

Redesigning Bureaucracy as a Governmental Strategy for Enhancing Public Service Effectiveness

Mujahidin * , and Fanila Kasmita Kusuma 

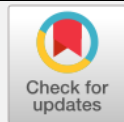
Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, Sumedang Regency, West Java Province, 45363, Indonesia

* Corresponding Author: mujahidin@ipdn.ac.id

ARTICLE INFO

Publication Info:

Research Article



How to cite:

Mujahidin, M., & Kusuma, F. K. (2025). Redesigning Bureaucracy as a Governmental Strategy for Enhancing Public Service Effectiveness. *Society*, 13(1), 803–817.

DOI: [10.33019/society.v13i1.766](https://doi.org/10.33019/society.v13i1.766)

Copyright © 2025. Owned by author (s), published by Society.

OPEN  ACCESS



This is an open-access article.
License: Attribution-NonCommercial-ShareAlike (CC BY-NC-SA)

Received: January 8, 2025;

Accepted: March 28, 2025;

Published: April 3, 2025;

ABSTRACT

This study investigates Indonesia's bureaucratic redesign as a strategic response to enhance public service effectiveness in the post-decentralization and post-pandemic era. Drawing on a qualitative approach and literature-based analysis, the research explores four interrelated dimensions: organizational structure reform, digital transformation (SPBE), adaptive work culture, and post-pandemic governance strategies. Findings indicate that while regulatory frameworks such as PermenPAN-RB No.28/2019 and SPBE initiatives provide formal direction, their implementation is shaped by institutional capacity, cultural alignment, and leadership commitment. Structural reforms often fall short due to insufficient capacity-building and performance incentives, while digital initiatives reveal spatial inequality and interoperability challenges. The adoption of adaptive cultural values, notably through the BerAKHLAK framework, shows promise but remains uneven. Similarly, hybrid service models introduced during the pandemic highlight Indonesia's strategic responsiveness, yet their impact varies across regions. The study offers a synthesized analysis combining empirical findings and theoretical insights, emphasizing the need for coherent, context-sensitive reforms that integrate structural, digital, and cultural components. This research contributes to public administration scholarship by reframing bureaucratic transformation as both a technical and political process requiring iterative adaptation, inclusive governance, and long-term institutional learning.

Keywords: Adaptive Organizational Culture; Bureaucratic Redesign; Digital Transformation; Governmental Strategy; Public Service Delivery

1. Introduction

The effectiveness of public service delivery is a critical indicator of a government's responsiveness and accountability to its citizens. However, bureaucracy, widely regarded as the primary institutional mechanism for public service provision, is frequently perceived as slow, rigid, and inadequately responsive to the changing demands of society and the complexities of the contemporary era (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2007; Dwiyanto, 2006; Hughes, 2018). Traditional bureaucratic structures, characterized by hierarchical rigidity and procedural formalism, are often identified as key impediments to delivering fast, accurate, and citizen-centered public services (Olsen, 2006; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Addressing these challenges requires a transformative approach in the form of bureaucratic redesign, involving strategic and comprehensive restructuring of institutional frameworks, work processes, and organizational culture (Chandler, 2014).

According to the Lembaga Administrasi Negara (LAN), only approximately 38% of Indonesia's 514 regencies and municipalities meet the minimum standards for public service delivery, measured by indicators such as speed, reliability, and citizen satisfaction, highlighting significant deficiencies in service performance (Lembaga Administrasi Negara Republik Indonesia, 2022). Furthermore, the 2021 Annual Report of the Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia recorded 7,186 public service complaints, with the most frequent issues involving delays, procedural inconsistencies, and insufficient transparency (Ombudsman Republik Indonesia, 2021). These findings underscore persistent inefficiencies in the bureaucratic system, indicating that it has yet to deliver inclusive and high-quality public services effectively.

Bureaucratic transformation cannot rely solely on administrative or structural reform. Such measures tend to be normative and often fail to improve service outcomes (Hughes, 2018) significantly. Therefore, as a governmental strategy, bureaucratic redesign must aim to establish a more adaptive, transparent, and results-oriented system consistent with the principles of New Public Management (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Significantly, bureaucratic transformation should not be reduced to structural downsizing or the digitization of procedures. Instead, it must be conceptualized as a strategic endeavor integrating technological innovation, service-oriented work culture, and effective change management (Indrajit, 2006).

In the context of post-pandemic recovery and accelerated digital transformation, the imperative for bureaucratic redesign has become more urgent. Governments are expected to respond reactively to crises and develop long-term strategies that sustain effective public service delivery. This aligns with Lewin's model of organizational change, comprising the stages of unfreezing, changing, and refreezing (Lewin, 1947), as well as with Mintzberg's view of governmental strategy as an interplay between deliberate and emergent processes (Mintzberg, 1994).

Beyond internal bureaucratic constraints, public expectations around service quality have also shifted. In an era of increased information transparency and digital democratization, citizens expect services to be rapid but also accountable, transparent, and responsive to real-time needs. This societal evolution reinforces the need to reconceptualize bureaucracy as a participatory and adaptive institution. Accordingly, the success of public service delivery today hinges on the technical competence of civil servants and the institutional capacity of government to respond inclusively and dynamically to evolving social conditions.

Globally, numerous countries have restructured their bureaucracies to meet evolving governance demands. In Scandinavia, particularly Norway, significant advances in digital government have enhanced administrative agility, interoperability, and citizen-centered service delivery. According to the OECD, Norway has implemented widespread use of e-ID systems,

digital mailboxes, one-stop service portals, and shared data registries, all of which contribute to higher citizen satisfaction and administrative efficiency (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023). The 2023 review further confirms Norway's position among the top performers in the OECD Digital Government Index, underscoring its continued leadership in public sector digital transformation.

In contrast, Indonesia's decentralized administrative framework presents substantial challenges. While decentralization has expanded local autonomy, it has led to regulatory overlap, fragmented authority, and uneven regional digital capacity (Schulze & Sjahrir, 2014). These structural barriers have constrained coherent service delivery and complicated efforts to implement integrated bureaucratic reforms. As a result, Indonesia's bureaucratic redesign initiatives must go beyond internal modernization to include regulatory harmonization, institutional capacity-building at the local level, and more equitable access to digital infrastructure (Schulze & Sjahrir, 2014).

Despite these efforts, bureaucratic redesign initiatives in Indonesia often encounter persistent implementation barriers. These include limited political commitment, internal resistance to reform, and insufficient human resource capacity to manage large-scale organizational change. A more strategic and integrated approach is thus essential, aligning bureaucratic redesign with broader systems of change management, including regulatory reform, transformational leadership, and adaptive governance models.

While bureaucratic reform has been the focus of extensive scholarship, most studies have concentrated on structural and administrative aspects rather than examining the strategic dimensions of bureaucratic redesign within governance frameworks. Mansuri and Rao demonstrate that despite widespread implementation of participatory and decentralization initiatives, these reforms often fail to align with broader governmental strategies, resulting in fragmented and episodic interventions (Mansuri & Rao, 2013). Likewise, Moynihan critiques performance-based reforms such as "managing for results," arguing that they frequently lack strategic integration, long-term orientation, and stakeholder engagement, limiting their effectiveness (Moynihan, 2006).

Similarly, scholarship on New Public Management emphasizes efficiency and decentralization (Hughes, 2018; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011), but tends to overlook contemporary governance challenges' complex, adaptive, and political nature. Meanwhile, studies on digital government often focus on the technical implementation of information systems without embedding digital transformation efforts into a coherent and strategic bureaucratic design (Gil-Garcia, 2013; Indrajit, 2006).

This study addresses that gap by adopting an integrative framework that brings together perspectives on structural reform, governmental strategy, and citizen-oriented service delivery. In contrast to previous research focusing on internal bureaucratic adjustments or digital interventions, this study conceptualizes bureaucratic redesign as a strategic instrument for administrative and political governance. The primary aim is to establish a clear link between redesign strategies and key performance dimensions of public service: speed, accuracy, citizen satisfaction, and accessibility. By doing so, this research contributes theoretically and practically to developing a context-specific and operational bureaucratic model suited to Indonesia's governance landscape.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Bureaucratic Theory and Its Contemporary Relevance in Public Service Reform

The theoretical foundation of this study draws upon Max Weber's classical model of bureaucracy, which conceptualizes an ideal administrative system based on hierarchical authority, specialization, codified procedures, and impersonality (Weber, 1947). This model was intended to ensure legal-rational legitimacy, administrative predictability, and institutional stability. Weberian principles continue to inform modern public bureaucracies in many respects, particularly concerning procedural regularity, role clarity, and accountability mechanisms (Beetham, 1996).

Nevertheless, contemporary public administration scholarship has identified critical limitations in applying Weberian bureaucracy to dynamic governance environments. As demands for transparency, efficiency, and citizen-centric service delivery intensify, bureaucratic systems grounded in rigid hierarchies and procedural formalism are increasingly seen as barriers to innovation, responsiveness, and adaptive capacity (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). The emphasis on rule-bound behavior and centralized control often inhibits agile decision-making, especially during crises or in decentralized administrative settings (Moynihan & Landuyt, 2009).

Empirical studies on reform in developing countries, including Indonesia, emphasize the necessity of moving beyond traditional structural adjustments toward integrative approaches incorporating digital governance, cross-sector collaboration, and responsive public management (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023; Schulze & Sjahrir, 2014). These paradigms challenge the classical Weberian model by promoting flexibility, decentralization, and outcome-oriented performance metrics. Afrilia et al. provide empirical evidence from Indonesian municipalities showing that digital innovation significantly enhances transparency, accelerates service delivery, and fosters citizen participation (Afrilia et al., 2024

). However, the success of these initiatives is contingent upon leadership commitment, adequate digital infrastructure, and enhanced human resource capacity.

This study builds upon and extends such perspectives by conceptualizing bureaucratic redesign not merely as an administrative or structural reform, but as a strategic governmental initiative that aligns with both New Public Management (NPM) and post-NPM paradigms (Christensen et al., 2007; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Rather than treating bureaucracy as a fixed institutional apparatus, this research reinterprets it as a dynamic and evolving system shaped by sociopolitical demands, technological change, and shifting governance logics.

A reconsideration of Weberian principles allows this study to propose an integrative framework for bureaucratic redesign. This framework preserves the normative strengths of classical theory, such as institutional integrity and rule-based accountability, while responding to its limitations through context-sensitive, innovation-oriented reform strategies. This theoretical lens is a basis for examining how strategic bureaucratic transformation can advance public service delivery quality, responsiveness, and inclusiveness within Indonesia's complex and decentralized administrative landscape.

2.2. Managing Institutional Resistance: Insights from Organizational Change Theory

Resistance to reform is widely recognized as a key barrier in bureaucratic transformation. Kurt Lewin's three-stage model, unfreezing, changing, and refreezing, continues to be a foundational framework for guiding how public sector reforms should be planned and integrated into institutional routines (Lewin, 1947).

In Indonesia, the challenge of transforming large bureaucratic structures is well documented. The country's reform efforts have struggled to achieve "world-class" public service standards, mainly due to internal resistance within entrenched institutional logics (Turner et al., 2022). This situation reflects the unfreezing stage in Lewin's model, where disrupting status quo routines is necessary to create momentum for change.

Further, public sector change management research underscores the importance of leadership and credible change agents in enabling institutional transformation. A systematic review by Hussain et al. emphasizes that transformational leadership and participatory employee involvement are essential in mobilizing behavioral shifts during organizational transitions (Hussain et al., 2018). Without these enablers, reform initiatives often remain superficial, yielding little impact on long-term institutional performance.

Finally, institutionalizing change, the refreezing phase, requires mechanisms that sustain newly introduced practices, such as performance-based incentives, accountability structures, and leadership continuity. Although less explored in the Indonesian context, reform setbacks are common when these institutional reinforcements are absent, often resulting in a regression to past routines (Deviana & Hendarsjah, 2023; Prasojo et al., 2021).

This study argues that bureaucratic redesign must address formal structures and the social and behavioral dynamics that shape how change is internalized and sustained across public institutions. It applies Lewin's theoretical model to the empirical context of Indonesian bureaucracy.

2.3. Performance-Oriented Bureaucratic Reform: Insights from New Public Management

The discourse on bureaucratic reform has been significantly shaped by the emergence of the New Public Management (NPM) paradigm, which promotes performance, efficiency, and customer-oriented service delivery as alternatives to traditional bureaucratic rigidity (CÔTÉ, 1999; Hood, 1991; Moran, 2016). Within the Indonesian context, post-decentralization reforms have adopted several NPM tools, particularly in the use of performance indicators and service charters to monitor institutional accountability (Dwiyanto, 2006; Turner et al., 2022).

Empirical studies demonstrate that NPM-inspired reforms, particularly those led by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (KemenPAN-RB) through the Performance Accountability System (SAKIP), have enhanced reporting mechanisms and promoted measurable outputs (Salomo & Rahmayanti, 2023; Setiawan et al., 2022). However, these reforms often fail to promote meaningful citizen participation or foster institutional coherence. Salomo and Rahmayanti note that, although SAKIP implementation in Indonesian local governments has improved formal accountability, it remains dominated by procedural compliance rather than cultural or participatory change (Salomo & Rahmayanti, 2023). Complementing this, Setiawan et al. find that while performance measurement systems can yield measurable improvements, they frequently focus more on technical monitoring than on engaging communities or building internal cohesion (Setiawan et al., 2022). While NPM has succeeded in shifting attention toward outcomes and managerial discretion, it has also been critiqued for promoting fragmented accountability and marginalizing normative values such as equity and inclusiveness (Christensen & Læg Reid, 2007; Drechsler, 2005).

This study builds upon these earlier contributions by examining how NPM-based tools can be integrated within a broader strategic framework of bureaucratic redesign. Rather than adopting NPM instruments wholesale, it proposes a selective application tailored to Indonesia's complex administrative landscape, where formal decentralization coexists with institutional inertia and uneven capacity. The study aligns with recent calls for hybrid approaches that

combine performance orientation with adaptive governance and citizen engagement (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011).

2.4. Citizen-Centered Governance and the Democratic Turn in Bureaucratic Reform

Recent shifts in public administration scholarship emphasize a democratic turn in governance, in which citizen participation and co-production of public value become central to bureaucratic reform. This normative shift is articulated through the New Public Service (NPS) framework, which emphasizes public interest, dialogue, and democratic citizenship over market logic and managerial efficiency (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000). Unlike the New Public Management model, NPS regards citizens as co-creators of services, rather than passive recipients or customers.

Empirical studies have demonstrated the applicability of NPS in enhancing social trust and accountability, particularly in contexts where public legitimacy is fragile (Bryson et al., 2014). In Scandinavian countries, for instance, institutional reforms that prioritize civic dialogue and co-governance have been shown to improve policy responsiveness and citizen satisfaction (Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development, 2023). These findings reinforce the view that democratic engagement is not antithetical to administrative performance, but relatively central to sustainable reform.

In Indonesia, the institutionalization of participatory governance remains uneven. Research by Widianingsih and Morrell on the Solo municipality's participatory planning process revealed that, although civic forums have been formally established, actual impact on decision-making is limited due to entrenched power structures and insufficient legal support (Widianingsih & Morrell, 2007). Similarly, a recent study by Jamaluddin and Maruapey on basic service delivery found that public participation mechanisms, such as aspiration-sharing and complaint channels, are often underutilized or tokenistic, hindered by bureaucratic inertia and weak feedback loops (Jamaluddin & Hussein Maruapey, 2024). These findings suggest that while participation is increasingly recognized in policy practices like the *Pelayanan Publik Berbasis Partisipasi* program, its substantive implementation is curtailed by structural and cultural limitations in the bureaucracy.

This study builds on those insights by exploring how strategic bureaucratic redesign can meaningfully embed citizen-centered governance. Rather than treating participation as a policy add-on, it analyzes how institutional frameworks can be restructured to prioritize dialogue, responsiveness, and co-produced accountability.

2.5. Bureaucratic Redesign as Strategic Governance: A Synthesis of Planning and Adaptive Approaches

Scholarly work increasingly emphasizes that bureaucratic reform must be viewed not simply as an administrative adjustment but as part of a broader strategic vision of governance. Mintzberg's seminal distinction between *deliberate strategy* and *emergent strategy* provides a valuable lens to understand this shift (Mintzberg, 1994). In the public sector, effective reforms are often not the product of rigid long-term plans alone, but rather emerge through adaptive responses to social, political, and technological shifts (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007).

Empirical studies support this perspective. Moynihan argues that public sector performance reforms often fail because they are disconnected from broader strategic objectives, resulting in fragmented or symbolic changes (Moynihan, 2006). In the Indonesian context, Drysdale and Willis have shown that reform programs, such as the *Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap*, lack long-term

strategic coherence and are frequently undermined by political turnover and short-termism (Drysdale & Willis, 2014).

Rather than treating strategic planning and adaptive learning as mutually exclusive, contemporary approaches argue for their integration. Strategic bureaucratic redesign should align institutional change efforts with national development goals while remaining responsive to emergent governance challenges. This requires what Andrews, Andrews et al. call “problem-driven iterative adaptation” (PDIA), where reform is both context-sensitive and dynamically managed (Andrews et al., 2017).

This study adopts this dual framework to examine how Indonesia's bureaucratic reform initiatives can be evaluated based on structural or procedural shifts and their contribution to long-term, adaptive, and coherent governance strategies.

3. Research Methodology

This study employs a qualitative approach using the library research method to examine the conceptual foundations, policy frameworks, and best practices of bureaucratic redesign in public service delivery. Library research was selected as it allows for a comprehensive synthesis of theoretical and policy-oriented knowledge, which is essential when the research objective is to develop strategic and normative frameworks rather than empirically test hypotheses (Berman, 2007; Booth et al., 1997). This approach is particularly suited to studies that aim to improve conceptual clarity and generate strategic recommendations by critically engaging with existing literature and reform models.

The data for this study were drawn from various credible secondary sources, including academic textbooks, peer-reviewed journal articles, government policy documents issued by institutions. These materials were selected based on their relevance to bureaucratic transformation, public service innovation, and strategic governance, with particular attention given to works published between 2010 and 2024.

The primary analytical technique employed in this study is content analysis using a thematic approach. Thematic analysis followed the six-phase approach proposed by Braun and Clarke, including familiarization with the data, initial coding, theme development, reviewing themes, defining themes, and producing the final synthesis (Braun & Clarke, 2006). Through this process, recurring patterns were identified across the literature, and classified into key themes such as bureaucratic structure, change management, digital transformation, citizen satisfaction, and strategic governance. These themes were subsequently synthesized to construct a conceptual framework that forms the basis for the study's analysis and recommendations.

This method enables the study to address its central research questions regarding the strategic function of bureaucratic redesign and its alignment with participatory and adaptive governance principles. Rather than focusing on hypothesis testing, the research is exploratory and conceptual, seeking to develop a normative model grounded in empirical observations and theoretical insights. The study employs source triangulation to ensure analytical rigor and maintain logical consistency throughout its argument.

Nonetheless, using library research as a methodological approach presents certain limitations. Chief among them is the potential for selection bias, as the analysis depends heavily on the availability and quality of published materials. Additionally, the absence of direct field engagement limits the contextual specificity of findings and restricts generalizability. These limitations are acknowledged and addressed by applying critical source evaluation and grounding the analysis within a clearly defined conceptual scope.

4. Results

4.1. Organizational Structure Reform

PermenPAN-RB No. 28 of 2019 mandates organizational structure reform in Indonesia and revised in PermenPAN-RB No. 17 of 2021, abolishing Echelon III and IV positions and replacing them with functional roles to streamline administration and improve service delivery. However, field evaluations, particularly within the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, illustrate notable implementation challenges. A study by Naptalina Sipayung et al. (2022), focusing on 141 transferred officers, reveals that only 40.5% of respondents felt the policy was well socialized, while just 38% reported improved performance after switching to functional roles (Sipayung et al., 2022). These numbers highlight gaps in internal communication, training, and cultural assimilation. This evidence suggests that structural mandates alone cannot automatically generate agile bureaucracies; meaningful change requires organizational learning, leadership buy-in, and comprehensive capacity-building alongside policy shifts.

Empirical evidence suggests that the regional implementation of structural bureaucratic reforms remains uneven. Notably, Khairudin and Wiyarni (2023) conducted a study in North Penajam Paser Regency that investigated the equalization of supervisory positions into functional roles through an Assessment Center (Khairudin & Wiyarni, 2023). They found that although the Assessment Center accurately mapped competencies, its impact on broader administrative performance was limited due to deficiencies in career development incentives and alignment with existing performance management systems. These findings align with broader evaluations of delayering efforts in Indonesia, which indicate that structural simplification does not always translate into functional agility without supportive systems and institutional alignment (Maulana et al., 2022).

4.2. Digital Transformation (SPBE)

The transformation of Indonesia's public sector through digital governance, formally institutionalized by Presidential Regulation No. 95 of 2018 concerning the Electronic-Based Government System (*Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik*, SPBE), has shown measurable progress but also reveals persistent structural disparities. The SPBE framework serves as the national foundation for digital interoperability, aiming to streamline bureaucratic functions, enhance transparency, and optimize public service delivery across government agencies.

According to the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (KemenPAN-RB), the national SPBE Index rose from 2.34 in 2022 (classified as "Adequate") to 2.79 in 2023, reaching a "Good" category and surpassing the government's annual performance target (Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi, 2024). This indicates positive momentum in implementing digital transformation policies at the institutional level.

However, a more granular analysis of the 2023 SPBE evaluation, which assessed 621 government agencies, including ministries, local governments, and non-ministerial institutions, reveals that only 24 agencies achieved "Very Good" or "Excellent" ratings. This suggests that digital transformation remains uneven despite national-level advancements, particularly across subnational jurisdictions. Several challenges were identified as contributing to this gap, including:

- Limited digital infrastructure in rural and remote areas, especially in eastern Indonesia;
- Inadequate availability of ICT-competent human resources at the local government level;
- Fragmentation of digital applications and platforms across agencies hampers system interoperability and user experience consistency.

These structural constraints hinder the full realization of integrated digital governance. Moreover, local government units often lack both the fiscal capacity and institutional readiness to comply with national SPBE standards. The findings underscore the importance of strengthened cross-sectoral coordination, inclusive digital capacity-building, and more precise regulatory instruments to accelerate digital maturity beyond Java-centric bureaucracies.

The data also reflects the broader implications of digital inequality, where reforms tend to concentrate in urban or administratively strong regions, leaving peripheral areas behind. This fragmentation risks undermining the very goals of SPBE, namely, universal access to quality public services and equitable governance. As such, sustained political commitment, resource redistribution, and targeted technical assistance are crucial to achieving a more balanced and robust national digital transformation agenda.

4.3. Adaptive Work Culture

Adaptive work culture, fostering responsiveness, innovation, and collaboration, is critical for effective bureaucratic redesign. One key initiative in this area has been the introduction of the BerAKHLAK core values across the Indonesian civil service in 2021 (*Service-Oriented, Accountable, Competent, Harmonious, Loyal, Adaptive, Collaborative*) to reinforce cultural and behavioral norms (Brumadyadisty, 2025). A qualitative study of East Java's public service offices found that BerAKHLAK was institutionalized through routine workshops, mentoring, and performance dashboarding, and significantly improved interagency collaboration, service ethics, and citizen trust. However, challenges such as resistance from older personnel, uneven leadership commitment, and limited digital infrastructure were also documented (Brumadyadisty, 2025).

Further evidence comes from a quantitative study in Bogor City, which demonstrated that BerAKHLAK values moderated the relationship between transformational leadership and public service performance. This suggests that embedding adaptive cultural values enhances how leadership translates into improved operational outcomes (Dwi Pranaputra et al., 2024).

Complementing these findings, OECD emphasizes that future-ready public services require agile cultures that support reskilling, flexibility, diversity of thought, and innovation (OECD, 2021). These conditions align closely with the objectives of bureaucratic redesign, showing that adaptive culture must be developed through leadership, structured training, and systemic incentives

In the context of this study, the institutionalization of adaptive work culture through BerAKHLAK and related leadership mechanisms provides an important strategic enabler. For bureaucratic redesign to succeed, cultural reforms must be integrated, not bolted on, alongside structural and digital changes. This ensures that policies exist on paper and are internalized and practiced within civil servants' day-to-day operations. Without such cultural alignment, bureaucratic redesign risks remaining procedural rather than transformative.

4.4. Post-Pandemic Services and Government Strategy

The COVID-19 pandemic prompted a strategic shift in Indonesia's public sector toward hybrid and remote work arrangements. In April 2023, the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform officially allowed civil servants to work remotely up to two days per week, with discretionary criteria regarding job type and regional capacity (Syaefudin, 2020). This policy indicates a deliberate, strategic effort to modernize service delivery and adapt institutional practices.

The pandemic's disruptions also prompted a reassessment of bureaucratic models. Faedlulloh and Yulianto evaluated the relevance of post-bureaucratic frameworks, emphasizing

agility, citizen-centered design, and flexible structures, as viable alternatives to Weberian models in the post-pandemic context. Their study, encompassing government documents and academic sources, highlights key adaptive features: decentralized decision-making, empowered frontline staff, and continuous feedback loops (Faedlulloh & Yulianto, 2023).

Strategically, Indonesia's government transformation aligns with its ambition to join the world's top 10 economies by 2030. Realizing this vision requires an accelerated digital strategy, addressing key domains, infrastructure, innovation, data governance, security, and workforce development, through a whole-of-government approach (GSMA, 2023; Parsons, 2023).

Despite this alignment, the translation of strategy into consistent outcomes remains uneven. Hybrid work policies, digital service platforms, and decentralized emergency responses have varied adoption across provinces. This indicates that sustainable government transformation requires reactive adaptation and deliberate, well-resourced strategies combining centralized guidance with regional flexibility.

5. Discussion

The findings across the four reform dimensions, organizational structure, digital transformation, adaptive work culture, and post-pandemic service strategies, highlight the multi-layered challenges and opportunities in Indonesia's bureaucratic redesign. These results must be interpreted through the theoretical lenses outlined in the Literature Review, particularly the tensions between classical bureaucracy and emergent governance paradigms, the management of institutional resistance, and the strategic reorientation toward adaptive and citizen-centered public service.

First, the organizational structure reform driven by PermenPAN-RB No. 28/2019 and No. 17/2021 reflects a Weberian impulse toward rationalization and hierarchical flattening. However, as the empirical studies demonstrate, the reforms have not consistently translated into improved performance or clarity in job functions (Khairudin & Wiyarni, 2023; Sipayung et al., 2022). This supports critiques within contemporary public administration theory that structural reforms are insufficient in dynamic governance environments (Christensen & Lægheid, 2007; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2011). Resistance rooted in institutional inertia and the absence of enabling mechanisms, such as training, career incentives, and strategic communication, echoes Lewin's concept of "unfreezing" as a prerequisite for meaningful change. Without sufficient internal disruption, new structures risk being absorbed into old routines (Hussain et al., 2018).

Second, while promising in aggregate metrics, the digital transformation trajectory through SPBE reveals uneven outcomes across Indonesia's administrative landscape. The concentration of progress in Java-centric agencies reinforces Heeks' argument that e-governance efforts often fail to address disparities in institutional capacity (Grafton, 2006). This outcome underscores the limitations of purely performance-driven approaches and highlights the need for integrative strategies that include infrastructure development, digital literacy, and inter-agency interoperability. From the New Public Management (NPM) lens, digital transformation is a key tool for performance enhancement (Dwiyanto, 2006). However, this case illustrates that NPM tools must be adapted to context-specific realities rather than applied universally.

Third, the institutionalization of the BerAKHLAK values represents a significant step toward embedding adaptive work culture. Drawing from organizational change theory, the BerAKHLAK initiative exemplifies the "changing" phase in Lewin's model by actively introducing new norms, performance expectations, and leadership behaviors. Studies in East Java and Bogor reveal that values-based leadership enhances public trust and inter-agency collaboration (Brumadyadisty, 2025; Dwi Pranaputra et al., 2024). However, institutionalizing

this transformation, the “refreezing” phase, requires reinforcement through recognition, evaluation, and peer accountability systems. Cultural reforms risk being ephemeral without institutionalization (Hussain et al., 2018; OECD, 2021).

Fourth, the hybrid work arrangements and broader post-pandemic strategies highlight the convergence of deliberate and emergent strategic approaches. Mintzberg discussed that reforms are most effective when adaptive learning complements formal planning (Mintzberg, 1994). Adopting flexible work policies post-2020 signals an openness to emergent solutions; however, uneven adoption reflects persistent bureaucratic rigidity. Faedlulloh and Yulianto’s (2023) framework on post-bureaucratic models reveals the need for decentralized decision-making and empowered frontline workers. These findings also speak to the strategic governance paradigm advanced in the Literature Review, particularly the PDIA (problem-driven iterative adaptation) approach, which emphasizes reform as a process of contextual learning and strategic responsiveness (Andrews et al., 2017).

Moreover, aligning Indonesia’s bureaucratic transformation with its broader development ambition, becoming a top-10 global economy by 2030, requires more than structural or digital reforms. It demands the fusion of Weberian accountability, NPM performance logic, and New Public Service (NPS) principles of citizen engagement. This is especially critical in light of evidence that participatory mechanisms in Indonesian governance remain underutilized and structurally constrained (Jamaluddin & Hussein Maruapey, 2024; Widianingsih & Morrell, 2007).

This study finds that Indonesia’s bureaucratic redesign represents a strategic balancing act between tradition and transformation. Regulatory rationalization, digital tools, adaptive leadership, and pandemic-era innovations provide key levers of change. However, their effectiveness is mediated by entrenched bureaucratic cultures, uneven institutional capacities, and partial implementation. Bridging the gap between reform intent and outcome requires policy coherence, cross-sector collaboration, and an epistemic shift, reframing bureaucracy as an evolving governance system responsive to complexity, inclusion, and democratic accountability.

Thus, the Indonesian experience affirms that successful bureaucratic transformation is not solely a matter of technical reform, but a profoundly political and cultural endeavor requiring long-term investment, institutional learning, and strategic alignment across national and local levels.

6. Conclusion

This study critically examined Indonesia’s bureaucratic reform across four dimensions: organizational restructuring, digital transformation, adaptive work culture, and post-pandemic service strategies. Through the integration of empirical evidence and theoretical lenses, Weberian bureaucracy, Lewin’s change theory, New Public Management (NPM), and strategic governance, findings reveal that while policy momentum and structural directives are evident, practical implementation remains highly uneven and context-dependent.

The abolishment of hierarchical echelons and transition to functional positions reflects a rational-legal aspiration to streamline governance. However, as the findings show, structural adjustments without parallel investments in training, communication, and incentives often result in performative compliance rather than substantive change. Digital transformation through SPBE demonstrates tangible improvements at the national level but also highlights infrastructural and capacity asymmetries across local governments, reinforcing a Java-centric developmental bias. Meanwhile, the institutionalization of BerAKHLAK values signals a promising cultural shift; yet sustaining this transformation demands long-term systems of reinforcement, leadership commitment, and organizational learning. Finally, the move toward hybrid service models in the

post-pandemic context marks an adaptive turn. However, disparities in adoption illustrate the need for iterative, decentralized strategies supported by enabling institutions.

This study is primarily grounded in secondary data analysis, government reports, and selected empirical studies available up to 2025. As such, it cannot capture real-time reform dynamics and subnational heterogeneity across Indonesia's diverse administrative regions. The absence of primary fieldwork also constrains the depth of institutional and actor-level insights, particularly regarding informal practices and bottom-up innovation in local governance units.

Future research should incorporate ethnographic, case study, or mixed-methods approaches to assess bureaucratic reform at the frontline level, including how local officials internalize reform mandates, navigate institutional ambiguities, and exercise discretionary power. Longitudinal studies could also examine how reform trajectories evolve across electoral cycles, leadership transitions, and fiscal shifts. Additionally, comparative studies between Indonesian provinces or between ASEAN countries would offer valuable insights into how varying political-administrative cultures shape bureaucratic transformation.

Ultimately, this study affirms that Indonesia's bureaucratic redesign is not merely a technical exercise but a profoundly political and adaptive process, requiring sustained leadership, systemic coherence, and participatory engagement to achieve inclusive and resilient public governance.

7. Acknowledgment

The authors would like to thank all parties who contributed to the completion of this research, including academic colleagues, institutional partners, and all individuals who provided insights and support throughout the study.

8. Declaration of Conflicting Interests

The authors have declared no potential conflicts of interest regarding this article's research, authorship, and/or publication.

References

- Afrilia, U. A., Asy'Ary, A. P. M. H., Muhdiarta, U., Mayasari, Y., & Anangkota, M. (2024). Transforming Public Services: the Role of Digital Innovation in Indonesian Municipal Governance. *VISIONER: Jurnal Pemerintahan Daerah Di Indonesia*, 16(1), 60–70. <https://doi.org/10.54783/jv.v16i1.1043>
- Andrews, M., Pritchett, L., & Woolcock, M. (2017). *Building State Capability*. Oxford University Press/Oxford. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780198747482.001.0001>
- Beetham, D. (1996). *Bureaucracy*. Open University Press.
- Berman, S. (2007). Case Studies and Theory Development in the Social Sciences. *Perspectives on Politics*, 5(1), 187–188. <https://doi.org/10.1017/S1537592707070491>
- Booth, W. C., Colomb, G. G., & Williams, J. M. (1997). The Craft of Research. *College Composition and Communication*, 48(1), 127. <https://doi.org/10.2307/358777>
- Braun, V., & Clarke, V. (2006). Using thematic analysis in psychology. *Qualitative Research in Psychology*, 3(2), 77–101. <https://doi.org/10.1191/1478088706qp063oa>
- Brumadyadisty, G. (2025). Implementation of Core Values “BerAKHLAK” In Improving Professionalism and Performance of State Civil Apparatus. *Journal of Business Management and Economic Development*, 3(01), 216–235. <https://doi.org/10.59653/jbmed.v3i01.1351>
- Bryson, J. M., Crosby, B. C., & Bloomberg, L. (2014). *Public Value Governance: Moving Beyond*

- Traditional Public Administration and the New Public Management. *Public Administration Review*, 74(4), 445–456. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.12238>
- Chandler, J. A. (2014). Comparative Public Administration. In J. A. Chandler (Ed.), *Comparative Public Administration*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315771977>
- Christensen, T., & Lægreid, P. (2007). The Whole-of-Government Approach to Public Sector Reform. *Public Administration Review*, 67(6), 1059–1066. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2007.00797.x>
- Christensen, T., Lægreid, P., Roness, P. G., & Røvik, K. A. (2007). *Organization Theory and the Public Sector: Instrument, culture and myth*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203929216>
- CÔTÉ, M. (1999). Reinventing Government: How the Entrepreneurial Spirit is Transforming the Public Sector. *Management International*, 4(1), 59–60. <https://doi.org/10.59876/a-r2tf-6anh>
- Denhardt, R. B., & Denhardt, J. V. (2000). The New Public Service: Serving Rather than Steering. *Public Administration Review*, 60(6), 549–559. <https://doi.org/10.1111/0033-3352.00117>
- Deviana, R. B., & Hendarsjah, H. (2023). Enhancing Individual Positive Reaction to Organizational Change Through Transformational Leadership and Change Agent's Credibility. *Jurnal Manajemen Bisnis*, 14(2), 342–360. <https://doi.org/10.18196/mb.v14i2.17741>
- Drechsler, W. (2005). The rise and demise of the new public management. *Post-Autistic Economics Review*, 33(14), 17–28.
- Drysdale, P., & Willis, S. (2014). International Institutions and the Rise of Asia. *Asia and the Pacific Policy Studies*, 1(3), 455–469. <https://doi.org/10.1002/app5.47>
- Dwi Pranaputra, R., Sobandi, A., & Hadi Senen, S. (2024). The Influence of Transformational Leadership on Public Service Performance Moderated by Core Values BerAKHLAK in the Bogor City Government. *Dinasti International Journal of Education Management And Social Science*, 6(2), 1258–1269. <https://doi.org/10.38035/dijemss.v6i2.3574>
- Dwiyanto, A. (2006). *Reformasi Birokrasi Publik di Indonesia*. Gadjah Mada University Press.
- Faedlulloh, D., & Yulianto, Y. (2023). Model for Post-Pandemic Bureaucracy in Indonesia: Is Post-Bureaucracy Relevant? *Jurnal Borneo Administrator*, 19(3), 221–236. <https://doi.org/10.24258/jba.v19i3.1228>
- Gil-Garcia, J. R. (2013). Enacting Electronic Government Success. An Integrative Study of Government-wide Websites, Organizational Capabilities, and Institutions, by R. Gil-Garcia, ed.,. *Information Polity*, 18(2), 193–195. <https://doi.org/10.3233/IP-130306>
- Grafton, C. (2006). Book Review: Implementing and Managing eGovernment: An International Text. *Social Science Computer Review*, 24(3), 389–391. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0894439306287246>
- GSMA. (2023). *Indonesia must accelerate delivery of digital strategy to achieve government's top 10 global economy by 2030 ambitions, says GSMA report*. <https://www.gsma.com/newsroom/press-release/indonesia-must-accelerate-delivery-of-digital-strategy-to-achieve-governments-top-10-global-economy-by-2030-ambitions-says-gsma-report/>
- Hood, C. (1991). a Public Management for All Seasons? *Public Administration*, 69(1), 3–19. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1467-9299.1991.tb00779.x>
- Hughes, O. E. (2018). Public Management and Administration. In *Public Management and Administration*. Macmillan Education UK. <https://doi.org/10.1057/978-1-137-56010-0>
- Hussain, S. T., Lei, S., Akram, T., Haider, M. J., Hussain, S. H., & Ali, M. (2018). Kurt Lewin's change model: A critical review of the role of leadership and employee involvement in organizational change. *Journal of Innovation and Knowledge*, 3(3), 123–127. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.jik.2016.07.002>

- Indrajit, R. E. (2006). *Electronic Government: Strategi Pembangunan dan Pengembangan Sistem Pelayanan Berbasis Teknologi Digital*. Penerbit Andi.
- Jamaluddin, Y., & Hussein Maruapey, M. (2024, March 19). Public Participation in Basic Services In Indonesia. *IAPA 2023 Annual International Conference*. <https://doi.org/10.18502/kss.v9i7.15522>
- Kementerian Pendayagunaan Aparatur Negara dan Reformasi Birokrasi. (2024). *Kementerian PANRB umumkan hasil evaluasi SPBE tahun 2023*. <https://www.menpan.go.id/site/berita-terkini/kementerian-panrb-umumkan-hasil-evaluasi-spbe-tahun-2023>
- Khairudin, K., & Wiyarni, W. (2023). The Effectiveness of the Equalizing Supervisory Positions to Functional Positions Using Assessment Center in the North Penajam Paser Regency, East Kalimantan, Indonesia. *American Journal of Industrial and Business Management*, 13(02), 79–92. <https://doi.org/10.4236/ajibm.2023.132006>
- Lembaga Administrasi Negara Republik Indonesia. (2022). *Laporan Kinerja Instansi Pemerintah (LKjIP) Tahun 2022*.
- Lewin, K. (1947). Frontiers in Group Dynamics. *Human Relations*, 1(1), 5–41. <https://doi.org/10.1177/001872674700100103>
- Mansuri, G., & Rao, V. (2013). *Localizing Development*. Washington, DC: World Bank. <https://doi.org/10.1596/978-0-8213-8256-1>
- Maulana, A., Indriati, F., & Hidayah, K. (2022). Analysis of Bureaucratic Reform Through Delaying of Government Institutions in Indonesia. *Jurnal Borneo Administrator*, 18(2), 155–170. <https://doi.org/10.24258/jba.v18i2.1003>
- Mintzberg, H. (1994). *Rise and fall of strategic planning*. Simon and Schuster.
- Moran, M. (2016). A government that worked better and cost less? evaluating three decades of reform and change in uk central government. *Public Administration*, 94(1), 282–284. <https://doi.org/10.1111/padm.12232>
- Moynihan, D. P. (2006). Managing for Results in State Government: Evaluating a Decade of Reform. *Public Administration Review*, 66(1), 77–89. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2006.00557.x>
- Moynihan, D. P., & Landuyt, N. (2009). How Do Public Organizations Learn? Bridging Cultural and Structural Perspectives. *Public Administration Review*, 69(6), 1097–1105. <https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1540-6210.2009.02067.x>
- OECD. (2021). *Public employment and management 2021: The future of the public service*. OECD. https://www.oecd.org/en/publications/2021/12/public-employment-and-management-2021_6a1fc237.html
- Olsen, J. P. (2006). Maybe It Is Time to Rediscover Bureaucracy. *Journal of Public Administration Research and Theory*, 16(1), 1–24. <https://doi.org/10.1093/jopart/mui027>
- Ombudsman Republik Indonesia. (2021). *Laporan Tahunan Ombudsman Republik Indonesia Tahun 2021*.
- Organisation for Economic Co-operation and Development. (2023). *The digital transformation of Norway's public sector*.
- Parsons, G. T. (2023). *Forging a resilient digital Indonesia: A path toward inclusive and sustainable growth*. G&T Perspectives. <https://www.gtperspectives.com/2023/12/forging-resilient-digital-indonesia.html>
- Pollitt, C., & Bouckaert, G. (2011). *Public Management Reform: a Comparative Analysis: New Public Management, Governance, and the Neo-Weberian State*. Oxford University Press.
- Prasojo, E., Putri, M., & Hariyati, D. (2021). Unfreezing without Refreezing Change Management: Dilemmatic Roles of Agents in Succeeding the Bureaucracy Reform. *Otoritas : Jurnal Ilmu*

- Pemerintahan*, 11(1), 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.26618/ojip.v11i1.4694>
- Salomo, R. V., & Rahmayanti, K. P. (2023). Progress and Institutional Challenges on Local Governments Performance Accountability System Reform in Indonesia. *Sage Open*, 13(4). <https://doi.org/10.1177/21582440231196659>
- Schulze, G. G., & Sjahrir, B. S. (2014). Decentralization, governance and public service delivery. In H. Hill (Ed.), *Regional Dynamics in a Decentralized Indonesia* (pp. 186–207). ISEAS Publishing. <https://doi.org/10.1355/9789814519175-015>
- Setiawan, A., Tjiptoherijanto, P., Mahi, B. R., & Khoirunurrofik, K. (2022). The Impact of Local Government Capacity on Public Service Delivery: Lessons Learned from Decentralized Indonesia. *Economies*, 10(12), 323. <https://doi.org/10.3390/economies10120323>
- Sipayung, N., Sumaryadi, I. N., Daraba, D., & Lukman, S. (2022). The Policy Implementation of Simplification Bureaucracy For Performance Improvement In The Ministry of Administrative And Bureaucratic Reform. *Devotion : Journal of Research and Community Service*, 3(13), 2433–2448. <https://doi.org/10.36418/dev.v3i13.295>
- Syaefudin, R. A. (2020). Working From Home Policy for Indonesian Civil Servants During Coronavirus Disease Pandemic. *Spirit Publik: Jurnal Administrasi Publik*, 15(2), 167. <https://doi.org/10.20961/sp.v15i2.41394>
- Turner, M., Prasojo, E., & Sumarwono, R. (2022). The challenge of reforming big bureaucracy in Indonesia. *Policy Studies*, 43(2), 333–351. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442872.2019.1708301>
- Weber, M. (1947). *The Theory of Social and Economic Organizations*. Free Press.
- Widianingsih, I., & Morrell, E. (2007). Participatory planning in Indonesia. *Policy Studies*, 28(1), 1–15. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01442870601121320>

About the Authors

- Mujahidin** is an Assistant Professor at Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN), Indonesia, in the Public Safety and Security Management Study Program. He earned his Doctoral degree from Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya in 2024, after completing his Master of Management at Universitas Mataram and his Bachelor's degree in Social Sciences at Universitas Brawijaya. His academic interests include disaster resilience, public sector management, and digital learning. He has actively participated in research and community engagement initiatives related to disaster mitigation, village governance, and environmental awareness.
E-Mail: mujahidin@ipdn.ac.id
- Fanila Kasmita Kusuma** is an Assistant Professor at Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri (IPDN), Indonesia, in the Public Safety and Security Management Study Program. She earned her Doctoral degree from Universitas 17 Agustus 1945 Surabaya in 2024, after completing her Master's degree at Sekolah Tinggi Ilmu Ekonomi Indonesia Malang and her Bachelor's in Political Science at IPDN. Her academic interests include public policy, organizational management, and disaster resilience. She has actively participated in research and community service initiatives related to risk governance, village empowerment, and environmental sustainability.
E-Mail: fanilakasmitakusuma@gmail.com