

**IMPLEMENTATION OF RESTRUCTURING POLICY AT
REGIONAL LEVEL:
A CASE STUDY OF EAST NUSA TENGGARA PROVINCE**

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ABSTRACT

A qualitative inquiry aiming at exploring factors supportive of the implementation of restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No. 18/2016 and its results was conducted in 2017. Face to face in-depth interview method was employed to collect data from participants (n=15) who were recruited using purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was guided by a qualitative data analysis framework. The results indicated that communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure were the supporting factors for the implementation of restructuring policy. Limited number of staffs and lack of financial support were reported as the barriers to effective and efficient performance of departments and bureaus at the government of East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) province after the implementation of restructuring policy. Changes in the structure of bureaucracy in terms of the number structural positions and executing positions, preparation of implementing regulations, and socialization of such policy were reported as the results of the implementation of restructuring policy. These findings indicate a need for the government of NTT province to support each department and bureau with sufficient budget and number of staffs as needed.

Key words: Restructuring policy, implementation, factors, NTT province, Indonesia

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INTRODUCTION

Ineffective and inefficient bureaucratic performance has been a common issue at all governmental level and in all parts of Indonesia. At the regional level, this is mainly due to the big and fatty bureaucratic structure, leading to overspending regional resources and less positive outcomes in terms of public services. Such bureaucratic structure has been developed at all district and provincial governmental levels in Indonesia based on uniformity principle (1, 2). Ideally, bureaucratic structure should be proportionally developed and adjusted to the local needs at district and provincial level.

A number of previous studies have reported several factors contributing to the ineffectiveness and inefficiency of bureaucratic structure in delivering public services to societies. A study by Dwiyanto (3), for example, reports unclear formulation of mission and structure of tasks and functions as the main contributor to ineffective and inefficient bureaucracy. This often leads to conflict of mission and overlapping tasks and functions among departments, non departmental bodies and ministries at district, provincial and national levels. Political influences and interests have also been indicated to bring significant negative impacts on bureaucratic structure, leading to ineffective and inefficient implementation of programs to serve the needs of citizens (1, 4, 5). This is because bureaucracy has often been influenced by politicians and political parties to reach their political interests.

The expectation to establish an effective and efficient bureaucratic structure that has high working performance seems difficult but can be pursued by formulating clear mission and structure of tasks and functions among departments and non departmental bodies at both national and regional levels (1, 3, 6). This will also lead to restructuring big and fatty governmental bureaucracy in order to establish rightsizing bureaucracy which is adjusted to its tasks and functions. This means that the size of the structure of bureaucracy depends upon its tasks and functions. Besides, this is also useful to prevent the bureaucracy from executing activities outside its missions, tasks and functions. This study therefore aimed to explore factors supportive of the implementation of restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No. 18/2016, and the results of the implementation.

METHODS

Study design

A qualitative design using one-to-one in-depth interviews was employed in this research. This qualitative design helped the research to observe the real experiences, situations, and settings where the respondents lived, worked and interacted, and provided a chance for direct interaction between the researcher and the participants (7-9).

Recruitment and data collection

Data collection was conducted in 2017 involving 15 respondents recruited using purposive sampling technique. Prior to the interviews, participants were advised about the nature and aim of the study. Interviews aimed to identify factors related to the implementation of restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No. 18/2016 and the results of the implementation. Prior to the interviews, participants were informed about voluntary principle of their participation in this study. Participants were also told that each interview would take 45 to 60 minutes and be recorded using a tape recorder. They were also assured that information they provided in the interview would be confidential and anonymous. Each participant was informed that the study has been approved by Nusa Cendana University, Kupang, Indonesia.

Data analysis

The recorded data were literally transcribed and translated into English for further analysis. Five steps of qualitative data analysis introduced by Ritchie and Spencer (10) were used to guide this thematic analysis. They included familiarisation with the data by reading them line by line and making comments, identification of emerging themes, indexation to the entire data, charting the data, and mapping and interpretation of the data (10, 11). The framework analysis is a valid data process and provides a systematic approach to data management, and enhances rigour, transparency, consistency and structure of the data (10).

FINDINGS

Communication

Communication was found to play a significant role in the implementation of restructuring policy in NTT province. It was an instrument employed by both the policy makers and

implementers to ensure the effectiveness of coordination line between them. This helped to make sure that the implementers understood what they were doing and the ultimate goal of the implementation of restructuring policy. Several participants interviewed expressed that communication among the implementers at NTT province and between the implementers at provincial level and the government at the national level went well:

“Government Regulation No.18/2016 on regional bureaucratic structure has described in detail and mandated government at provincial level to organize regional bureaucratic structure. Organization Bureau of NTT province as the implementers of this restructuring policy has been effectively communicating with the national government staff and other implementers at the provincial level” (Respondent 5).

“Communication is very important during the process of restructuring bureaucracy in this province. We have a good communication and coordination line between the leaders and the implementers. This is to make sure that everybody understands his or her tasks and responsibilities. The work we do is based on the written guidelines, but extra verbal explanation is also provided to prevent multi interpretations among staffs and implementers” (Respondent 1).

Intense communication between the leaders and implementers and among the implementers was carried out during the implementation process of restructuring policy. It was used as a strategy to avoid overlapping tasks and functions during the preparation of programs and activities. This was considered to lead to the effectiveness of the implementation process:

“There has been intensive communication and coordination amongst the departments and bureaus to confirm tasks and functions of each department and bureau, especially amongst departments and bureaus that have similar tasks and functions in several aspects such as environment and forestry” (Respondent 10).

“Communication during the implementation of the main tasks and functions of each department has been effectively conducted through coordination meeting. Such coordination meeting is also used to clarify functional relationship between the departments” (Respondent 2).

Resources

Findings of this study indicated that resources were a very crucial aspect to the policy implementation, especially restructuring policy in NTT province. Several participants interviewed commented that resources required for the implementation of restructuring policy included sufficient number of staffs with various expertise and backgrounds needed to perform their tasks, and infrastructures and facilities. Limited resources and lack of expertise of the implementers often become the common barriers that lead to the failure of policy implementation:

“If we talk about human resources then there are two aspects that should be considered: quantity and quality. In terms of quantity, we have sufficient number of human resources in East Nusa Tenggara province, but the quality aspect still needs our attention....” (Respondent 8).

“Our human resources are sufficient in terms of quantity, but insufficient in terms of quality. This is partly due to the staffs with required expertise and backgrounds are not evenly distributed to all work unit. Now we have a policy that allows staffs to continue their study at higher education level...” (Respondent 2).

However, findings from the fieldwork also showed that several departments and bureaus had insufficient number of staffs. A few interviewees stated that lack of staffs in the new departments and bureaus in NTT province influenced the performance of the departments and bureaus in implementing restructuring policy as mandated in Government Regulation No. 18/2016:

“Trade department is a new department and we have insufficient number of staffs. Therefore, we need more staffs and facilities to support our tasks” (Respondent 11).

“The number of human resources at Bureau of Cooperation is still insufficient, we only have 5 staffs. How can we perform our tasks and functions if we do not have enough staffs” (Respondent 9).

Lack of financial resources also seemed to be another factor that had significant influence on the performance of the departments and bureaus in the policy implementation process. Several participants commented that restructuring bureaucracy led to increasing the workload of each department. However, financial resources were not adjusted to additional programs and activities, leading to inability of the departments and bureaus to implement all the programs and activities:

“The transfer of authority to the forestry section increases the workload of forestry department ...yet this is not supported with sufficient financial resources” (Respondent 4).

“The financial support is not enough to cover all the programs and activities. We are aware of this financial limitation, so we make priority scale to the programs and activities that we should implement at first” (Respondent 15).

Disposition

Disposition seemed to be another important aspect in the implementation of restructuring policy stipulated in the Government Regulation No. 18/2016. The majority of the interviewees acknowledged that policy implementation carried out by each department or bureau was consistent with the stipulated guidelines. This indicated the strong commitment of the government through its departments and bureaus to successfully restructuring the bureaucracy which could support effective and efficient performance:

“Prior to the implementation of restructuring policy at each department and bureau in NTT province, we have sent the Governor an official memo related to the institutional arrangement as stipulated in Government Regulation No. 18/2016, and Governor responded by giving disposition to the Regional Secretary to be implemented by departments and bureaus. This was started with preliminary studies on restructuring regional bureaucracy in this province” (Respondent 1).

“Disposition from the leaders at higher level has contained clear instructions so that we as the implementers of the policy can respond correctly and know what we are going to do” (Respondent 13).

Bureaucratic structure

Bureaucracy as a system that runs the government was found to have an important role in supporting the effectiveness of policy implementation. Bureaucratic structure as a part of the bureaucracy was reported to also contribute to the policy implementation in NTT province. It comprised both bureaucratic mechanism and bureaucratic structure itself. All the participants commented that mechanism or standard operating procedure (SOP) was ready to use prior to the policy implementation. SOP was seen as the guideline for implementers, which helps them implement the policy in accordance with its goal and target:

“Each department and bureau has SOP because it is a need. Each department and bureau prepares and has it because it functions as the guideline in policy implementation” (Respondent 3).

“All departments and bureaus have SOP which was stipulated by Governor Decision with the expectation that all departments and bureaus implement their policies accordingly” (Respondent 7).

Fragmentation referring to the distribution of responsibility for a policy implementation to several governmental Bodies was indicated to be a hindering factor for the implementation of restructuring policy at each department or bureau. Long and fragmented bureaucratic structure tended to weaken control and cause inflexible and complex bureaucracy.

“In relation to fragmentation, there has been inefficiency in the implementation of several tasks at a few departments and bureaus. For example, there is a similar function which is performed by more than one department or bureau: collaborative function is performed by Regional Development Planning Agency, Economic Bureau and Governmental Bureau. They are now combined under one bureau called Collaborative Bureau” (Respondent 13).

Changes in the bureaucratic structure of the government of NTT Province

This study discovered that restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No.18/2016 has been implemented in NTT Province. Changes or restructuring bureaucracy in this province

were based on the Regional Government Regulation No.9/2016. Data indicated that there had been changes in the structural positions at several departments and bureaus in the province with the aim to establish an effective and efficient bureaucracy at each department and bureau:

“Government Regulation No.18/2016 has brought a significant impact on restructuring regional bureaucracy. For example, there have been reduction in structural positions at the Regional Secretariat from 156 to 120, and at the Secretariat of the Regional House of Representatives from 17 to 13,All these changes are to create effective and efficient bureaucracy as needed” (Respondent 7).

The changes in the structure of bureaucracy of the government of NTT province seemed to be in line with the vision and mission of the governor, which was to create good governance. Several participants revealed that restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No.18/2016 had led the government of this province to restructuring bureaucracy that is considered rational, proportional, effective and efficient:

“What we have done in relation the Government Regulation No.18/2016 in East Nusa Tenggara Province supports the vision and mission of the governor. Restructuring bureaucracy we have made is to support and put into practice the vision of our governor” (Respondent 2).

“Restructuring bureaucracy helps to create regional bureaucratic structure that is efficient, effective, flexible, and has clear working procedure and functions” (Respondent 13).

Preparation of implementing regulations

In relation to restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No.18/2016, it was found that there had been 38 implementing regulations issued by the governor of NTT Province. These implementing regulations were used by departments and bureaus to guide their main tasks and functions, and to establish an efficient and effective bureaucracy:

“The main tasks and functions of the departments, bureaus and governmental bodies have been carried out successfully by each structural official and executing official....” (Respondent 5).

“.... although this is a new department but all the main tasks and functions are well performed. This is due to diagonal coordination we have made so far” (Respondent 8).

Socialization of restructuring policy of regional bureaucracy

Socialization as an important part of the implementation of restructuring policy was reported to have been carried out the Regional Secretariat Organization as the coordinator of the implementation of restructuring policy in NTT province. A number of participants stated that socialization of restructuring policy had been conducted since the formulation of Local Regulations Draft, where departments and bureaus were asked to contribute their opinions regarding this topic:

“Socialization about restructuring policy has been done at national, provincial and district levels. Likewise, stipulation of the local regulations has also been socialized to all departments and bureaus in NTT Province” (Respondent 5).

“Socialization has been delivered even to the low level of bureaucratic structure in this province but I think the implementing staffs need time to understand this restructuring policy and their main task and functions” (Respondent 2).

“Socialization has been carried out for staffs and structural officials: for Echelon IV, III and II officials and Chief of each department...” (Respondent 11).

DISCUSSION

Consistent with results of previous studies (12-14), the current study reports that communication was a very important aspect to the implementation of restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No.18/2016. Communication among implementers, and between implementers and policy makers helped to ensure that implementers understand their tasks and functions, and implement them based on the procedures and regulations. Supporting the previous results (15, 16), findings of the current study confirm that resources including human resources, financial resources, infrastructures and facilities were the supporting factors for the

implementation of restructuring policy in NTT province. However, this study reports limited number of staffs at several new departments and bureaus, and lack of financial support after the implementation of the restructuring policy as the hindering factors for effective and efficient performance of those departments and bureaus.

Consistency between the implementation of restructuring policy and the guidelines that had been stipulated was also a positive supporting factor diagnosed in the current study. The results of this study also confirm the previous findings (17, 18), reporting that bureaucratic structure as a part of bureaucratic system had significant contribution to the policy implementation in NTT province. Standard operating procedure which was used as the guideline helped the implementers to implement restructuring policy in accordance with its goal and target. Yet, the study findings also show that long and fragmented bureaucratic structure tended to weaken the control over the implementation process and caused inflexible and complex bureaucracy.

The present study also reports that there had been changes in the structure of bureaucracy of the government of NTT province in terms of the number structural positions and executing positions as the direct impacts of the implementation of the restructuring policy mandated in Government Regulation No.18/2016. This is in line with the previous studies' findings (19-21), indicating that changes in organizational structure often occur due to the implementation of new government regulation. Other factors reported in the current study as the results of the implementation of restructuring policy were preparation of implementing regulations and socialization of restructuring policy of regional bureaucracy.

CONCLUSIONS

This study reports several supporting factors for the implementation of restructuring policy as mandated in Government Regulation No. 18/2016. They include communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Limited number of staffs and lack of financial support after the implementation of restructuring policy are reported as the barriers to the effective and efficient performance of departments and bureaus of the government of NTT province. This study also suggests a number of aspects as the results of the implementation of restructuring policy, including changes in the structure of bureaucracy in NTT province in terms of the

number structural positions and executing positions, and preparation of implementing regulations, and socialization of restructuring policy of regional bureaucracy. The findings of the current study indicate that there is a need for the government of NTT province to support each department and bureau with sufficient budget and number of staffs as needed.

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