



Public Service Accountability and Bureaucratic Reform

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Abstract

Article history:

Received: July 11, 2025

Revised: August 22, 2025

Accepted: October 20, 2025

Published: December 30, 2025

Keywords:

Bureaucratic reform,
Governance,
Public administration,
Public services,
Transparency.

Identifier:

Zera Open

Page: 107-122

<https://zeraopen.com/journal/pp>

Public service accountability is a fundamental component of governance reform in Indonesia, particularly in the context of ongoing bureaucratic transformation. This study examines the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms in public service delivery and analyzes the urgency of strengthening accountability to support governance improvement. Using a normative juridical method with systematic and sociological approaches, the study evaluates the alignment between regulatory frameworks and their implementation in practice. The findings reveal that although accountability mechanisms are formally well-established, their effectiveness remains limited due to weak enforcement, fragmented oversight, and inconsistencies in institutional performance. In addition, persistent issues such as maladministration and abuse of power highlight structural weaknesses in accountability systems. These conditions underscore the urgent need to strengthen accountability through improved enforcement mechanisms, institutional capacity, and policy integration. The study contributes to the development of more transparent, accountable, and service-oriented governance practices in Indonesia.



1. Introduction

Public service accountability has become a central issue in the development of governance practices in Indonesia, particularly in the context of ongoing bureaucratic reform. The government has introduced various regulatory frameworks to ensure that public institutions operate transparently, responsibly, and in accordance with legal principles. Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 2009 tentang Pelayanan Publik establishes the obligation of public institutions to deliver services that prioritize accountability and citizen rights. Similarly, Undang-Undang Nomor 30 Tahun 2014 tentang Administrasi Pemerintahan emphasizes the importance of lawful administrative actions and mechanisms to prevent abuse of authority. Mareta and Fakhri (2024) highlight that accountability mechanisms are essential to ensure that public services meet standards of transparency and responsiveness. These developments indicate that accountability is formally embedded within Indonesia's governance framework.

Despite the existence of comprehensive regulatory provisions, the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms in public service delivery remains a significant concern. Lestari and Salomo (2022) note that the implementation of accountability systems in local government institutions often faces challenges related to performance measurement and institutional coordination. Hartanto et al. (2021) further argue that the effectiveness of governance mechanisms, including accountability, is closely linked to institutional capacity and technological support. In addition, Turner et al. (2022) emphasize that bureaucratic reform in Indonesia continues to encounter structural constraints that limit its impact on governance

quality. Rahmat et al. (2024) also highlight that the transition from traditional public administration to more modern governance models remains incomplete. These findings suggest that accountability, while normatively established, is not always effectively implemented in practice. This gap between regulatory expectations and implementation outcomes raises critical questions about governance effectiveness.

The issue of accountability becomes more complex when examined through the lens of oversight and control mechanisms in public administration. Institutions such as the Ombudsman are designed to monitor public service delivery and address maladministration. However, Peso and Pranoto (2022) indicate that oversight mechanisms often face limitations in enforcing corrective actions. Maulina and Hidayat (2025) further highlight that the authority of oversight institutions in imposing sanctions remains limited, reducing their effectiveness in ensuring accountability. Similarly, Yasin et al. (2025) demonstrate that the handling of maladministration cases is often constrained by procedural and institutional barriers. These challenges indicate that accountability mechanisms may exist formally but lack sufficient enforcement capacity. As a result, the effectiveness of accountability in public services remains questionable.

In addition to institutional limitations, issues such as abuse of power and weak performance accountability further illustrate the shortcomings of current governance practices. Sakti et al. (2023) emphasize that abuse of authority by public officials reflects weaknesses in accountability enforcement. Ismail et al. (2025) also highlight that corruption and misuse of power remain persistent challenges in public administration. Empirical studies, such as those by Arifin (2021) and Lewis et al.

(2020), demonstrate that accountability mechanisms do not always lead to improved public service performance. These findings suggest that accountability systems may not function effectively as intended within bureaucratic structures. Consequently, the persistence of these issues undermines public trust and governance quality. This highlights the need for a more critical evaluation of accountability mechanisms.

Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of public service accountability mechanisms within the existing regulatory framework in Indonesia and to examine the urgency of strengthening accountability to support bureaucratic reform. The study adopts a normative juridical approach combined with systematic and sociological perspectives to evaluate both legal frameworks and their implementation. By focusing on effectiveness and urgency, this research addresses key dimensions of governance that are essential for improving public service delivery. The analysis contributes to a deeper understanding of the gap between regulatory norms and administrative practices. Furthermore, it provides insights into how accountability mechanisms can be strengthened to enhance governance quality. Through this approach, the study supports the development of more transparent, accountable, and service-oriented public administration.

2. Literature Review

The concept of accountability is a fundamental principle in public governance, closely associated with transparency, responsibility, and responsiveness in public administration. Accountability ensures that public officials and institutions are answerable for their actions and decisions, particularly in the delivery of public

services. Raesalat et al. (2024) argue that accountability is a core component of governance reform, as it promotes oversight and improves institutional performance. Similarly, Dharmika and Subanda (2023) emphasize that effective public services are closely linked to the degree of accountability embedded within governance systems. In this context, accountability is not only a formal requirement but also a practical mechanism that influences service outcomes. The integration of accountability into public service delivery is therefore essential for achieving good governance. However, the effectiveness of such integration depends on how accountability mechanisms are implemented in practice.

Public service accountability in Indonesia has been institutionalized through various mechanisms, including performance evaluation systems, complaint handling processes, and oversight institutions. Mareta and Fakhri (2024) highlight that accountability mechanisms are designed to ensure that public services meet standards of transparency and responsiveness. In addition, Sakti et al. (2023) emphasize that accountability plays a critical role in preventing abuse of authority within public institutions. Despite these formal mechanisms, challenges remain in ensuring their effective implementation. Lestari and Salomo (2022) note that accountability systems often face difficulties related to performance measurement and institutional coordination. These challenges indicate that the presence of accountability mechanisms does not automatically guarantee their effectiveness. As a result, the relationship between accountability systems and service outcomes requires further examination.

Bureaucratic reform has been a central strategy in improving governance quality in Indonesia, aiming to modernize public administration and enhance service delivery. Turner et al. (2022) argue that reform efforts are essential for addressing structural inefficiencies within large bureaucratic systems. Similarly, Maulana et al. (2022) highlight that organizational restructuring and administrative simplification are key components of bureaucratic reform. Rahmat et al. (2024) further emphasize the transition from traditional public administration to more flexible and performance-oriented governance models. However, these reform efforts often encounter challenges related to institutional resistance and limited capacity. The effectiveness of bureaucratic reform is therefore closely linked to the ability of governance systems to integrate accountability mechanisms. Without effective accountability, reform initiatives may fail to achieve their intended outcomes. This highlights the importance of examining accountability within the broader context of bureaucratic reform.

Despite extensive research on accountability and bureaucratic reform, gaps remain in understanding how these concepts operate in practice within public service systems. Existing studies often focus on normative frameworks or reform strategies without fully addressing implementation challenges. Pohan et al. (2024) identify that the implementation of good governance principles in Indonesia is often constrained by institutional and administrative barriers. Hartanto et al. (2021) further demonstrate that governance effectiveness is influenced by the interaction between accountability mechanisms and institutional capacity. These findings indicate that there is a disconnect between regulatory expectations and actual governance

practices. As a result, accountability mechanisms may exist formally but fail to produce effective outcomes. This study addresses this gap by analyzing the effectiveness of accountability mechanisms and examining the urgency of strengthening them in the context of bureaucratic reform.

3. Methods

This study employs a normative juridical research method combined with systematic and sociological approaches to analyze the effectiveness of public service accountability mechanisms and the urgency of strengthening accountability in the context of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia. The normative approach is used to examine legal norms, principles, and regulatory frameworks governing public service accountability and administrative governance. The systematic approach is applied to interpret these legal provisions in a structured manner by analyzing the relationship between different regulatory instruments and governance practices. In addition, the sociological approach is used to assess how accountability mechanisms are implemented in practice, particularly in relation to institutional capacity, bureaucratic behavior, and public service delivery. This combination of approaches enables a comprehensive analysis of both normative frameworks and their practical implications.

The sources of legal materials consist of primary legal materials, including national legislation related to public services and administrative governance, and secondary legal materials such as academic articles, books, and policy analyses relevant to accountability and bureaucratic reform. All materials are selected based

on their relevance and academic credibility. The analysis is conducted using qualitative legal interpretation through systematic interpretation and normative reasoning, supported by a sociological perspective to evaluate implementation challenges. This method allows the study to identify gaps between regulatory frameworks and actual practices, as well as to formulate normative conclusions regarding the effectiveness and urgency of strengthening accountability in public service governance.

4. Results

4.1. Effectiveness of Public Service Accountability Mechanisms

The findings indicate that public service accountability mechanisms in Indonesia are normatively well-established but remain limited in their practical effectiveness. Regulatory frameworks such as Undang-Undang Nomor 25 Tahun 2009 tentang Pelayanan Publik and Undang-Undang Nomor 30 Tahun 2014 tentang Administrasi Pemerintahan provide a comprehensive legal basis for accountability in public administration. These regulations define obligations related to transparency, responsibility, and responsiveness in service delivery. However, empirical evidence suggests that the implementation of these principles has not fully achieved the expected outcomes. Mareta and Fakhri (2024) highlight that accountability mechanisms, while formally structured, often fail to ensure consistent service quality. This indicates that the existence of regulatory frameworks does not automatically translate into effective governance.

Oversight institutions and complaint handling mechanisms are essential components of accountability in public services, yet their effectiveness remains constrained. Institutions such as the Ombudsman are tasked with monitoring public service delivery and addressing maladministration. However, Peso and Pranoto (2022) note that oversight mechanisms often face limitations in enforcing corrective actions. Maulina and Hidayat (2025) further emphasize that the authority of oversight institutions in imposing sanctions is still limited, reducing their capacity to ensure compliance. Similarly, Yasin et al. (2025) demonstrate that the handling of maladministration cases is frequently hindered by procedural and institutional barriers. These limitations indicate that accountability mechanisms may function more as formal procedures than as effective enforcement tools. Consequently, the ability of these institutions to improve service outcomes remains restricted.

The effectiveness of accountability is also undermined by issues related to performance measurement and institutional behavior within public administration. Empirical studies show that accountability mechanisms do not consistently lead to improved public service performance. Arifin (2021) highlights that monitoring systems in local governments do not always produce meaningful improvements in accountability outcomes. Lewis et al. (2020) further demonstrate that political accountability does not necessarily correlate with better service delivery in decentralized governance contexts. In addition, Sakti et al. (2023) and Ismail et al. (2025) identify persistent issues of abuse of power and corruption, reflecting weaknesses in accountability enforcement. These findings indicate that

accountability mechanisms are insufficiently integrated into bureaucratic practices. As a result, accountability in public services remains more normative than functional.

4.2. Challenges and Urgency of Strengthening Accountability in Local Governance

The urgency of strengthening public service accountability in Indonesia is closely linked to the ongoing process of bureaucratic reform and the need to improve governance quality. Bureaucratic reform initiatives aim to enhance efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness in public administration. Turner et al. (2022) argue that reform efforts are necessary to address structural inefficiencies within large bureaucratic systems. However, Rahmat et al. (2024) highlight that these reforms have not yet fully achieved their intended outcomes due to persistent institutional challenges. Without effective accountability mechanisms, bureaucratic reform may fail to deliver meaningful improvements in governance. This indicates that strengthening accountability is a critical component of successful reform.

Another factor contributing to the urgency of strengthening accountability is the increasing complexity of governance and public service delivery. Modern public administration requires coordination between multiple institutions, as well as the integration of various governance mechanisms. Pohan et al. (2024) highlight that the implementation of good governance principles is often constrained by institutional and administrative barriers. Hartanto et al. (2021) further emphasize that governance effectiveness depends on the interaction between accountability systems and institutional capacity. These challenges indicate that existing accountability mechanisms are not fully equipped to address the complexities of modern

governance. As governance systems evolve, accountability frameworks must also adapt to ensure their continued relevance and effectiveness. This underscores the need for regulatory and institutional improvements.

Finally, strengthening accountability is essential to maintain public trust and ensure the legitimacy of public institutions. Public trust is a key indicator of governance quality and is closely linked to the performance of public services. Pramuditha et al. (2025) highlight that the effectiveness of public services significantly influences public confidence in government institutions. In addition, persistent issues such as maladministration and abuse of power can undermine trust and reduce citizen engagement. Weak accountability mechanisms may lead to perceptions of inefficiency and lack of transparency in public administration. Therefore, strengthening accountability is necessary not only for improving service performance but also for reinforcing governance legitimacy. This highlights the urgency of developing more effective and integrated accountability frameworks.

5. Discussion

The findings of this study demonstrate that the effectiveness of public service accountability in Indonesia is constrained by a disconnect between normative frameworks and practical implementation. Although regulatory provisions establish clear obligations for accountability, their impact is limited by institutional weaknesses and fragmented enforcement mechanisms. This supports the argument that accountability in public administration is not solely determined by legal structures but also by administrative capacity and governance practices. Dharmika and Subanda

(2023) emphasize that effective public services depend on how accountability mechanisms are embedded within institutional operations rather than merely formalized in regulations. Similarly, Raesalat et al. (2024) highlight that accountability must function as a dynamic process that integrates oversight, performance evaluation, and responsiveness. The results of this study indicate that such integration remains incomplete in Indonesia's public service system. Therefore, improving accountability requires a shift from formal compliance toward functional implementation within bureaucratic practices.

The urgency of strengthening accountability further reflects the broader challenges of bureaucratic reform and governance transformation. The persistence of maladministration, abuse of power, and weak performance accountability indicates that existing mechanisms are insufficient to address complex governance demands. These findings align with broader governance perspectives that emphasize the importance of adaptive and integrated accountability systems in modern public administration. Strengthening accountability is not only a legal necessity but also a strategic requirement for ensuring the success of bureaucratic reform. Without effective accountability, reform initiatives risk becoming procedural rather than transformative. Furthermore, the relationship between accountability and public trust highlights the importance of transparency and responsiveness in maintaining governance legitimacy. As public expectations continue to evolve, accountability frameworks must also adapt to ensure their effectiveness. This suggests that future governance reforms should prioritize strengthening institutional capacity and integrating accountability mechanisms across all levels of public administration.

6. Conclusion

This study concludes that public service accountability mechanisms in Indonesia, although normatively well-established within the existing regulatory framework, have not yet achieved optimal effectiveness in practice. The legal provisions governing accountability provide a solid foundation for transparent and responsible public service delivery. However, their implementation is constrained by limited enforcement capacity, fragmented oversight mechanisms, and inconsistencies in institutional performance. As a result, accountability tends to function more as a formal requirement than as an effective governance instrument. These findings indicate that the effectiveness of accountability is not solely determined by regulatory completeness but also by the ability of institutions to operationalize these norms within bureaucratic practices. Strengthening institutional capacity and improving the integration of accountability mechanisms are therefore essential to enhance governance performance.

Furthermore, the study highlights that strengthening public service accountability is an urgent priority in supporting bureaucratic reform and improving governance quality in Indonesia. The persistence of maladministration, abuse of power, and weak performance accountability demonstrates that existing systems are insufficient to meet the demands of modern governance. Addressing these challenges requires not only regulatory improvements but also a comprehensive approach that integrates accountability into all aspects of public administration. Policy efforts should focus on enhancing enforcement mechanisms, strengthening oversight institutions, and promoting a culture of accountability within bureaucratic

structures. In addition, improving transparency and responsiveness is critical to maintaining public trust and ensuring the legitimacy of government institutions. This study recommends the development of more integrated and adaptive accountability frameworks to support sustainable and effective governance reform in Indonesia.

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