

Regulatory Misalignment and Academic Professionalism Erosion Among Indonesian Lecturers

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Abstract: This study examines the implementation of Indonesian PANRB Regulation No. 1/2023, which was designed to streamline civil service administration but has had adverse effects on academic professionalism among lecturers. Employing a qualitative bibliographic approach, this research analyzes government policy documents, official circulars, media reports, and peer-reviewed academic literature. The study analyzed data through Grindle's Implementation Framework, focusing on the interaction between policy content and implementation context. Findings reveal a fundamental epistemic mismatch between the regulation's bureaucratic standardization logic and the non-linear nature of academic work. The policy imposes rigid performance reporting requirements and relies on unintegrated digital systems, while institutional capacity and inter-ministerial coordination remain insufficient. These conditions generate professional resistance, declining research productivity, and the erosion of academic autonomy, a phenomenon this study conceptualizes as "aca-demic alienation." This research contributes to implementation theory by demonstrating how content-context misalignment produces "implementation gridlock" in knowledge-intensive public sectors. Policy recommendations include inter-ministerial harmonization, differentiated performance indicators, and participatory policy formulation involving academic stakeholders.

1. Introduction

The issuance of Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 represents a significant shift in Indonesia's civil service governance, introducing mechanisms of position equalization, hierarchical simplification, and performance-based credit conversion intended to modernize bureaucratic management. However, its application to the academic profession has generated substantial controversy. Lecturers, as knowledge workers regulated under Law No. 14 of 2005, operate through non-linear work processes centered on academic autonomy, research creativity, and the Tridharma mandates of teaching, research, and community service—a professional logic fundamentally distinct from conventional civil service roles (Altbach, 2015; Clark, 1987).

Since the policy was issued, its implementation has not gone smoothly in several professions, especially teaching. As a professional group regulated by Law No. 14 of 2005, lecturers have work characteris-

tics that differ from other civil service positions. In the literature, the teaching profession is described as knowledge workers who rely on intellectual autonomy, scientific creativity, and methodological reflection as part of the knowledge production process (Altbach, 2015; Marginson, 2011). Thus, the position of lecturers is not only as executors of state functions but also as scientists and educators who carry out the Tridharma of Higher Education, namely teaching, research, and community service, which historically has been the main foundation of academic professional identity.

This is where the main problem lies. The policy of standardizing lecturers' work patterns with those of administrative positions is often seen as contrary to the basic nature of the academic profession, which demands flexibility in time, space for self-development, and academic freedom to explore and produce knowledge (Clark, 1987; Herbst, 2025). Overly bureaucratic standardization efforts can also ignore the non-linear nature of scientific work, which is heavily influenced by the dynamics of the academic community. Instead of simplifying bureaucratic processes, such policies actually create new complexities and widen the gap between the normative objectives of the policy and actual practices in the field, a phenomenon often referred to in policy implementation theory as the gap between design and operational reality (Wambe, 2025). This triggers resistance because the policy is seen as out of step with the logic of higher education, which operates through a balance between academic responsibility and institutional autonomy.

This situation ultimately led to uncertainty in implementation at the university level, especially when higher education institutions had to interpret and adapt the regulations to the diverse rhythms of academic work. As Musselin (2018) notes, bureaucratization efforts that do not account for academic culture tend to create structural tensions and disrupt the stability of the knowledge ecosystem. Thus, this issue is not merely administrative; it concerns how the state, institutions, and the academic profession negotiate boundaries of autonomy and accountability in higher education.

Various academic and institutional criticisms reinforce this issue. Prakasa (2023) from UGM asserts that "The PANRB regulation, which was drafted using the omnibus method, has been misinterpreted by the Directorate General of Higher Education, as if universities were positioned as subordinates rather than equal partners" (Tempo, April 21, 2023). This quote contains serious criticism of the way ministries/institutions view universities. Not only is there misinterpretation, but there also appears to be a tendency to treat universities as subordinate units rather than autonomous entities, as stipulated in the Higher Education Law.

Meanwhile, Darmawan (2023) said that implementing this policy has placed an additional burden on lecturers: "The administrative burden on lecturers has become increasingly counterproductive. Time for research and publication has been eroded by personnel reports" (Republika, April 17, 2023). This excessive administrative burden shifts lecturers' focus from academic activities to administrative tasks, reducing scientific productivity and the quality of education. This issue is the starting point for this research. This background will critically examine the inconsistency between policy design and implementation reality using Grindle's Implementation Model (1980) as the main analytical tool.

One root cause of the problem can be traced to the epistemic mismatch between the logic of bureaucratic policy and the logic of the academic profession. There is (provisionally at least) little discretion, much less scope for initiative, within a bureaucratic frame of rules and standardized procedures; administrative responsibilities are narrowly defined, or backstopped in case this indefinite undertaking of administration goes awry. However, the university is characterized by academic autonomy, flexibility, creativity, and academic freedom, which are essential to developing innovative knowledge. Despite the potential for structural friction, PANRB Regulation No. 1 of 2023 introduced a model that did not suf-

ficiently account for the character of academic labor through its system of assessment, promotion, and reporting.

Several academics have termed this phenomenon epistemic mismatch: the gap between policy assumptions and how the targeted profession works. In situations like this, policies that are insensitive to the professional context almost always face implementation barriers. This is where Merilee S. Grindle's (1980) theory becomes relevant. In *Politics and Policy Implementation in the Third World*, Grindle emphasizes that implementation is not a mechanical process of applying rules, but a series of actions whose success is shaped by the interaction between the policy's content and its implementation context. As Grindle asserts, "implementation is the process by which policies are carried out, and their success depends not only on the content of the policy, but also on the context in which the actions are carried out" (1980). This perspective offers an appropriate analytical framework for assessing the implementation of the PANRB Regulation, because this bureaucratic policy is applied to an academic work system that has fundamentally different orientations, rhythms, and professional values. Thus, the implementation challenges that arise are not merely technical administrative issues; they reflect deeper epistemic issues about how the state and the academic profession understand, or fail to understand, each other in the policy process.

This study is anchored in Grindle's (1980) implementation framework, which posits that policy success depends on the interaction between policy content and implementation context. Specifically, Grindle asserts that "Implementation is the process by which policies are carried out, and whether they succeed depends not only on the content of policy but also on the context within which actions take place" (Grindle, 1980). This study is anchored in Grindle's (1980) implementation framework, which argues that policy implementation success depends on the interaction between policy content and the implementation context. As Grindle (1980) argues, "Implementation is the process by which policies are carried out, and whether they succeed depends not only on the content of policy but also on the context within which actions take place." The content-of-policy dimension concerns who benefits or bears the consequences of a policy, the resources available for implementation, the degree of change expected, the types of benefits generated, and the actors responsible for implementing the program. When applied to Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023, this dimension reveals several ambiguities. The stated objective of bureaucratic simplification appears inconsistent with the emergence of additional administrative burdens, and the regulation provides insufficient clarity on reducing non-academic activities. The policy's benefits for lecturers are also not clearly articulated, campus personnel units responsible for implementation receive inadequate operational guidance, and lecturers, as key affected actors, have limited involvement in the policy formulation process. These conditions suggest a potential gap between the policy's intended content and the practical requirements faced by implementers and target groups.

The second dimension, the context of implementation, focuses on the distribution of power, interests, and strategies among actors, institutional characteristics, and the compliance and responsiveness of implementing actors. In this case, the implementation context is characterized by the strong influence of the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform and the Directorate General of Higher Education in shaping the policy's direction. At the same time, higher education institutions face constraints in exercising their institutional autonomy, while lecturers constitute a directly affected group whose involvement in policy formulation has been limited. Implementation is further complicated by differences in interpretation and capacity among implementation units. Consequently, the same regulation may be translated differently across institutions, producing variations in administrative practices and potentially creating uncertainty among lecturers and technical implementers.

The interaction between these two dimensions helps explain the emergence of resistance and what may be described as implementational gridlock. Although Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 is presented as part of an effort to simplify bureaucracy, its implementation has encountered conditions that may produce outcomes different from its stated objectives. Credit reporting has become more complicated; centralized reporting systems such as SIASN and SISTER are not yet fully integrated; some academic activities are not adequately recognized for credit purposes; and lecturers are required to devote considerable time to administrative responsibilities. These conditions illustrate a disconnect between policy objectives and implementation outcomes, demonstrating that formal regulatory change does not automatically translate into administrative simplification at the implementation level.

Grindle's framework is particularly relevant because it situates affected actors' responses and strategies within the broader implementation process. In the case of Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023, implementation has generated criticism from professional organizations such as KIKA, APTISI, and AWI; protests among lecturers at various universities; concerns about institutional readiness to implement the new provisions; and confusion among technical implementers due to incomplete or insufficiently clear implementation guidelines. These responses should therefore not be viewed merely as resistance to policy change, but as part of the implementation dynamics arising from interactions among policy design, institutional conditions, actor interests, implementation capacity, and the experiences of target groups.

This situation also raises a broader issue concerning the relationship between bureaucratic regulation and academic autonomy. Higher education institutions are expected to function as spaces of academic autonomy, yet implementing increasingly centralized administrative requirements may strengthen their dependence on government bureaucratic mechanisms. From this perspective, implementing Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 offers an important case for examining whether bureaucratic simplification at the regulatory level translates into simplification at the institutional and individual levels. Existing studies on the regulation remain relatively limited in explaining these implementation dynamics in depth. Therefore, comparing Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 with the previous regulatory framework, particularly Permen PANRB No. 13 of 2019, provides an analytical basis for identifying changes in policy content, implementation arrangements, administrative requirements, and their implications for lecturers and higher education institutions.

Table 1. Amendments to the PAN RB Regulation on Functional Positions

No.	PAN RB Regulation No. 13/2019	PAN RB Regulation No. 1/2023
1	Based on the equivalence of activity items and SKP	Based on the scope of duties at each job level and adjusted to performance expectations.
2	Transfers are carried out within one cluster	Transfers can be carried out across clusters to facilitate talent mobility.
3	Setting AK targets at the beginning of the performance year in alignment with activity items in the SKP	Annual AK targets are set as a coefficient for converting performance evaluation ratings each year.
4	Based on the credit score assessment (AK) on the DUPA submission activity items	There is no longer a DUPAK; evaluations are based on the fulfilment of performance expectations.
5	Extraordinary promotion only for JPT and JA	In addition, special promotions are given to functional officials who have demonstrated exceptional performance and expertise in carrying out their functional duties.
6	The supervisory agency has 19 main tasks: Education and training, competency standards, competency testing, and coordination.	The supervisory agency develops learning content, strategies, and competency development programs.

Source: BKN (2023) in the Indonesian Widyapraja Association.

It is suspected that Permen PAN RB No. 1 of 2023 was drafted using the omnibus method. During the planning and drafting stages, a participatory process should have been used in this case, and lecturers should have been asked for their opinions in drafting the regulation (Wibowo, 2023). However, in practice, the Directorate General of Higher Education, Research and Technology (Dirjen Dikti Kemenbudristek) has misinterpreted Permen PAN RB No. 1 of 2023, positioning higher education institutions as subordinates rather than equal partners (Wibowo, 2023). Permen PAN RB No. 1 of 2023 is an omnibus law covering all ranks among civil servants, with implications for lecturers' career paths, which are becoming increasingly difficult (Andryanto, 2023).

Several important theoretical and practical gaps remain insufficiently addressed in the literature on implementing Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023. First, studies that explicitly apply Grindle's (1980) implementation framework to examine the interaction between policy content and the implementation context remain limited. Much of the existing discussion is descriptive and has not systematically analyzed how policy design, actor interests, institutional capacity, and implementation conditions interact to shape policy outcomes. Second, the literature still pays insufficient attention to the policy's impact on academic autonomy, even though autonomy is an important normative and legal foundation of higher education governance. Third, the phenomenon of academic alienation, understood here as the growing disconnection of lecturers from their core academic roles due to increasing bureaucratic and administrative burdens, has not been sufficiently explored despite its empirical relevance. Fourth, existing studies have rarely linked lecturer resistance to broader power structures within the implementation process, particularly the unequal relationships between central government institutions, universities, and lecturers as the affected professional group.

To address these gaps, this study offers three main contributions. First, it applies Grindle's (1980) theory as the primary analytical framework for examining the implementation of Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023. This approach enables a more systematic mapping of policy content, implementation actors, institutional conditions, and the dynamics that emerge during implementation. Second, this study develops the concept of academic alienation as an analytical lens for understanding the structural effects of excessive bureaucratization on lecturers' professional identity, academic engagement, and relationship with their core academic functions. Third, the study critically examines the power relations between the government and higher education institutions in implementing national policy, particularly regarding the potential marginalization of university autonomy and lecturers' limited involvement in decisions that directly affect their professional responsibilities.

The implementation of Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 should therefore not be understood merely as an administrative or technical issue. It also reflects structural, epistemic, and political dimensions of policy implementation. From Grindle's (1980) perspective, which emphasizes the interaction between policy content and implementation context, implementation barriers can be understood as a consequence of policy design that is not fully aligned with the characteristics of the academic profession, the institutional capacity of higher education institutions, and the distribution of power among relevant actors. In this sense, implementation problems arise not only from technical weaknesses but also from deeper tensions between bureaucratic standardization and academic autonomy, as well as between centralized policy direction and institutional diversity. Accordingly, this research is expected not only to describe implementation empirically but also to provide a stronger analytical basis for evaluating whether the policy supports or constrains the development of the national academic ecosystem.

Against this background, the implementation of Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 raises several fundamental issues that require systematic investigation. The first concerns the policy's content, particularly

how the regulation is designed and the extent to which its provisions align with the characteristics of the lecturer profession and the higher education ecosystem. The second concerns the implementation context, including the roles of implementing actors, institutional capacity, administrative readiness, and power relations among government agencies, universities, and lecturers. The third concerns the interaction between these two dimensions, particularly how the relationship between policy content and implementation context influences the success, limitations, or failure of implementation. The fourth concerns the emergence of resistance, implementation obstacles, and inconsistencies, as well as their implications for lecturer professionalism and academic autonomy. Finally, the study also needs to examine what implementation strategies or policy adjustments are required so that the regulation can be implemented more effectively while remaining consistent with its intended objectives and without undermining the principles of academic autonomy or the professional character of lecturers.

Accordingly, this study is directed at examining how the content of Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 is designed and whether it is aligned with the characteristics of the lecturer profession and higher education governance; how the implementation context is shaped by implementing actors, institutional capacity, and inter-institutional power dynamics; how the interaction between policy content and implementation context, as conceptualised by Grindle (1980), affects implementation outcomes; what forms of resistance, obstacles, and inconsistencies emerge during implementation and how they affect lecturer professionalism and academic autonomy; and what implementation efforts are necessary to improve policy effectiveness while safeguarding the specific institutional and professional characteristics of higher education.

2. Literature Review

Global Bureaucratization of Higher Education and New Managerialism

The bureaucratization of higher education is a well-documented global phenomenon driven by three converging forces: the rise of accountability regimes, the diffusion of new public management (NPM) principles, and the expansion of digital governance systems. Tight (2019) demonstrates that contemporary universities have progressively adopted compliance cultures in which academic performance is evaluated through rigid, indicator-based metrics, effectively transforming lecturers from knowledge producers into administrative workers. This structural shift represents what [Ter Bogt and Scapens \(2012\)](#) term “new managerialism,” the importation of corporate performance logic into academic institutions, wherein outputs are quantified, ranked, and made subject to bureaucratic oversight.

[De Boer, Enders, and Schimank \(2015\)](#) extend this argument by characterizing higher education as entering a “regulative state,” wherein governments exercise authority not through direct funding or academic planning but through compliance mechanisms and administrative rules. [O’Reilly \(2017\)](#) further identifies “administrative intensification” as the dominant organizational tendency within this regime: the progressive colonization of academic time and institutional space by administrative processes. These global studies consistently find that bureaucratization undermines academics’ core professional function, particularly research productivity and pedagogical quality. [Zink et al. \(2024\)](#) synthesize these effects empirically, showing that high administrative burdens correlate significantly with academic fatigue and reduce research output, disciplinary focus, and teaching quality.

The digital dimension of this bureaucratization has introduced new complexities. [Bozeman, Youtie, and Jung \(2020\)](#) document the paradox of “robotic bureaucracy, wherein automated compliance systems designed to reduce workloads generate additional layers of administrative complexity through

fragmented platforms, duplicated data entry requirements, and a lack of system interoperability. Barkov, Markeeva, and Gavrilenko (2024) similarly describe “innovation bureaucracy” as a condition in which digitization increases rather than reduces administrative burdens, particularly in institutions with insufficient digital infrastructure. Sariene et al. (2020) further note that open government and digital transparency mandates translate into more granular and frequent reporting obligations for academic staff.

Robb, Candy, and Deane (2022), in a systematic review of regulatory overlap literature, further show that the simultaneous operation of multiple, non-harmonized regulatory systems generates cumulative compliance costs disproportionately borne by professionals in knowledge-intensive fields. The concept of “regulatory layering,” the accretion of successive mandates without corresponding removal or prior obligation, applies directly to the Indonesian lecturer context, where Permen PANRB No. 1/2023 was superimposed on an already complex KUM and SISTER reporting architecture. Aruldas and Ponnusamy (2025) extend this analysis by characterizing such conditions as a “regulatory trap”: a self-reinforcing governance cycle in which compliance demand escalates beyond institutional absorptive capacity, producing systematic non-compliance, professional disengagement, and declining policy legitimacy.

Policy Implementation Frameworks: From Grindle to Multi-Actor System

The theoretical anchor of this study is Grindle’s (1980) implementation framework, which conceptualizes policy success as contingent upon the compatibility between two analytical dimensions: the content of the policy (including its goals, benefit types, resource requirements, implementer characteristics, and target populations) and the context of implementation (encompassing power relations, institutional capacity, actor interests, and compliance conditions). Unlike linear models, policy implementation is a political and administrative process shaped by actors’ agency, institutional constraints, and structural misalignment.

Van Meter and Van Horn (1975) complement this framework by highlighting the interaction between top-down directives and bottom-up local adaptations, arguing that implementation outcomes are coproduced by central policy designers and implementing agents rather than determined solely by the former. Guy (2018) contributes the concept of “constrained bureaucratic conditions,” identifying the circumstances under which state institutions attempt to enforce policies without adequate resources, technical capacity, or regulatory clarity, conditions directly applicable to the Indonesian case. Enserink et al. (2022) further elaborate on the challenge of multi-actor implementation systems, demonstrating that fragmented institutional authority across ministries, agencies, and universities generates power asymmetries and coordination failures that systematically undermine policy coherence.

Kingdon’s (1984) multiple streams framework provides an additional lens for understanding how the conditions for policy change align or misalign: when problem, policy, and political streams converge without adequate implementation infrastructure, reform efforts produce unintended consequences rather than desired outcomes. This theoretical convergence underscores the analytical value of examining Permen PANRB No.1/2023 not merely as a regulatory text but as an implementation event shaped by institutional actors, competing interests, and structural constraints.

Miller, Farris, and Nelson (2025) introduce the concept of the “regulatory labyrinth” to describe governance environments in which actors must navigate overlapping, sometimes contradictory mandates issued by multiple administrative authorities, with no single coordinating mechanism. Their analysis shows that regulatory labyrinths are not merely technical inconveniences but structural barriers

to implementation fidelity, as implementing organizations expend resources navigating the regulatory environment rather than executing policy objectives. This conceptualization aligns closely with Enserink et al.'s (2022) multi-actor systems framework and provides a concrete vocabulary for analyzing the four-ministry coordination challenge that characterizes the implementation architecture of Permen PANRB No. 1/2023.

Lubis and Kartika (2024) examined the Indonesian regulatory context, documenting the structural tension between academic freedom provisions embedded in Law No. 14/2005 on Teachers and Lecturers and the administrative standardization logic encoded in civil service regulations. They argue that this tension constitutes a "regulatory dissonance," a condition in which two legally valid normative frameworks produce contradictory behavioral demands on the same professional population. This finding is directly relevant to the present study, as it identifies a pre-existing legal fault line that Permen PANRB No.1/2023 exacerbates rather than resolves.

Academic Professionalism, Autonomy, and the Epistemic Nature of Lecture Role

Academic professionalism is constituted by a distinct set of norms, orientations, and practices that differentiate the lecturer role from conventional civil service positions. Clark (1989) established that academic work is fundamentally organized around disciplinary communities, scholarly inquiry, and the pursuit of knowledge, an epistemic logic that is inherently incompatible with standardized, output-based performance management. Altbach (2015) reinforces this argument at the international level, demonstrating that academic freedom, encompassing freedom of inquiry, research, and publication, is not merely a normative ideal but a functional prerequisite for scientific productivity and institutional legitimacy.

Dane (2020) documents the concrete effects of bureaucratic overload on professional identity, showing that excessive administrative demands erode the intrinsic motivation, disciplinary engagement, and pedagogical creativity that characterize high-performing academics. When performance is measured through credit points, document submissions, and compliance checkboxes rather than through the quality and impact of scholarly work, lecturers experience what this study terms "academic alienation," a progressive displacement from the epistemic core of their professional role. This concept draws theoretically on Ter Bogt and Scapens' (2012) notion of "managerial capture," in which institutions lose control over academic priorities as administrative logics displace scholarly ones.

Stowell, Falahee, and Woolf (2015) provide empirical grounding for this theoretical claim through their study of the tension between academic standards maintenance and the regulatory compliance framework in British higher education. They demonstrate that when the regulatory framework prioritizes procedural standardization over professional judgment, academic standards are paradoxically eroded rather than protected, a finding that directly contradicts the stated objective of performance management policies. Garwe (2024), examining the Zimbabwean higher education context, identifies an analogous tension between vertical qualification alignment mandates and institutional innovation capacity, arguing that regulatory standardization that does not accommodate disciplinary and institutional diversity generates innovation suppression alongside compliance fatigue. These cross-national comparative findings strengthen the external validity of the present study's argument by demonstrating that the Indonesian case reflects structural tensions endemic to standardized regulatory governance of diverse knowledge institutions.

The Indonesian Higher Education Context: Administrative Burden and Policy Misalignment

Within the Indonesian higher education context, administrative burden has been identified as a systemic governance challenge anteceding the issuance of Permen PANRB No.1/2023. [Suryadi \(2020\)](#) demonstrates that the Cumulative Credit Point (KUM) system, the predecessor mechanism for lecturer performance evaluation, was already characterized by excessive complexity, redundant documentation requirements, and inequitable disciplinary standards. Rather than enhancing productivity, the KUM system served as an administrative filter that disadvantaged lecturers in applied, practice-based, and interdisciplinary fields.

[Azfirmawarman, Adnan, and Khaidir \(2024\)](#) provide more recent empirical evidence, showing how institutional governance systems in Indonesian universities systematically increase lecturers' administrative workloads across teaching, accreditation compliance, and research reporting. [Sudrajat, Djibrul, and Saputra \(2022\)](#) show that implementation failures at private higher education institutions are compounded by institutional unpreparedness, insufficient administrative personnel, and a lack of adequate digital infrastructure. [Ridwan and Andini \(2022\)](#) similarly attribute policy implementation failures to fragmented institutional authority, conflicting ministerial directives, and the absence of horizontal coordination mechanisms between PANRB, Kemendikbudristek, BKN, and the LLDIKTI network.

[Maulana and Putri \(2020\)](#) specifically examine the digitization dimension, finding that administrative technology adoption in Indonesian universities has proceeded without commensurate investments in training, technical support, or system integration, thereby producing digital overload rather than digital efficiency. These national findings collectively establish an institutional context characterized by low capacity, fragmented authority, and accumulated policy fatigue, conditions that critically shape the reception and implementation of any new regulatory intervention.

A governance dimension largely absent from prior Indonesian studies is the role of internal accountability structures within higher education institutions. [Kamila and Munajat \(2025\)](#), in a case study of PTN-BH governance at Universitas Pendidikan Indonesia, demonstrate that even among autonomous universities, which theoretically possess greater regulatory flexibility, financial management accountability systems remain fragmented, with internal audit functions insufficiently integrated into performance governance structures. These findings suggest that the implementation challenges posed by Permen PANRB No.1/2023 are not solely attributable to external regulatory pressure but are also compounded by internal governance deficiencies within Indonesian higher education institutions.

Research Gap

This review reveals several intersecting gaps in the literature. First, while the global literature on bureaucratization and new managerialism is well-developed ([Tight, 2019](#); [Ter Bogt & Scapens, 2012](#); [O'Reilly, 2017](#)), its application to non-Western, developing-country higher education contexts, particularly those marked by multi-ministerial governance and weak digital infrastructure, remains limited. Second, implementation studies of Indonesian higher education policy have primarily addressed discrete issues such as KUM complexity ([Suryadi, 2020](#)) or accreditation compliance ([Sudrajat et al., 2022](#)) without a comprehensive theoretical framework for analyzing the interaction between policy design and implementation context.

Third, and most critically, no prior study has applied Grindle's (1980) implementation framework to analyze the specific implementation dynamics of Permen PANRB No. 1/2023. This constitutes the pri-

mary contribution of the present study. By systematically examining both the content dimensions of the regulation (it goals, resource assumptions, and beneficiary designations) and its implementation context (institutional capacity, actor interests, and inter-ministerial power relations), this study advances implementation theory in two respects: (1) it empirically demonstrates how content-context misalignment produces “implementational gridlock” in knowledge-intensive public sectors, and (2) it introduces the concept of “academic alienation” as a theoretically grounded construct for analyzing the professional consequences of managerial capture in higher education governance.

3. Research Methods

This study employs a qualitative bibliographic research design. Data were drawn from three primary source categories: (1) official government documents, including Permen PANRB No. 1/2023, BKN circular letters, and Ministerial Decree No. 152/2023 on performance evaluation; (2) national media reports published between January 2023 and December 2023 from outlets including Tempo and Republika; (3) peer-reviewed academic literature retrieved from SINTA-indexed and Scopus-indexed journals using the search terms “bureaucratic reform,” “academic professionalism,” and “policy implementation in higher education.” Document selection was based on three criteria: relevance to the study’s theoretical framework, publication within the last ten years (with exceptions for foundational works), and availability in full-text form. Data were analyzed using content analysis following Grinelde’s (1980) two-dimensional framework, systematically examining policy content dimensions (goals, resources, implementers, beneficiaries) and contextual dimensions (power relations, institutional capacity, actor compliance). Validity was ensured through source triangulation across government documents, academic literature, and media discourse.

As [Creswell \(2017\)](#) notes, qualitative research aims to understand the “assumptions and interpretive frameworks that inform the study of research problems to explore the meaning individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem.” In terms of social context, power relations, actors’ interpretations, and institutional configurations, policy implementation is complex. Hence, qualitative research allows researchers to explore the intricacies of policy implementation, actors’ responses, and the subsequent effects on lecturers’ workload.

This investigation employed bibliographic research, also known as a literature review. Because this study uses texts, reports, documents, and scientific articles to explain the historical, political, and epistemic context of policies in addition to attempting to comprehend empirical phenomena, a literature review was selected. According to [Melfianora \(2019\)](#), [Embun \(2012\)](#) clearly distinguishes between bibliographic research and literature studies: “Bibliographic research is research conducted solely based on written works, including published and unpublished research results.” Therefore, the following bibliographic sources are used in this study:

- Official articles in the national media,
- Government documents (Permen PANRB, circular letters, credit score guidelines),
- Public data from the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, Higher Education Monitoring and Evaluation Agency, and National Agency for Civil Service,
- Results of academic discussions,
- Scientific articles and journals related to lecturer workload,
- Academic theories related to policy implementation.

According to Melfianora (2019), "Sources of facts for literature research can consist of seminar reports, medical dialogue notes, official authorities' publications, and virtual documents." Thus, this study can combine data from online sources like Tempo, Republika, Katadata, LIPI, and systematic articles in reputable journals.

The literature approach is frequently employed in public policy studies, particularly when:

- The policy is still new.
- Changes to the policy have caused controversy.
- There are differences in interpretation among actors.
- There is not much empirical data available.

Yin (2014) elucidates that "Document analysis is an essential component in policy research because documents are the main instruments through which policy is formulated, interpreted, and implemented." Consequently, literature studies constitute a pertinent methodology for examining the implementation of new policies, such as PANRB Regulation No. 1/2023.

4. Results and Discussion

A Content Analysis of Permen PANRB No.1/2023 and Its Alignment with the Lecturer Profession

Grindle (1980) defines the content dimension of policy as encompassing six analytical elements: the interests affected, the type of benefits delivered, the extent of change envisioned, the site of decision-making, the program implementers, and the resources committed. A documentary analysis of Permen PANRB No. 1/2023, cross-read with BKN Circular Letter No. 1/2023 and Ministerial Decree No. 152/2023 on Lecturer Performance Evaluation, reveals systematic misalignments across all six content dimensions when applied to lecturers. Regarding policy goals, the regulation's stated objective of bureaucratic simplification is operationalized exclusively through administrative mechanisms (position equalization, credit conversion, e-reporting mandates) that presuppose a linear, output-measurable work process. This operationalization is epistemically incompatible with the non-linear, inquiry-driven nature of academic work, which Law No. 14/2005 explicitly protects through academic freedom provisions (Lubis & Kartika, 2024).

"Higher education is shifting into a regulative state, characterized by high reliance on administrative rules and compliance mechanisms," according to Angel (2015). Academic work often becomes bureaucratic when administrative norms are overly stringent. This regulation mandates strict credit scoring and performance reporting, but it ignores variation in academic output, research workloads, and disciplinary differences. According to Tight's (2019) research, indicator-based evaluation systems create a "compliance culture" that transforms academics into "administrative workers."

Regarding resource assumptions, documentary analysis of the regulation reveals no provision for additional administrative staffing, digital infrastructure investment, or funding for inter-system integration. The regulation implicitly assumes that universities are already equipped to operate SISTER, e-Kinerja, and PDDikti reporting systems in an integrated manner, an assumption contradicted by Maulana and Putri's (2020) finding that most Indonesian universities lack sufficient digital infrastructure and trained administrative personnel. Bozeman, Youtie, and Jung (2020) characterize this pattern as "robotic bureaucracy": deploying automated compliance systems without commensurate organizational capacity, producing additional rather than reduced administrative burden. The regulatory trap identified

by [Aruldas and Ponnusamy \(2025\)](#) is directly instantiated here: the regulation mandates compliance with systems that institutions cannot yet operationalize, generating a self-reinforcing cycle of non-compliance, supplementary circulars, and escalating administrative demands.

The teaching profession is a scientific profession oriented towards the development of knowledge, the pursuit of scientific truth, academic freedom, work flexibility, research creativity, and publication. Rigid, uniform administrative policies run counter to the nature of the profession. [Zink et al. \(2024\)](#) assert that “bureaucratic overload undermines academic autonomy and reduces time available for scholarship.”

In sum, the content dimension analysis reveals that Permen PANRB No. 1/2023 treats lecturers as generic civil service employees rather than as knowledge workers operating under a distinct professional and legal framework. This fundamental misclassification at the policy-design level is the primary source of the content-context misalignment identified in this study.

Context Dimension Analysis: Institutional Capacity, Actor Interest, and Power Fragmentation

[Grindle \(1980\)](#) states that the implementation context is influenced by factors such as bureaucratic capacity, the implementing organization’s characteristics, political support and resistance, and the distribution of power among actors. Implementing the PANRB Regulation involves at least four main actors: the Ministry of PANRB, the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology, the National Civil Service Agency (BKN), and universities (public and private). The lack of harmonization between administrative and academic policies causes dissonance. [Ridwan & Andini \(2022\)](#) emphasize that many higher education policy implementations fail because of “fragmented institutional authority”.

Higher education institutions have uneven capacity because most still lack administrative staff, digital performance management systems, research repository systems, and data integration with SISTER e-Kinerja. PANRB regulations tend to “dominate” the academic space of higher education institutions. In line with [O’Reilly \(2017\)](#), who refers to this phenomenon as administrative intensification, namely the strengthening of administrative control over academic institutions.

PANRB regulations tend to “dominate” the academic space of higher education institutions. This is in line with [Ter Bogt and Scapens \(2012\)](#), who refer to this phenomenon as administrative intensification, namely the strengthening of administrative control over academic institutions.

Regarding compliance and responsiveness, the documentary and media record reveals a pattern of selective and inconsistent compliance: universities with stronger administrative capacity (particularly research universities and PTN-BH institutions) demonstrate higher formal compliance rates while exhibiting informal workarounds, whereas smaller private institutions demonstrate widespread formal non-compliance attributable to incapacity rather than resistance. This pattern is consistent with [Azfirmawarman et al.’s \(2024\)](#) finding that administrative governance burdens are distributed unequally across the higher education system, falling most heavily on institutions with the least administrative capacity. [Miller et al.’s \(2025\)](#) regulatory labyrinth framework predicts precisely this outcome: in governance environments characterized by navigational complexity, compliance capacity rather than policy merit determines implementation fidelity.

In sum, the context dimension analysis reveals that the implementation environment for Permen PANRB No. 1/2023 is characterized by fragmented institutional authority ([Ridwan & Andini, 2022](#); [Robb et al., 2022](#)), constrained bureaucratic capacity ([Guy, 2018](#); [Kamila & Munajat, 2025](#)), unresolved regulatory dissonance ([Lubis & Kartika, 2024](#)), and unequal compliance capacity across the higher education

system. These contextual conditions are not merely incidental implementation obstacles but structural features of the Indonesian higher education governance landscape that render the regulation's goals unachievable without fundamental policy redesign.

Context Interaction: Implementation Gridlock and Academic Alienation

According to Grindle (1980), implementation success depends on the degree of compatibility between policy content and the context of implementation. The goal of simplifying bureaucracy was not matched by institutions' ability to operate reporting, verification, and documentation mechanisms. Grindle refers to this phenomenon as "policy mismatch." When implementers feel that the burden of policy is unrealistic, resistance emerges in the form of:

- academic criticism,
- delays in implementation,
- local interpretation,
- selective compliance.

The second dimension of the content-context interaction concerns the erosion of academic professionalism. When performance measurement systems colonize the epistemic space of academic work, the professional consequences extend beyond increased workload to encompass what this study terms "academic alienation", a progressive displacement of lecturers from the scholarly activities that constitute their professional identity. Stowell et al.'s (2015) finding that regulatory standardization erodes rather than protects academic standards provides the empirical grounding for this conceptualization. Garwe's (2024) documentation of innovation suppression under vertical qualification alignment mandates demonstrates its application in a developing-country context. Dane's (2020) evidence of professional identity erosion under bureaucratic overload provides the psychological mechanism. The cumulative effect, documented in the Tempo and Republika reporting analyzed for this study, is a higher education workforce characterized by what Zink et al. (2024) identify as the convergent outcomes of administrative overload: fatigue, disengagement, reduced research productivity, and deteriorating pedagogical quality. Enserink et al.'s (2022) power fragmentation analysis explains the governance mechanism: without a coordinating authority capable of resolving the PANRB-Kemendikbudristek jurisdictional conflict, the policy implementation system lacks the structural capacity to self-correct.

Professional Resistance and Implementation Consequences

The professional resistance to Permen PANRB No. 1/2023, documented in national media and professional association communications between January and December 2023, represents more than a political reaction: it constitutes evidence of implementation failure at the actor-compliance level of Grindle's context dimension. Woelert's (2025) cross-national finding that excessive administrative burdens catalyze professional resistance is directly confirmed by the Indonesian case, where organized resistance from KIKA, APTISI, and individual university faculty associations produced formal policy revision requests within three months of the regulation's issuance. The specific obstacles documented in media analysis, non-integrated SISTER/e-Kinerja platforms, technically ambiguous credit-calculation guidelines, absence of discipline-specific implementation guidance, and insufficient administrative staffing correspond precisely to the resource assumption failures identified in the content dimension analysis (Section 3.1) and the capacity deficits identified in the context dimension analysis (Section 3.2). Sudrajat

et al.'s (2022) finding of institutional unpreparedness at private universities is confirmed as a persistent structural condition rather than a transitional implementation challenge.

This contributes to a decline in lecturer professionalism. Zink et al. (2024) state that bureaucratic overload reduces research productivity, academic focus, and teaching quality. Permen PANRB No. 1 of 2023 increases this risk. This policy increases the state's administrative control over campuses. Ter Bogt and Scapens (2012) refer to this phenomenon as managerial capture, when academic institutions lose control over their academic priorities. Resistance arises because the policy is incompatible with the nature of the teaching profession and the institutional context. The impact is significant for professionalism, academic freedom, and scientific productivity.

Policy Reconceptualization Escaping the Regulatory Trap

Harmonizing regulations between ministries is necessary so implementation is well accepted and does not appear to place an additional burden on lecturers' performance. Therefore, the Ministry of Education and Culture (academic functions), the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (civil service functions), the National Civil Service Agency (civil service), and universities (institutional autonomy) need to reconcile their roles. This is in line with what Enserink et al. (2022) said: harmonization is a key requirement in multi-actor policy systems.

This harmonization includes staffing administrative personnel, setting minimum standards for digital systems, providing administrative training, and integrating the SISTER e-Kinerja. Bozeman et al. (2020) emphasize that technology is only effective if organizational capacity supports it.

The conceptual contribution of this study, the "academic alienation" framework, provides the normative criterion against which policy reforms should be evaluated: any revision of Permen PANRB No. 1/2023 that does not measurably reduce the displacement of lecturers from their scholarly functions fails the standard of professional adequacy regardless of its administrative efficiency gains. Tight's (2019) argument that universities must return to scholarly inquiry as their primary institutional logic, rather than administrative compliance, constitutes the aspirational benchmark. Achieving it in the Indonesian context requires not merely regulatory adjustment but a fundamental reorientation of the state's relationship to higher education institutions: from administrative subordination to epistemic partnership.

Therefore, the policy content should be revised in line with Grindle's principles by adjusting objectives, simplifying indicators, ensuring resource availability, and balancing actors' interests. Effective implementation requires policy reconceptualization: harmonizing institutions, building institutional capacity, revising administrative indicators, and reaffirming lecturers' academic autonomy.

Grindle's theory-based analysis shows that implementing PANRB Regulation No. 1 of 2023 has fundamental inconsistencies between the policy's content and its implementation context. This misalignment has led to resistance, burdened professionalism, reduced academic autonomy, and hampered policy effectiveness. Improvements must be made through the harmonization of regulations between ministries, strengthening institutional capacity, reorganizing administrative indicators, and respecting the character of the lecturer profession as academic workers, not merely administrative civil servants.

5. Conclusion

This study shows that Permen PANRB No.1 of 2023 has failed to achieve its bureaucratic simplification objectives in the higher education context because of a fundamental misalignment between policy content and implementation context, as analyzed through Grindle's (1980) framework. The regulation's

imposition of uniform administrative standards on the non-linear, autonomy-dependent nature of academic work has generated epistemic friction, excessive reporting burdens, and widespread professional resistance. Fragmented interministerial authority, insufficient institutional capacity, and inadequate digital infrastructure have compounded implementation failures, producing “academic alienation,” in which lecturers are increasingly displaced from their core scholarly functions. These findings extend Grindle’s framework by demonstrating how content-context misalignment creates “implementational gridlock” in knowledge-intensive public sectors, a contribution relevant to broader debates on managerialism in higher education.

Based on these findings, the following recommendations are proposed: (1) the Ministry of PANRB and the Ministry of Education, Culture, Research, and Technology should undertake formal interministerial harmonization to produce a dedicated regulatory track for academic functional positions; (3) the digital reporting system (SISTER and e-Kinerja) must be integrated and accompanied by adequate training programs before full implementation is mandated; and (4) future policy revisions must incorporate participatory formulation processes that meaningfully involve academic stakeholders, including representatives from professional associations such as KIKA and APTISI.

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