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Educational Bureaucracy in Indonesia and Its Implications for School Governance

Sabrina Syifaurrehman*, Jefpi Milda, Muhammad Sirozi

Islamic Religious Education, Universitas Islam Negeri Raden Fatah, Palembang, 30126, Indonesia

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* Corresponding author:

E-mail: syifaurrehman@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

The education bureaucracy in Indonesia has an important role in maintaining national education standards through regulating and supervising the implementation of education policies. However, in practice, the education bureaucracy is often perceived as slow, overly formal and bureaucratic. Long administrative procedures can hamper schools' flexibility in management, such as decision making, financial and budgetary management, teacher recruitment and management, and curriculum and learning systems development. This article aims to analyze the implications of the education bureaucracy on school governance in Indonesia using a library research approach and descriptive analysis. The results showed that a rigid and centralized education bureaucracy can inhibit creativity and innovation at the school level, but on the other hand, it is also needed to ensure the effectiveness of policy implementation and equitable distribution of education services. Therefore, a more adaptive and efficient education bureaucracy reform is needed, such as decentralized authority, simplified regulations, increased transparency and accountability, and developed the capacity of education human resources, so that schools can have more space to innovate in improved the quality of education.

1. Introduction

Education is one of the main pillars of national development. In the Indonesian context, the national education system is regulated hierarchically and bureaucratically, with the involvement of the central government, regional governments, and educational units at the school level. Education has a very strategic role in forming human resources that are quality, competitive and able to face global challenges. According to Murjani's research, effective bureaucracy can improve school performance, while bad bureaucracy can actually hinder innovation and development (Murjani, 2022). In Indonesia, education management is under the framework of a complex and tiered government bureaucratic system.

The education bureaucracy is one of the key aspects of Indonesia's education system, playing an important role in the management and implementation of education policies. The complex bureaucratic structure plays an important role in policy formulation, resource management and implementation of education programs at the school level. The education bureaucracy is designed to ensure uniformity of national standards, equity of services and effectiveness in the implementation of education policies. However, in practice, the education bureaucracy often faces challenges related to budget absorption and resource allocation. According to a report by the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP, 2022), there are many cases of ineffective use of the education budget due to complicated bureaucratic procedures. This has a direct impact on the quality of education services received by students.

Other challenges include lengthy administrative procedures, limited school authority in decision-making, and lack of flexibility in managing finances and teaching staff (Fatmawati, 2019). In line with Nurkolis' research, there are several challenges faced, including apathy among education service providers, lack of independent authority at the school level, and the quality of bureaucrats who are not always up to standard or competent (Nurkolis, 2013). This can have an impact on school governance, especially in the aspects of decision-making, budget management, and innovation in the teaching and learning process (Kristiawan et al., 2017). Thus, the effectiveness in achieving the goals of quality education that is relevant to the needs of society, especially schools, can be affected.

Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of bureaucracy in education is important to study. This article aims to analyze educational bureaucracy and its implications for school governance. By understanding the impact of educational bureaucracy, it is hoped that appropriate solutions can be found to improve the effectiveness of school management and ultimately improve the quality of education in Indonesia.

2. Methodology

This research uses a library research approach or literature study. Library study is a research that uses written sources available in libraries, archives, or other documentation which in this case uses books, journal articles, and other written works that are relevant to the research problem by collecting, analyzing, and interpreting data (Zed, 2008). The analysis technique used is descriptive analysis technique where after the data review, the results and discussion will be outlined in descriptive form. By using this approach, it is expected that the research can provide a comprehensive and theoretical description or information on the issues discussed without collecting field data directly.

3. Result and Discussion

Education Bureaucracy in Indonesia

Bureaucracy is an administrative system with written rules that regulate the duties and responsibilities of individuals, involving a clear division of labor and hierarchy as a key element (Ali et al., 2023). Bureaucracy comes from the word bureau in French meaning “writing desk” and kratos in Greek meaning “government” which is understood as people who work behind an office desk (Sawir, 2020). Bureaucracy can be in the form of work procedures, organizational systems, and power to make decisions (Amruddin et al., 2022). The bureaucratic system includes strict regulations, controlling people's behavior to ensure order, discipline in line, and fair distribution of resources for all citizens. Bureaucracy itself is built to create a conducive environment or organization.

The development of bureaucracy occurs in various fields, one of which is in the field of education. Bureaucracy in government institutions is not included in political power, but the emphasis is more on administrative technical aspects (Sawir, 2020). The implementation of bureaucracy in education functions as a supervisory mechanism that ensures that every educational policy and program is implemented correctly and effectively and allows for policy evaluation and adjustment based on the needs and developments that occur in society (Adawiyah et al., 2024). In addition, the implementation of educational bureaucracy is expected to improve the governance and quality of education in Indonesia. Thus, the education bureaucracy is a system of administration and management of education carried out by the government through various policies, regulations and multilevel organizational structures.

The education bureaucracy in Indonesia, starting from the central government level to local governments, is in charge of developing the applicable curriculum, providing teaching and education personnel, determining budget allocations, procuring facilities and infrastructure and their maintenance, paying attention to the implementation of the teaching and learning process, preparing an education evaluation system, ensuring the quality of education and so on (Adawiyah et al., 2024). The bureaucratic system aims to maintain national education standards, such as in terms of curriculum, educator management, equal access, and ensuring the effectiveness of implementing education policies in schools. In other words, the purpose of the bureaucratic system is to create an effective, consistent and structured organizational structure so that duties and responsibilities can be clearly defined. The existence of standardized procedures also allows for efficient resource management and accountability (Smith & Larimer, 2004).

However, on the negative side, bureaucracy is often a barrier to innovation and creativity. Rigid and complicated procedures can prevent teachers and principals from making quick and appropriate decisions. For example, in emergency situations such as the COVID-19 pandemic, many schools find it difficult to adapt to online learning because they have to follow pre-established procedures.

Research by Prabowo shows that schools that are able to adapt quickly have better learning outcomes compared to those stuck in rigid bureaucracy (Kholis, 2015). Bureaucracy can also cause a gap between policy and practice on the ground. Many policies are well designed at the central level but are not implemented effectively at the school level. This is often due to a lack of understanding and support from administrators and educators. Therefore, it is important to create good communication channels between all parties involved in education. In addition, bureaucracy is often perceived as slow and overly formal (Ali et al., 2023). The tendency of bureaucracy in educational institutions is complicated in providing services to the community because there are so many stages that must be passed. It is the impression of prioritizing bureaucracy that can override the main task of educators (Fatmawati, 2019). Bureaucracy itself has a number of characteristics including:

1. The work is very strict and rule-oriented where the tasks are specialized or specific.
2. Usually rigid or formal.
3. It is centralized and usually does not violate the agreed provisions.
4. The form is structured, which has a clear organizational structure.
5. Obedient and obedient to existing rules or regulations due to the existence of vertical hierarchical authority.
6. Sometimes service procedures are convoluted, making the decision-making process difficult (Amruddin et al., 2022).

In Indonesia, the education bureaucracy is often faced with challenges such as a lack of transparency and accountability. Based on data from the Ministry of Education and Culture (Kemendikbud), there are more than 50,000 schools in Indonesia operating under various levels of bureaucracy, from central to regional levels (Kemendikbud, 2022). This shows the complexity of the existing system, where each layer of bureaucracy has different, but often overlapping roles and responsibilities. The education bureaucratic system also includes various regulations that schools must follow, such as curriculum, budget management and reporting. However, often these regulations are not accompanied by adequate training for educators and school administrators, resulting in a gap between policy and implementation in the field. For example, research (Pontoh et al., 2017) shows that many school principals do not fully understand the existing regulations, resulting in errors in managing BOS (School Operational Assistance) funds.

Basically, bureaucracy is essentially a tool whose function is to facilitate public services (Arrafiatus, 2011). Various problems, especially in the field of education, such as education services without discrimination, the availability of funds for compulsory education programs, the availability of quality educators, the development of educators, educational facilities and infrastructure, and supervision of education implementation are the main obstacles in creating quality education (Arifin & Akhiruddin, 2022). This is also due to the education bureaucracy that does not run according to its provisions. If the bureaucracy is run

correctly, consistently, responsibly, professionally, firmly and efficiently, the quality of education will advance.

Bureaucracy has a very important role in the education system, especially in terms of management and administration. One of the main functions of bureaucracy is to ensure order and certainty in the implementation of education policies. With a clear bureaucratic structure, each individual in the education system can understand their roles and responsibilities, which in turn will improve the efficiency of school operations. Furthermore, the bureaucracy also functions as a controller of education quality. Through various mechanisms, such as accreditation and evaluation, the bureaucracy can ensure that the set education standards are adhered to by all institutions. Data from the National Accreditation Board for Schools/Madrassas (BAN-S/M) show that accredited schools perform better in terms of student learning outcomes compared to non-accredited schools (BAN-S/M, 2021).

The importance of bureaucracy lies not only in the aspect of supervision, but also in the development of education itself. An effective bureaucracy can act as a bridge between government policy and practice in the field. For example, education programs launched by the central government must be well implemented at the school level and this requires the support from a strong and responsive bureaucracy.

Bureaucratic Culture and Academic Culture

Bureaucratic culture and academic culture have different characteristics that can effect school governance. Bureaucratic culture tends to focus on compliance with rules and procedures, while academic culture emphasis on innovation, creativity and knowledge development. In the context of education, bureaucratic culture emphasises efficiency and effectiveness, while academic culture encourages collaboration and exploration (Aji, 2019).

One of the striking differences between these two cultures is the way decisions are made. In a bureaucratic culture, decisions are usually made by those in authority based on established procedures, whereas in academic cultures, decisions often involve discussion and consideration from various parties, including students and teachers (Le et al., 2022). This can cause tension between administrators and educators, especially if the policies set are not in line with existing academic needs. A clear example of this difference can be seen in curriculum management. In many schools, the curriculum is rigidly set by the government without considering the local context and the needs of students, resulting in a lack of relevance of the material being taught, so students are not motivated to learn.

To ensure that bureaucracy does not undermine academic culture, there needs to be a balance between adherence to procedures and freedom to innovate. One solution is to give schools greater autonomy in the management of the curriculum and teaching methods. Thus, schools can customise their approach according to the needs of students and the local context. In addition, it is important to create a

culture of collaboration among educators. Schools can organise activities that encourage collaboration between teachers, such as working groups or curriculum development teams. By working together, teachers can share experiences and ideas, which in turn can improve teaching quality and student learning outcomes.

Implications of Education Bureaucracy for School Governance

The educational bureaucracy is an administrative system that regulates school management which can help and make it easier to provide educational services that can help and facilitate the provision of educational services that will definitely affect efforts to improve the quality of education. Therefore, the education bureaucracy has an impact on school governance in several aspects, including:

1. Financial and Budgetary Management

Schools or madrasahs receive funds from various sources, such as School Operational Assistance (BOS) and other grant funds. However, budget use must follow strict bureaucratic procedures, including lengthy accountability reports. This sometimes hampers schools' flexibility in allocating funds for more urgent needs (Seger, 2022). Long administrative processes can slow down decision making and implementation of school programs. In addition, transparency and accountability are still weak despite the implementation of digital systems such as the RKAS (School Activity and Budget Plan) programme because there is still a lack of involvement between parties, making financial reports suboptimal and vulnerable to fraud (Permata & Mustoffa, 2023).

2. Decision Making

The school or related parties must follow the regulations set by the local or central government that oversees the school. Although schools have room for innovation, many strategic decisions have to be approved by higher authorities, which slows down the process of programme implementation or school infrastructure development (Kristiansen & Pratikno, 2006).

3. Teacher Recruitment and Management

Teacher recruitment and transfers are still highly dependent on central and local policies. This process often does not take into account the specific needs of schools, leading to an imbalance in the availability of qualified educators. In addition, teacher performance evaluations are still administrative in nature, resulting in a lack of real focus on improving teacher quality by focusing only on formal reporting (Setia & Nasrudin, 2020).

4. Curriculum and Learning Systems

Indonesia's education bureaucracy is still centralised, with schools following the curriculum set by the Ministry of Religious Affairs or the Ministry of Education and Culture. Although there is flexibility in developing local curricula, schools still have to conform to the existing rules, which may limit innovation and creativity in learning and is often not flexible enough to adapt to the local context of schools, especially in disadvantaged, remote and outermost (3T) areas (Suryaman et al., 2020). In addition, the frequent changes in the central curriculum in a short period of time can cause confusion and implementation gaps in schools.

Based on these aspects, it can be seen that the education bureaucracy has implications for school governance where in this case the bureaucracy is still rigid and may not be able to adjust to the needs of the school. Educational bureaucracy is needed as an effort to provide effective educational services in a structured way. However, in reality, bureaucracy does not always succeed in solving problems because bureaucracy has rules that are too detailed and rigid, so it can interfere with the creativity and innovation needed to adjust to the demands of the times (Amruddin et al., 2022).

Furthermore, inefficient bureaucracy can result in budget waste. Data from the Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP) shows that around 30% of the education budget is not used effectively, often due to complicated and non-transparent bureaucracy (BPKP, 2022). This certainly has a negative impact on the quality of education received by students, as the budget that should be used for educational development is instead hampered by inefficient procedures.

Another impact is the lack of innovation in teaching methods. With too much focus on regulatory compliance, many teachers are reluctant to try new approaches to teaching. In addition, bureaucracy can also drain energy that is not very substantial to the task, for example, a teacher's main task can be disrupted due to administrative matters. Therefore, the bureaucracy in education should consider what is more important between improving the quality of education or fulfilling bureaucratic demands.

The solutions that can be applied to improve the school governance from the impact of education bureaucracy include:

1. Decentralization of Authority, namely by giving schools more autonomy in budget management and academic policies. In addition, this authority can speed up the decision-making process at the school level without having to go through a long bureaucracy.
2. Simplification of regulations, such as reducing the complexity of administrative rules to make them more efficient and providing clearer and more flexible guidelines for school financial management.
3. Improving Transparency and Accountability by ensuring that any funds provided to schools are used effectively and on target and improving audit systems and simpler yet accurate reports.
4. Education Human Resource Capacity Development, such as providing education management training for principals and educators or improving the teacher recruitment system to better suit the needs of schools.

Another solution is to improve communication between all parties involved. This can be done through discussion forums, training and workshops involving teachers, principals and education managers (Alonso et al., 2022). With good communication, it is expected that all parties can understand their respective roles and responsibilities and collaborate in developing better education. In addition, it is important for each individual in the education system to understand their roles and responsibilities. Training and socialization on the structure and function of the

education bureaucracy needs to be conducted regularly so that all parties can have the same awareness of the importance of an efficient and effective bureaucracy. With a good understanding, it is expected that each individual can contribute maximally in achieving educational goals (Chun, 2023)

4. Conclusion

The education bureaucracy in Indonesia has an important role in maintaining education standards by regulating and ensuring the quality of education is maintained, but it can also be an obstacle in school governance. Therefore, there needs to be a balance between bureaucratic rules and flexibility in education management so that the quality of education continues to improve. With more adaptive and efficient bureaucratic reforms, schools can have more room to innovate in improving education quality as well as being transparent, accountable and responsive to education needs at the local level.

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