

Paradoxical Strategies for Winning Change in Government Bureaucracy

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ABSTRAK

Reformasi birokrasi di Indonesia telah menjadi perhatian utama untuk meningkatkan efisiensi dan transparansi pemerintah. Namun, meskipun berbagai kebijakan reformasi telah dilaksanakan, data menunjukkan bahwa banyak instansi pemerintah masih menghadapi tantangan dalam melaksanakan perubahan yang signifikan. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis faktor-faktor yang menghambat keberhasilan reformasi, strategi yang efektif dalam mendorong perubahan, dan peran teknologi dan dukungan politik dalam proses tersebut. Penelitian ini berfokus pada Lembaga Administrasi Negara (LAN) sebagai studi kasus, mengingat perannya yang krusial dalam reformasi birokrasi di Indonesia. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pendekatan paradoks, seperti pembentukan peta jalan yang fleksibel dan komunikasi informal, dapat memperkuat efektivitas reformasi. Selain itu, dukungan politik yang konsisten dan pelatihan berkelanjutan bagi pegawai juga diidentifikasi sebagai faktor penting dalam mendorong inovasi dan perubahan di sektor birokrasi. Penelitian ini memberikan rekomendasi praktis bagi para pengambil keputusan untuk meningkatkan keberhasilan reformasi birokrasi di Indonesia.

ABSTRACT

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has been a primary focus in efforts to enhance government efficiency and transparency. However, despite the implementation of various reform policies, data reveals that many government agencies still face challenges in implementing significant changes. This research aims to analyze the factors hindering the success of reforms, effective strategies to drive change, and the role of technology and political support in the process. The study focuses on the National Institute of Public Administration (LAN) as a case study due to its crucial role in Indonesia's bureaucratic reform. The findings indicate that paradoxical approaches, such as creating flexible roadmaps and promoting informal communication, can strengthen reform effectiveness. Additionally, consistent political support and ongoing training for employees are identified as key factors in fostering innovation and change within the bureaucracy. This study offers practical recommendations for decision-makers to improve the success of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia has been a key focus in improving government efficiency and transparency for more than a decade. The government has simplified the bureaucracy from 2014-2024. A total of more than 55 thousand organizational units have been simplified. In terms of equalizing structural positions, 43 thousand environmental positions in ministries and institutions have been equalized into functional positions (Beatrix & Apriyansyah, 2022). Apart from that, the PANRB Ministry has also simplified the classification of executive positions from 3,414 classifications to three position classifications. This arrangement is expected to support an increasingly effective and agile bureaucracy in line with the development of digital work mechanisms and business processes.

Since the launch of various reform policies, expectations for creating a more responsive and accountable government system have continued to grow. However, although various initiatives have been implemented, according to the latest data from the Ministry of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform (2023), around 63% of government agencies still face challenges in implementing significant changes.

Figure 1.
Policy Direction for the Implementation of Bureaucratic Reform in Indonesia



Source: <https://menpan.go.id/site/berita-terkini/berkenalan-dengan-konsep-reformasi-birokrasi-general-dan-reformasi-birokrasi-tematik> (2023)

Based on Figure 1 this problem was triggered by several factors, including incongruence between policies formulated at the central level and practices in the field. Often, the policies implemented do not take into account the specific context of each institution, causing difficulties in implementation. This can be seen from the fact that teachers in remote areas have difficulty fulfilling certification requirements, such as a minimum bachelor's degree, while incentives are often paid late, making this policy difficult to implement evenly. In regional autonomy policies, many regional governments lack the capacity and human resources to carry out the authority granted, leading to ineffective implementation. The distribution of village funds is also often uneven, with village heads struggling to understand complex reporting procedures. Bureaucratic reforms, such as cutting echelonization formulated at the central level, are difficult to implement in the regions due to differences in work culture and organizational structure. Additionally, the National Health Insurance system through BPJS often does not suit the conditions of health facilities in remote areas, resulting in hindered health services.

The importance of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia extends beyond national concerns, as it plays a critical role in addressing modern challenges faced by developing countries globally. Effective reform is crucial for improving government efficiency, transparency, and public service delivery, which are key components of sustainable development and poverty alleviation. In the global context, Indonesia's reform efforts align with international calls for better governance, particularly as developing countries face increasing pressure to enhance state capacity in the face of economic challenges, digital transformation, and global competition. For Indonesia, implementing successful bureaucratic reform is essential not only for domestic development but also for positioning itself as a competitive and reliable player in the international arena. The complexity of reform in Indonesia highlights the broader issues faced by emerging economies, where bureaucratic inefficiencies and resource constraints often impede progress, underscoring the need for adaptable and context-specific solutions.

In addition, a rigid and hierarchical bureaucratic culture adds to the complexity of the reform process. Many employees feel trapped in a system that does not support innovation, giving rise to resistance to proposed changes. This resulted in reform objectives such as improving the quality of public services and accountability not being achieved optimally.

In this context, this research focuses on identifying barriers or paradoxes to effective strategies for Winning Change in Government Bureaucracy. By identifying these problems, it is hoped that this research can make a significant contribution in increasing understanding of the dynamics of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia.

The purpose of this research is to identify and analyze strategies for bureaucratic reform, focusing on the State Administration Agency (LAN) as a case study due to its crucial role in capacity building and reform implementation. This research aims to provide practical insights for decision-makers to formulate more effective strategies for strengthening bureaucratic reform in Indonesia, particularly by creating a flexible road map, adaptable organizational structure, and promoting informal communication channels. The study will address key questions such as: What are the barriers to effective reform at LAN? How can paradoxical strategies, like flexibility and informal communication, enhance reform success? What role does leadership support play in driving these reforms? And how can human resource capacity be expanded to support the ongoing reform process? By examining these areas, the research seeks to offer actionable recommendations that can guide policymakers in overcoming the challenges of bureaucratic reform and improving the overall efficiency and responsiveness of Indonesia's public administration system.

In the process, it is hoped that bureaucratic reform will not only be limited to improving administration but also focus on increasing human resource capacity, which is the key to realizing the desired changes. The success of bureaucratic reform is highly dependent on the development of human resource competencies which include transformational leadership, mastery of technology, analysis and problem solving, adaptability, effective communication, and professional ethics and integrity. Leaders must be able to inspire and direct change, while ASNs need to master technology to support e-government and digital-based public services. Analytical capabilities are needed to respond to complex challenges, along with flexibility and resilience in the face of change. Good communication skills ensure policies can be communicated clearly, while integrity builds public trust and transparency. By integrating innovation and creativity into every process, reform not only improves administrative efficiency but also the overall quality of public services.

Furthermore, it is important to create an organizational culture that supports change. A bureaucratic culture that is open to innovation and change is necessary so that employees feel safe to propose new ideas. This can be achieved by promoting open communication between leaders and staff and rewarding employees who show initiative in reform.

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia also needs to consider technology as a tool to drive efficiency and transparency. In today's digital era, the use of information technology can help speed up.

Administrative processes can be simplified, and the accessibility of public services can be significantly improved through the implementation of electronic-based government systems (e-Government). This system utilizes digital technology to reduce bureaucratic delays, automate routine tasks, and provide an online platform for the public to access services. By minimizing physical barriers and enabling anytime and anywhere access to essential services, e-Government can make public administration more inclusive, especially for remote or underserved communities. In addition, the integration of real-time data management and transparent processes will encourage greater efficiency and accountability, ultimately increasing public trust and satisfaction with government performance. Therefore, public services must respect the values, needs and preferences of citizens, and encourage dialogue and consultation as stated by Denhardt in (Nubala et al., 2024).

Finally, consistent political support is critical to the success of bureaucratic reform. Without support from stakeholders at the highest level, reform efforts will be difficult to implement effectively. Political commitment ensures that reforms are not only endorsed but also receive the necessary resources and prioritization within government agendas. This support is especially important in navigating political resistance and ensuring sustained momentum throughout the reform process. Therefore, collaboration between government, civil society, and the private sector is key to creating an enabling environment for reform.

Moreover, the role of technology in bureaucratic reform cannot be overstated. Globally, digital transformation has been a key driver of efficiency and transparency in government. E-government initiatives, for instance, have revolutionized public administration by automating routine tasks, improving service delivery, and making government processes more accessible to citizens. Research by Heeks (2020) and Park et al. (2021) demonstrates that technology enables governments to reduce corruption, enhance data management, and streamline operations, contributing significantly to improved governance. In the context of bureaucratic reform, the integration of information technology provides a pathway to overcoming traditional inefficiencies and building more transparent, accountable, and responsive systems. As seen in countries like Estonia and Singapore, which have successfully implemented digital government strategies, technology can drive profound changes in public sector performance, demonstrating that a combination of political support and technological innovation is essential for successful reform.

Throughout this process, this research aims to produce concrete and applicable recommendations specifically tailored for decision-makers at the State Administration Institute (LAN) and the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (Kemenpan RB). By identifying the key factors that influence the success of bureaucratic reform, the findings can guide LAN in designing targeted capacity-building programs for civil servants and developing frameworks for adaptive governance. Simultaneously, the research can assist Kemenpan RB in formulating policies that align with on-the-ground realities, ensuring streamlined processes, enhanced public service delivery, and measurable outcomes. These recommendations aim to support both institutions in implementing bureaucratic reform initiatives more effectively, thus maximizing their societal impact.

Through a more flexible and responsive approach, and involving the active participation of all relevant parties, bureaucratic reform can achieve its main goal of creating a better and more accountable government. Thus, this research not only contributes to the development of science in the field of public administration but also provides practical benefits for the improvement of the government system in Indonesia as a whole.

Literature Review

Bureaucratic reform has become an important theme in the study of public administration in various countries, including Indonesia. For instance, South Korea has successfully implemented bureaucratic reform through its Government 3.0 initiative, which emphasizes transparency, citizen engagement, and data-driven governance. This approach has enhanced public service delivery and increased trust in government institutions. Similarly, Singapore is often cited for its highly efficient bureaucracy, achieved through strict merit-based recruitment, continuous professional development, and the integration of technology in governance. These examples provide valuable lessons for Indonesia, highlighting the importance of leadership, innovation, and adaptability in

overcoming challenges and driving successful reform in a global context. As an effort to increase government efficiency, transparency and accountability, this reform faces various challenges which often cause its implementation to not run as expected. These challenges include resistance from internal bureaucracies who are reluctant to change due to comfort factors or lack of understanding of the benefits of reform, lack of human resource capacity to implement new policies, and overlapping regulations that hamper the decision-making process. Apart from that, limited technological infrastructure in some areas, especially remote areas, and a work culture that still prioritizes formality over real results are also significant obstacles. All of this slows down efforts to create a bureaucracy that is more modern, responsive and serves society optimally.

The concept of bureaucratic reform and inhibiting factors

Almahdali et al. (2024) define bureaucratic reform as a series of actions aimed at transforming government operations to enhance effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness to societal needs. This reform encompasses changes in organizational structure and the development of human resource capacity. Shoimuna (2024) emphasizes that bureaucratic reform must prioritize accountability and transparency, enabling the public to monitor government performance more effectively. Transparency can be achieved through mechanisms such as open data initiatives, public access to performance reports, and digital platforms that facilitate real-time communication between the government and citizens.

Prasojo (2020) noted that in Indonesia, bureaucratic reform began in the early 2000s with the passing of Law Number 43/1999 on Civil Service Principles. Since then, various policies and initiatives have been introduced to support reform, but the results achieved are still far from expectations (Sari & SH, 2024). Many government agencies have treated reforms as mere formalities, without yielding significant practical changes (Hakim, n.d.). For instance, the implementation of performance-based budgeting has often been reduced to a procedural requirement, where agencies submit detailed plans and reports but fail to translate them into measurable improvements in public services. Similarly, the introduction of e-government platforms in some regions has been limited to establishing websites or online portals that are rarely updated or do not function effectively, instead of genuinely improving service delivery. These examples highlight the gap between policy intentions and their execution, emphasizing the need for more substantive efforts to ensure that reforms lead to real, impactful changes in governance practices.

Various studies show that several factors hinder the success of bureaucratic reform, one of which is the misalignment between policy and practice in the field. According to Subianto (2020), policies that fail to account for the specific context of each agency are often impractical and challenging to implement. For instance, a one-size-fits-all approach to digital transformation disregards disparities in technological infrastructure and human resource capabilities between urban and rural agencies, leading to uneven adoption of e-government initiatives. Similarly, standardized performance indicators may overlook the unique functions and priorities of different institutions, resulting in inefficiencies and demotivation among employees.

This misalignment is further exacerbated by a rigid and hierarchical bureaucratic culture, where employees are hesitant to propose innovations or voice concerns about impractical policies, as noted by Dwiyanto (2021). Such a culture stifles creativity and discourages adaptive problem-solving, which are essential for reform to succeed. For example, in many agencies, top-down directives dominate, leaving little room for localized solutions

that address specific challenges. As a result, policies that appear effective on paper often fail to achieve their intended outcomes, undermining the overall goals of bureaucratic reform.

In addition, resistance to change is also a major challenge. Research by Zein (2023) states that government employees often feel threatened by reforms that are perceived to change their position and career stability. Therefore, it is important to create an organizational culture that supports innovation and change. (Hamdillah, 2023).

Strategies to Drive Change

To encourage more significant changes in government bureaucracy, there are several strategies that can be implemented. One of them is a paradoxical approach, where reform does not have to follow rigid procedures, but must be flexible and responsive to the specific needs of each institution (Sawir, 2020). This strategy aims to simplify processes, improve service delivery, and foster a culture of innovation and adaptability within government agencies. By addressing structural inefficiencies, empowering human resources, and leveraging technology, these approaches aim to build a bureaucracy capable of effectively responding to the challenges of a rapidly changing world while maintaining public trust and satisfaction. Creating a road map that is not tied to a physical form is one example of how reform can be carried out with a more adaptive approach (Hanafi, 2023). In this context, "not tied to a physical form" refers to the flexibility in the reform process, which moves away from rigid, traditional structures and allows for dynamic, context-sensitive approaches. This can involve decentralization, where decision-making and implementation are more localized, enabling agencies to adapt reforms based on their specific needs. It also includes the transition to digital systems, where processes are not reliant on physical paperwork or manual procedures, but instead leverage technology to enhance efficiency and responsiveness. This adaptive road map allows for ongoing adjustments and improvements, ensuring that reforms are relevant and effective in the face of changing circumstances. In addition, it is important to strengthen a flexible organizational structure. According to Kotter (Rifdan et al., 2024) stated that organizations that can adapt quickly to environmental changes will be more successful in implementing reforms. This can be done by providing decentralization in decision-making so that lower-level employees have more power to innovate.

Informal communication reform channels also play an important role in encouraging bureaucratic success (Figenschou, 2020). Research by Dühring & Zeffass (2021) shows that communication outside formal structures is often more effective in conveying information and responding to problems quickly. This is because informal communication fosters quicker decision-making, enhances collaboration, and encourages a more open exchange of ideas. In bureaucratic settings, where formal channels can be slow and hierarchical, informal communication can create a more agile response system. For example, in the Finnish public sector, the use of informal networks and cross-departmental collaboration has led to faster implementation of reforms, as employees freely share insights and suggestions without waiting for formal approval. Similarly, in Singapore's Civil Service, informal "innovation hubs" encourage open dialogue among employees at all levels, allowing them to brainstorm solutions to challenges in real-time. By promoting informal communication, bureaucracies can break down silos, reduce inefficiencies, and facilitate the smoother implementation of reforms.

Use of Technology in Reform

In the current digital era, the use of information technology is a crucial factor in bureaucratic reform (Park et al., 2021). The implementation of an electronic-based government system (e-government) can significantly enhance the efficiency and transparency of public services (Ismail et al., 2020). E-government streamlines administrative processes by automating tasks, reducing manual interventions, and speeding up service delivery, making it easier for citizens to access public services. Additionally, it fosters transparency by providing real-time access to government data, allowing the public to track processes and decisions, which increases accountability. For example, Estonia's e-government system enables citizens to access most government services online, including voting, tax filing, and public records, all through a secure digital identity system. This has not only made public services more efficient but also greatly reduced opportunities for corruption. However, the implementation of e-government in Indonesia still faces several challenges, particularly in terms of infrastructure readiness and human resource capacity (Karunia et al., 2023). To overcome these barriers, a comprehensive strategy is needed, focusing on improving digital infrastructure, training personnel, and fostering a culture of innovation within the bureaucracy to ensure that information technology can effectively support bureaucratic reform.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study method to identify and analyze strategies that can encourage bureaucratic reform in Indonesia, especially at the State Administrative Agency (LAN). This method was chosen because it allows for in-depth exploration of complex and context-specific phenomena. In contrast to quantitative methods, which focus on numerical data and generalizability, qualitative research offers a deeper understanding of the underlying factors, challenges, and perspectives involved in bureaucratic processes. According to scholars like Denzin and Lincoln (2018), qualitative research is particularly suited for studying complex social phenomena because it captures the nuances of human behavior, institutional dynamics, and the cultural context of the organization. By using case studies, researchers can examine real-life examples in detail, uncovering differences such as organizational culture, stakeholder dynamics, and the practical implications of reform efforts. This approach is useful when dealing with complex, multifaceted problems such as bureaucratic reform, where human behavior, institutional culture, and contextual factors play a significant role.

This research design includes several integrated steps, namely data collection, data analysis, and presentation of findings (Saharan et al., 2020). Data collection was conducted through in-depth interview techniques, observation, and document analysis. The in-depth interviews involved 15 to 20 key participants, including senior officials at the State Administration Agency (LAN), middle-management staff, and external experts on bureaucratic reform. This diverse range of participants allows for a comprehensive understanding of different perspectives on the reform process. Additionally, the research involved analyzing a variety of documents, including reform policy reports, strategic plans, performance evaluation reports, and meeting minutes from relevant departments. By triangulating these data sources, the research aims to provide a holistic view of the challenges and opportunities faced in bureaucratic reform at LAN. This multifaceted approach ensures a well-rounded and thorough examination of the subject.

In-depth interviews were conducted with various stakeholders, including structural officials at LAN, employees, as well as external parties such as academics and practitioners in the field of public administration. The selection of respondents was based on specific criteria to ensure that

the sample aligned with the research objectives and captured a diverse range of perspectives. First, participants were chosen based on their roles and positions within the organization. Structural officials at LAN were selected for their involvement in policy formulation and decision-making processes, providing valuable insights into the strategic direction of bureaucratic reform. Employees, on the other hand, were included to offer a more grounded perspective on the day-to-day implementation challenges they face. Additionally, external academics and practitioners were invited to contribute their expertise and offer a broader view of public administration practices, both theoretically and from a practical standpoint.

Furthermore, the experience and expertise of the participants played a crucial role in the selection process. Those with significant experience in bureaucratic reform or public administration were prioritized to ensure that the interviews would provide in-depth and relevant knowledge. To ensure comprehensive coverage of the topic, participants were selected to represent a diversity of viewpoints. This included varying professional backgrounds, ranks, and perspectives within the organization, ensuring that both top-down and bottom-up views were captured. By carefully selecting participants based on these criteria, the research aimed to gather a rich variety of insights that would provide a holistic understanding of the challenges, opportunities, and impacts of bureaucratic reform at LAN.

In addition to interviews, researchers also conducted direct observations at LAN to gain a deeper understanding of the work dynamics and interactions between employees. The observation phase lasted for a period of six weeks, with researchers making regular visits to LAN on a weekly basis. Each observation session lasted between 4 to 6 hours, allowing the researchers to capture a range of daily activities and interpersonal dynamics across different times of the day. These observations focused on various aspects, including employee behaviors, communication patterns, decision-making processes, and informal interactions within the organization. By conducting multiple observations throughout the research period, the researchers were able to gather diverse, real-time insights that complemented the interview data and document analysis. The frequency and duration of these observations ensured that the researchers could identify recurring patterns and nuances in the organizational environment, which enriched the interpretation of the interview findings and provided context for the analyzed documents. This triangulated approach helped to provide a comprehensive and well-rounded understanding of the bureaucratic reform process at LAN.

Document analysis was also an important part of the research. Official documents, including annual reports, policies, and strategic documents relevant to bureaucratic reform at LAN, were analyzed to identify how the policies were implemented and to understand their objectives and intended outcomes. Specifically, the analysis focused on documents from the past five years (2018-2023), which included LAN's annual reports, strategic planning documents, performance evaluation reports, and reform progress reports. These documents provided insight into the policies and actions taken by LAN to implement bureaucratic reforms and allowed the researchers to assess the alignment between official strategies and their actual outcomes. By analyzing these documents, the researchers could trace the evolution of LAN's reform efforts, evaluate the success of various initiatives, and identify potential gaps between policy intentions and practical implementation. The selected timeframe ensured that the documents reflected recent reform initiatives, offering a current and relevant context for the research.

Once the data was collected, it was analyzed using a thematic analysis approach. The process began with familiarization, where researchers reviewed all data to identify initial patterns, followed by coding key segments of the data with descriptive labels. These codes were grouped into categories, and broader themes were extracted iteratively, ensuring they accurately

represented the data.

To ensure the validity and reliability of the research, several specific steps in data triangulation were taken. Data from interviews, observations, and documents were cross-checked to identify consistent patterns and discrepancies. For instance, findings from interviews were compared with observational notes to confirm whether reported practices aligned with observed behaviors. Similarly, document analysis was used to validate claims made by informants, ensuring that reported policies or initiatives matched the official records. To further enhance reliability, key findings were shared with informants for validation, allowing them to provide feedback and confirm the accuracy of interpretations. This iterative process ensured that the results were grounded in multiple sources of evidence and reflected a well-rounded perspective.

In terms of ethical considerations, the study adhered to strict protocols to protect participant privacy and maintain data confidentiality. All participants were provided with a detailed explanation of the study's objectives, methods, and potential implications before being asked to participate. Written informed consent was obtained, ensuring that participation was voluntary and based on a clear understanding of the research. Data confidentiality was preserved by anonymizing participant identities in all records and analyses, with sensitive information stored securely in password-protected files accessible only to authorized researchers. These measures ensured ethical integrity and fostered trust between researchers and participants throughout the study.

By using this method, the research is expected to produce in-depth and meaningful findings on effective strategies for promoting bureaucratic reform in Indonesia. Specifically, the study aims to generate recommendations that address key areas such as enhancing organizational flexibility, fostering a culture of innovation, and improving the implementation of e-government systems. For instance, recommendations may include the development of adaptive roadmaps tailored to specific institutional needs, comprehensive training programs to strengthen human resource capacity, and strategies to promote informal communication as a tool for collaboration and problem-solving.

The potential impact of these findings includes enabling LAN and other government institutions to implement reforms more effectively, ensuring that policies align with practical realities. By improving leadership support, streamlining processes, and leveraging technology, these recommendations could lead to more responsive and accountable public services. Additionally, the findings may help shape future policy frameworks, fostering a more efficient, transparent, and innovative bureaucratic system that ultimately builds public trust and enhances government performance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The results of this study highlight the importance of paradoxical strategies in promoting bureaucratic reform at the State Administration Institute (LAN). In this context, paradoxical strategies refer to approaches that balance seemingly contradictory elements, such as maintaining organizational structure while allowing flexibility and adaptability. These strategies recognize the need for stability to ensure accountability and consistency, while also embracing change and innovation to address evolving challenges. By combining these opposing forces, paradoxical strategies offer a dynamic framework for overcoming rigid bureaucratic cultures and fostering more effective reform implementation.

The findings of this study reveal that both internal and external factors significantly influence bureaucratic reform at the State Administration Agency (LAN). Internally, a rigid organizational

culture that emphasizes formal procedures stifles innovation and flexibility, while consistent leadership support is essential to maintain momentum for reforms. Additionally, ongoing human resource capacity building through training and development is crucial for empowering employees to adapt to new systems. Externally, political commitment provides the necessary legitimacy and resources for reform, and technological challenges, including inadequate training and cybersecurity issues, must be addressed for successful e-government implementation. Furthermore, effective inter-agency collaboration is key to ensuring that reforms are cohesive and supported across different sectors.

One of the key findings was that employees at LAN felt trapped in a system that prioritized formal procedures over effective outcomes. Research by Sarjito (2023) highlights that rigid organizational cultures are a common barrier to innovation, as they discourage risk-taking and creative problem-solving. This aligns with broader studies, such as Dwiyanto (2021), which emphasize that overly hierarchical bureaucracies often result in inefficiencies and demotivation among employees. Excessive focus on formalities and standardization can hinder adaptability and responsiveness, critical components for fostering innovation. At LAN, these challenges were evident, with many employees expressing dissatisfaction with bureaucratic processes perceived as overly complex and slow. For example, an interview with one employee revealed that "a lot of time is wasted on fulfilling administrative requirements, while the expected innovation does not happen." These findings underscore the need for reform strategies that address cultural rigidity and promote a balance between procedural accountability and creative flexibility.

On the other hand, implementing a flexible road map allows employees to adapt to the dynamics at hand. A flexible road map refers to a strategic framework that outlines key goals and actions while allowing for adjustments based on changing circumstances and emerging needs. Unlike rigid, predetermined plans, a flexible road map incorporates mechanisms for regular feedback, monitoring, and iterative improvements. It is developed through collaborative processes involving input from multiple stakeholders, ensuring it is both inclusive and adaptable. Key elements of such a road map include clear objectives, flexible timelines, and built-in contingencies to address uncertainties. By enabling adjustments in decision-making and execution, it provides employees with the autonomy to innovate and respond proactively to challenges. This approach aligns with Rainey's view in (Rifdan et al., 2024), which emphasizes that organizations capable of adapting to environmental changes are more likely to succeed in reform efforts. By empowering employees with decision-making freedom, a flexible road map fosters commitment, engagement, and a sense of ownership in the reform process.

In addition, observations show that informal communication plays an important role in fostering collaboration and innovation. At LAN, various types of informal communication were observed, including casual conversations during breaks, impromptu brainstorming sessions among colleagues, and spontaneous discussions in informal forums or chat groups. For example, some employees mentioned that during lunch breaks, they often exchanged ideas about how to streamline certain bureaucratic processes, leading to suggestions that were later incorporated into formal meetings. Similarly, informal discussion groups organized by employees allowed participants to share insights and propose solutions to ongoing challenges without the constraints of hierarchy or rigid protocols.

These informal interactions contributed to collaboration by breaking down silos between departments, enabling employees to connect across organizational boundaries. They also fostered innovation by providing a safe space for employees to propose unconventional ideas and receive immediate feedback from peers. Mintzberg (Lestari et al., 2022) supports this, noting that informal communication creates a more responsive network by facilitating open and

dynamic information exchange. At LAN, this approach has proven effective in generating actionable ideas that may not have emerged in more formal, structured settings, highlighting the value of informal communication as a catalyst for organizational reform.

While there is potential in the use of paradoxical strategies, challenges remain, especially in the context of the use of information technology. E-government, as part of bureaucratic reform, has great potential to improve efficiency and transparency. However, Heeks' research (Nugroho & Purbokusumo, 2020) shows that the successful implementation of this technology depends on organizational readiness and employee training. At LAN, it was found that despite significant investments in technology, several challenges hinder its optimal use.

One of the primary issues is the lack of comprehensive training programs, which leaves many employees unfamiliar with using new digital systems effectively. This is compounded by limited technical support, particularly in troubleshooting and system maintenance, which can lead to frustration and reduced adoption of these technologies. Additionally, infrastructure disparities between central and regional offices further complicate implementation, as some locations lack reliable internet access or updated hardware necessary to run e-government platforms. Resistance to change among employees accustomed to traditional methods also poses a challenge, with some perceiving digital tools as overly complex or unnecessary.

Moreover, insufficient integration between legacy systems and new technologies can result in inefficiencies, such as data inconsistencies or redundant processes. Lastly, cybersecurity concerns, including a lack of robust protocols to protect sensitive information, further hinder the confidence and effectiveness of e-government systems. These challenges illustrate the multifaceted nature of reform efforts and emphasize the need for a holistic approach that addresses both technical and human resource dimensions to achieve successful digital transformation.

Furthermore, analysis of leadership support also shows that the success of bureaucratic reform is strongly influenced by commitment from the top level. Interviews with officials at LAN revealed that support from leaders is very important in encouraging employees to innovate. One senior official stated, "When leadership is visibly engaged and supportive, it inspires confidence in the reform process. However, when there's ambiguity in leadership's stance, employees hesitate to push forward with new ideas, fearing their initiatives might not be supported." This highlights the direct link between leadership support and employee engagement in reform efforts. Kotter (Maigahoaku et al., 2024) noted that successful organizational change is often led by individuals or groups who have authority and support from the highest level.

Uncertainty in leadership support often manifests in the form of mixed messages or a lack of clear direction. For example, during the implementation of a new digital system at LAN, some employees noted that while the initiative was officially endorsed, there was no follow-up from top leadership regarding resources or encouragement to fully embrace the change. One employee remarked, "We were told to use the new system, but there was no ongoing support or recognition of our efforts, which made it feel like the leadership wasn't truly committed." This kind of uncertainty can lead to hesitation among employees, resulting in slower adoption of reform initiatives and missed opportunities for innovation. In practice, this uncertainty undermines morale and stifles the willingness of employees to take risks or suggest innovative solutions, ultimately hindering the overall success of bureaucratic reform.

It is important to note that successful bureaucratic reform cannot be achieved in a short period. This research shows that change takes time, as well as commitment from all stakeholders. Employees need to see concrete results from reforms to stay motivated. In line with this,

research by Setiawan et al. (2024) emphasized the importance of accountability and transparency in reform, where employees feel that they have a significant role in achieving organizational goals. The study observed a timeframe of several years for meaningful reform progress to be made, particularly at LAN. This extended timeline reflects the need for gradual cultural shifts, infrastructure improvements, and continuous stakeholder engagement to create lasting change. Such a timeline also allows for the refinement of strategies and the integration of feedback from employees, ensuring that reforms remain relevant and effective as they are rolled out.

In the context of the challenges faced by LAN, the extended timeframe highlights that the reforms are not a quick fix but rather a long-term process that requires ongoing effort and adaptation. This process includes providing consistent support for capacity-building, technology implementation, and leadership development to sustain momentum.

Regarding the mention of "improved coordination between the public and private sectors," it appears that there was a redundancy in the statement. The intended point was likely to emphasize the need for improved coordination between the public and private sectors to support reform efforts. Effective collaboration between these sectors can help bridge gaps in resources, expertise, and technology, creating a more conducive environment for successful bureaucratic reform. Therefore, the redundant phrase should be revised to clarify the importance of such coordination without repetition.

Cybersecurity is a critical focus for future strategies to improve the quality of electronic-based government systems. As government services become increasingly digitized through e-government platforms, the risks associated with cyber threats, such as data breaches, hacking, and unauthorized access to sensitive information, grow significantly. These risks could undermine public trust in government systems, disrupt service delivery, and result in financial and reputational damage. For example, a security breach in a public service platform could expose citizens' personal data or interfere with the functionality of essential services. Therefore, strengthening cybersecurity is essential not only to protect data and systems but also to ensure the continued effectiveness and reliability of e-government initiatives, which are foundational to bureaucratic reform.

In terms of expanding human resource capacity at LAN, one approach would be to implement targeted, ongoing training programs focused on developing both technical and soft skills. These programs should be designed to address emerging trends, such as the integration of new technologies (e.g., artificial intelligence, data analytics, and cloud computing) and strengthening digital literacy across all levels of the organization. Additionally, offering certifications and specialized training in cybersecurity, project management, and digital governance would equip employees with the necessary skills to manage and safeguard the digital transformation of government services. Regular workshops, seminars, and online courses could also be used to continuously update staff on best practices and new tools.

To effectively enhance employee capabilities, LAN should prioritize training in areas directly related to the broader goals of bureaucratic reform, such as technological proficiency, adaptive leadership, problem-solving, and collaboration. These skills are essential for fostering an innovative environment where employees are empowered to propose and implement solutions that respond to changing public needs. Training initiatives should also focus on fostering a culture of accountability, where employees understand the importance of transparency, ethical decision-making, and proactive problem resolution in driving reform. By investing in these areas,

LAN can create a more agile, capable, and responsive workforce, ultimately supporting the success of the broader reform agenda.

CONCLUSIONS

From the results and discussion above, it is clear that the implementation of paradoxical strategies can be key to promoting bureaucratic reform at the State Administration Agency (LAN). Rigid organizational culture, resistance to change, and challenges in using information technology are significant barriers. However, the findings highlight that introducing flexibility in road map creation, fostering informal communication channels, and ensuring consistent leadership support can empower employees and encourage their active involvement in the reform process. For example, informal discussion groups at LAN have helped generate new ideas, while flexible approaches in road map design have allowed employees to adapt to evolving needs. These strategies have proven effective in overcoming organizational inertia and fostering a culture of innovation.

The importance of political support and commitment from all stakeholders cannot be overstated. Political support provides the necessary authority and legitimacy for reforms to be implemented effectively. Without strong backing from political leaders, initiatives may face delays or lack the resources required for successful execution. For example, consistent support from the top levels of government was crucial for the success of e-government projects in countries like Estonia, where political commitment ensured that technology-driven reforms were adequately funded and prioritized. In Indonesia, strong political commitment can drive the alignment of various agencies and foster inter-agency collaboration, ensuring that reform strategies are not stalled due to political indecision or fragmentation.

The success of bureaucratic reform requires close cooperation between leaders and employees. This "close cooperation" can be seen in practices such as joint strategy workshops, regular feedback loops between management and staff, and cross-departmental task forces that work collaboratively to implement reforms. For instance, creating task forces composed of both high-level leaders and frontline employees can ensure that reform strategies reflect the needs and experiences of those directly involved in the service delivery process. Furthermore, engaging employees in decision-making fosters a sense of ownership and accountability, making the reform process more inclusive and effective. By nurturing these collaborative frameworks, LAN can enhance its reform efforts, ensuring that they are not only top-down but also reflect the insights and innovation of the employees who execute the policies. This approach ensures that bureaucratic reforms are sustainable and impactful, ultimately improving public services and building public trust in the government.

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