

Bureaucracy and Pathology in the Education System

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Abstract

This study aims to deeply analyze the role and impact of bureaucracy in the education system and identify the forms of bureaucratic pathology that emerge and hinder the effectiveness of educational institutions. This study starts from the assumption that while bureaucracy is necessary to ensure orderly governance, its rigidity and structural dysfunction often become major obstacles to innovation, quality, and the achievement of educational goals.

Keywords : Bureaucracy, Bureaucratic Pathology, Education System, Education Reform, Organizational Dysfunction.

Introduction

Education is a crucial pillar in developing the quality of human resources and determining the progress of a nation. However, in practice, the implementation of education is often inseparable from bureaucratic interference. Bureaucracy essentially functions as a regulatory and control instrument to ensure the education system operates according to established rules and objectives. However, in reality, educational bureaucracy is often plagued by various problems that actually hinder the effectiveness and efficiency of education delivery.

The emerging phenomena include convoluted bureaucracy, overlapping regulations, and slow decision-making. This has hampered educational services, particularly at the school and educational unit level. This condition represents a form of bureaucratic pathology, a deviation or disease within the bureaucratic system that prevents the bureaucracy from achieving its original functions and objectives optimally.

Bureaucratic pathologies in the education system can include nepotism in appointments, corruption of education funds, a greater focus on administrative interests than on the quality of learning, and a lack of transparency and accountability. As a result, the national education goal of improving the nation's intellectual life is hampered, and the public, as recipients of education services, often suffers.

Given these conditions, it is important to further examine how bureaucracy plays a role in the education system and how bureaucratic pathologies emerge and impact educational effectiveness. This analysis is expected to provide a deeper understanding of the relationship between bureaucracy and pathologies in the education system and provide a basis for reflection in finding solutions for improvement.

Research Methods

This article was compiled using library research, applying the library study method. Library research is an argumentative presentation of data sources in the form of a study, by reviewing the results of previous studies. (Ahmad, 2020) The literature approach is a study that uses data analysis based on written materials. These materials include published records, books, magazines, newspapers, manuscripts, journals, or articles. (Nasution et al., 2023) Therefore, library research encompasses research. Sources for this study include books, scientific journals, articles, and other printed and online reading materials. This research is descriptive analytical, where researchers gather various sources and then analyze the data to explain the topic efficiently and concisely so that readers can easily understand it. Descriptive analysis is used as a data analysis tool, which describes and explains the collected data.

Results And Discussion

1. Bureaucracy in the Education System

The term bureaucracy was introduced by Martin Albrow in 1745 and remains a hot topic in society, especially among academics. From birth to death, humans are constantly involved in bureaucratic affairs. Children must have a birth certificate upon birth, and even deaths require a death certificate. This fact confirms Etziomi Amitai and Gerald Caiden's statement that life always requires bureaucracy and that bureaucracy is unavoidable. (Amruddin et al., 2022)

From the explanation above, it can be understood that bureaucracy can mean: (a) work procedures, (b) organizational systems, and (c) the power to make decisions. In this analysis, we do not focus on one definition, but rather use it in a cross-section, meaning that the meaning of bureaucracy can touch on the bureaucracy of organizational systems, work procedures, and decision-making. The author argues that the three cannot be separated discretely. In all three definitions, bureaucracy is simply a tool used by humans to conduct life in society.

Educational bureaucracy is indeed necessary as a simple and practical way to provide public services. Education must be regulated so that no party is disadvantaged or treated unfairly. The public interest must be prioritized and protected. Despite this, it is recognized that bureaucracy does not always successfully resolve problems completely. When bureaucratic regulations are too detailed and rigid, they actually hinder creativity, innovation, and/or change that are actually necessary to adapt to the demands of the times and produce quality. Bureaucracy can even drain energy that is not truly substantive to the type of task. The primary duties of a teacher or lecturer, for example, can be disrupted by mere bureaucratic administrative matters. Therefore, in running a bureaucracy, one must consider which is truly more important: fulfilling one's duties as an educator or simply fulfilling bureaucratic administrative demands.

Educational bureaucracy in this case is the use of bureaucratic practices in educational services by government officials to citizens. Typically, the educational bureaucracy in Indonesia starts from the central government level to the regional government, both provincial and district/city levels, tasked with compiling the applicable curriculum, providing teaching and educational staff, determining budget allocations, procuring facilities and infrastructure and their maintenance, paying attention to the implementation of the teaching and learning process, preparing an educational evaluation system, ensuring educational quality and so on. (Adawiyah et al., 2024)

Over time, numerous examples of bureaucracy implemented so strictly actually make education stagnant and slow. As a result, education, which should always be at the forefront of societal development, is instead lagging behind. Education becomes outdated. Various criticisms that education is of poor quality, or unable to meet societal demands, and even the emergence of irregularities in education implementation, for example, education is run merely as a formality, news of fake diplomas, doctored exam results, and so on, may all be the result of an educational bureaucracy that does not allow for creativity.

2. Forms of Bureaucratic Pathology that Occur in the Implementation of Education

Bureaucratic pathology is a condition or problem that commonly occurs within the bureaucratic system of an organization or government and can disrupt efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability. It encompasses various types of deviations or dysfunctions that can undermine the primary purpose of bureaucracy, namely the effective management of administrative tasks and the delivery of public services. (Natasyah, 2020)

Bureaucratic pathology is not only caused by incorrect and inappropriate bureaucratic structures, such as inappropriate and excessive hierarchies, rigid procedures, excessive bureaucratic fragmentation, and other structural problems. In addition to structural problems, bureaucratic pathology is also caused by the interaction of various interrelated variables, both within the bureaucratic structure, bureaucratic culture, and other variables within the environment.

As a consequence of education being institutionalized and publicly owned, society requires certainty regarding standards, legality, and even quality. Furthermore, the implementation of education also requires recognition and even protection. Based on these interests, such as standards and legality, for example, it's possible that someone might possess extraordinary skills, but because their abilities were acquired without formal procedures, they might not be recognized.

Beyond what is described above, because educational institutions fall within the government bureaucracy, their implementation also follows bureaucratic regulations. Education is not only regulated in terms of teachers, students, textbooks, and the like, but also regulates who is entitled to be a principal, administrative or structural official, who provides educational facilities and

infrastructure, and budgeting. All educational implementation, even though there is the possibility of external stakeholders influencing it, must be carried out according to proper bureaucratic procedures. (Amruddin et al., 2022)

Forms of bureaucratic pathology in education include corruption, collusion, and nepotism, abuse of authority and position, convoluted and slow procedures, lack of transparency and accountability, inability to innovate, indifference to criticism, and low productivity and poor service quality. These conditions hamper the effectiveness and efficiency of education delivery and undermine public trust in educational institutions.

- a. Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism (KKN): The practice of abusing power for personal gain, such as accepting bribes or nepotism in the recruitment and placement of teachers and staff. (Maolani et al., 2022)
- b. Abuse of Authority and Position: The use of authority inappropriately or for personal gain, such as in determining policy or allocating educational resources. (Hasim, 2023)
- c. Complicated Procedures: Complicated and inefficient administrative rules and procedures, which take time, effort and money for the parties being served.
- d. Lack of Transparency and Accountability: Poor disclosure of information regarding the management of education funds, policies, or service processes, and a lack of accountability for performance.
- e. Inability to Innovate (Status Quo): The attitude of maintaining the existing state of affairs and rejecting change, innovation, and experimentation in the education system.
- f. Indifference to Criticism: An apathetic attitude towards suggestions and criticism from the public or other parties, including education stakeholders.
- g. Low Productivity and Poor Service Quality: Lack of effectiveness in carrying out tasks and providing quality services, including academic and administrative services.
- h. Non-merit-based recruitment and placement: The process of recruiting and placing officials or staff that is not based on competence and achievement, but rather on non-technical factors.
- i. Empire Building (Building a Bureaucratic Dynasty): The tendency of bureaucracy to develop itself and expand its power and influence without paying attention to the main goals of the organization.

3. Factors Causing the Emergence of Bureaucratic Pathology in the Education System

Bureaucratic pathologies in education arise from various factors, including weak morals and ethics among civil servants, low human resource competency and professionalism, misperceptions and managerial styles among officials, the implementation of complex rules and procedures, and abuse of power. Traditional cultures such as nepotism also play a role, compounded by institutional factors that

contribute to inefficiency, slow service delivery, and a lack of transparency in the education system.(Maolani et al., 2022)

Here are some of the contributing factors : (Maolani et al., 2022)

- 1) Problems with the Apparatus/Human Resources (HR)
 - Low Morality and Ethics: Problems often arise such as abuse of authority and position, accepting bribes, corruption, nepotism, and arrogance.
 - Lack of Knowledge and Skills: Inability to articulate policies, lack of accuracy, slowness, or inability to provide easily understood explanations can hinder performance.
 - Dysfunctional Behavior: Members of the bureaucracy act in a discriminatory, arbitrary, or undisciplined manner.
- 2) Structural and Procedural Issues
 - Complicated Rules and Procedures: This condition causes services to be slow, inefficient, and makes things difficult for the public.
 - Dysfunctional Structure: Poor organizational structure or poor institutional characteristics can hinder good performance.
- 3) Organizational Culture and Politics
 - A Culture of Exploitation or Mutual Benefit: This type of culture encourages corruption, collusion, and nepotism, and disregards quality and professionalism.
 - Pathological Interconnections: Corruption, nepotism, and inefficiency can reinforce each other and form a “pathological syndrome” that is difficult to overcome.
- 4) Internal and External Situations
 - Lack of Transparency: Lack of transparency can create opportunities for negative practices within the bureaucracy.
 - Unsupportive Infrastructure: Sometimes there are obstacles related to internal conditions within an agency that are not suitable for achieving optimal performance.

4. The Impact of Bureaucratic Pathology on the Quality and Effectiveness of Education

Bureaucratic pathologies negatively impact the quality and effectiveness of education by stifling innovation through rigid regulations, wasting resources through inefficiency and corruption, eroding trust in the education system, and reducing the competitiveness and relevance of graduates to job market needs. Pathologies such as plagiarism, cheating, and data falsification, along with a slow and rigid work culture, hinder quality learning processes.(Sri Yulianty Mozin et al., 2025)

Direct Impact on the Quality and Effectiveness of Education:

- **Declining Learning Quality:** Pathologies such as plagiarism, cheating in evaluations, and data falsification lower the quality of education and tarnish the legitimacy of institutions.
- **Hindered Innovation:** The rigid and hierarchy-oriented nature of bureaucracy often limits flexibility and innovation in educational institutions, making it difficult to adapt to the needs of the times.
- **Waste of Resources:** Corruption and inefficiency that occurs in the education bureaucracy causes waste of budget and resources that should be used to improve the quality of education.
- **Low Public Satisfaction and Trust:** Unfriendly, slow, and discriminatory services cause the public to lose trust in the education system and government.
- **Graduate Mismatch:** Rigid bureaucracy can affect the curriculum and learning process, producing graduates who are irrelevant to the demands of the workplace, thus reducing the effectiveness of graduates in society.

5. Efforts to Minimize Bureaucratic Pathology in the Education System

To minimize bureaucratic pathology in the education system, global administrative reform is needed, encompassing improving the quality of bureaucrats, improving morale, and shifting the paradigm that bureaucracy is a tool for public service. Furthermore, the application of information technology (e-government) for efficiency, increased oversight and transparency to prevent corruption, and accountability and active public participation in overseeing the educational administration process are necessary.

Concrete Steps to Overcome the Pathology of Educational Bureaucracy:(Maolani et al., 2022)

- a. There is a need for global administrative reform. This means that administrative reform is not just about replacing personnel, not just changing the name of certain agencies, not just changing the nameplate in front of the office, or not just reducing or streamlining bureaucracy, but also carrying out reforms on intangible things such as upgrading the quality of bureaucrats, moral schools, and changing the way bureaucrats view themselves and the institution that bureaucracy is a tool for public service and not for seeking profit. The role of the quality of apparatus resources greatly influences the quality of service, for that cognitive abilities that come from intelligence and experience, skills or abilities, supported by attitudes or etiquette are factors that can be used to solve the problem of bureaucratic pathology in the education system in Indonesia.
- b. Establishing clear legal and regulatory powers. Legal powers have a significant impact on crimes, including crimes and ills within the bureaucracy. Establishing the rule of law can be achieved through fair and strong leadership, strong law enforcement agencies that are free from political interests, and impartial oversight of the implementation of

government activities within the bureaucracy. In Indonesia, one of the legal powers in the implementation of government bureaucracy is the enactment of Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, which regulates the ASN management system, namely the merit system. With the implementation of this Law, bureaucrats, in the case of ASN, are expected to carry out their duties and responsibilities properly and correctly and apply a neutral attitude in all areas, and prioritize the interests of the state above personal and group interests.

- c. Creating a system of accountability and transparency. The lack of accountability within the bureaucracy has emboldened bureaucrats to deviate from their duties. Both bottom-up and top-down oversight are tools for creating this accountability and transparency.

Conclusion

Educational bureaucracy is indeed necessary as a simple and practical way to provide public services. Education must be regulated so that no party is disadvantaged or treated unfairly. The public interest must be prioritized and protected. Despite this, it is recognized that bureaucracy does not always successfully resolve problems. When bureaucratic regulations are too detailed and rigid, they actually hinder creativity, innovation, and/or change that are actually necessary to adapt to the demands of the times and produce quality. Bureaucracy can even drain energy that is not truly substantive to the type of task.

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