

Discrepancy in Public Administration Services Due to Vacancy in Regional Head Positions

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ABSTRACT

Vacancies in the position of regional heads have a significant impact on public services in the regions, which have implications for access, quality and responsiveness of services to the community. This study aims to identify and analyze the impact of vacancies of regional head positions on the delivery of public services and formulate strategies that can be done to improve the quality and responsiveness of public services in the regions. The research method used is normative legal research, with a focus on analyzing legal norms written in legislation and relevant legal literature. This approach is carried out by studying various regulations relating to public services and the authority of regional heads. The results showed that the vacancy of the regional head position caused serious disruption in the delivery of public services. This has resulted in a decline in service quality, delays in decision-making, and policy uncertainty that has a negative impact on public satisfaction. In addition, the vacancy poses challenges in maintaining public trust in the government. This research emphasizes the need for the transformation of public administration services to overcome the problems arising from the vacancy of the regional head position. Innovation and the use of information technology are expected to improve service efficiency and transparency. Recommendations are also given to develop human resource capacity and analyze community needs.

Keywords: Vacancies of Officials, Regional Heads, Public Administration Services, Inequality

Introduction

Public administration services are a series of activities carried out by the government in order to provide services to the community, whether in the form of information, permits, or other basic services (Ahmad & Si, 2018). Public administration has a central role in ensuring that various community needs, whether economic, social, educational, or health, can be met efficiently and fairly. In this context, public administration services not only cover formal

aspects such as document management but also play a role in managing various public resources that are vital to the community's welfare. (Hardiyansyah, 2011) Public administration services serve as a bridge between the community and the government. This system is designed to be able to respond to the needs of citizens quickly and accurately, both on an individual and community scale. These services cover various sectors, such as managing Identity Cards (KTP), business licenses, health services at community health centers, social assistance, and infrastructure. The efficiency of good public administration services is necessary to support local economic growth, strengthen public trust in the government, and ensure social justice. In addition, the quality of public services is a major indicator of the government's success in implementing good governance. (Hayat, 2017)

Public service has now become one of the strategic policy issues that is increasingly receiving serious attention. This is because public service is a real manifestation of the government's existence in society. Public service involves activities carried out by individuals, groups, or certain institutions to provide services to the community, either in the form of easy access to information, licensing, or provision of basic needs (Mulyadi et al., 2016). The purpose of public service is to facilitate the community in achieving various goals, ranging from social and political to economic. Therefore, the implementation of good public service will create a positive image of the government in the eyes of the community. The government must provide quality services as part of its function because the government was established and exists to meet the interests and needs of citizens (Box, 2014; Kettl, 2015; Mansoor, 2021).

With the implementation of decentralization and regional autonomy in Indonesia, each region is now responsible for managing and providing public services according to its local characteristics and conditions. Public services are one of the most visible indicators in assessing the performance of local governments. The public can directly evaluate government performance based on the quality of services they receive. If public services do not meet expectations, it has the potential to trigger a crisis of trust among the public. Dissatisfaction with public services is often expressed through various forms, such as demonstrations or through social media as a channel to convey criticism of the government (Bonsón et al., 2015; Chen et al., 2020; Fuchs, 2015). This phenomenon shows how important the role of public services is in maintaining relations between the government and the public.

However, various problems are still often found in the implementation of public services, which indicates that their implementation is not yet fully effective and efficient. Problems such as the low quality of human resources responsible for services, complicated and bureaucratic procedures, lack of transparency in requirements, and the lack of certainty of time in completing applications are the main sources of public complaints. In addition, the public often faces the problem of unofficial additional costs, which further worsens the image of public services. As a result, local governments are often seen as less capable of carrying out their duties professionally and transparently, which in turn strengthens the negative image in the eyes of the public. The bad image of public services is further exacerbated by issues of corruption that often involve public officials, including regional heads. Corruption committed by regional heads in various regions in Indonesia further worsens public trust in the government. A real example is in Papua, where three regional heads were simultaneously named as suspects by the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) in a corruption case. The determination of regional heads as suspects not only raises pros and cons among the public but also adds to the bad record regarding the integrity of regional officials in Indonesia. This situation results in a vacancy in the position of a regional head who is permanently incapacitated, which has the potential to disrupt the smooth running of public services in the region.

The vacancy of the position of regional head due to being named a suspect in a corruption case or other reasons has a serious impact on the efficiency of public services. This is because regional heads have an important role in supervising, guiding, and evaluating the implementation of public services, as stipulated in the public service law. In addition, regional heads must also report the results of public service performance in their regions to the Regional People's Representative Council (DPRD) and relevant ministries. With a vacant position, the flow of reporting and supervision can be stopped, which indirectly affects the course of public services in the area.

Public administration services are a series of activities carried out by the government to provide services to the community, both in the form of information, licensing, and other basic services. Previous research shows that vacancies in regional head positions can significantly affect the quality of public services. For example, research by Ahmad (2018) found that uncertainty in leadership can lead to stagnation in the implementation of service programs. In

addition, research by Mulyadi (2016) shows that low service quality is often related to a lack of direction and supervision from regional heads.

Therefore, vacancies in the position of regional heads caused by permanent obstacles, such as being involved in legal cases or other problems, can disrupt the smooth and efficient delivery of public services. In this situation, an appropriate solution is needed so that public services can continue to run well even though the regional head is permanently absent. This effort is very important to ensure that the community is not harmed and public services can still be implemented optimally without any administrative obstacles or leadership vacancies at the regional level.

This research offers novelty by focusing on the Indonesian context, which has not been widely explored in the literature on the impact of regional head vacancies. By analyzing the social and economic impacts of regional head vacancies, this study provides new insights into the challenges faced by local governments in maintaining the quality of public services.

The findings of this study have important implications for policymakers and government agencies. By understanding the impact of vacancies, recommendations can be made to improve public service management mechanisms and filling strategies. This study is also expected to encourage the government to adopt innovation and technology in public services, as well as improve human resource capacity to ensure services continue to run well despite vacancies.

Research Method

The normative legal research method is a legal research approach that focuses on the study of written legal materials. This research aims to examine the legal norms contained in laws and regulations, doctrines, and legal literature. In this method, law is seen as a normative system that has rules that must be interpreted and analyzed. Researchers use various legal materials, such as laws, government regulations, court decisions, and other official documents as the main research materials. The normative legal method also examines how a legal rule is implemented and the consistency between one regulation and another. The main focus of this approach is on the law as text and how these legal texts can provide solutions to the legal problems being faced.

One approach that is often used in normative legal research is the statutory approach. This approach involves analyzing various applicable regulations, both national and local laws and regulations. The goal is to understand the structure and hierarchy of legal regulations and how these regulations are relevant to answering the issues being studied. In addition, the

conceptual approach is also often used in normative legal research. This approach aims to examine legal concepts that form the basis for the formation of certain legal rules. The conceptual approach emphasizes a deep understanding of the basic principles of law, legal theory, and the interpretation of fundamental concepts used in the legal system, such as justice, rights, obligations, or good governance. Through a combination of legislative and conceptual approaches, normative legal research can provide a more holistic and comprehensive analysis of legal issues.

Result and Discussion

The Impact of Regional Head Positions Vacancy on the Implementation of Public Services in the Regions

In Article 1 of the Regional Government Law, it is emphasized that regional governments have an obligation to fulfil the basic service needs of the community and set minimum standards for services and the quality of basic services. Some regions have even supplemented this provision with additional regulations that support public services. For example, Papua Province has issued Governor Regulation Number 17 of 2020 regulates the implementation of public services within the scope of the provincial government. In the gubernatorial regulation, it is explained that the regional head acts as a supervisor who is responsible for ensuring the smooth implementation of public services and assigns the regional secretary as the party responsible for coordinating, evaluating, and reporting the results of the implementation of tasks to the regional head.

As a mentor, a regional head should set a good example for his subordinates and the community. However, if a regional head is caught in a corruption case, it will certainly have a negative impact on the image of the government in the community. This condition then becomes the responsibility of the acting or acting regional head to improve this image. In the implementation of public services, obstacles often occur, especially when the regional head is permanently prevented due to a legal case. Although the government continues to strive to develop a better service format in line with increasing public demands, the vacancy of the regional head position creates its own challenges. In accordance with Article 65 Paragraph (4) of the Regional Government Law, if the regional head is serving a prison sentence, the deputy regional head will carry out his duties and authorities. With this vacancy, the deputy regional head is expected to be able to improve the image of the

government and improve public services while maintaining neutrality and avoiding the practices of corruption, collusion, and nepotism.

The acting regional head who is assigned to replace the regional head who is permanently prevented needs to take appropriate action so that the image of the government does not deteriorate further and to improve public services which are the first communication bridge between the government and the community. However, there is a provision in Article 14 Paragraph (7) of Law Number 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, which states that government agencies or officials who obtain authority through a mandate are not authorized to make strategic decisions or actions, which can have an impact on changes in legal status, organization, staffing, and budget allocation. As a result, the vacancy of the regional head position causes legal uncertainty due to the limited authority held by the acting or acting regional head.

In theory, the regional head has an area of administrative discretion to implement regulations or carry out duties, especially when there are no clear regulations. However, this vacancy raises various complex problems, both in the context of urgent problems and those considered important. When a problem concerns the public interest, the problem can be categorized as something important to address. Therefore, it is very important for the acting regional head who is given a mandate to carry out temporary duties to be given discretionary authority. With discretion, the acting head can fulfill his obligations more optimally, especially in the context of public service. In Indonesia, the use of discretion is regulated in the Law on State Administration, which provides regional heads with the opportunity to use discretion to address concrete problems in the administration of government, especially in situations where existing regulations are inadequate.

Discretion can be used to take quick and effective action to improve public services and restore public trust in the government that may have been disrupted due to the negative behaviour of previous regional heads. Article 22 of the Law on State Administration states that granting discretion aims to facilitate the implementation of government, especially in terms of public services. When there is stagnation in government, where government functions are not running properly, this can cause the wheels of government to stop running, which can have fatal consequences in critical situations, such as natural disasters or political unrest.

Vacancies in regional head positions can have a significant impact on public services, especially in terms of efficiency and effectiveness. When regional heads are permanently incapacitated either due to legal issues, resignation, or other reasons, the regional government structure often becomes dysfunctional. In a state of vacancy, public services can be hampered due to the absence of a leader responsible for directing and managing government activities. It can cause policies and programs that should be implemented to stop. Thus, disrupting basic services should be received by the community. Communities that should have easy access to services such as health, education, and infrastructure may experience delays or uncertainty that ultimately reduce the level of public satisfaction and trust in the government.

The efficiency of public services in the regions can also decrease due to vacancies. The decision-making process becomes slower due to uncertainty in leadership. Without a regional head, program planning and implementation are often hampered. For example, when a policy requires the signing or approval of the regional head, a vacancy can cause delays that impact programs directly related to community needs. It will lead to a decline in the quality of service, potentially creating a gap between community needs and the services provided.

In addition, vacancies in regional heads also affect strategic decision-making and public policy. Regional heads have an important role in formulating policies and strategies that can address regional problems. In a vacancy situation, the ability to make quick and accurate decisions becomes very limited. The official who replaces the regional head may not have the mandate or full authority to make decisions related to long-term policies. In this case, the decisions taken tend to be temporary and unfocused, so they cannot optimally meet community needs.

Vacancies can also trigger uncertainty in public policy. The public becomes confused about the direction of the policy to be taken, and this can lead to social and political instability. When people feel there is no clear leadership, they may be more sceptical of the government, which can trigger protests or wider dissatisfaction. In addition, the opportunity to create innovative policies that are responsive to community needs is reduced. Without a regional head who actively leads and encourages innovation, the region can get stuck in old patterns that are no longer in line with existing social, economic, and political dynamics.

Discrepancy and Transformation of Public Administration Services Due to Vacancies in Regional Head Positions

The vacancy of the regional head position can cause a difficult situation in the implementation of public services. When the regional head is absent, either due to a legal case, resignation, or other reasons, there is a leadership vacuum that has a major impact on the operation and quality of public services. One of the most obvious impacts is reduced public access to the services they should receive. Public services that are usually structured and coordinated become hampered, making it difficult for the public to get the information or assistance they need. For example, the process of applying for permits, health services, education, and infrastructure often stops or is delayed, which ultimately reduces public trust in the local government.

The quality of public services also declines significantly during a vacancy. Without an active regional head to lead, supervise, and evaluate service performance, staff, and civil servants may become less motivated and lack clear direction. In this situation, the services provided often do not meet established standards in terms of time, accuracy, and transparency. For example, health services that are usually fast and responsive can be hampered, resulting in residents in need of medical care experiencing long waiting times or even having their access to basic health services cut off. In addition, when strategic decision-making to address urgent problems is not carried out, the quality of services will be further eroded.

Responsiveness of services also decreases when the regional head is absent. Responsiveness in public services includes how quickly and effectively the government responds to the needs and complaints of the community (Dharmawan et al., 2023; Goldsmith & Crawford, 2014). In a vacancy, decision-making can be hampered and services become less responsive to changing community needs. Uncertainty about who has the authority to make decisions in urgent situations makes the service process unclear. The community, which can usually submit complaints or input to the regional head, now feels neglected because there is no leader present to listen and resolve existing problems. This can lead to dissatisfaction among the community, which ultimately triggers protests and doubts about the capacity of local government.

Some of the public services most affected by the vacancy of regional heads include health services, education, and infrastructure. In the health sector, basic services such as immunization, health checks, and treatment may be seriously disrupted. In the education sector, the management of schools and

the provision of educational facilities may be hampered, causing students to lose access to decent education. In addition, infrastructure projects that depend on the decision of the regional head to continue or postpone may be hampered, resulting in damaged roads, poorly maintained public facilities, and delays in construction that are much needed by the community. Thus, the vacancy of the regional head not only impacts the administration but also has a direct impact on the welfare of the community depends on effective and efficient public services.

Discrepancy in public services can have significant social and economic impacts on society. From a social perspective, inadequacies in public services often lead to dissatisfaction among the community. For example, when health services are inadequate, people in need of medical care may not get the necessary access, which can ultimately be fatal. This also has the potential to increase mortality and disease rates in the community, creating social injustice for the most vulnerable groups. In addition, education hampered by suboptimal public services causes the younger generation to miss out on opportunities to develop their potential, which has an impact on the quality of human resources in the future. As a result, discrepancy in public services can create long-lasting social injustice, trigger social tensions, and disrupt community cohesion.

From an economic perspective, discrepancy in public services can result in substantial losses. When infrastructure, such as roads and bridges, are poorly maintained, transportation costs increase, affecting business productivity and regional competitiveness. Poor public services can also deter investment, as investors tend to avoid areas with weak infrastructure and inefficient services. This can lead to reduced employment and job opportunities for the community. Public dissatisfaction arising from poor services can lead to protests and social instability which in turn can disrupt economic activity. If this dissatisfaction is not handled properly, it can lead to a crisis of public trust in the government, making it difficult for the government to implement needed policies and programs.

Public service transformation refers to the process of change that aims to improve the effectiveness, efficiency, and responsiveness of services to the community. The main goal of this transformation is to ensure that public services not only meet minimum standards but also adapt to the evolving needs of the community. This transformation includes the use of technology, improving administrative processes, and strengthening community

involvement in service delivery. By carrying out the transformation, the government is expected to be able to create more inclusive and responsive services that not only pay attention to quality but also speed and ease of access for all levels of society.

Vacancies in regional heads are often the impetus for transformation in public service systems. When a vacancy occurs, there is an opportunity to reassess existing systems and processes and find ways to improve them. The acting regional head or a designated replacement can evaluate weaknesses in public service delivery and formulate new, more effective strategies (Berman et al., 2021; Perry & Christensen, 2015). It could include introducing new technologies to increase transparency and efficiency, or changes in organizational structures to improve collaboration between agencies. In this way, vacancies can serve as a moment of introspection that drives improvements in public service delivery, making it better prepared to face future challenges.

To address discrepancy in public service delivery, several strategies and policies need to be implemented systematically. First, it is important to conduct an in-depth community needs analysis so that the government can understand the problems faced by citizens. Through surveys and discussion forums, the public can provide direct input on the types of services they need and expect. Furthermore, increasing the capacity of human resources, including training and skills development for civil servants, is also very important to ensure that they are able to provide quality services.

In today's digital era, the role of information and communication technology (ICT) is crucial in facilitating the transformation of public services. By utilizing ICT, the government can provide faster and more efficient services through online platforms. For example, mobile applications or public service portals can be used to make it easier for the public to access information and apply for services without having to visit government offices in person. In addition, the use of big data and analytics can help the government identify trends and community needs more accurately so that services can be adjusted in a timely manner. Thus, the application of ICT not only increases efficiency but also increases transparency and accountability in public services, which in turn can increase public trust in the government.

Conclusion

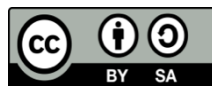
Vacancies in regional heads have a significant impact on public services, which in turn have a major impact on the community. When regional heads are absent, access to and quality of public services are often hampered, creating gaps that worsen the social and economic conditions of the community. This can lead to widespread dissatisfaction, increase the risk of distrust in the government, and lead to protests and social tensions. Communities that should receive basic services, such as education, health, and infrastructure, are neglected, which ultimately creates injustice and hinders the growth and development of the region as a whole.

However, this situation also opens up opportunities for transformation in public administration services. Vacancies can be a starting point for system evaluation and improvement, allowing replacement regional heads to introduce innovations and efficiencies in public services. Through a more inclusive and technology-based approach, the government can strengthen the capacity of public services, increase transparency, and better respond to community needs. By adopting the right strategies and leveraging information technology, the government can not only address existing discrepancy but also rebuild public trust, creating a more stable and productive environment for all parties.

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