efficiency to support the performance of government services to the public.

Based on the research, the position of functional positions resulting from the equalization of positions can be interpreted as the position of functional officials resulting from equalization, which describes the relationship between work units and work fields that have not changed. Coordination lines and work hierarchies still show partial and silo patterns. They work still in the corridors of their respective fields. There is no integration of work systems; collaboration is only limited to working on their respective roles and functions and then being delivered to the next work unit that works on the next stage of the work process. In addition, the functional officials resulting from the equalization policy need to recognize or even understand their roles, duties, and functions as functional officials. The first cause is implementing the equalization policy, which has a very short deadline of only six months. As a result, the preparation and formulation of the equalization policy could not be carried out thoroughly due to the limited time to consolidate, socialize, map, classify, and codify functional positions. This causes the resulting policy to be partially optimized

by the characteristics of the regional apparatus and the competence of its apparatus.

Until now, the Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency has not carried out activities such as socialization and assistance to introduce functional positions to functional officials resulting from equalization. This activity aims to give functional officials a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The absence of this activity has resulted in functional officials still needing help understanding their new roles in the organizational structure.

Then, when talking about the competence of civil servants, especially for civil servants who hold functional positions, based on the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform Number 1 of 2023 concerning Functional Positions, it is explained that each level of functional position has competency standards consisting of Technical Competence, Managerial Competence, and Socio-Cultural Competence. The instrument used to measure the extent to which civil servants' ability to meet these competency standards is through competency tests. Especially in BKPSDM North Padang Lawas Regency, all functional officials resulting from equalizing positions from the appointment process into functional positions have never taken and passed a competency test according to the competency standards that the Supervisory Agency has prepared.

Research Implications of Managerial Competence of Functional Position Civil Servants as a Result of Position Equalization Policy

The result of this research is the revelation of a fact and reality where there is a gap between the objectives, concepts and principles of the policy and the impact resulting from the policy and the residual results of the policy. The consequences of the results of the findings of this study will be presented in the form of arguments to be defended and tested for the level of validity and accuracy of the findings. The implication of this research is a coverage of aspects relevant to the research formulation, research objectives and research framework. The research implications can reveal the disparity between practice and policy concepts, because some of the findings can provide insights and other perspectives for practitioners and policy makers in formulating strategic plans and subsequent policy formulations. The following are some of the implications of research on the Managerial Competence of Civil Servants who occupy Functional Positions as a result of the Position Equalization Policy carried out at the North Padang Lawas Regency Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM).

Role, Function and Position of Functional Officials

Functional Officials as a result of the equalization policy still have the same role, function and position as when they were administrative officials. There is no significant change in the implementation of duties, functions and authorities, they are still dominant in managerial and operational types of work, have not touched at all to the area of assignment in accordance with their roles and functions as functional officials. Then, the functional officials resulting

from the equalization policy are unable to recognize, even understand their roles, duties and functions as functional officials. The first cause is the process of implementing the equalization policy, which has a very short deadline, which is only 6 months. As a result, the preparation and formulation of the equalization policy could not be carried out thoroughly due to the limited time to consolidate, socialize, map, classify, and codify functional positions. This causes the resulting policy to not be fully optimized in accordance with the characteristics of the regional apparatus and the competence of its apparatus.

The second cause is that until now, the Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency has not carried out activities such as socialization and assistance to introduce functional positions to functional officials resulting from equalization. This activity aims to provide functional officials with a deeper understanding of their roles and responsibilities. The absence of this activity has resulted in functional officials still facing difficulties in understanding their new roles in the organizational structure.

Civil Servants Who Are Not Competent as Functional Officials

From the results of data processing, it then enters the data presentation stage and then produces report data in the form of a report card on civil servant managerial competency skills. Based on the presentation of the report data, it is found that of the 6 (six) civil servants who occupy functional positions as a result of the position equalization policy at BKPSDM North Padang Lawas Regency, 2 (two) of them have achieved competency scores in the low category.

Competency Development and Career Development of Functional Officials as a Result of Equalization of Positions

Based on the provisions of Article 8 Paragraphs 2, 3 and 4 of Permenpan RB Number 17 of 2021 concerning Position Equalization, it states that, position equalization is carried out after participating in and passing the competency test carried out by the Government Agency concerned after coordinating with the Functional Position fostering agency. In the event that they do not take and do not pass the competency test, Administrative Officials can be transferred to other Functional Positions by the provisions of laws and regulations. Administrators, Supervisors, and implementing officials who are echelon V must have education following the requirements of the position no later than 4 (four) years after being appointed and inaugurated in a Functional Position.

Until the time of this research, there has not been any policy direction formulated by the North Padang Lawas Regency Government Agency through BKPSDM as the regional apparatus responsible for developing apparatus competencies, especially to facilitate and accommodate the need to attend technical training education for functional positions and competency tests. The effect of not accommodating functional officials to take part in training education and competency tests, can be projected that the future career of functional officials resulting from equalization at BKPSDM will be hampered, if the Regional Government Agency of North Padang Lawas Regency does not immediately allocate a budget, formulate a road map or strategic steps to

overcome problems regarding the competency development of equalized functional officials.

Accreditation of Work Products of Equalized Functional Officials

Every work product that is the result of the work of equalized functional officials at BKPSDM North Padang Lawas Regency is of doubtful accreditation. The principle of functional officials in carrying out work is based on the expertise, skills and competencies possessed and mastered. This ability is legally recognized through ownership of a certificate of competency. To obtain a certificate of competence, functional officials first take part in functional position training education and pass competency tests. It has been explained in the previous discussion, that none of the functional officials resulting from equalization of positions in BKPSDM North Padang Lawas Regency has a certificate of competence. This is because the functional officials resulting from the equalization of positions in BKPSDM have never attended training education and passed the competency test.

Therefore, it can be concluded that almost all work products and performance in the BKPSDM organization are carried out by people who do not have competence. Although the results of work products and performance can be said to be of good quality, it is unfortunate that these products do not have accreditation, because they are produced by components of people who do not have competency certificates.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This conclusion is the end of the process of researching the Competence of Functional Position Civil Servants as a result of the Position Equalization Policy carried out at BKPSDM North Padang Lawas Regency, presented in the form of a brief and concise description of the main findings that have relevance to the formulation of problems and the composition of the narrative that the results of data analysis and interpretation have guided.

Based on the results of the study, the author concludes that the position of functional officials as a result of equalizing positions describes a condition that has not changed at all both in the position before and after the implementation of the policy of simplifying the organizational structure and equalizing positions, the relationship between work units and between work fields has not changed, the lines of coordination and hierarchy of work are still patterned partially and silo.

FURTHER STUDY

They still work in the corridors of their respective fields. There is no integration of work systems; collaboration is only limited to working on their respective roles and functions and then submitting to the next work unit that works on the next stage of the work process. Organizational governance, supported by working groups that support each other and are connected based on networking, has yet to be realized. This is because, until now, the process of simplifying the bureaucracy is still in a state of adaptation and transition to transformation. The lesson that can be learned in implementing this bureaucratic

simplification policy is that an organizational model that previously had an established institutional system turned into a more complicated and confusing one after the equalization of position instruments and integrated work systems with other organizational units. Some conditions require adjustments and configuration processes in systems and ways of working, and technical regulations governing functional positions are gradually reduced and sustainable.

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