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Bureaucratic Simplification in Practice: Implementation, Organizational Impact, and Enabling Factors at the Organization Bureau of East Java Province, Indonesia

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A R T I C L E I N F O

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A B S T R A C T

Bureaucratic simplification is one of Indonesia's national priority programs, intended to cut hierarchical layers, professionalize civil servants, and speed up public services. East Java Province carried out the largest simplification among Indonesian provinces in 2021, covering 1,443 administrative positions, yet many local governments reported weaker performance afterward. This study examines how the policy was implemented at the Organization Bureau of the East Java Regional Secretariat, what impact it had on the Bureau's performance, and which factors supported or hindered it. A descriptive qualitative design was used, drawing on observation, interviews with purposively selected officials, and organizational documents from 2021 to 2024. The data were analyzed with the interactive model of Miles and Huberman and interpreted through Edwards III's implementation variables and Dunn's evaluation criteria. The Bureau complied with the five ministerial regulations that govern the policy, with one remaining shortcoming: one functional official had not completed mandatory training. Performance improved, as the provincial Bureaucratic Reform Index rose from 76.71 to 93.82 and 16 of 22 internal targets (72.7%) exceeded expectations, even though staff numbers fell from 42 to 34 before recovering to 38. Directive leadership, cross-stakeholder collaboration, a locally tailored work-system regulation, and a revised job map supported these results, whereas central budgeting and financial administration rules and limited training quotas inhibited them. Amending the two Ministry of Home Affairs regulations concerned would strengthen the outcomes.

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INTRODUCTION

Public bureaucracies in Indonesia have long been criticized for being slow, procedurally lengthy, and insufficiently professional, which discourages citizens and investors from using formal public services. The problem moved to the center of national policy when the President set a target of raising Indonesia's Ease of Doing Business ranking from 72nd to 40th by 2019. At that time the country still stood 144th among 190 economies on the starting-a-business indicator, where registering a company required 23 days and 11 procedures (Freddy & Saputri, 2018). A long span of control is widely seen as one cause, because every decision and every draft must pass through several hierarchical layers before it is approved, which makes important decisions long, complicated, and costly (Baharudin, 2023).

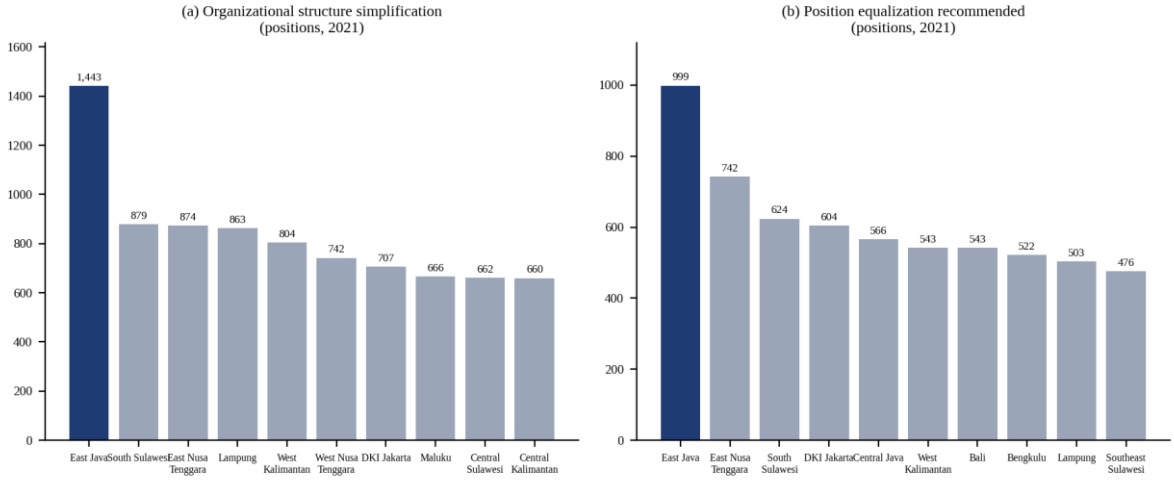
In response, the 2019-2024 government made bureaucratic simplification one of its five national priority programs, alongside human capital development, infrastructure, regulatory simplification, and economic transformation. The program reduces the administrative hierarchy from five layers to two and moves affected officials into functional positions. Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform (MoSAEBR) Number 25 of 2021 organizes the program into three consecutive stages: simplification of the organizational structure, equalization of positions, and adjustment of the work system (MoSAEBR, 2021). Central agencies completed the process in 2019, whereas regional governments began only at the end of 2021. Local governments manage 33 governmental affairs (32 concurrent affairs and one general affair), far more than the typical ministry, and in 2019 too few functional positions matched the task families of regional administrative offices.

The regional rollout was more complicated than the central one. Several letters from the Ministry of Home Affairs in 2019 and 2021 produced inconsistent interpretations of which functions could not be simplified, so MoSAEBR issued Circular Letter Number B/467/KT/01/2021 on 27 May 2021 (MoSAEBR, 2021). The circular sorted provincial government affairs into four models according to how many sections and subdivisions could remain. Health, finance, public works, and manpower, for example, kept two sections per division and one administrative subdivision, whereas affairs such as social services, education, and communication and informatics kept no sections at all. This design explains why provinces ended up with very different numbers of simplified positions, and it makes the East Java case, which was the largest, a demanding test of the policy.

East Java Province is the clearest example of how far this policy can reach. In 2021 it simplified the structure of 1,443 positions, consisting of 19 administrator positions (echelon III) and 1,424 supervisory positions (echelon IV), the largest number among all provinces and well above the second-ranked South Sulawesi with 879 positions (Figure 1a). It then equalized 999 positions into functional positions on 31 December 2021, namely 19 administrators into Middle Experts and 980 supervisors into Junior Experts, again the highest figure nationally, followed by East Nusa Tenggara with 742 (Figure 1b). The gap of 444 positions between the two stages arose because 50 supervisory proposals were

rejected by the central government and 394 supervisory positions in school units were vacant at the time.

Figure 1. Top ten provinces by simplified structures and equalized positions, 2021



Source: Organization Bureau of the East Java Regional Secretariat (2022), redrawn from Ministry of Home Affairs data

By 2024, however, many local governments in Indonesia felt that the policy was not working as intended. Reported problems included weaker unit performance when equalized officials were promoted, rotated, moved to structural posts, or retired and could not easily be replaced. Agencies also struggled to identify who now carried the duties of abolished positions. Equalized officials were demotivated because reward and career patterns remained undefined, some refused additional duties in budget planning and financial administration so that budget absorption declined, several functional positions did not match the task family of their unit, and many agencies implemented the policy in ways that deviated from MoSAEBR regulations. Similar tensions appear in other settings, such as the double burden reported at the Ministry of Home Affairs (Baharudin, 2023) and the education and competency mismatch among equalized officials in North Maluku (Tuasamu et al., 2023).

The research gap lies in what existing studies measure. Most of them examine one stage, usually equalization, or focus on legal grounds, career patterns, or compliance in a single institution, for example in West Java (Ristala & Rahmandika, 2022), Sidoarjo Regency (Kustanto & Nuviandra, 2023), the Ministry of Home Affairs (Baharudin, 2023), and the Ministry of Agriculture (Hanjani & Muslim, 2024). Among the studies reviewed for this research, none evaluated whether the three stages together preserved the performance of the organizational unit that was affected, and none did so for the East Java Provincial Government, the largest implementer of the policy. This question is urgent because the Provincial Government employs around 87,000 civil servants, according to the Bureau's informants, the largest regional workforce in the

country, and because the policy is to be maintained rather than reversed. The Organization Bureau of the Regional Secretariat is both the coordinator of the policy in East Java and one of the units affected by it, so its experience offers evidence for other regions. This study therefore aims to (1) describe how the policy was implemented in the Bureau, (2) analyze its impact on the Bureau's performance, and (3) identify the factors that supported and hindered implementation.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Public Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is the stage between the establishment of a policy and its consequences for the people it affects (Edwards, 1980). Edwards explained that implementation succeeds or fails through four interacting variables: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Communication requires that implementers know what they are expected to do and that policy goals reach the target group clearly and consistently, which reduces distortion. Resources, such as adequately skilled staff, information, authority, facilities, and finance, determine whether a well-communicated policy can actually be executed. Disposition concerns the commitment, honesty, and attitude of implementers, and implementation becomes ineffective when their perspective differs from that of the policymakers. Bureaucratic structure affects implementation through standard operating procedures (SOPs) and the fragmentation of responsibility across units. Tachjan (2006) complements this view by describing an implementation system as consisting of a program, a target group, and implementing units, and by stressing that an operational program must specify objectives, resource allocation, procedures, and standards.

Applied to bureaucratic simplification, the four variables take concrete forms. Communication concerns how clearly the three stages and their regulations are conveyed to the officials affected and how well the implementing unit coordinates with the central ministries. Resources include the number and competence of staff, the allowance budget, training quotas, and the digital facilities that allow fewer people to handle more tasks. Disposition refers to the willingness of leaders and equalized officials to accept new roles, and structure covers the SOPs, business processes, and budget codes that determine who does what. Because the policy abolishes a managerial layer, the structural variable changes the most, and the other three variables become more important for keeping the unit running.

Policy Evaluation Criteria

Policy evaluation produces information about the value or benefit of policy outcomes. Dunn (2018) proposes six criteria for this purpose. Effectiveness asks whether the intended result is achieved; efficiency concerns the effort required to produce a given level of effectiveness; adequacy asks how far that effectiveness satisfies needs, values, or opportunities; equity concerns the fair distribution of costs and benefits among groups; responsiveness asks how far the policy meets the preferences of particular groups; and appropriateness refers to the worth of policy objectives and the soundness of the assumptions behind them. In this study the criteria are applied by comparing implementation with

the norms, standards, procedures, and criteria set by the central government, and by comparing the Bureau's performance before and after the policy.

Dunn (2018) treats the six criteria as complementary rather than independent, since a policy may be effective yet inefficient, or efficient yet inequitable. This matters for bureaucratic simplification because a reduction of layers may save managerial posts while shifting burdens onto functional officials, or may raise the indicators of one unit while leaving others behind. The study therefore reads effectiveness and efficiency as questions about outputs relative to inputs, adequacy and appropriateness as questions about whether the policy solved the problems that motivated it, and equity and responsiveness as questions about who gained and who was heard.

Bureaucratic Simplification and Position Equalization

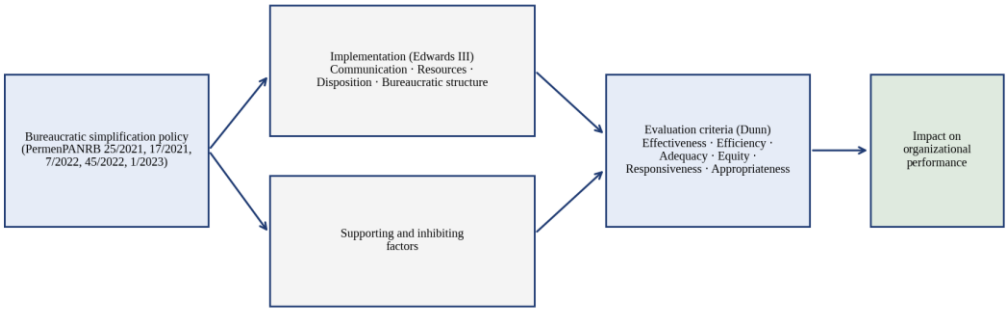
Bureaucratic simplification flattens the hierarchy so that decisions are taken faster and work is organized around results rather than structural boxes. Under MoSAEBR Regulation Number 17 of 2021, administrators are equalized into functional positions at the Middle Expert level, supervisors at the Junior Expert level, and implementers at the First Expert level, with mandatory functional training within a set period and an obligation to close any education gap (MoSAEBR, 2021a). Regulation Number 7 of 2022 then requires work systems that are collaborative, team-based, adaptive, and digitally supported, with business processes and SOPs reassigned from administrative officials to teams or individuals (MoSAEBR, 2022).

Two further regulations shape the day-to-day experience of equalized officials. MoSAEBR Regulation Number 45 of 2022 simplifies the nomenclature of implementer positions and removes task item lists so that implementers can be assigned flexibly (MoSAEBR, 2022), while Regulation Number 1 of 2023 on functional positions replaces accumulated credit points with credit points converted from annual performance ratings (MoSAEBR, 2023). Career development therefore depends on performance rather than on collecting administrative evidence, but only if officials have the education and training that their positions require. Local evidence shows why these matters: in Sidoarjo Regency about 30% of equalized functional officials were older than 53 years, which may affect their performance and career progression (Kustanto & Nuviandra, 2023).

Empirical studies show that outcomes depend heavily on how work is redesigned after the structure changes. Baharudin (2023) found that equalized officials in the Ministry of Home Affairs carried a double burden because they kept performing structural tasks while also collecting credit points. Tuasamu et al. (2023) reported weak effectiveness in North Maluku because many officials lacked the education and competency required by their new positions. Ristala and Rahmandika (2022) concluded that West Java needs agile organizations with cross-department collaboration, and Hanjani and Muslim (2024) argued that a performance culture must accompany structural change. Taken together, the three theoretical lenses guide this study, as shown in Figure 2: the policy is executed through Edwards' four variables, supporting and inhibiting factors

shape the process, and the results are judged with Dunn's criteria and with organizational performance.

Figure 2. Conceptual framework of the study



Source: Authors' elaboration

METHODOLOGY

This study used a descriptive qualitative design, which suits the aim of describing a policy in its natural setting and uncovering the values and impacts that numbers alone cannot reveal (Sugiyono, 2016). A qualitative approach was also preferred because the impact of a policy includes events that can be counted, such as staff numbers and index scores, and experiences that cannot, such as motivation, working relationships, and perceived fairness. The locus is the Organization Bureau of the East Java Regional Secretariat. It was chosen because the Bureau coordinates the formulation of bureaucratic simplification policy for the whole Provincial Government and therefore understands its philosophical, sociological, and juridical foundations, and because the Bureau was itself directly affected by the policy. The study covers the period from 2021, when structures were simplified and positions equalized, to 2024, with fieldwork completed in 2025.

Data were collected through observation, in-depth and guided interviews, and documentation. Observation recorded how teams actually organize their work and use digital applications. Two types of interviews were combined: in-depth interviews without a fixed guide, which allowed informants to describe experiences freely, and guided interviews with prepared questions on communication, resources, disposition, structure, impact, and obstacles, which kept the discussion focused on the research aims. Informants were selected purposively according to their mastery of the problem, their access to data, and their willingness to provide complete information. They included the Head of the Bureau, the heads of the three divisions (Institutional and Job Analysis, Governance Procedures, and Bureaucratic Reform and Performance Accountability), the head of the General Affairs and Personnel Subdivision, team leaders, team members who serve as implementers or functional officials, and former supervisors who were equalized into functional positions. Documents comprised ministerial and gubernatorial regulations, job maps, performance reports, and the Bureau's data for 2021-2024.

The data were analyzed with the interactive model of Miles and Huberman (1994), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Interview transcripts and documents were reduced into themes that correspond to the three research questions, displayed as narrative and tables, and verified against other sources before conclusions were drawn; statements from interviews were compared with regulations and performance documents, and tentative conclusions were revised when they were not supported by consistent evidence. The policy was assessed against the norms, standards, procedures, and criteria of the five MoSAEBR regulations, and impact was assessed by comparing performance indicators from 2021, the year before the policy took effect, with those from 2022 to 2024. Findings were then interpreted using the variables of Edwards (1980) and the criteria of Dunn (2018).

RESEARCH RESULT

Policy implementation

The Bureau carried out simplification of its structure in line with MoSAEBR Regulation Number 25 of 2021. Of its nine supervisory positions, eight were abolished and one, the Head of the General Affairs and Personnel Subdivision, was retained because it performs administrative functions, while the Head of the Bureau and the division heads were not affected. The abolished positions had analytical, coordinating, and policy-preparation tasks that match functional positions. On 31 December 2021 the eight former supervisors were equalized into Policy Analyst (Junior Expert) positions after a desk review with the Regional Civil Service Agency in June 2021. No education gap existed for any of them, and all eight positions matched the task family of their former posts.

One requirement was not fully met. Functional training had to be completed within the period set by the regulation, yet only one of the eight officials completed it on time, two did so after the deadline, one had not yet attended, and four were exempt because they had been promoted or moved to administrative posts. Bureau informants explained that they hold neither the authority nor the budget for human resource development, which lies with the Provincial Human Resource Development Agency, and that the training quota was limited.

Table 2. Status of mandatory functional training for the eight equalized officials

Status	Officials	Explanation
Completed on time	1	Attended in 2024
Completed after the deadline	2	Attended in 2025
Not yet completed	1	Limited training quota
Exempt	4	Promoted to administrator or moved to a supervisory post

Source: Organization Bureau of the East Java Regional Secretariat (2024)

The work system was regulated through East Java Governor Regulation Number 92 of 2023 (Governor of East Java, 2023). Work is organized in teams, and team leaders are chosen for managerial, socio-cultural, and technical competence rather than seniority. The Head of the Bureau acts as performance appraiser and delegates the appraisal of functional officials and implementers to division heads. Business process maps were revised in 2022 and SOPs in 2023 so that the owner of each activity is a team or individual instead of a supervisor. More than ten in-house and shared applications support digital administration, including the electronic correspondence system, the performance accountability application, and the public satisfaction survey application. The Bureau also followed Regulation Number 45 of 2022 on implementer positions (MoSAEBR, 2022a) and Regulation Number 1 of 2023 (MoSAEBR, 2023), which converts credit points from accumulation to performance ratings (150% for very good, 100% for good, 75% for needs improvement, 50% for poor, and 25% for very poor).

Digitalization changed how the Bureau handles correspondence and reporting. The applications cover electronic numbering of official letters, travel administration, archive documentation, job and institutional arrangement, integrated performance assessment, the BerAKHLAK core values, performance accountability reporting, public service innovation, and the public satisfaction survey. One informant explained that officials can now send and receive dispositions and revise draft documents from anywhere, so frequent travel to coordinate with 38 regencies and cities no longer delays the preparation of official documents. Business processes and SOPs were revised in two steps: in 2022 the Bureau held desks with all regional agencies to reassign the owner of each activity from a supervisor to a coordinator, team, or individual, and in 2023 it did the same for SOPs.

Impact on performance

Staff numbers declined after the policy, from 42 civil servants in 2021 to 39 in 2022 and 34 in 2023, and then rose to 38 in 2024 when five contract-based government employees (PPPK) were recruited. The Bureau's budget requirement, however, grew from IDR 15.22 billion to IDR 19.82 billion (30.3%) over the same period, because new tasks were assigned. These included an expanded Bureaucratic Reform Index assessment (from eight areas to 30 indicators plus thematic areas), job evaluation for all civil servants in the province, calculation of performance allowances, and the Governor's directive to restructure 1,071 work units.

Performance indicators that the Bureau helps to influence rose between 2021 and 2024 (Table 1 and Figure 3). The Bureaucratic Reform Index increased from 76.71 to 93.82, including a jump of 13.26 points in 2024, the highest in the history of the assessment since 2014. The public satisfaction score rose from 85.44 to 89.51 and the institutional composite index from 69.59 to 82.66. The Public Service Index dipped in 2023 (4.36) because the number of evaluated units was increased from two to four, and it recovered to 4.63 in 2024. Internally, 16 of the Bureau's 22 performance targets (72.7%) exceeded expectations and six (27.3%) met them. Since measurement began in 2023, 50% of the targets of the

Institutional and Job Analysis Division exceeded expectations, 40% met them, and 10% fell short.

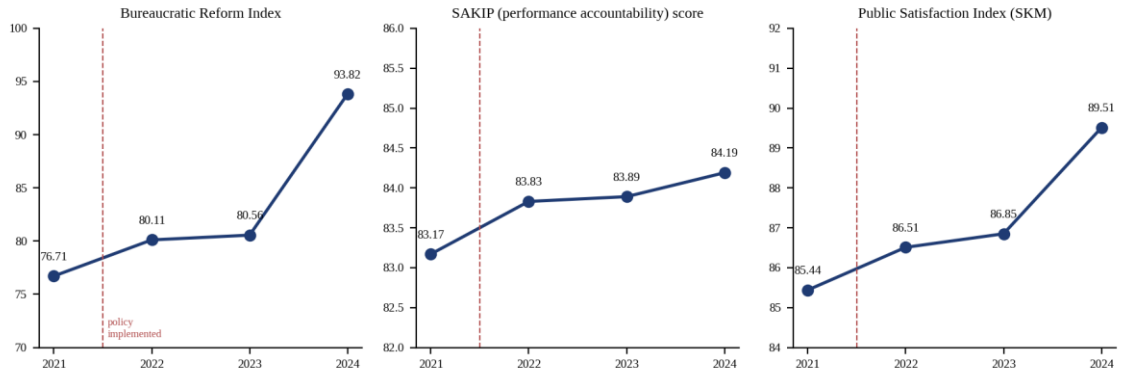
Other indicators moved in the same direction. The public service compliance score increased from 75.08 in 2021 to 92.08 in 2024, and the BerAKHLAK Index, which was first calculated in 2022, rose from 61.2 to 84.7 and moved from the category of fairly healthy to healthy. The institutional composite index changed from the opinion of effective and accommodative in 2021-2023 to very effective and very accommodative in 2024, and the maturity level of regional agencies rose from 41 to 46. The SAKIP score increased only slightly, from 83.17 to 84.19, so the performance accountability result is stable rather than dramatically improved.

Table 1. Performance indicators of the East Java Provincial Government influenced by the Bureau, 2021-2024

Indicator	2021	2022	2023	2024
Bureaucratic Reform Index	76.71	80.11	80.56	93.82
SAKIP score (performance accountability)	83.17	83.83	83.89	84.19
Public Satisfaction Survey (SKM)	85.44	86.51	86.85	89.51
Public Service Index (scale 1-5)	4.34	4.58	4.36	4.63
Public service compliance score	75.08	79.35	88.81	92.08
BerAKHLAK Index (civil service core values)	n/a	61.2	61.4	84.7
Institutional Composite Index	69.59	69.59	73.88	82.66

Source: Organization Bureau of the East Java Regional Secretariat (2024)

Figure 3. Trends of three key performance indicators, 2021-2024



Source: Organization Bureau of the East Java Regional Secretariat (2024)

Professionalism also increased. In 2024 three equalized Junior Experts and five implementers pursued master's degrees, and one implementer moved from a diploma to a bachelor's program, motivated by the requirement of a master's degree for promotion to Middle Expert. A negative effect appeared in 2022-2023: all nine supervisors in 2021 had been promoted from implementer positions, so abolishing these posts closed the career path of implementers and weakened internal succession. In 2024 the Bureau answered by revising its job map, which created demand for two Middle Experts, eight Junior Experts, and 16 First Experts and opened career opportunities for 24 implementers, four First Experts, and four Junior Experts.

The Bureau further reported that new employees recruited between 2022 and 2024 adapted quickly to its work culture, and that staff coped with changes of leadership style, from an emphasis on information technology to an emphasis on structured and measurable work, without serious conflict. Team leaders are appointed by the Head of the Bureau and division heads on the basis of competence. A team leader ideally holds a Junior Expert position at job class 9, but when the best candidate is a functional official at class 8 or an implementer at class 6 or 7, the person receives an allowance that brings take-home pay close to that of class 9. Performance is reviewed every three months, every six months, and annually, and no team leader has had to be replaced because of unmet targets.

Supporting and inhibiting factors

Six factors supported implementation: directive leadership that schedules mandatory and flexible activities according to deadlines and workload; intensive cross-stakeholder collaboration, often at the penta-helix level; a comprehensive work-system regulation that reflects local wisdom; the adaptive capacity of civil servants; quarterly, semiannual, and annual performance monitoring; and the revised job map. Three factors hindered it. First, Ministry of Home Affairs Regulation Number 90 of 2019 on budget planning (Minister of Home Affairs, 2019) still requires separate sub-activity codes, so teams cannot move funds across sub-activities that previously belonged to different supervisors. Second, Regulation Number 77 of 2020 on financial administration (Minister of Home Affairs, 2020) still requires managerial officials to serve as budget users' authorities. Third, the budget for functional training was limited.

The budgeting rule illustrates the inhibiting factors well. Before simplification, the Institutional and Job Analysis Division had two sub-activities, one for arranging provincial agencies and one for guiding district and city institutions, each managed by a different supervisor. After simplification the division wanted to treat them as one body of work, but the planning regulation still requires both codes, so funds cannot be moved between them even when one is short. The Bureau consulted the Regional Development Planning Agency about merging the codes, but the request was refused. For training, informants stated that the quota allowed only one equalized official to attend in 2024 and two in 2025, which leaves one official outstanding and may delay promotion to a higher functional level.

DISCUSSION

Viewed through Dunn's (2018) criteria, the results indicate a largely successful policy. On effectiveness, the Bureau met the requirements of all five MoSAEBR regulations except one training obligation. This differs from the situations reported elsewhere. In North Maluku many equalized officials lacked the required education (Tuasamu et al., 2023), whereas in the Bureau every official met the education requirement and all positions matched their task families because the choice of functional positions was checked in advance with the Regional Civil Service Agency. The Bureau's regulation also treats the role of team leader as an additional duty that carries an allowance and appraisal priority, which probably reduces the double burden that Baharudin (2023) described as officials who are functional in title but structural in practice.

On efficiency, the Bureau lost eight of 42 staff between 2021 and 2023 yet raised its indicators. Informants explained that flexible allocation of staff across teams and a timeline that avoids peaks of workload allowed more output from fewer people, and that digital applications made it possible to disposition and revise drafts from any location. The growth of the budget does not contradict this interpretation, because it followed the added tasks rather than the policy itself. On adequacy, the policy addressed the problems the Bureau faced before 2021, namely tasks divided into rigid compartments, uncertain succession for supervisory posts, and weak motivation to study. The career stagnation of implementers, which the policy created, was handled within two years by the job map revision, so the response matched the problem.

The temporary negative impact deserves attention because it is the most common concern in the literature on equalization. The abolition of supervisory posts closed the promotion route for implementers and increased the risk that supervisory vacancies would be filled from outside the Bureau. Before 2021, three civil servants from other bureaus were appointed as subdivision heads during five years, and they needed time to learn the unit's work. After simplification, team leaders had to come from the unit that owns the performance target, which improves succession and shortens adaptation. This finding supports the view that the career consequences of equalization can be managed when the organization analyzes jobs and workload and updates its job map (Kustanto & Nuviandra, 2023).

On equity, improvements were seen in all divisions, not only one or two, and study permits were granted equally. Regarding responsiveness, team leaders chosen by competence rather than age or seniority gained respect from team members, and the Bureau issued the work-system regulation and revised the job map quickly after problems appeared. Regarding appropriateness, the comparison between 2021 and 2024 shows clear gains. Even so, these indicators are measured at provincial level and are influenced by many other actors, and no comparison group is available. The gains are therefore associated with, rather than proven to be caused by, bureaucratic simplification.

The Edwards (1980) variables help to explain why the Bureau succeeded. Communication was strong because the Bureau, as policy coordinator, held desks with all regional agencies and drafted its work-system regulation together with the Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform, the Ministry of Home Affairs, and provincial agencies. Resources were adequate in human terms, since placements followed a job map based on job and workload analysis, but training funds were scarce. Disposition was favorable because of the political will of the Governor, the Vice Governor, and the Regional Secretary, and because the Bureau leadership directed rather than merely supervised. Bureaucratic structure changed through new business processes and SOPs, while fragmentation persisted in the central budgeting rules that still lock teams into sub-activity codes. This shows that a local organization can adapt its internal work system, but cannot fully deliver the flexibility the policy promises while higher-level regulations remain unchanged.

A further implication is that disposition and structure can partly compensate for scarce resources. The Bureau did not receive more staff, yet its leader's reorganized teams around work targets, distributed staff according to workload, and monitored results regularly. This is consistent with the argument that simplification works when the organization uses the freedom it gains from flatter structures to build collaborative teams, and not when it merely abolishes posts (Hanjani & Muslim, 2024). It also suggests that regions where performance fell after simplification may have lacked such deliberate redesign, although this study cannot test that proposition directly.

These findings agree with studies that stress collaboration and performance culture as conditions for success (Hanjani & Muslim, 2024; Ristala & Rahmandika, 2022) and with the view that career patterns after equalization need deliberate management (Kustanto & Nuviandra, 2023). They also suggest that the double burden and competence mismatch reported in other institutions are not inevitable but depend on design choices. The main limitations are that the study covers one bureau, relies on documents provided by the Bureau itself, and cannot isolate the effect of the policy from other influences.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The bureaucratic simplification policy at the Organization Bureau of the East Java Regional Secretariat has been implemented in accordance with the norms, standards, procedures, and criteria of the central government, with one exception: one equalized official has not completed functional training. The policy had a positive impact on performance and professionalism, shown by higher reform, public satisfaction, and institutional indices and by 72.7% of internal targets exceeding expectations despite fewer staff, with the temporary career stagnation of implementers resolved through the 2024 job map revision. The positive impact was also visible in professionalism, because equalized officials and implementers began to pursue higher formal education. Leadership with political will, collaboration, a locally tailored work-system regulation, an evidence-based job map, and routine monitoring supported this success, while Ministry of Home Affairs Regulations Number 90 of 2019 and Number 77 of 2020 and limited training budgets hindered it.

The Bureau should maintain the current structure rather than return to supervisory positions, encourage knowledge sharing among divisions and teams to strengthen technical competence, and ensure that the remaining official attends functional training immediately. The Provincial Government should coordinate with the Ministry of Home Affairs so that Regulations Number 90 of 2019 and Number 77 of 2020 are amended to accommodate team-based work, for instance by removing sub-activity compartments and allowing non-managerial officials to hold budget-related authority. Other regions can use the Bureau's experience in job mapping, selecting team leaders by competence, and designing incentives as a reference, while the central government should ensure that quotas and budgets for functional training keep pace with the number of officials equalized.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Future research should compare several regional secretariats or agencies with different outcomes to test which design choices explain success, use mixed methods that combine panel performance data with surveys of equalized officials, extend the observation period beyond 2024 to see whether the gains persist, and include the views of public service users to verify whether better indices translate into better service experience.

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