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Article

Effectiveness of Apparatus Performance in Public Administration Services at the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency

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Abstract: This research aims to analyze the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration services at the General Affairs Division of the Regional Secretariat of East Barito Regency, focusing on the work process, apparatus experience, and supporting and inhibiting factors in service delivery. This issue is important to study considering the demands for improving public service quality and bureaucratic reform at the regional government level, which still faces various structural and cultural challenges. The research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. Data collection techniques were carried out through semi-structured interviews, participatory observation, and documentation. Informants consisted of civil servants, work unit leaders, and service users selected through purposive and snowball sampling. The research results indicate that the effectiveness of apparatus performance is influenced by professionalism and individual competence, still procedural service orientation, hierarchical bureaucratic structures, adaptation to digital transformation, and a collective work culture within the organization. The responsiveness of the apparatus to the community is considered quite good, but the speed of service is still hampered by tiered coordination mechanisms and human resource limitations. Furthermore, the digitalization of services has not been optimal due to constraints in technological competence and organizational readiness.

These findings contribute to enriching public administration studies by emphasizing the importance of work culture dimensions, experience, and the meaning of service in understanding the effectiveness of apparatus performance. Practically, this research recommends strengthening the capacity of the apparatus, simplifying bureaucratic procedures, developing transformational leadership, and optimizing the utilization of technology in public administration services. Future research is suggested to use comparative and integrative approaches to broaden the understanding of apparatus performance effectiveness in local governments.

Keywords: Performance effectiveness, public administration services, bureaucratic reform.

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1. Introduction

Public administration services are one of the main functions of government in meeting the needs of the community and are an important indicator of the success of good governance. Globally, the demand for quality public services is increasing along with the development of the paradigms of *good governance*, accountability, transparency, and responsiveness of government apparatus. Public organizations are required to be able to provide effective, efficient services oriented towards community satisfaction. In various countries, public administration reform has emphasized the importance of improving the performance of apparatus as a strategic factor in realizing quality services. This indicates that the effectiveness of apparatus performance is not only related to the technical aspects of service delivery but also reflects the quality of the institution and the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the public [1], [14].

In the national context, bureaucratic reform in Indonesia continues to be directed at improving the quality of public services, including through the implementation of performance accountability systems, service digitalization, and improving the competence of human resources in the apparatus. The government has set various policies to improve the performance of apparatus, such as Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services and bureaucratic reform policies that emphasize professionalism, integrity, and results-orientation. However, various studies show that the implementation of these policies still faces challenges, especially at the regional government level. Problems such as low work discipline, limited competence, an unadaptive organizational culture, and suboptimal utilization of information technology are still obstacles in improving the effectiveness of public administration services [1], [2]. This indicates a gap between policies designed at the central level and service practices in the regions.

Empirically, this phenomenon is also observed in regional apparatus organizations, including in the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency. Based on initial observations and information from several employees and service users, some problems were found such as delays in administrative completion, inefficient service procedures, and suboptimal internal coordination. Furthermore, the public still considers that administrative services have not been fully responsive to the needs and expectations of service users. In some cases, the effectiveness of apparatus performance is influenced by factors of organizational communication, leadership, and work motivation. This condition indicates that the effectiveness of apparatus performance is not only determined by regulations and organizational structure, but also by aspects of work culture, experience, and individual perceptions in carrying out service tasks.

The issue of the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration services is important to study because it is directly related to public trust in regional governments. Ineffective services can lead to dissatisfaction, reduce government legitimacy, and weaken the quality of governance. From a social and cultural perspective, the quality of public services also reflects the relationship between the government and the community, as well as the level of citizen participation in the development process. Therefore, a deep understanding of the experiences of apparatus and the community in the service process becomes important to produce contextual and sustainable policy recommendations.

Several previous studies have examined the performance of apparatus and public services in regional governments, but most used quantitative approaches focusing on measuring performance indicators, public satisfaction, or service quality. These studies have not deeply explored the processes, meanings, and experiences of the apparatus in carrying out service tasks, including organizational dynamics, work values, and contextual factors that influence performance effectiveness [3], [4]. Furthermore, research specifically examining the effectiveness of apparatus performance in the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat is still limited, even though this unit has a strategic role in supporting regional government administration. Thus, there is a

theoretical and empirical gap that needs to be filled through a qualitative approach to understand the phenomenon comprehensively.

Based on the description above, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration services at the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency. The focus of the study is directed at work processes, apparatus experiences, supporting and inhibiting factors, and public perception of service quality. This research is expected to provide theoretical contributions to the development of public administration studies, especially regarding the effectiveness of apparatus performance from a qualitative perspective. Practically, the research results can be a basis for recommendations for regional governments in improving the quality of public administration services by strengthening apparatus capacity, improving work systems, and developing a more responsive and professional organizational culture.

2. Literature Review and Theoretical Basis

The study of the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration services cannot be separated from the development of modern public administration paradigms that emphasize results-orientation, service quality, and community satisfaction [14]. In the context of *New Public Management* and *New Public Service*, government apparatus are no longer positioned as mere administrative implementers, but as public servants responsible for community needs. This perspective emphasizes that the effectiveness of apparatus performance is closely related to the organization's ability to produce appropriate, responsive services oriented towards public interest. Therefore, the analysis of apparatus performance effectiveness needs to consider structural, cultural, and organizational behavioral aspects holistically.

Conceptually, the performance of public apparatus is understood as the work results achieved by employees in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities assigned. Performance is measured not only by output but also by the quality of the process, timeliness, and the level of satisfaction of service users. This approach is in line with organizational performance theory, which states that effectiveness is the level of achievement of organizational goals by optimally utilizing available resources. In the context of the public sector, the effectiveness of apparatus performance reflects the extent to which the apparatus can carry out service, coordination, and administrative functions professionally. Contemporary research shows that apparatus performance is influenced by competence, work motivation, leadership, organizational culture, and the performance evaluation system implemented [5].

Furthermore, the concept of organizational effectiveness becomes an important basis for assessing apparatus performance. Effectiveness in public organizations refers to the institution's ability to achieve service objectives through efficient and adaptive work mechanisms. Some indicators of effectiveness relevant to public administration services include service speed, procedural accuracy, transparency, accountability, and the ability to respond to community needs. In the context of the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat, effectiveness also relates to internal coordination, administrative document management, and support for the regional government's decision-making process. Therefore, the effectiveness approach is not only quantitative but also qualitative, especially in understanding the experiences of the apparatus and public perception of service quality.

The theory of public services also serves as an important framework for this research. Public services are government activities in meeting the needs of the community directly or indirectly. The quality of public services is influenced by the dimensions of tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy [15]. Although this model is widely used in quantitative approaches, qualitative research provides space to understand the meaning of services from the perspective of the apparatus and the community. In the context of regional public administration, service quality is often influenced by organizational culture, bureaucratic structure, and the relationship between

the apparatus and the community. Recent research indicates that the success of public services in the regions is not only determined by regulations, but also by the values, norms, and work practices that develop within the organization [2].

In addition, the *good governance* approach provides a normative perspective that emphasizes the principles of transparency, participation, accountability, and responsiveness in public services. The effectiveness of apparatus performance is one of the indicators of successful implementation of good governance. The apparatus is required to work professionally, adapt to changes, and be able to utilize information technology in services [13]. In the context of regional governments, the implementation of *good governance* often faces challenges such as limited human resources, resistance to change, and a bureaucratic culture that is still hierarchical. This suggests that the analysis of apparatus performance effectiveness needs to consider contextual factors, including organizational dynamics and regional characteristics [3].

In this study, the concept of apparatus performance effectiveness is operationalized through several main indicators, namely timeliness of service, quality of work results, internal coordination and communication, responsiveness to community needs, and professionalism of the apparatus. These indicators are relevant to the context of public administration services in the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat, which functions as an administrative support unit for regional government. The qualitative approach allows researchers to deeply explore the experiences, perceptions, and work practices of the apparatus in carrying out their service duties.

A number of previous studies have examined the performance of apparatus and public services in the context of regional governments. Research shows that bureaucratic reform influences the improvement of service quality, but the effectiveness of its implementation is still influenced by organizational culture and leadership [2]. This study confirms that human factors are the main determinants of the success of public service reform. Furthermore, research that the effectiveness of apparatus performance is correlated with work motivation, reward systems, and organizational support in improving public service quality [5]. This study emphasizes the importance of human resource management in improving apparatus performance. Meanwhile, international research shows that digital competence and the adaptability of the apparatus are key factors in increasing the effectiveness of public services in the era of digital transformation [7]. This study highlights the importance of innovation in modern bureaucracy.

Although these studies have made important contributions, there are still limitations in exploring the subjective experiences of the apparatus, organizational work dynamics, and local contexts that influence performance effectiveness. Most studies use quantitative approaches and focus on measuring performance indicators, thus lacking a deep understanding of the processes, meanings, and service practices. Furthermore, research specifically examining the effectiveness of apparatus performance in the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat is still limited. Therefore, this study seeks to fill this gap through a qualitative approach that focuses on the experiences, perceptions, and work practices of the apparatus in public administration services.

Based on the review of theories and previous research, this study uses the perspectives of organizational performance, public services, and *good governance* as a conceptual framework. These three perspectives are seen as complementary in understanding the effectiveness of apparatus performance comprehensively. The analysis will focus on how the apparatus understands service tasks, how work processes occur, and the contextual factors that influence performance effectiveness in public administration services. This framework is expected to provide in-depth understanding and relevant policy recommendations for improving service quality in regional governments, especially in the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency.

3. Research Methodology

This study uses a qualitative approach with a case study design. This approach was chosen because the research aims to deeply understand the processes, experiences, and meanings of

apparatus performance effectiveness in public administration services at the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency. A case study allows researchers to comprehensively explore phenomena in the real organizational context, including work dynamics, bureaucratic culture, and interactions between the apparatus and the community [8]. This approach is also relevant for exploring contextual factors that cannot be measured quantitatively, thus providing a deeper understanding of apparatus performance effectiveness. Some recent studies confirm that qualitative case studies are effective in public administration research because they can reveal the complexity of service practices and organizational relationships holistically.

The research was conducted at the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency as a work unit that has a strategic role in supporting regional government administrative services. The selection of the location was based on the consideration that this unit functions as an administrative coordination center, document management, and operational support for regional leaders, making apparatus performance crucial for public service effectiveness [9]. The research subjects consist of civil servants working in the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency, the work unit leader, and community service users. Informants were selected using a purposive sampling technique with specific criteria, namely employees with at least two years of experience in administrative services, directly involved in the service process, and having an understanding of the organization's work system. In addition, a snowball sampling technique was used to identify additional informants based on recommendations from primary informants, especially to obtain a broader perspective on apparatus performance effectiveness. This approach is considered appropriate because qualitative research emphasizes depth of information, not the number of respondents.

Data collection techniques were carried out through semi-structured interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Semi-structured interviews were used to explore the experiences, perceptions, and views of the apparatus and the community regarding the effectiveness of public administration services. Interview guides were prepared flexibly to allow exploration of emerging issues during the research process. Participant observation was conducted to directly understand the service process, interactions between the apparatus and the community, and daily work practices within the organization. Meanwhile, documentation was used to obtain secondary data such as performance reports, standard operating procedures, service archives, and related regulations. The use of various techniques aims to strengthen the depth and accuracy of data through method triangulation [11].

Data validity and credibility were maintained through several strategies. First, source triangulation was carried out by comparing information from the apparatus, leaders, and community service users. Second, method triangulation was carried out by integrating the results of interviews, observations, and documentation. Third, member checking was performed by confirming the interview results with informants to ensure that the researcher's interpretation matched their experiences. In addition, an audit trail was used to systematically document the research process, including field notes, interview transcripts, and the data analysis process. This technique is important to ensure the transparency and reliability of qualitative research [4].

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which includes three main stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction was carried out by simplifying, grouping, and coding information based on main themes such as service quality, responsiveness, coordination, and professionalism of the apparatus. Subsequently, data display was presented in narrative, matrix, and thematic table forms to facilitate interpretation. The final stage was drawing inductive conclusions by identifying patterns, relationships, and meanings that emerged from the data. This approach allows researchers to understand apparatus performance effectiveness contextually and in depth [11].

Through this methodology, this study is expected to yield credible, contextual findings that are relevant to the needs of public service development in regional governments [10]. The qualitative

case study approach contributes to a deeper understanding of service practices, thus serving as a basis for more adaptive and sustainable policy recommendations in improving the effectiveness of apparatus performance at the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency [12].

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the in-depth interview process, participant observation, and document analysis at the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency, several main themes were identified reflecting the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration services. These findings indicate that effectiveness is not only understood as achieving work targets but is also related to experiences, work culture, and organizational dynamics that develop in daily service practices.

First, it relates to the professionalism of the apparatus in carrying out administrative services. Most informants stated that the apparatus has made efforts to perform their duties according to standard operating procedures, especially in managing correspondence, archiving, and internal coordination. However, this professionalism is still influenced by work experience and individual competence. Apparatus with longer tenure tend to be more effective in completing work compared to new employees. This is stated by one of the informants:

"*The service actually follows the procedures, but the speed and accuracy depend greatly on the employee's experience. New employees still need guidance*."

Observations also indicate that the execution of tasks often depends on certain individuals considered to have higher competence. This condition reflects an imbalance of capacity within the organization that can affect service effectiveness.

Second, it is the responsiveness of the apparatus to community needs. The research findings show that the apparatus is aware of providing friendly and open services, especially in helping the community understand administrative procedures. The public considers the communication of the apparatus to be quite good, although there are still limitations in the speed of service completion. One service user stated:

"*The officers are quite helpful and explain clearly, but sometimes the process is long because it has to wait for the leader's disposition*."

This suggests that the responsiveness of the apparatus is influenced not only by individual attitudes but also by the bureaucratic structure and internal coordination system.

Third, it relates to organizational coordination and communication. The effectiveness of apparatus performance is greatly determined by the flow of coordination between sections and communication between leaders and staff. Observation results show that coordination is relatively good, but it is still hierarchical. Administrative service processes often require tiered approval, which slows down document completion. An informant revealed:

"*Everything must go through procedures and the leader's disposition. Sometimes if the leader is not present, the service is delayed*."

These findings indicate that organizational effectiveness depends not only on individuals but also on the work system and decision-making structure.

Fourth, it is the utilization of technology in administrative services. Some administrative processes have used digital systems, but their implementation is not yet optimal. The apparatus still combines manual and electronic systems. This causes work duplication and potential service delays. However, efforts are being made to adapt to digital transformation, especially in managing archives and internal communication. This condition reflects the organization's transition phase towards technology-based services [7].

Fifth, it is the inhibiting and supporting factors for performance effectiveness. Supporting

factors include open leadership, a collective work culture, and the apparatus's motivation to provide good service. Meanwhile, inhibiting factors include limited human resources, uneven workload, and a bureaucratic system that is still formalistic. Several informants also highlighted the importance of training and developing the competence of the apparatus to improve service quality.

The findings of this study indicate that the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration services is determined not only by achieving work targets but also by dimensions of organizational culture, bureaucratic structure, and social interaction dynamics. These results are in line with the perspective of organizational performance in public administration, which emphasizes the importance of integrating individual competence, work systems, and the organizational environment [5]. The professionalism of the apparatus, influenced by experience and competence, shows that human resource management is a key factor in improving service effectiveness [2].

The responsiveness of the apparatus to the community indicates a developing orientation towards public service. However, the limitations in service speed due to bureaucratic procedures suggest that public service reform still faces structural challenges. These findings are consistent with previous research stating that the quality of public services in regional governments is often influenced by organizational culture and a hierarchical bureaucratic structure. However, this study provides a new perspective by emphasizing the importance of subjective experiences of the apparatus and the community in understanding service effectiveness.

Organizational coordination that is still formalistic indicates that the principles of *good governance* have not been fully implemented. Service effectiveness requires a work system that is more flexible, collaborative, and adaptive. In this context, transformational leadership plays an important role in driving changes in work culture. This study also strengthens the findings that leadership and organizational communication contribute to the effectiveness of apparatus performance.

The utilization of technology in administrative services indicates a transformation towards digital bureaucracy. However, the adaptation process still faces obstacles in competence and infrastructure. These findings are consistent with the literature which states that digital transformation in the public sector requires readiness in human resources, organizational systems, and changes in work culture. This study contributes by showing that digitalization is not only related to technology but also to changes in the behavior and work practices of the apparatus.

Practically, this research has implications for regional governments to strengthen apparatus capacity through training, competency development, and the implementation of results-based performance evaluation systems. Furthermore, simplification of bureaucratic procedures, improvement of organizational coordination, and optimization of technology utilization in administrative services are necessary. Theoretically, this research enriches public administration studies by emphasizing the experiences, meanings, and organizational dynamics in understanding the effectiveness of apparatus performance.

This study also has limitations because it focuses only on one organizational unit and does not compare it with other agencies. Therefore, future research can expand the study to various regional governments, use comparative approaches, or integrate qualitative and quantitative methods. Further research can also explore the roles of leadership, organizational culture, and digital innovation more deeply in improving the effectiveness of apparatus performance.

Thus, the results of this study indicate that the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration services is a complex phenomenon influenced by individual, organizational, and systemic factors. A holistic approach is needed to understand and improve the quality of public services sustainably.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that the effectiveness of apparatus performance in public administration

services at the General Affairs Section of the Regional Secretariat of Barito Timur Regency is a multidimensional phenomenon influenced by the interaction between individual competence, organizational culture, bureaucratic structure, and the developing service system. The main findings reveal that the professionalism of the apparatus has been carried out according to procedural standards, but there are still disparities in competence and work experience that affect service quality. The service orientation of the apparatus also tends to focus on administrative compliance, so it has not fully adopted the paradigm of responsive public service based on community needs. Furthermore, the hierarchical organizational structure and tiered coordination mechanisms are factors that slow down the service process. Digital transformation has begun to be implemented, but it is still in the adaptation phase, with challenges in aspects of technological competence, work culture, and organizational readiness.

Theoretically, this research contributes to enriching public administration studies by confirming that the effectiveness of apparatus performance cannot only be measured through formal performance indicators but also needs to be understood through experiences, work meanings, and organizational dynamics in a local context. The qualitative approach used provides a more comprehensive perspective on the relationship between individual performance, organizational systems, and public service practices. These findings strengthen the relevance of organizational performance theory, public services, and *good governance*, while also demonstrating the importance of work culture dimensions and service orientation in improving apparatus effectiveness.

Practically, this research has implications for regional governments to strengthen apparatus capacity through needs-based training, digital competency development, and the implementation of performance evaluation systems that are more results-oriented and focused on service quality. In addition, efforts are needed to simplify bureaucratic procedures, improve organizational coordination, and strengthen transformational leadership to encourage an adaptive and innovative work culture change. Optimizing the utilization of information technology is also a strategic step in improving the speed, transparency, and accountability of public administration services.

In terms of policy, these findings show that bureaucratic reform at the regional level needs to be directed not only at regulatory aspects but also at strengthening human resource capacity and transforming organizational culture. Contextual and participatory approaches need to be developed so that public service policies are more responsive to community needs. This research emphasizes the importance of integrating service innovation, apparatus competency development, and flexible organizational systems in realizing effective public administration services.

This study still has limitations because it focuses on one organizational unit and a specific regional context. Therefore, future research is advised to develop comparative approaches across regions, explore the roles of leadership, organizational culture, and digital governance in more depth, and integrate qualitative and quantitative approaches to achieve a more comprehensive understanding. Thus, this research is expected to serve as a basis for developing strategies to improve apparatus performance and the quality of public administration services sustainably in regional governments.

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