

Strengthening Bureaucratic Integrity Through State Civil Apparatus Professionalism and Ethics

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Abstract: Bureaucratic reform is essential for improving Indonesia's governance. Improving bureaucratic reform is important for creating transparent, accountable, and effective governance in Indonesia; however, corruption, inefficiencies, integrity issues, and inconsistent implementation still affect Indonesian bureaucratic performance. This research investigates how improving bureaucratic integrity by changing the position of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) can support good governance. The research used a qualitative case study methodology, with the population comprising ASN members and government officials sampled through purposive sampling. The study used semi-structured interviews and participant observation to collect data, which were then analyzed using thematic analysis aligned with the six policy evaluation dimensions: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and forwardness. The findings show that strengthening bureaucratic integrity requires changing organizational culture, improving human resource capacity, improving oversight processes, and sustaining ethical and professional development. Ethical and professional training effectively improves decision-making, communication, and service delivery performance. However, inequities in resources, technological capacity, political will, and public participation limit reform implementation in the region. The study concludes that bureaucratic integrity requires ongoing reforms, equitable implementation, active public involvement, and sustained evaluation.

1. Introduction

Bureaucratic reform is a key tool for improving governance quality in Indonesia by increasing transparency, accountability, efficiency, and service delivery (Efendi & Frinaldi, 2024). Although Indonesia has implemented reforms extensively, its bureaucracy still faces recurring issues, including corruption, abuse of power, inefficiency, and inconsistent service delivery (Zulkarnain & Santosa, 2020). These recurring issues suggest that bureaucratic reform should focus not only on changes to laws and regulations but also on efforts to ensure the integrity of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), the main actors in implementing public policies (Yuliana & Wijayanti, 2020). Achieving this requires a robust and effective role from the State Civil Apparatus (ASN). As the key implementers of government policies, ASN bear significant responsibility for ensuring that public services meet community needs (Xenia & Pramudito, 2023). Therefore, bureaucratic integrity has become an important prerequisite for realizing reform commitment toward governance that is accountable and oriented toward the public (Vera & Haryanto, 2021).

The issue of bureaucratic integrity is very important due to the fact that ASN are located at the crossroads of governmental policies and daily life experiences of citizens in terms of public administration

(Wahyudi & Santoso, 2022). Although ASN are supposed to implement policies and provide public services, problems with professional and ethical competence and accountability may lead to corruption, collusion, nepotism, and abuse of administrative power (Umar & Prasetyo, 2023). These phenomena are likely to reduce organizational efficiency and lower people's trust in state institutions (Dewi & Santoso, 2024). Consequently, previous literature suggests that bureaucratic integrity should be understood as honesty, transparency, accountability, and the responsible use of public power (Vera & Haryanto, 2021).

The issue can be further explained through the notion of professionalism and ethical governance within the public sector (Taufik & Suryani, 2020). A culture of integrity within the bureaucracy must also go hand in hand with an organizational culture that promotes ethical conduct, HR systems that build professional competencies, and control mechanisms that minimize opportunities for corruption (Suhardiman et al., 2026). In this context, it is wrong to view ASN merely as policy enforcers; they are institutional actors who can help drive organizational reform (Gunawan & Sari, 2021). Redefining ASN therefore involves combining professionalism, ethical obligation, accountability, and public service spirit in exercising bureaucratic authority (Sari & Wijayanti, 2022).

Previous studies have identified several aspects that can improve integrity within the bureaucracy. The literature emphasizes organizational culture and human resource development as important foundations for integrity, while others emphasize the need for technical knowledge along with ethics through training programs (Rachman & Hidayat, 2021). Literature on monitoring and controlling bureaucracy also shows that monitoring and control mechanisms reduce the likelihood of misuse of public power (Hidayat & Rahman, 2022). Furthermore, digitalization has also facilitated methods to improve transparency, efficiency, and responsiveness despite regional differences in digital capability, leading to new forms of exclusion (Ariansyah et al., 2026). These findings suggest that bureaucratic integrity is multi-faceted and cannot be improved through a single intervention such as regulation, training, digitalization, or supervision (Qodri & Sari, 2020).

However, the literature has significant gaps. First, prior studies focus on individual aspects of the reform process within the ASN, such as ethics education, digitalization, organizational culture, or supervision, but fail to assess their combined impact (Pratiwi & Yuwono, 2022). Second, little research examines how the ASN's role can shift from policy implementer to an enabler of public service delivery (Julianto & Pramudito, 2021). Lastly, one should not assume that reform efficiency will be the same, as leaders' dedication, organizational competence, digitalization, and public participation may differ across political systems (Wakhid et al., 2026). Thus, it is vital to analyze how these factors can affect bureaucratic integrity (Nugroho & Santosa, 2023).

Public participation may be another component that needs more attention in this context. The government's ability to be accountable will improve if citizens have opportunities to provide input and express concerns about bureaucratic performance (Indrian i& Wulandari, 2023). This means collaboration among government organizations, citizens, and other parties involved in the process will supplement internal mechanisms by creating an external accountability mechanism (Oktaviani & Prasetyo, 2021). Public participation is not considered in the discourse on ASN professionalism and bureaucratic performance (Novitaet al., 2026). A combination of internal and external mechanisms will help create a broader picture of how good governance may be achieved (Mahda & Naibaho, 2025).

In this context, the present study investigates how to enhance bureaucratic integrity by strategically repurposing the role of ASN within clean and responsive governance. The study explores organizational, professional, ethical, supervisory, and participatory conditions for enhancing bureaucratic integrity (Lestari

& Haryanto, 2022).

2. Literature Review

This literature review explores recent scholarly work on bureaucratic reform in Indonesia, focusing on the role of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in strengthening governance integrity. The selected sources are primarily journal articles published in the last decade and offer insights into the challenges and strategies associated with bureaucratic reform in Indonesia.

Bureaucratic Reform and Public Service Innovation

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is an ongoing process to improve government efficiency, accountability, and public service delivery. [Zulkarnain dan Santosa \(2020\)](#) delve into Indonesia's transition from traditional public administration to new public management, which focuses on making government services more responsive, efficient, and performance-oriented ([Yuliana & Wijayanti, 2020](#)). They argue that this transition is crucial to creating a more dynamic, results-driven bureaucratic system. However, despite these reform efforts, corruption, inefficiency, and abuse of power continue to hinder the quality of public services ([Xenia & Pramudito, 2023](#)). The study highlights the need for further governance innovations that move beyond administrative tasks to include entrepreneurial approaches that enhance service delivery ([Wahyudi & Santoso, 2022](#)).

In line with this, [Umar and Prasetyo \(2023\)](#) examine bureaucratic reform through the lens of corruption prevention, emphasizing that bureaucratic structures must be reengineered to reduce the opportunities for corruption. Their study argues that reforms should prioritize simplifying administrative processes, increasing transparency in decision-making, and strengthening accountability mechanisms to curb corrupt practices ([Taufik & Suryani, 2020](#)). They also discuss how poor implementation of reforms can lead to institutional inertia, where public service remains suboptimal, and the potential for corruption persists. The authors stress that innovation in public services is not just about incorporating new technologies but also fostering a culture of accountability and transparency ([Sari & Wijayanti, 2022](#)).

[Rachman and Hidayat \(2021\)](#) explore the Indonesia Serving Movement (GIM) as an innovative initiative to improve public services in the country. GIM encourages bureaucratic entrepreneurship, where ASN adopt innovative, solution-oriented practices in their work ([Qodri & Sari, 2020](#)). This movement reflects a shift towards service delivery that prioritizes responsiveness and community involvement ([Pratiwi & Yuwono, 2022](#)). The study highlights how GIM has spurred positive changes in service delivery by empowering ASN to act as catalysts for innovation within the government. However, the study also notes that the success of such movements depends on the policy environment and public servants' capacity to embrace change ([Rahayu et al., 2026](#)).

Digital Transformation and ASN Professionalism

Digital transformation plays an increasingly pivotal role in bureaucratic reform, particularly in improving ASN professionalism and ensuring the delivery of high-quality public services ([Zulkarnain & Santosa, 2020](#)). [Yuliana and Wijayanti \(2020\)](#) analyze the impact of digital transformation on ASN's role in government services. They argue that integrating digital technologies, such as e-Government systems, data analytics, and digital platforms, is essential to improve efficiency and accountability in the public sector ([Xenia & Pramudito, 2023](#)). However, they emphasize that digital tools alone are not sufficient. The success of digital transformation depends on ASN's capacity to use these tools effectively, which requires targeted professional development programs ([Vera & Haryanto, 2021](#)).

The study also highlights that digital transformation in public administration should be accompanied by ethics training, ensuring that ASN are not only tech-savvy but also ethically conscious in their duties (Wahyudi & Santoso, 2022). Umar and Prasetyo (2023) recommend a comprehensive approach to training ASN that combines both technical digital skills and ethical standards. By enhancing digital literacy among civil servants, the government can significantly improve service delivery, making processes more transparent, responsive, and accessible to the public (Majic & Ditmire, 2026).

Furthermore, Taufik and Suryani (2020) emphasize the importance of a merit-based system for recruiting and promoting ASN as part of the reform process. She suggests that a meritocratic approach is essential for creating a professional and accountable civil service. This system helps ensure that the most qualified individuals are selected for positions based on their competencies and qualifications, which is essential for the effective functioning of government institutions (Rachman & Hidayat, 2021). However, the study also notes that while meritocracy can reduce corruption and nepotism, it reaches its full potential only when accompanied by systemic and institutional reforms that promote fairness and equality across regions (Qodri & Sari, 2020).

Meritocracy and Accountability in ASN

A core aspect of bureaucratic reform is implementing a merit-based system for ASN recruitment, promotion, and evaluation. Pratiwi and Yuwono (2022) assess the implementation of meritocracy within the Indonesian bureaucracy, noting that while it has contributed to greater transparency and fairness in civil service management, inconsistencies in its application across regions remain a significant challenge (Nja et al., 2026). The study highlights that regional disparities in implementing the merit system undermine its effectiveness, as some regions continue to rely on nepotism and political patronage (Nugroho & Santosa, 2023). This inconsistency in policy enforcement suggests that meritocracy alone cannot achieve the desired reform outcomes without strong monitoring and accountability mechanisms (Oktaviani & Prasetyo, 2021).

To address these challenges, the study calls for a more robust oversight framework that can enforce the merit system uniformly across the country (Mahda & Naibaho, 2025). This includes strengthening external audits and internal accountability mechanisms to ensure the fair application of meritocratic principles (Lestari & Haryanto, 2022). Furthermore, ensuring that ASN adhere to the merit-based approach requires continuous evaluation of recruitment and promotion processes, with an emphasis on eliminating biases and favoritism that compromise the system's integrity (Kusnadi & Wijayanti, 2020).

In parallel, Julianto and Pramudito (2021) explore the role of ethics in bureaucratic governance, tracing the evolution of bureaucratic ethics in Indonesia and the challenges that persist in establishing strong ethical standards (Indriani & Wulandari, 2023). The study notes that while government agencies have made significant efforts to institutionalize ethical frameworks, ASN ethical commitment remains varied (Duru et al., 2026). Kurniawati argues that ethical education is essential to complement the structural reforms introduced by the merit system. Without a commitment to ethical behavior, merit-based systems may remain susceptible to manipulation and inefficiency (Hidayat & Rahman, 2022).

Leadership and Organizational Justice in Bureaucratic Reform

Leadership plays a crucial role in guiding bureaucratic reform and ensuring that it leads to sustainable change. Gunawan and Sari (2021) investigate the relationship between organizational justice, leadership, and innovation among civil servants in Indonesia. Their study finds that transformational leadership, which emphasizes open communication, inclusivity, and ethical behavior, positively influences innovative behavior among ASN (Efendi & Frinaldi, 2024). However, they also conclude that organizational justice,

which refers to the fairness of decision-making processes within an organization, does not significantly moderate this relationship. This suggests that while leadership drives innovation, creating a fair and just work environment is equally critical to the long-term success of reform initiatives (Dewi & Santoso, 2024).

The study emphasizes that transformational leadership fosters an environment where ASN feel valued and motivated to innovate (Cahyani & Prasetyo, 2023). However, it also highlights that organizational justice, which ensures fairness in how decisions are made and how resources are allocated, is essential for maintaining ASN's trust in the leadership. Thus, bureaucratic reforms need to focus not only on leadership development but also on ensuring that decisions within government organizations are made transparently and equitably (Budiarto & Suryani, 2022).

Andriani (2020) discusses delayering as a strategy for enhancing bureaucratic efficiency. Delayering, which involves reducing hierarchical levels within government organizations, aims to streamline decision-making and improve responsiveness (Arifin, 2021). Their study indicates that while delayering can enable quicker decision-making and more flexible organizational structures, it must be implemented carefully to avoid coordination gaps. Delayering should be combined with other reforms, such as training programs and technological advancements, to ensure that the newly restructured bureaucracy functions smoothly (Z. Zhao & Yang, 2021).

Ethical Standards and Training for ASN

Ethical training for ASN is an essential component of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia. Yang and Lu (2021) examine the evolution of bureaucratic ethics in the country, highlighting the ongoing challenges in implementing consistent ethical standards across all levels of government (Wu & Zhang, 2022). She argues that while regulations governing ethical behavior have been put in place, continuous education and enforcement are needed to ensure that ASN adhere to these standards. The study suggests that ethical training should be a fundamental part of ASN professional development, focusing not only on legal compliance but also on fostering a deep understanding of moral responsibilities in public service (Soo & Cheung, 2022; Wang & Li, 2023).

Soo and Cheung (2022) also advocate for comprehensive training programs that integrate both technical and ethical education. These programs should help ASN understand the importance of acting with integrity in all aspects of their work, from financial management to public service delivery. By instilling ethical responsibility, training can help combat corruption, enhance accountability, and improve the overall quality of governance (Syarifudin, 2026). This dual focus on technical skills and ethical values is critical for ensuring that digital transformation initiatives within the public sector are both efficient and morally sound (Seyed & Saeed, 2021).

Public Participation and Collaboration Public Participation and Collaboration in Bureaucratic Reform

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia cannot succeed without the active participation of the public and private sectors. Parker and Lawrie (2022) highlight the importance of collaboration between government agencies, the private sector, and civil society in driving bureaucratic reforms. Public participation is essential to ensure reforms align with the population's needs and expectations (Zaki et al., 2026). This collaboration helps build a governance ecosystem that supports a clean, efficient, and responsive government (Mason & Smith, 2022).

Public participation in the governance process includes providing feedback on government policies, holding civil servants accountable, and participating in decision-making processes (Mtawa et al., 2021).

Citizen involvement in monitoring and evaluating ASN performance can improve transparency and

prevent corruption. Furthermore, by actively engaging with the government, the public can help ensure that reforms are both inclusive and effective (Bansal & Taylor, 2002). Nasir et al. (2021) also point out that the private sector can play a vital role in supporting bureaucratic reforms by providing expertise, technology, and resources. Collaboration with the private sector can help modernize government systems and improve service delivery. By fostering a culture of transparency, accountability, and collaboration, the government can create a supportive environment for bureaucratic reforms that ultimately benefit the public (Nemeth, 2026).

3. Research Methods

This study used a qualitative case study design to investigate how ASN professionalism and governance can enhance bureaucratic integrity (Creswell, 2016). Study participants included ASN members and government officials engaged in bureaucratic reform and public services. The study used purposive sampling to select participants based on their engagement in the research area. This study sample included ASN members and government officials, but the number of participants is not provided in this manuscript. Data were gathered through semi-structured interviews and observations of organizational culture, human resources, ethics and professional development, governance and supervision, digital transformation, public participation, and bureaucratic reform.

The data were analyzed using thematic analysis, which involves identifying recurrent patterns, organizing data into themes, comparing findings, and interpreting results in light of the research topic. The analysis used six policy evaluation dimensions: effectiveness, efficiency, adequacy, equity, responsiveness, and forwardness. The six dimensions were utilized to assess the extent to which ASN professionalism and governance ethics led to bureaucratic integrity and performance, among other aspects.

4. Results and Discussion

Based on the research findings, several key points emerge that highlight the effectiveness, challenges, and areas for improvement in implementing bureaucratic reforms in Indonesia. These points provide valuable insights into the role of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in strengthening bureaucratic integrity and the long-term sustainability of these reforms. The following sections discuss the results and analysis in more detail.

Overview of the Research Object

The research focused on bureaucratic integrity in relation to ASN professionalism and ethics among public servants engaged in bureaucratic reforms and public service delivery (Zulkarnain & Santosa, 2020). This study focused on the organizational and institutional factors that affect public servants' ability to uphold professional, ethical, accountable, and honest behavior in the course of their administrative duties (Yuliana & Wijayanti, 2020). Hence, the research object is not only the individual ASN members' behavior, but also the organizational environment in which they operate (Xenia & Pramudito, 2023).

The results show that integrity in bureaucracy is affected by the interplay among personal competency, organizational culture, HR development, governance and supervision, technology capability, and public participation. These factors are interdependent, not independent (Vera & Haryanto, 2021). Professionalism equips public servants with the knowledge and skills needed to do their jobs, while ethical standards set behavioral expectations for integrity and accountability. However, the effectiveness of both factors depends heavily on the institutional setting, including resource availability, supervision, commitment, technology, and public participation (Wahyudi & Santoso, 2022).

Professionalism and Ethical Development of State Civil Apparatus

The results clearly show that building ASN professionalism and ethics plays a crucial role in strengthening bureaucratic integrity (Sari & Wijayanti, 2022). Professional development initiatives, especially training and capacity-building programs, positively affect decision-making, communication, and public service delivery (Rachman & Hidayat, 2021). Such results indicate that professionalism is not only an administrative issue but also an important means by which public officials can turn ethics into action (Qodri & Sari, 2020).

However, the results also reveal that professional development does not necessarily lead to similar positive changes in the bureaucracy's integrity. Differences in organizational capacity and resource availability affect how far professionals use the knowledge and skills acquired through training (Pratiwi & Yuwono, 2022). When professional development is supplemented with appropriate supervision and an organizational environment that responds positively to ethics, its positive effect on bureaucratic integrity is more likely to be sustainable (Nugroho & Santosa, 2023).

This realization points to the need to treat professionalism as an ongoing process rather than an end result of training (Oktaviani & Prasetyo, 2021). Professionalism must be continually cultivated, supported by institutions, and measured, while also providing public officials with the avenues to enhance their skill set. Therefore, efforts at enhancing bureaucratic integrity must include an integrated approach to human resources development (Lestari & Haryanto, 2022).

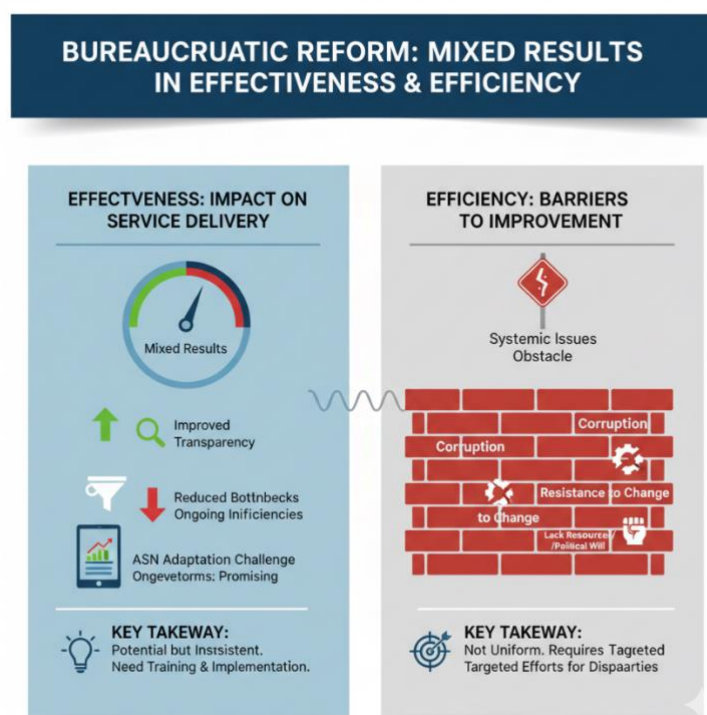


Figure 1. Effectiveness & Efficiency

Organizational Culture and Bureaucratic Integrity

The results further show that organizational culture plays an important role in shaping the implementation of ethical and professional standards (Indriani & Wulandari, 2023). A bureaucratic environment that consistently reinforces integrity can encourage public officials to internalize ethical

behavior as part of their routine professional responsibilities (Hidayat & Rahman, 2022). In such an environment, ethical conduct is not treated solely as compliance with formal regulations but becomes embedded within everyday organizational practices and decision-making processes (Gunawan & Sari, 2021).

The findings suggest that organizational culture change is therefore central to bureaucratic reform. Formal regulations may set standards of conduct, but their effectiveness depends on whether organizational norms and leadership practices support them (Efendi & Frinaldi, 2024). When organizational expectations are inconsistent, units or levels of government may implement ethical principles unevenly. This creates a gap between formal bureaucratic reform policies and their practical implementation (Dewi & Santoso, 2024; Cahyani & Prasetyo, 2023).

The study consequently indicates that strengthening integrity requires more than introducing new rules or administrative procedures (Budiarto & Suryani, 2022). Organizational leaders and institutions need to create an environment in which professionalism, transparency, responsibility, and ethical decision-making are consistently expected and reinforced. The effectiveness of bureaucratic reform thus depends on institutions' capacity to transform organizational culture rather than simply modify formal administrative structures (Andriani, 2020).

Public Responsiveness and Engagement

Public responsiveness was another key dimension evaluated in this research. The study found that reforms, particularly those involving digital platforms, had improved government responsiveness in some areas (Arifin, 2021). The introduction of e-government platforms enabled more efficient request processing, greater transparency in service delivery, and quicker response times to citizen inquiries (Z. Zhao & Yang, 2021). However, despite these advancements, gaps in public engagement remained, especially in more remote or underserved areas (Darabee et al., 2026). Some ASNs still struggled to meet citizens' evolving needs because of outdated systems, limited public communication, and a lack of adaptive strategies to address emerging issues (Hartley, 2015).

Informants noted that while digital platforms improved accessibility, they were not always sufficient to address deeper issues in public engagement. In some regions, citizens were not fully aware of or able to navigate the new digital systems, limiting their ability to provide feedback or engage with the government (Kazbekova et al., 2025). Moreover, in areas with limited internet access, the shift to digital platforms inadvertently excluded parts of the population, exacerbating the inequity in public service delivery (T. Zhao & Sun, 2024). This points to a larger issue: while digital transformation is essential to bureaucratic reform, it must be complemented by efforts to ensure that all citizens, regardless of location or technological access, can engage with the government effectively (Smith, 2019).

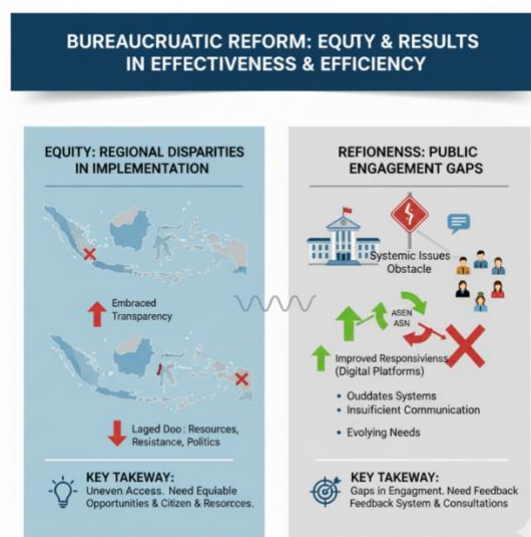
Additionally, ASNs in certain regions still struggled to communicate effectively with the public. In many cases, insufficient outreach or a lack of transparency about reform processes left citizens uninformed and disconnected from the government (Huang et al., 2024). The study suggests that improving public engagement mechanisms, such as establishing more robust feedback systems and holding regular citizen consultations, would enhance responsiveness and better align reforms with citizens' expectations (Park & Kim, 2024).

Strengthening public engagement would not only improve the responsiveness of government services but also build trust between ASN and the public (Bovaird, 2007).

Trust is a critical component of effective governance, and when citizens feel that their voices are heard and their concerns are addressed, they are more likely to support and participate in the

reform process. To enhance public engagement, the government should prioritize communication, transparency, and inclusivity in its reform efforts (Miranda-Hospinal et al., 2026). This could involve creating platforms for dialogue between ASN and citizens, providing regular updates on reform progress, and ensuring feedback mechanisms are accessible to all segments of the population (Ahmad & Sukmana, 2020).

Figure 2. Equity & Result in Effectiveness & Efficiency



ASN Professional Development and Ethical Standards

The research found that ASN (State Civil Apparatus) professionalism and integrity were crucial factors in the success of bureaucratic reforms. ASN who participated in targeted professional development programs, particularly those focused on ethics, leadership, and technical skills, were more likely to embrace reforms and demonstrate higher levels of integrity in their roles (Purnomo & Widodo, 2020). These training programs helped ASN understand the importance of ethical conduct and equipped them with the skills needed to implement reforms effectively. Informants reported that ASN who received these programs showed improvements in their decision-making, communication, and service delivery, which contributed positively to the overall effectiveness of bureaucratic reforms (Liu & Wang, 2015).

However, the study also found that overall professionalism among ASN varied significantly. While some ASN embraced the changes and consistently adhered to ethical standards, others still engaged in practices that undermined bureaucratic integrity (Corona-Treviño, 2023). Behaviors such as favoritism, corruption, and a lack of accountability were still prevalent in certain regions and government departments. This variation points to the need for comprehensive, ongoing training programs that address not only technical skills but also ethical development (Fauzi & Santoso, 2023). Continuous ethical education should be a core component of ASN professional development to ensure that integrity remains a priority at all levels of government (Nurcholis et al., 2023).

The research suggests that while initial training programs were effective for some ASN, these programs need to be expanded and made more accessible to all civil servants. A uniform approach to professional development across regions and government agencies would help raise overall professionalism and ensure ethical conduct becomes ingrained in daily bureaucratic operations.

This ongoing development, especially in leadership and ethics, is essential for sustaining the integrity of bureaucratic reforms and for ensuring that ASN can fulfill their roles as effective and trustworthy public servants (Nguyen et al., 2024).

Sustainability of Reforms and Forward Planning

The findings also show that organizational culture is a key component in shaping ethical and professional conduct within the organization. A bureaucratic culture that upholds integrity helps public servants develop a habit of ethical conduct as part of their professionalism (Jiang & Li, 2024). In such an environment, ethics and bureaucratic regulations are not separate but integrated within the organizational culture (Ahmad & Sukmana, 2020; Putri & Adi, 2021).

These findings show that organizational culture transformation is a key component of bureaucratic reform. Regulations may set standards of conduct, but their effectiveness depends on how much the organization adheres to them (Han et al., 2024). Inconsistent expectations about organizational culture may lead to the partial application of ethical values across different organizational units and levels of government (Razin & Sadka, 2005).

The research therefore shows that building integrity involves more than developing new policies or systems. Leadership and institutions must create an environment that consistently encourages professionalism, transparency, responsibility, and ethics (Nadja & Mikaela, 2024). The success of bureaucracy reforms will depend on institutions' ability to change organizational culture, not just the administrative structure (Abdulkareem & Ramli, 2022).

Digital Transformation and Institutional Capacity

The research findings suggest that digital transformation is another critical aspect of bureaucratic integrity and public administration performance (Freilich et al., 2009). Digital technologies can enhance administrative efficiency, monitoring, transparency, and access to public services. In terms of institutions, digital transformation might limit possibilities for discretionary behavior through more transparent and standardized administrative processes (Johnson, 2017).

However, research shows that institutions' uneven technological capacities limit the role of digital transformation. Uneven technological infrastructure, competences, and institutional readiness can lead to uneven implementation of digital bureaucratic reforms (P. Handayani & Saputra, 2022). Therefore, digital transformation should not be seen as a sure sign of enhanced bureaucratic integrity, but as something that depends on whether the institution has the resources, competences, and governance system needed to implement technologies (Wu & Zhang, 2022; Kalalingiet al., 2023).

Introducing digital technologies without developing human skills and institutional oversight could transfer existing institutional problems into the new digital context. This means digitalization must be paired with professional development and accountability (N. Handayani et al., 2024). Current evaluation systems tend to focus on immediate results, such as reduced processing times or the implementation of digital platforms. However, a more holistic evaluation system is needed, one that measures not only short-term outcomes but also the long-term impact of reforms (Yuliana & Wijayanti, 2020). This means digitalization must go hand in hand with professional development and accountability (Vera & Haryanto, 2021).

Public Participation and Accountability

Public participation was another important variable linked to bureaucratic integrity. Effective public participation can provide feedback on the quality of government services and the

performance of government institutions (Mahda & Naibaho, 2025). By participating, people can help supervise public administration and inform government institutions about how their programs and services function. However, the findings show that public participation depends on government institutions' readiness and ability to create mechanisms for effective participation (Lestari & Haryanto, 2022). Participation may be symbolic when public feedback is gathered but not used for decision-making and evaluation. Therefore, participation is not only about creating feedback mechanisms but also about citizens' ability to use them to influence the governance process. Incorporating public participation into bureaucratic supervision may enhance the external accountability of government institutions. While internal supervision aims to control public officials' actions, public participation offers another opportunity to learn from citizens' experiences in receiving services (Kusnadi & Wijayanti, 2020).

Barriers to the Implementation of Bureaucratic Integrity

Despite the benefits of professionalism, ethical development, supervision, digital transformation, and citizen engagement, the findings indicate that implementing bureaucratic integrity faces barriers caused by structural determinants (Indriani & Wulandari, 2023). According to the research, those structural barriers are resource disparities, disparities in technology capacity, lack of readiness, and differences in political will. Resource disparities can create inequalities in institutions' ability to implement reforms (Hidayat & Rahman, 2022). Government institutions with greater resources (human, financial, and technological) can implement professional and digital transformations. In contrast, those with insufficient resources will struggle to implement reforms, even with identical policy goals. Political will is another barrier to implementing bureaucratic reform. Bureaucratic reforms require consistent institutional commitment because organizational culture and professional behavior cannot change quickly (Efendi & Frinaldi, 2024).

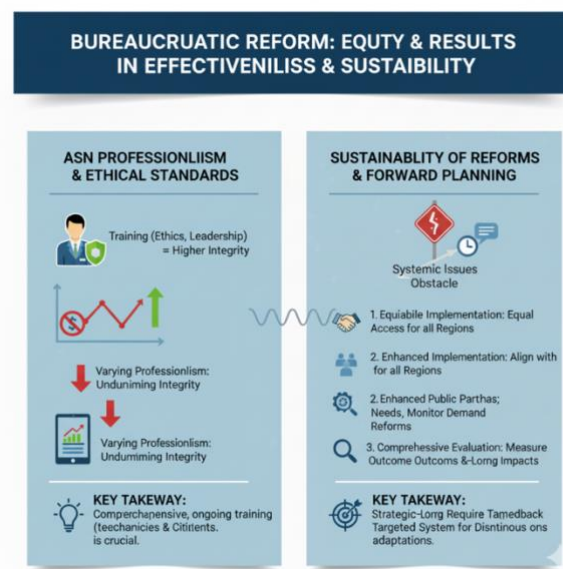


Figure 3. Equity & Result in Effectiveness & Sustainability

Summary of Findings from Research

Overall, the findings show that the conditions for bureaucratic integrity depend on the joint contribution of ASN staff professionalism, ethical development, organizational culture, supervision

and governance, technology capacity, and citizen participation (Cahyani & Prasetyo, 2023). Professional development supports decision-making, communication, and service delivery, while organizational culture and supervision shape the potential for effectively institutionalizing professional and ethical standards. Public participation and digital transformation are additional instruments for enhancing bureaucratic integrity but, at the same time, their efficiency depends on institutional and organizational capacities (Z. Zhao & Yang, 2021). Because the research used a qualitative case-study methodology, the findings are described in terms of substantive patterns and relationships rather than statistical terms (Wu & Zhang, 2022). This means the research does not present parameters such as correlation coefficients, regression coefficients, significance levels, or hypothesis-testing results. Nevertheless, the substantive direction of the findings can be identified as follows: better conditions for bureaucratic integrity are created by better professionalism, ethical capacity, supervision, supportive organizational culture, technology capacity, and public participation, while resource inequalities, low technology capacity, and political commitment are the constraints (Soo & Cheung, 2022; Wang & Li, 2023).

Discussion

These findings signal that bureaucratic integrity is a multidimensional institutional phenomenon, not merely an attribute of individual public officials. Individual professional and ethical competence is necessary but not sufficient without a supportive organizational environment (Seyed & Saeed, 2021). Therefore, professional development programs can help individuals become more competent but cannot guarantee that they will be more ethical. These findings are also important for moving away from individualism when understanding bureaucratic integrity. If we consider integrity as a personal attribute, then organizational features of institutions, such as organizational culture, supervision, resources, and political will, become secondary (Mason & Smith, 2022). However, these findings suggest that an individual's ethical behavior is shaped through interaction with their institutional environment. Public officials work in organizational settings with specific incentives, constraints, expectations, and outcomes. Therefore, improving bureaucratic integrity requires developing both individual and institutional competencies.

Professional development is especially crucial in this respect. Training can improve ASN members' capacity to decide, communicate, and deliver public services. Nevertheless, training cannot be viewed as an intervention that takes place in isolation from other factors (Mtawa et al., 2021). Training success depends on whether staff can apply new skills in the organizational setting. If organizational practices maintain low accountability or unethical behavior, training's behavioral impact may be insignificant. Therefore, professional development must be combined with performance appraisal, supervision, leadership, and organizational culture change. Results on organizational culture also support this idea. Bureaucratic integrity will be more sustainable when ethicality becomes routine within the organization (Bansal & Taylor, 2002). An organizational culture that encourages professionalism and accountability could motivate public officials to treat ethicality as a routine aspect of professionalism rather than a standard imposed by regulations. On the other hand, organizational culture can challenge employees in translating institutional standards into action when organizational norms oppose formal ethical standards. Thus, organizational culture serves as a significant channel for linking bureaucratic reforms to administrative practice.

Supervision is yet another important channel. The results suggest that professionalism and ethical standards require institutionalization through monitoring and accountability. However, this does not mean that integrity will be achieved mainly through punishment.

Supervision should include monitoring, performance assessment, feedback, corrective actions,

and professional development. This promotes accountability and helps public officials improve their performance. The results on digital transformation add another layer to the discussion. Technology can increase transparency and traceability in the administrative process, but technological systems cannot replace institutional integrity (Wahyudi & Santoso, 2022). With poor human resource capabilities and weak governance structures, digital systems might reflect the same administrative problems through a new channel. Therefore, digital transformation must be accompanied by increased digital literacy, supervision, and responsible governance. Technology should be seen as an enabling tool, not a standalone remedy for bureaucratic integrity.

Public participation also shows that bureaucratic integrity extends beyond internal government procedures. Citizens are key stakeholders in judging whether the administration works transparently, responsively, and professionally (Sari & Wijayanti, 2022). Public participation can add pressure to the system and generate new data not revealed through internal supervision. However, public participation must be linked to institutional decision-making processes and service evaluation to have any effect. Overall, the results suggest that bureaucratic reform should involve an integrated rather than a fragmented approach (Qodri & Sari, 2020). Professionalizing officials without organizational reform will not yield much; digitizing procedures without sufficient institutional capacity will worsen inequality; supervision without organizational learning will lead to excessive punishment; and public participation without appropriate institutions will become purely symbolic. Thus, the efficiency of integrity programs within bureaucracies relies on how these mechanisms are aligned (Nugroho & Santosa, 2023).

Finally, the findings provide important recommendations for public sector reform. Public sector institutions should focus on developing continuous professional education, creating organizational cultures that promote proper behavior, improving the supervisory system, eliminating inequalities regarding technological and organizational capabilities, and creating effective means of public participation (Oktaviani & Prasetyo, 2021). These measures should be carried out as interconnected elements of the bureaucratic reform process. Ultimately, the study reveals that bureaucratic integrity is best explained by how these dimensions interact (Lestari & Haryanto, 2022). Because the methodology does not support establishing causality, the study's conclusions cannot be treated as statistical findings; however, it provides clear evidence that these dimensions interact to create the context in which integrity can be fostered.

5. Conclusion

Bureaucratic integrity will improve when ASN professionalism, ethics, organizational culture, supervision, and continuing professional development are addressed together, not in isolation as distinct aspects of reform. The study found that stronger professional competence and ethics lead to more responsible decision-making, accountability, administrative transparency, and better public service delivery. Nevertheless, corruption, opposition to organizational change, variations in institutional and technological capability between regions, inconsistent reform implementation, and varying political and management commitment limit the realization of bureaucratic integrity. These findings suggest that bureaucratic reform requires institutional commitment, ongoing professional and ethical development, supervision, and equitable implementation across government organizations and regions. Overall, the research achieves its objectives by showing that improving ASN professionalism and ethics is the primary means of achieving bureaucratic integrity in Indonesia.

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