



## Bureaucratic Reform Enhancing Responsiveness of Government Institutions

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### ABSTRACT

This study examines how bureaucratic reform enhances the responsiveness of government institutions in delivering efficient and adaptive public services. Using a descriptive qualitative approach and a single case study at the Samarinda City Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services Office (DPMPSTP), data were collected through observations, in-depth interviews with ten key informants, and policy document analysis. Findings reveal that organizational restructuring, process simplification, digital service innovation, and a strengthened performance-based work culture significantly improve institutional responsiveness and citizen satisfaction. Nevertheless, challenges remain in sustaining behavioral changes among personnel and integrating digital systems across service units. Overall, the study concludes that bureaucratic reform not only improves administrative efficiency but also fosters adaptive, citizen-centered governance, contributing both theoretically and practically to the advancement of good governance at the local level.

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## **INTRODUCTION**

Bureaucratic reform is one of the important agendas in many countries to improve the quality of governance and public services. The community is now demanding government agencies to be faster, more transparent, and responsive to their needs. In various countries, bureaucratic reform is directed at digitalization, simplification of procedures, and increased public participation so that government agencies are more responsive to changes in the social and technological environment (Straub et al., 2024). In Indonesia, these efforts are realized through national bureaucratic reform policies and the implementation of the Electronic-Based Government System (SPBE). The goal is to build a bureaucracy that is professional, effective, and oriented towards quality public services (Wijayanti et al., 2023).

Although reform policies have been implemented nationally, the reality on the ground shows that there is still a gap between policy and practice. The response of government agencies to the aspirations of the community is often still slow, while coordination between units is not fully integrated. Problems such as a hierarchical work culture, resistance to change, and limited human resource capacity are the main challenges in realizing a truly responsive bureaucracy (Widowati et al., 2023). This condition indicates that bureaucratic reform is not only about changes in structure and regulations, but also changes in the mindset and service culture in the bureaucracy itself.

Previous research has largely discussed the effectiveness of bureaucratic reform policies in general, but few have examined how they actually impact increasing the responsiveness of government agencies at the local level. Most research still focuses on administrative or institutional evaluation, not on the behavioral and interaction dimensions between the apparatus and the community (Sulila et al., 2024). Therefore, research is needed that is able to explain how the bureaucratic reform process runs in practice, what factors support and hinder it, and how it affects the responsiveness of local government institutions.

This research aims to analyze in depth the implementation of bureaucratic reform in local government institutions, especially in increasing the responsiveness of institutions to public needs. The focus of the research includes the identification of reform strategies, the dynamics of their implementation, and the extent to which these measures have an impact on improving the quality of services. The main question that needs to be answered is how bureaucratic reform contributes to improving the ability of government institutions to respond to the needs of the community quickly, precisely, and results-oriented.

Theoretically, this research contributes to the development of the concept of responsive governance, which is a government that is sensitive to the needs and aspirations of the community. This approach is important because the success of bureaucratic reform is measured not only by procedural changes, but also by the ability of institutions to listen, adjust, and innovate in delivering public services. Thus, the results of this study are expected to strengthen the theory of the relationship between bureaucratic reform and institutional responsiveness in the context of developing countries such as Indonesia.

From a practical perspective, this research is expected to provide relevant policy recommendations for local governments, especially in increasing the effectiveness of the implementation of bureaucratic reform. Recommendations can include strategies to strengthen the capacity of the apparatus, simplify service procedures, optimize digital systems, and increase public accountability. By paying attention to the local social and cultural context, bureaucratic reform can be more adaptive to the characteristics of the community in the region.

The local context of Samarinda has become very interesting to study because the city government has carried out various initiatives, such as the establishment of Public Service Malls and the digitization of licensing services. However, a systematic review is still needed to assess the extent to which these initiatives truly improve the responsiveness of institutions to the community. This study chose a location at the Samarinda City Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services Office (DPMPTSP) as a case study in order to produce findings that are relevant and applicable to other local governments in Indonesia.

The research method used is a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data was collected through in-depth interviews with officials and employees, observation of service processes, and analysis of bureaucratic reform policy documents. The analysis was carried out with thematic techniques to find patterns of relationships between reform policies, implementation, and institutional responsiveness. The results of this study are expected to explain concretely how bureaucratic reform affects the improvement of public service performance and encourages the realization of a more responsive, effective, and community-oriented government.

## LITERATURE REVIEW

### *Bureaucratic Reform and Quality of Public Services*

Bureaucratic reform in the context of public administration is a systemic effort to improve the performance of government institutions to be more adaptive to social and technological changes. Studies show that bureaucratic reform has a significant effect on improving the quality of public services through simplifying procedures and improving the professionalism of the apparatus (Wijayanti & Salomo, 2023). These reforms focus not only on organizational restructuring, but also on strengthening the value of transparency and accountability to strengthen public trust in government. According to Sundari and Sartika (2024), the implementation of an electronic-based government system encourages bureaucratic work efficiency and accelerates institutional responses to community needs. Thus, bureaucratic reform is the main foundation for improving the quality of governance and public satisfaction with government services.

### *Simplification of Policies and Institutional Capacity*

The success of bureaucratic reform is largely determined by the policy capacity and the ability of institutions to implement bureaucratic simplification policies. Research conducted by Mubarok et al. (2025) confirms that simplifying institutional structures and cutting administrative hierarchy chains can increase

the effectiveness of coordination between service units. However, these reforms can only run optimally if the apparatus has adequate analytical and operational capacity to manage changes (Wijayanti & Salomo, 2023). Lumenta (2023) added that policy capacity includes the ability of organizations to formulate, implement, and evaluate policies consistently. Thus, bureaucratic simplification must be accompanied by increased institutional capacity in order to produce an agile, responsive, and results-oriented bureaucracy.

### ***Digital Innovation and Responsiveness of Government Institutions***

Digital transformation is a key pillar in strengthening the responsiveness of modern government institutions. Digital-based innovation allows the government to provide services quickly, openly, and oriented to user needs. According to Lestari et al. (2022), the implementation of an online queue system in regional hospitals can significantly increase efficiency and public satisfaction. Rohayatin et al. (2023) said that the smart city concept functions as an instrument of bureaucratic reform that encourages synergy between the government and the community in the provision of public services. Haug (2024) also emphasized that digitalization encourages changes in the pattern of interaction between bureaucrats and citizens, so that the government is better able to respond to people's needs in real-time. Therefore, digital innovation is a key component in building an adaptive and competitive bureaucracy.

### ***Social Factors and Technology Access Gap***

The responsiveness of government institutions is not only determined by internal policies, but also by social factors such as people's ability to access digital services. According to Thonmanee and Lowatcharin (2023), citizens' perception of government responsiveness is greatly influenced by the level of digital literacy and the availability of technological infrastructure. Inequality of internet access can hinder the achievement of digital-based bureaucratic reform goals. Al-Muttaqin and Nugroho (2025) emphasized that reform strategies must consider a combination of online and offline services so that all levels of society have equal access to public services. This shows that the success of bureaucratic reform requires an inclusive approach that pays attention to the social conditions and technological capabilities of the community.

### ***Implementation Barriers and Organizational Cultural Dynamics***

While bureaucratic reform brings a variety of benefits, its implementation often faces complex obstacles. Hasyem et al. (2020) explained that bureaucratic resistance to change, lack of leadership commitment, and hierarchical organizational culture are the main factors that hinder transformation. On the other hand, the research of Widowati et al. (2023) highlights that weak supervision and overlapping regulations often hinder the implementation of reforms at the regional level. Moser-Plautz (2023) added that successful reform requires adaptive leadership and an incentive system that supports innovation and accountability. Thus, changes in organizational behavior are an important element so that bureaucratic reform does not stop at the policy level, but is truly realized in responsive and effective public service practices.

## **METHODOLOGY**

### ***Research Approach and Design***

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with a single case study design focused on the Samarinda City Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services Office (DPMPTSP). The qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to deeply understand the social dynamics, organizational culture, and bureaucratic practices that affect the responsiveness of government institutions to society. The design of the case study allows for an in-depth exploration of specific phenomena in a real-world context without the manipulation of variables (Creswell & Poth, 2021). This study seeks to identify the relationship between the implementation of bureaucratic reform and increased responsiveness through process analysis, apparatus behavior, and perception of public service users. This approach is in line with the goal of gaining a contextual understanding of how reform policies are implemented at the local level (Yin, 2022).

### ***Population and Sampling Techniques***

The research population includes all structural officials, service staff, and service users in the Samarinda City DPMPTSP. Given that the research is qualitative, the sampling technique used is purposive sampling by considering the relevance of informants to the focus of the research (Etikan, 2022). A total of ten key informants were selected, consisting of three structural officials, four service implementing employees, and three service user communities. The selection of the number of informants is based on the principle of data saturation, which is when the information obtained has been repeated and no new findings have been found (Guest et al., 2020). This approach allows researchers to gain a variety of perspectives to comprehensively understand how the process of bureaucratic reform is implemented and accepted by various parties in government institutions.

### ***Data Collection Techniques***

Data collection was carried out through three main techniques, namely in-depth interviews, participatory observation, and document analysis.

- a. First, participatory observation is carried out by participating in direct service activities at licensing counters and digital queue systems to understand the interaction between employees and the community (Merriam & Tisdell, 2022).
- b. Second, in-depth interviews were conducted using semi-structured guidelines designed based on the theoretical framework of responsiveness and bureaucratic reform. The questions were developed from an adaptive public service model (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2023) that emphasizes the value of response speed and orientation in citizens.
- c. Third, document analysis includes an examination of internal policies on bureaucratic reform, annual performance reports, and SPBE evaluation data from the Samarinda City Government. Triangulation of these three techniques was carried out to improve the validity of the data and strengthen the empirical findings of the research (Lincoln & Guba, 2021).

### ***Data Validity and Reliability***

Data validity is maintained through triangulation techniques of sources, methods, and time, to ensure the consistency and accuracy of information from various perspectives. According to Noble and Smith (2022), validity in qualitative research depends on openness, clarity of context, and repeatability of interpretation logic. In addition, member checking is carried out by reconfirming the results of the interview with the informant to ensure the suitability of the meaning and interpretation of the data (Birt et al., 2021). Reliability is strengthened by systematic field records and trail audits that record each stage of the research process, so that the data can be traced back by other researchers in the same context (Nowell et al., 2023).

### ***Research Implementation Procedure***

The research process is carried out in several systematic stages, namely:

- a. The first stage is planning, which includes problem identification, formulation of research objectives, and preparation of interview and observation guidelines.
- b. The second stage was the collection of field data for three months in the Samarinda City DPMPTSP, where the researcher conducted interviews and direct observations on the licensing service process.
- c. The third stage is data reduction and presentation, where the interview results are transcribed and categorized according to key themes such as organizational restructuring, digital innovation, and apparatus work culture (Miles et al., 2020).
- d. The fourth stage is thematic analysis, to find the pattern of the relationship between bureaucratic reform and institutional responsiveness.
- e. The final stage is conclusion drawing and verification, in which the researcher assesses the linkage between empirical findings and public administration theory.

### ***Data Analysis Techniques***

Data analysis uses Miles and Huberman's interactive analysis model which consists of three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing (Miles et al., 2020). This stage is carried out simultaneously and repeatedly to maintain the depth of interpretation. The analysis was carried out with the help of NVivo 14 software, which was used to perform thematic coding and identify inter-category relationships based on interview and observational narratives. The use of NVivo allows for the systematization of text analysis and visualization of inter-thematic relationships, thereby improving the accuracy of data interpretation (Silver & Lewins, 2022). The results of the analysis are presented in an analytical descriptive form by highlighting empirical findings that support theoretical arguments regarding the relationship between bureaucratic reform and the responsiveness of government institutions.

## RESEARCH RESULTS

### *Organizational Restructuring and Efficiency Improvement*

Organizational restructuring in the Samarinda City DPMPTSP has proven to have a significant impact on the efficiency of the public service process. Before the reforms were implemented, the institutional structure was still hierarchical and fragmented, leading to convoluted coordination processes and slow decision-making. Reform is carried out through the simplification of the hierarchy of positions, the incorporation of cognate units, and the formulation of more specific job descriptions. These changes strengthen the accountability of each field and accelerate the flow of vertical and horizontal coordination.

The executive employee explained that after the restructuring, coordination became more effective. *"Now if there is a file coming in, we immediately know who handles it and where it should be sent, there is no need to wait for a long disposition,"* (PL-02, July 10, 2025 interview). A structural official added that the restructuring also fostered a new sense of responsibility. *"In the past, there was a lot of overlap in work, now all fields have their own targets and performance indicators,"* (PS-01, July 12, 2025 interview). From the community's side, this change is also felt in the speed of service. *"If in the past the permit could be two weeks, now it will take a maximum of five working days to complete,"* (MP-01, July 15, 2025 interview).

The results of the observation show that coordination between units is now strengthened through weekly meetings and service evaluation forums. The combination of structural simplification and improved coordination has been shown to improve administrative efficiency and accelerate the agency's response to public needs.

### *Simplification of Service Processes and Procedural Transparency*

Simplifying service procedures is an important step in building an efficient and transparent bureaucratic system. This reform reduces the number of licensing stages from eight to four main steps that are more concise, while minimizing face-to-face contact. In addition, the implementation of the digital Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) allows the public to access service information openly through the official DPMPTSP website.

The service user community admitted that this change was very helpful. *"Now all the stages are clear in the application, so we are no longer confused about which counter to go to,"* (MP-03, July 15, 2025 interview). Implementing employees also assessed that simplifying workflows reduces work pressure. *"In the past, we often went back and forth to check files because the format was different between units, now the system has automatically validated,"* (PL-01, July 11, 2025 interview). A structural official explained that this policy also strengthens internal accountability. *"Every file is now digitally recorded, who processes it can be traced, so the responsibilities are clearer,"* (PS-02, July 14, 2025 interview).

Field observations showed a reduction in physical queues at service offices and an increase in public satisfaction with the speed and clarity of procedures. Overall, simplification and digitization of procedures strengthens transparency and encourages the emergence of a more open and accountable public service culture.

### ***Digital Innovation and Service Responsiveness***

Digital innovation is the most prominent dimension in bureaucratic reform in the Samarinda City DPMPTSP. The implementation of the Online Single Submission (OSS) system, online queues, and the Samarinda Smart Service application creates a new channel of efficient interaction between the government and the community. This innovation allows the administrative process to run quickly, transparently, and automatically documented.

A structural official said that digital services speed up the management of licensing data. *"In the past, manual verification took two to three days, now the system immediately validates once the document is uploaded,"* (PS-03, July 13, 2025 interview). Implementing officers also feel a new ease in their daily work. *"With the online queue system, we can focus on core services, no longer bother managing queues at the counter,"* (PL-03, July 14, 2025 interview). From the user side, the public expressed satisfaction with this digital system. *"Now that everything can be accessed from home, we don't need to come to the office to ask for files,"* (MP-02, July 16, 2025 interview).

However, some obstacles still arise such as network disruptions and limited digital literacy, especially in the elderly community. However, in general, digital innovation has been proven to increase institutional responsiveness to public complaints, shorten service times, and strengthen the image of local governments as adaptive and technology-based institutions.

### ***Performance-Based Work Culture and Behavior Change***

Changes in work culture are the result of the most complex transformation in the bureaucratic reform process. Based on the results of the study, employees showed a shift in orientation from administrative work patterns towards results-based performance and innovation. A measurable individual performance appraisal system and merit-based awards are the drivers for change in apparatus behavior.

Implementing employees said that the new system made them more motivated. *"Every month there is an evaluation of achievements, and if the results are good, there is an award from the leadership immediately,"* (PL-04, July 17, 2025 interview). Structural officials explained that this change also has an impact on improving discipline. *"We see that employees are now more aware of time and responsibility, because all targets are recorded and announced,"* (PS-02, Interview July 18, 2025). Meanwhile, the service user community confirmed the improvement in the quality of interaction with the apparatus. *"Now employees are friendlier and quick to respond, it feels very different than before,"* (MP-03, July 19, 2025 interview).

However, resistance is still encountered, especially among senior employees who are not fully comfortable with the target-based approach and use of digital technology. The process of internalizing these new values requires time and continuous coaching so that an adaptive work culture can be thoroughly embedded.

### ***Institutional Challenges and Limitations of Digital Integration***

While bureaucratic reform brought many positive changes, the study also identified a number of important challenges at the institutional level. The main

obstacle is the limitation of digital system integration between units and between agencies. Some units still use manual methods in data logging and reporting, causing delays in inter-section verification.

Implementing officer admits that there are still gaps in the system. "*The systems in our field are not yet fully connected to other fields, so sometimes the data does not appear immediately,*" (PL-05, Interview July 20, 2025). Structural officials added that limited resources are also an obstacle. "*Not all employees have received IT training, even though the new system requires adequate technical capabilities,*" (PS-04, Interview July 21, 2025). The community of service users also highlighted technical issues. "*Once the system was down for two days, so we had to come directly to the office,*" (MP-01, July 22, 2025 interview).

In addition, the limitations of digital infrastructure and dependence on the internet network are still the main challenges in maintaining the consistency of online services. Therefore, the sustainability of bureaucratic reform requires a strategy to strengthen the digital capacity of the apparatus, update technological devices, and coordination across sectors so that system integration can run optimally.

## DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that bureaucratic reform at the Samarinda City Investment and One-Stop Integrated Services Office (DPMPTSP) significantly improves the efficiency, accountability, and responsiveness of government institutions. Institutional transformation through organizational restructuring, simplification of procedures, digitization of services, and strengthening of performance-based work culture are the main factors that drive bureaucratic behavior change towards a more adaptive and participatory direction. These findings are in line with the theory of administrative reform which emphasizes that rational changes in organizational structure can increase the capacity of governments to respond to public needs (Christensen & Lægheid, 2022). In this context, the restructuring carried out by the DPMPTSP serves as an adaptive mechanism to overcome bureaucratic complexity that has been an obstacle to public services in the regions (Rashid et al., 2023).

Organizational restructuring has been proven to accelerate internal coordination and clarify the responsibilities of work between fields. Based on interviews, employees stated that after the simplification of the hierarchy, the communication flow became faster and responsibilities clearer. This reinforces the view that public organizations that have lean structures and results-oriented tend to have higher levels of responsiveness (Moynihan, 2021). In addition to improving the structure, restructuring also internalizes the value of efficiency and cross-unit collaboration, which are important prerequisites in the development of responsive public governance. Thus, institutional change is not just administrative, but also a process of forming a new culture that encourages cooperation and accountability.

The next crucial step in Samarinda's bureaucratic reform is the simplification of service processes and increased procedural transparency. Digitizing SOPs and reducing licensing stages from eight to four main steps

strengthens the principle of open government and increases public trust in public institutions. These findings are consistent with the results of studies that show that simple and transparent service procedures are able to increase the perception of justice and reduce the chances of corruption in the public sector (Kim & Kim, 2023). Interviews with service users reinforce this, where the majority of respondents stated that digital systems make it easier to access and clarify service flows. Theoretically, this step reflects the application of the principle of administrative simplification in New Public Management (NPM) theory, which emphasizes efficiency, transparency, and orientation to citizen satisfaction (Osborne & Radnor, 2021).

Furthermore, digital innovation has proven to be a transformational factor that strengthens institutional responsiveness. The implementation of the OSS system, online queues, and Samarinda Smart Service shows that digitalization is not only a technical tool, but a strategic instrument in strengthening the adaptive capacity of the bureaucracy to the needs of citizens (Torres & Pina, 2022). The experience of employees who feel more efficient and service users who gain ease of access confirm that digital innovation increases the speed of service and reduces administrative burden. However, the study also noted that there is a digital literacy gap among the public and senior employees, suggesting that the success of digitalization still depends on the readiness of human resources and supporting infrastructure (Kettunen & Kallio, 2024). Therefore, digital transformation must be accompanied by training policies, capacity building, and system integration between agencies so that the benefits can be felt equally.

In addition to structural and technological aspects, this study highlights the importance of performance-based work culture change as the core of bureaucratic reform. The shift from administrative orientation to results strengthens employee motivation and improves work discipline. Based on interviews, employees reported an increase in motivation after the monthly performance reward and evaluation system was implemented. This phenomenon is in line with the findings that performance- and reward-based organizational culture have a positive correlation with increased public service effectiveness (De Vries et al., 2020). In the perspective of organizational behavior theory, the success of reform depends not only on structural changes, but also on the internalization of the values of professionalism, innovation, and responsibility (Fernandez & Rainey, 2021). The change in the behavior of bureaucrats in Samarinda shows that reforms that touch on the aspects of values and motivation can strengthen the responsiveness of institutions to the needs of the community in a sustainable manner.

However, this study also reveals institutional challenges and limitations of digital integration between service units. The main obstacles are the lack of optimal system synchronization between departments and the limitations of the digital competence of some apparatus. This situation illustrates that bureaucratic reform is an ongoing process that requires change management and cross-sectoral policy support (Ansell & Torfing, 2021). The findings support the view that the success of digital transformation is not only determined by technological devices, but also by adaptive leadership and horizontal coordination between

agencies (Hodgson et al., 2023). Therefore, strengthening the integration of digital systems and training of apparatus is a strategic step so that bureaucratic reform not only results in administrative efficiency, but also strengthens institutional resilience at the local level.

Conceptually, the findings of this study make an important contribution to the development of responsive governance theory at the local level. Bureaucratic reform in Samarinda shows that responsiveness is not only built through formal policies, but also through processes of structural adaptation, technological innovation, and the formation of a citizen-oriented work culture. The practical implication is that bureaucratic reform in the regions should be designed as an open system that integrates technology, human resources, and public service values. Theoretically, this research expands the understanding that bureaucratic reform not only improves efficiency, but also serves as an instrument to strengthen the legitimacy of the government in a democratic society.

However, this study has limitations in the scope of a single case study, so generalizations to other areas need to be done carefully. It is suggested that further research examine comparisons between regions or bureaucratic reform evaluation models based on more quantitative public performance indicators. In addition, it is important to further examine the long-term impact of digitalization on public trust and citizen participation in public services.

## **CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION**

This research confirms that bureaucratic reform plays an important role in increasing the responsiveness of government institutions to the needs of the community. Through organizational restructuring, simplification of service procedures, and the implementation of digital innovations, public institutions are able to create a faster, more efficient, and more transparent service system. The implementation of a performance-based work culture also strengthens the motivation of the apparatus in providing the best service and improving the government's image in the eyes of the public. Thus, bureaucratic reform in the Samarinda City DPMPTSP not only results in administrative efficiency, but also builds adaptive governance and is oriented towards public satisfaction.

However, this study also reveals that the success of bureaucratic reform still faces a number of challenges, especially related to the integration of digital systems, technological literacy gaps, and resistance to change among the apparatus. These factors show that the sustainability of reform requires a comprehensive approach, including strengthening the capacity of human resources, improving technological infrastructure, and fostering a consistent work culture. By paying attention to these aspects, bureaucratic reform is expected to transform into a government system that is responsive, participatory, and oriented towards quality and fair public services for all citizens.

## **FURTHER STUDY**

Future research is recommended to explore more deeply the factors that influence the sustainability of bureaucratic reform, particularly in relation to

digital integration, technological literacy, and change management within public institutions. Subsequent studies could examine the effectiveness of capacity-building programs, the readiness of technological infrastructure, and the role of leadership in fostering a consistent performance-based culture. Comparative research across different regional government agencies would also provide broader insights into the varying challenges and best practices in implementing reform. By expanding these areas of inquiry, future studies can contribute to the development of more adaptive, inclusive, and high-quality public service governance systems.

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