

DEVELOPMENT OF LOCAL GOVERNMENT BUREAUCRACY CAPACITY TO IMPROVE PUBLIC SERVICE PERFORMANCE (STUDY IN PALEMBANG, SOUTH SUMATRA PROVINCE)

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ABSTRACT

With the establishment of autonomous regions, the distance between public services and the community has narrowed, which is expected to lead to improved service quality. It is also anticipated that all local government stakeholders will experience the benefits more directly. The need and demand for high-quality public services are urgent and must be addressed by the government. Public services should be provided and distributed in accordance with the diverse needs of the state, individuals, residents, communities, and citizens. Therefore, governments have an ongoing obligation to pursue policy innovations to ensure that service delivery meets the various demands of society, thereby improving both quality and impact. This research focuses on the performance of the local government bureaucracy in Palembang City, South Sumatra Province, during the 2023–2024 period. Specifically, it examines public services in four key areas: clean water provision, healthcare, population administration, and licensing services. A qualitative approach with descriptive analysis was employed, comparing the results of interviews with 12 informants against available documented data. The findings indicate that public service performance in Palembang City does not align with the expectations and needs of the community. This underperformance is primarily attributed to the low bureaucratic capacity of the city government, encompassing individual, organizational, and systemic deficiencies. Additionally, weak political will from leadership, limited community participation, and the presence of obstructive structural factors further hinder effective service delivery.

Keywords: *Bureaucracy, Capacity, Public Service, Performance, Political Will*

ABSTRAK

Dengan terbentuknya daerah otonom, jarak antara layanan publik dan masyarakat semakin menyempit, yang diharapkan akan berdampak pada peningkatan kualitas layanan. Diharapkan pula bahwa seluruh pemangku kepentingan pemerintah daerah akan merasakan manfaatnya secara lebih langsung. Kebutuhan dan tuntutan akan layanan publik berkualitas tinggi sangat mendesak dan harus segera ditangani oleh pemerintah. Layanan publik harus disediakan dan didistribusikan sesuai dengan beragam kebutuhan negara, individu, penduduk, komunitas, dan warga negara. Oleh karena itu, pemerintah memiliki kewajiban berkelanjutan untuk terus berinovasi dalam kebijakan guna memastikan bahwa penyediaan layanan memenuhi berbagai tuntutan masyarakat, sehingga meningkatkan kualitas dan dampaknya. Penelitian ini berfokus pada kinerja birokrasi pemerintah daerah di Kota Palembang, Provinsi Sumatera Selatan, selama periode 2023–2024. Secara spesifik, penelitian ini mengkaji layanan publik di empat bidang utama: penyediaan air bersih, layanan kesehatan, administrasi kependudukan, dan perizinan. Pendekatan kualitatif dengan analisis deskriptif digunakan, dengan membandingkan hasil wawancara dengan 12 informan dengan data terdokumentasi yang tersedia. Temuan penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kinerja layanan publik di Kota Palembang belum sesuai dengan harapan dan kebutuhan masyarakat. Kinerja yang buruk ini terutama disebabkan oleh rendahnya kapasitas birokrasi pemerintah kota, yang mencakup kekurangan individu,

organisasi, dan sistemik. Selain itu, lemahnya kemauan politik dari pimpinan, terbatasnya partisipasi masyarakat, dan adanya faktor struktural yang menghambat semakin menghambat efektivitas pemberian layanan.

Kata Kunci: *Birokrasi, Kapasitas, Pelayanan Publik, Kinerja, Kemauan Politik*

A. INTRODUCTION

The development of regional government bureaucracy plays a critical role in accelerating the realization of empowered, independent, and prosperous autonomous regions. With the implementation of regional autonomy, public services are expected to be delivered closer to the community, allowing local governments to respond more effectively and efficiently to the needs of the people. In theory, this proximity should enhance the quality of public services and ensure that the benefits of governance are felt more significantly by all stakeholders, including government officials, service providers, and citizens.

Nevertheless, the urgency to fulfill the growing demand for high-quality public services remains a pressing challenge for local governments. Community needs encompass a wide spectrum—from basic goods and market-based services to more essential services such as healthcare, clean water, population administration, and licensing. While goods and market services can often be accessed through traditional market mechanisms, critical public services and social care cannot. According to Ndraha (2003), these

types of services are essential and strategic, lacking direct economic profitability but representing a fundamental need for every individual and group. Consequently, only the government is responsible for ensuring that such services are delivered in a fair, affordable, and accountable manner, with particular attention to the most vulnerable segments of society.

In response to this challenge, governments are encouraged to adopt policy innovations that allow public administration to adapt to changing needs and expectations. Three notable concepts—Reinventing People (RIPE), Reinventing Government (RIGO), and Reengineering Government (REGO)—have emerged as frameworks for such transformation. RIPE involves redefining citizens as sovereign individuals at the national level and as service consumers at the transactional level, thereby strengthening their position in relation to the state (Ndraha, 1997). RIGO refers to the transformation of government institutions to become more responsive, capable, and willing to meet the evolving demands of the public. Meanwhile, REGO, as proposed by Osborne and Plastrik

(2000), emphasizes the need to redesign bureaucratic structures, processes, and behaviors to achieve right-sizing, right-function, and right-behavior in public organizations.

This research examines the case of Palembang City, an autonomous region in South Sumatra Province, which has initiated various policy innovations aimed at improving the quality of public services. These innovations are particularly visible in key sectors such as clean water provision, healthcare, population administration, and licensing services. Despite these efforts, the local government continues to receive numerous public complaints related to service delivery, indicating a disconnect between policy initiatives and their outcomes. While it is acknowledged that programs for capacity building have been launched at both the individual and organizational levels, significant barriers persist in their implementation. The main challenges include a shortage of competent personnel, inefficiencies within service-providing institutions, the absence of adequate local legal frameworks to support bureaucratic reform, the lack of a constructive bureaucratic culture, and low levels of community participation and oversight.

This condition illustrates a paradox: on one hand, the Palembang City Government appears committed to resolving public service issues and enhancing governance performance; on the other hand, it remains constrained by internal and systemic limitations that undermine these efforts. As a result, the low performance of public services in Palembang City is closely associated with the relatively weak capacity of its local bureaucracy—encompassing individual competence, organizational function, and systemic integration. It is clear that building the capacity of the local government bureaucracy is a crucial step in the broader mission of achieving better governance and higher service standards in the region.

In light of this context, an in-depth academic investigation is required to explore and understand the root causes of the service performance gap and to develop a strategic model for strengthening bureaucratic capacity. This research seeks to fill that gap by focusing on the actual performance and capacity of the Palembang City bureaucracy in the 2023–2024 period. The study specifically addresses the quality and effectiveness of public service delivery in the aforementioned key sectors, while

examining how limitations in bureaucratic capacity hinder the successful translation of political and administrative inputs into tangible public outcomes.

Accordingly, the main problem posed by this research is: Why does the performance of public services in Palembang City remain low despite ongoing innovations and capacity-building efforts by the local government? From this central question emerge several sub-questions: What specific factors hinder bureaucratic performance at various levels? How do individual, organizational, and systemic capacities affect service outcomes? And what strategic approaches can be proposed to strengthen local government performance in a sustainable and measurable way?

To address these questions, the objectives of this research are threefold. First, to identify and analyze the key barriers that prevent the enhancement of public service performance in Palembang City. Second, to assess how bureaucratic capacity—at the level of individuals, institutions, and systems—influences the overall quality and effectiveness of public services. Third, to develop practical recommendations and strategic insights for strengthening the local bureaucracy in

ways that align with the principles of good governance and public accountability.

Through this study, it is hoped that a clearer understanding of the relationship between bureaucratic capacity and service delivery will emerge, offering a valuable contribution to both academic discourse and practical policymaking in the context of regional governance in Indonesia.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Bureaucratic Capacity Building Policy Foundation

The fundamental goal of bureaucratic reform, as stated in the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform 2010–2025, is to establish a professional government bureaucracy characterized by adaptability, integrity, high performance, and resistance to corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN). This bureaucracy is envisioned to be neutral, service-oriented, prosperous, dedicated, and committed to upholding the core values and code of ethics of the state apparatus.

Policy directions for bureaucratic reform are focused on two main pillars. First, the development of human resources through systematic bureaucratic reform aims to enhance the professionalism of the civil service and realize good governance at both the central and regional levels to

support broader development goals. Second, policies in the legal and administrative sectors are geared toward strengthening governance mechanisms and institutional structures through sustained reform and accountability practices.

Recent scholarship reinforces the idea that bureaucratic capacity is central to policy implementation. According to Painter and Pierre (2020), bureaucratic quality—including technical competence, policy knowledge, and institutional accountability—plays a pivotal role in shaping the effectiveness of public service delivery and state legitimacy. Likewise, Ang (2022) highlights that bureaucratic capacity must be supported by “adaptive efficiency,” where bureaucracies learn and adjust in response to public feedback and performance data to avoid institutional rigidity.

Public Service Policy Foundation

The legal foundation for public service policy in Indonesia is anchored in Law No. 25 of 2009 on Public Services, which mandates that all citizens and residents are entitled to access quality public goods, services, and administrative functions provided by public agencies in accordance with statutory regulations. The law emphasizes the principles of service

delivery, including public interest, legal certainty, equality of rights, balance between rights and obligations, professionalism, participation, non-discrimination, transparency, accountability, special treatment for vulnerable groups, punctuality, convenience, and affordability.

The broader aim is to build citizen trust in the public sector. Public services are not merely administrative functions but are embedded in democratic accountability and social justice. As articulated by Bouckaert, Peters, & Verhoest (2016), effective public service provision enhances state legitimacy by demonstrating responsiveness, equity, and reliability. Trust-based service delivery requires not only ethical conduct and transparency but also a sustained commitment to institutional learning and citizen engagement.

Public Service Performance

Understanding public service performance requires a multi-dimensional approach. Rummeler and Brache (1990) propose that organizational performance can be assessed on three levels:

1. Organizational Level; encompassing strategy, structure, and resource utilization;

2. Process Level; focusing on operational improvements and engineering interventions;
3. Performer Level; dealing with individual roles, training, and performance management.

In the context of public services, performance measurement is vital for evaluating whether services meet the expectations of users and achieve the goals set by the government. As Dwiyanto (2002) observes, performance information is indispensable in assessing the alignment between services delivered and public satisfaction. Good performance does not only reflect efficiency but also includes responsiveness, equity, and accessibility.

In recent years, performance management has shifted from input-output models toward outcome-based governance, emphasizing the impact of services on community well-being. Moynihan (2018) suggests that performance systems must be integrated with learning-oriented cultures, where feedback from citizens, data analysis, and policy adjustments work together in an iterative cycle.

Development of Regional Government Bureaucratic Capacity in Improving Public Services

The concept of bureaucratic capacity development at the local level is

comprehensively addressed by **GTZ (2004)**, which identifies three interrelated levels of capacity:

1. Systemic Capacity – referring to the overall framework, laws, regulations, and enabling environment in which regional autonomy operates;
2. Institutional or Organizational Capacity – referring to the ability of institutions to carry out their functions effectively;
3. Individual Capacity – referring to the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of government officials and civil society actors involved in governance.

Bureaucracy, in this sense, is understood as a goal-oriented organization that achieves its objectives through structured coordination (Said, 2007). However, to be effective in the era of decentralization, bureaucracies must not only follow formal procedures but also demonstrate **adaptive governance**, collaborative capacity, and innovation.

Recent studies by Svava (2021) and Christensen et al. (2022) emphasize that regional bureaucracies must foster institutional agility, inter-sectoral coordination, and community-based

accountability mechanisms to succeed in delivering inclusive public services.

Capacity building, therefore, must be seen not just as technical training or resource allocation, but as a comprehensive strategy involving system redesign, cultural change, and the reinforcement of local democratic values. In the Indonesian context, where regional disparities and governance challenges remain significant, strengthening bureaucratic capacity at all three levels—systemic, institutional, and individual—is imperative to fulfill the promise of decentralization and improve public service outcomes.

C. RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a qualitative research approach with a descriptive analytical method, which is appropriate for exploring social realities in complex, context-specific settings such as public service performance in regional governance. A qualitative approach allows researchers to capture deep, contextual, and interpretive insights from the perspectives of involved stakeholders. According to Creswell & Poth (2018), qualitative research is especially useful for investigating processes, meanings, and the

lived experiences of individuals within their sociocultural environments.

The object of this study encompasses all local government stakeholders, both directly and indirectly involved in the implementation of regional autonomy policies. The research was conducted in Palembang City, South Sumatra Province, during the 2018–2019 period. Palembang was selected due to its designation as a pilot project for regional autonomy and its status as a pluralistic city with a highly segmented social structure—making it a representative urban area for examining the dynamics of bureaucratic capacity and public service delivery in decentralized governance.

The study uses both primary and secondary data sources:

- Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews and participant observation, conducted directly by the researchers who acted as the primary instruments for data collection. This approach is aligned with the interpretivist paradigm, which emphasizes researcher immersion and reflexivity (Merriam & Tisdell, 2016).
- Secondary data consist of official reports, statistical publications,

public documents, and news coverage from credible local media sources. These materials help contextualize findings and provide supporting evidence for the analysis.

Other key data sources include observational notes, policy documents, and archival records related to public administration and local governance practices. Using triangulation of data sources enhances the credibility and dependability of the findings, as emphasized by Patton (2015) and Lincoln & Guba (1985) in their frameworks for trustworthiness in qualitative inquiry.

Informants in this study were drawn from both government bureaucratic units and members of the public who are engaged in or affected by public service

delivery in Palembang. Informant selection was carried out using a purposive sampling technique, specifically a purposeful stratified sampling strategy, which is recommended by Palinkas et al. (2015) for identifying information-rich participants based on their relevance to the research questions. This stratified strategy ensures that different categories of stakeholders—policy implementers, service providers, and service users—are adequately represented.

A total of 12 key informants were interviewed, selected based on their expertise, experience, and strategic position related to the implementation of regional governance and public services in Palembang. Details of these informants are presented in the table below:

Table 1
Informant Classification

Informant Classification	Key Informants	Number of Informants
Local Government Executives	Regent	1
	Regional Secretary (Sekda), Assistant for General Administration, Secretary of BKD, Director of PDAM	4
Entrepreneurs	Private sector actors engaged in interactions with government services	2

Legislative Representatives	Chairman and members of the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD), especially Commission leaders	2
Civil Society and Media	Representative of NGOs involved in governance and advocacy	1
	Journalist with a focus on bureaucratic reform and public services	1
	Community leader representing citizen perspectives	1
Total		12

D. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

Public Services in Palembang City

Public service performance represents a critical dimension in evaluating the effectiveness of regional autonomy and the progress of governance reform. With the implementation of decentralization in Indonesia, greater authority has been granted to regional and local governments, enabling them to carry out governmental functions and deliver public services that are responsive to the specific needs and dynamics of their communities. One of the most important indicators of the success of regional autonomy lies in its impact on the quality and accessibility of public services. Based on interviews conducted with various stakeholders and informants in Palembang City, this study identified several key

issues related to public service performance, particularly in the areas of health, licensing, population administration, and clean water provision.

First, it was observed that the performance of public services has not yet reached its full potential and continues to fall short of public expectations. This is primarily due to the lack of significant improvement over time, as service delivery is still largely focused on completing administrative tasks (outputs) rather than producing meaningful changes or benefits for citizens (outcomes). Additionally, public services are often delivered in a routine, passive manner, adhering strictly to existing government platforms and procedures, without adjusting to the actual needs and demands of the community. This reflects a service delivery model that is still rigid and supply-driven, instead of

being citizen-centered and outcome-oriented.

Second, the underperformance of public services is also attributed to the frequent delays, lack of comprehension, and unresponsiveness of public service personnel in addressing community needs and complaints. This indicates a low level of bureaucratic responsiveness, which, according to Edward III (2003), is a crucial element in successful policy implementation. The root cause of this problem lies in the absence of effective external communication between public agencies and service users. The lack of communication has led to a significant "service gap," where the perceptions of service providers and the expectations of the community are misaligned. This disconnect results in a mismatch between what the public expects and what the local government delivers in terms of service quality.

Third, challenges in public service performance in Palembang are also closely linked to the service orientation of the bureaucracy. Service orientation refers to the extent to which bureaucratic efforts are focused on meeting public service needs. In an ideal system, human resources within the bureaucracy should be strategically utilized to maximize service delivery outcomes. However, in Palembang, this orientation appears to be weak or

misdirected. The bureaucratic apparatus often prioritizes internal processes over public-facing services, leading to inefficiency and public dissatisfaction.

The overall conclusion from this analysis points to the persistently low quality of public services in Palembang City. While public services are inherently designed to meet the needs of the people, findings from informant interviews reveal that values such as efficiency, transparency, certainty, and fairness are yet to be realized in practice. The public bureaucracy has not been able to adapt to changing political and economic environments, resulting in services that are inefficient, unresponsive, and lacking in accountability. Ultimately, the failure to meet community expectations reflects the complex and deep-rooted issues within the local bureaucratic system.

A key finding from the interviews highlights that the main obstacle to improving public service performance in Palembang is the weakness in bureaucratic competence and institutional capacity. One of the primary concerns is the lack of a clear and merit-based recruitment and career development system. This has allowed for the persistence of nepotism and collusion (commonly referred to as CCN: corruption, collusion, and nepotism), which results in the appointment of individuals who may not

meet the required competencies. Consequently, this creates confusion in subsequent capacity-building efforts and hinders the formation of a professional civil service. Going forward, local governments must develop a transparent and robust recruitment framework, supported by standardized qualifications and consistent monitoring.

Another critical issue is the mismatch between employee skills and their assigned responsibilities. Many public servants are placed in positions that do not align with their expertise, which reduces the quality and efficiency of services delivered. To resolve this, local governments should undertake a comprehensive review of job requirements, establish clear competency standards for each civil service position, and implement training programs tailored to each level and type of job. Additionally, a transparent and accountable system for job appointments, transfers, and promotions must be developed and consistently applied.

Low employee discipline also remains a pervasive problem, which reflects the overall weakness in government performance culture. Addressing this issue requires a fundamental behavioral shift within the bureaucracy. Civil servants must be supported through continuous professional

development, strengthened commitment, and the implementation of an effective reward-and-punishment system that motivates them to fulfill their roles with integrity and responsibility.

Moreover, the instability of human resource management systems—ranging from recruitment to retirement—illustrates a broader problem in personnel planning. There is often a lack of rational and well-thought-out strategies in managing civil servants, and the absence of competitive, transparent, and fair selection processes undermines the credibility of public institutions. Planning inconsistency and the failure to reward high-performing staff or sanction rule violations further weaken institutional effectiveness.

Another significant issue lies in the lack of clarity surrounding job descriptions and lines of authority. Without well-defined roles, civil servants experience uncertainty about their responsibilities, which compromises service delivery. It is essential to establish clear boundaries between positions and define job descriptions and authorities with precision. Technical and managerial guidance must also be provided in a structured and continuous manner.

Furthermore, the lack of a coherent reward and punishment system contributes to low motivation and underperformance among public service personnel. To

address this, the existing legal and regulatory frameworks must be reviewed and improved. Reforms should include the restructuring of the education and training system, the formulation of fair and measurable criteria for evaluating merit and performance, and the development of an accredited professional development pathway. These policies should be disseminated widely through seminars and training programs.

Weak law enforcement and inconsistent implementation of regulations further exacerbate the problem. When civil servants are not held accountable for violations or misconduct, it undermines the rule of law and public trust. Thus, there must be clear legal procedures for addressing abuse of power, a redefinition of bureaucratic ethics and values, and the establishment of mechanisms that ensure compliance with state regulations. Human resource development must be oriented toward building civil servants who are committed to state goals and uphold the values of Pancasila and the 1945 Constitution.

Finally, the underdevelopment of supporting infrastructure also hinders bureaucratic effectiveness. A lack of modern facilities, equipment, and digital tools negatively affects the quality and efficiency of service delivery. Therefore, it is essential to invest in adequate

infrastructure, create operational standards for their use, and enhance the skills of personnel through relevant technical training.

In summary, the low performance of public services in Palembang City is a multifaceted issue rooted in both institutional weaknesses and human resource deficiencies. Addressing these challenges requires a comprehensive reform agenda that encompasses merit-based recruitment, capacity development, ethical governance, performance incentives, and infrastructure improvement. Only through sustained efforts and political will can Palembang's bureaucracy evolve into a responsive, professional, and citizen-oriented public service institution.

Analysis of Public Service Performance Improvement

Improving the performance of public services in Palembang City necessitates a comprehensive and strategic approach focused on enhancing bureaucratic capacity at multiple levels. One of the primary efforts in this regard is bureaucratic capacity building, which aims not only to improve the quality of public services delivered by local governments but also to foster a professional, productive, and accountable administrative environment. This effort is vital to creating

a local bureaucracy that is free from corrupt practices (commonly referred to as CCN: corruption, collusion, and nepotism) and is genuinely service-oriented. Bureaucratic capacity building is expected to instill a culture of integrity and high performance while fostering the development of competent human resources capable of providing efficient and effective services. Moreover, strengthening bureaucratic capacity also plays a central role in empowering civil servants and enhancing the overall quality of public service delivery for the citizens of Palembang.

According to Regent Kalamuddin, bureaucratic capacity development has been prioritized in local governance and policy agendas. However, its successful implementation is influenced by several interrelated factors: human resources, systems, organizational structures, and leadership quality. The human dimension includes elements such as expertise, professionalism, accountability, honesty, and social-emotional intelligence. Systemic factors encompass the availability of clear regulations, standard operating procedures, conducive work environments, and a service-oriented organizational culture. Organizational factors involve the management of workloads, the number and efficiency of units, and overall administrative

performance. Leadership factors, on the other hand, are reflected in the political will, leadership style, and attitude of public leaders. The policy-making mechanism itself is similar to other government policymaking processes, involving multi-stakeholder input based on areas of expertise. Despite this, practical challenges such as limited funding, outdated methods, and inadequate infrastructure continue to hinder tangible progress. Moreover, the absence of a robust monitoring and evaluation system further complicates the measurement of policy effectiveness, with issues such as workforce overcapacity, lack of technical skills, and limited resources remaining persistent barriers.

The study also emphasizes the importance of developing individual bureaucratic capacity. The underperformance of public services in Palembang is largely attributed to the inadequate capacity of individual civil servants, whose actions often fail to meet public expectations. Therefore, the enhancement of personal competencies—spanning knowledge, technical skills, attitudes, and self-perception—is crucial for transforming public perceptions from viewing the bureaucracy as unresponsive to recognizing it as efficient, accountable, and people-centered. According to Burns et al. (1994), a responsive bureaucracy is characterized by being accessible,

transparent, communicative, coordinated, efficient, and trustworthy. One effective strategy for achieving this is through a structured human resource development program that encompasses recruitment, performance reinforcement, and retention. Achieving a balance between job satisfaction and life satisfaction among public servants is essential, as it fosters stronger institutional loyalty and commitment to serving the public interest.

In addition to individual development, the study underscores the significance of organizational capacity building. This involves improving both internal resources—such as human capital and supporting institutions—and managerial elements, including leadership strategies, organizational processes, and inter-agency collaboration. As noted by Doughlas (2003), the ability of a public organization to adapt to both internal and external social environments is a critical determinant of its effectiveness. The study's findings also highlight the need for local governments to embrace digital technologies, enhance management systems, and develop collaborative partnerships with civil society to ensure that services are designed and delivered according to citizens' actual needs and expectations. As Bartle (2002) asserts, empowered organizations exhibit characteristics such as shared values,

mutual trust, communication, effective leadership, and strong networking capabilities. Furthermore, according to Shortell et al. (1995), performance improvement in public organizations is influenced by a combination of interdependent factors: institutional skills, organizational culture, leadership, and incentives.

Another crucial aspect is increasing community involvement in the governance and delivery of public services. The findings show that community engagement in Palembang remains limited, despite the growing demand for participatory and transparent governance. In an era marked by declining public trust in government institutions, it is imperative for local governments to actively involve citizens in service design, policy-making, and performance evaluation. This involves not only listening to community voices but also incorporating their feedback into tangible administrative actions. Governments are now increasingly expected to invest in legal, policy, and institutional frameworks that support civic engagement and to develop practical tools for monitoring and evaluating community participation in decision-making processes.

Political will also emerged as a key determinant in improving public service delivery. According to Brinkerhoff (2000), political will can be assessed through

several indicators: the initiative to pursue reforms, prioritization of key sectors, mobilization of political and public support, enforcement of sanctions against non-compliant officials, and continuity of reform agendas beyond political cycles. A genuine commitment by government leaders to acknowledge systemic weaknesses and address them through sustained and strategic reforms is essential. Moreover, empowering technocrats and reform-minded officials to carry out transformative initiatives is necessary to ensure that reforms are not only policy statements but also implemented actions. As emphasized in the study, the people of Palembang must also take responsibility for their own regional development. Local knowledge and homegrown policies, supported by external resources—such as financial capital, intellectual capacity, and the Palembang diaspora—can play a vital role in enhancing leadership and governance. Unfortunately, the city has yet to fully leverage its potential, including the talents of its youth, many of whom remain underutilized due to insufficient investment in human capital development.

Lastly, the study identifies regional endowment factors—including both physical and social capital—as influential in bureaucratic capacity building. As Fadel Muhammad (2007) explains, physical capital encompasses natural resources and

infrastructure, while social capital includes the population, public officials, and cultural values present in society. In Palembang, certain socio-cultural norms—such as the so-called "*Lokak*" culture (which prioritizes personal gain) and "*Jadilah*" culture (a complacent mindset accepting minimal standards)—negatively influence bureaucratic performance. These attitudes perpetuate mediocrity, discourage innovation, and reduce the motivation to improve service delivery. The persistence of these cultural patterns across generations continues to impede meaningful reform. According to informant Syahrul Efendi, issues such as weak infrastructure, insufficient funding, lack of supervision, and unaccountable leadership—combined with these entrenched socio-cultural values—have created significant barriers to improving public service quality. Thus, addressing both the structural and cultural dimensions of public service reform is essential to achieving meaningful and sustainable improvements.

E. CONCLUSION

Conclusion

1. The performance of public services in Palembang City has not met the expectations and demands of the community. This is due to the low bureaucratic capacity of the

Palembang City Government related to individual capacity, organizational capacity, and system capacity. In addition, it is also caused by the low political will of the leadership, weak community participation, and the presence of hindering endowment factors.

2. Building the capacity of the bureaucracy, which includes building individual capacity, organizational capacity, and system capacity, is able to encourage improving public service delivery practices as well as improving public service performance.
3. The findings that can be raised from the results of this study are that improving the performance of public services in Palembang City can also be done by strengthening the political will of the leadership, increasing community participation, and improving the inhibiting endowment factors.

Suggestion

1. Improving public service performance should not only focus on capacity building (individuals, organizations, and systems), but also integrate community participation, political leadership will, and supporting factors as part

of a coproduction approach. Further studies linking bureaucratic capacity and public service performance are needed to enhance the relevance of governmental science in improving local service delivery.

2. To improve public service performance, the Palembang City Government should develop and implement a comprehensive capacity-building policy through a legally grounded grand design and roadmap. This effort must be supported by innovative governance that redesigns bureaucratic structures, processes, and behaviors to better meet community needs. A shift from an administrative, rule-bound culture to a goal-oriented, managerial culture is essential, alongside a participatory reform process involving all stakeholders. Investment in information technology—both infrastructure and human resources—is crucial to support timely and targeted decision-making. Ultimately, building a rational-egalitarian bureaucracy requires training that fosters critical thinking, initiative, and a service-oriented mindset grounded in equality,

professionalism, and respect for all citizens.

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