

Practical Understanding Of Specialization And Coordination In Public Organizations To Observe How Indonesia Copes With The Worldwide Pandemic Of COVID-19

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Abstrak

Esai ini bertujuan untuk menemukan pemahaman tentang spesialisasi dan koordinasi vertikal dan horizontal dalam organisasi publik; relevansinya untuk memahami bagaimana Indonesia menghadapi Covid-19, dan tantangannya berdasarkan perspektif budaya. Seperti yang kita ketahui, dunia saat ini harus menghadapi pandemi yang berbahaya bagi kehidupan manusia, seperti kesehatan fisik dan mental, sosial, ekonomi, keamanan, keimanan, dan kebebasan. Sejak awal tahun 2020 hingga saat ini, hampir semua negara di berbagai belahan dunia sedang berjuang melawan penyakit coronavirus – 2019 atau Covid-19. Indonesia seperti banyak negara lainnya ditantang untuk segera menghentikan penyebaran virus sekaligus mencari solusi untuk mengatasi situasi selama pandemi. Penelitian ini juga memuat analisis singkat data empiris dari lapangan terkait tindakan pemerintah Indonesia dalam menghadapi pandemi. Dari sisi budaya ditemukan bahwa ketidakpercayaan masyarakat terhadap vaksin dan lemahnya koordinasi antar pemerintah dari berbagai tingkatan menjadi tantangan yang dihadapi Indonesia dalam upaya penanganan Covid-19. Tanggung jawab penanganan pandemi Covid-19 sepenuhnya berada di tangan pemerintah pusat. Sedangkan fungsi pemerintah daerah merupakan perpanjangan tangan dari pelaksanaan tugas pemerintah pusat.

Kata Kunci: *Spesialisasi Vertikal dan Horizontal, Koordinasi, Perspektif Budaya, Covid-19, Pemerintah Indonesia.*

Abstract

This essay aims to find an understanding of vertical and horizontal specialization and coordination in public organizations; its relevance to understand how Indonesia copes with the Covid-19, and its challenges based on the cultural perspective. As we know, the world now has to face a dangerous pandemic to human life, such as physical and mental health, social, economy, security, faith, and freedom. From the beginning of 2020 until now, almost all countries in different parts of the world are struggling with coronavirus disease – 2019 or Covid-19. Indonesia as many other countries was challenged to immediately stop the virus as well as to find solutions to overcome the situation during the pandemic. This essay also contains a short analysis of empirical data from the field related to the actions of the Indonesian government in facing the pandemic. From the cultural perspective, it was found that public distrust of vaccines and poor coordination between governments from various levels were the challenges facing Indonesia in its efforts to deal with Covid -19. The responsibility for handling the Covid-19 pandemic is entirely in the hands of the central government. Meanwhile, the function of local government is an extension of the implementation of the duties of the central government.

Keywords: *Vertical and Horizontal Specialization, Coordination, Cultural Perspective, Covid-19, Indonesian Government.*

INTRODUCTION

A specialized organizational structure in public organizations gives individuals a relatively narrow range of understanding and purview in their roles, which may cause their search for solution to be biased and near. Meanwhile coordination is the unification, integration, synchronization of the efforts of group members so as to provide unity of action in the pursuit of common goals. It is a hidden force which binds all the other functions of management. The purpose of this essay is to gain an understanding of vertical and horizontal specialization and coordination in public organizations and identify its relevance to Indonesia's coping with Covid-19.

Since the beginning of 2020, the world has to face a pandemic problem that is known to be very dangerous because it attacks not only physical health but almost all aspects of human life; social, economy, security, faith, freedom, and even mental health. This virus spreads very quickly due to the lack of community discipline in complying with health protocols, and people who are infected with the virus often appear to have no symptoms.

This virus is a disruptor to the way of life of people around the world, including people in Indonesia, one of many countries that have to work hard in facing Covid-19 problems. In July 2021, the surge in infections has led Indonesia to the 1st rank country with the highest Covid-19 cases in the world for the period 12-18 July 2021, according to data from the World Health Organization (WHO). This phase brings great pressure on the Indonesian government to improve their steps in handling Covid-19 pandemic. The pandemic of Covid-19 has hit the economy hard, with a -5.32% reduction in GDP in the second quarter, the worst economic slump since 1998. The sectors most affected by the pandemic were those related to mobility, international trade, and those related to the supply chain, and many of these sectors tend to be labor intensive.

In this paper, the author will bring the empirical data to discuss the overcome of the Covid-19 pandemic in Indonesia through theory approaches in public organizations. Entitled "Practical Understanding of Specialization and Coordination in Public Organizations to Observe How Indonesia Copes with The Worldwide Pandemic of Covid-19", study in this paper is conducted to answer the following questions: (1) What is meant by vertical and horizontal specialization and coordination in public organizations, (2) Try to identify how these dimensions are relevant for understanding how Indonesia have organized to cope with Covid-19, and (3) The main challenges related to the use of these structural dimensions in coping with the pandemic.

METHOD

This study uses Qualitative Research to gain a deep and comprehensive understanding of the problem and view it from the perspective of Specialization and Coordination in Public Organizations. With library research methods and journal studies, this research also contains a brief analysis of empirical data from the field regarding the actions of the Indonesian government in dealing with the pandemic.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Body

Specialization and Coordination in Public Organizations

In most government systems, both specialization and coordination are necessary (Christensen et al. 2016). These two concepts are often used in formal organizational structures. According to the instrumental perspective of public organizations, could be distinguish 2 main types (dimensions) of Specialization: vertical specialization and horizontal specialization.

Vertical specialization is interpreted as the conversion of existing state organizations into units that are organizationally further away from central political authorities. It also includes the transfer of tasks to existing units that have a structurally more devolved form, and an increase in the number of new organizations with a

structurally more devolved form (Lægreid et al. 2008). Vertical, intra-organizational specialization tells us how formal authority is distributed among different levels of the hierarchy, while Vertical inter-organizational specialization focuses on the specialization among public organizations (Christensen and Lægreid 2011).

Horizontal specialization may mean that existing organizations are split into smaller sub-units or that new organizations are founded at the same hierarchical level (Lægreid et al. 2008). In other way we could also say an organizational structure in which several units with the equal level and roles perform the same particular task(s), and there is no one higher over another. We could understand simply that vertical specialization is the division of roles on task(s) in an organization into hierarchical levels, and each role has a different responsibility as well. This type of division of labor has several units with different levels but work on the same task. While horizontal specialization is several units that are at the same level work on the same task to reach one final goal.

The common reason why public organizations need specialization is that public organizations often deal with complex tasks and it requires various competencies and skills. Sometimes a too-high level of horizontal specialization or vertical specialization could signify coordination problems; therefore, the formed specialization must be adjusted to the tasks. For example, it would be better and more efficient to form a simple specialization for tasks that can be done in a simple way and with few people.

Coordination can be defined as a process of adjustment in which at least two interdependent actors are involved (Koop and Lodge 2014). Organization as a way of coordination requires the establishment of a system of authority whereby the central purpose or objective of an enterprise is translated into reality through the combined efforts of many specialists, each working in his own field at a particular time and place (Gulick 1937). Luther Gulick (1937) stressed the dynamic relationship between specialization and coordination. The more specialization in a public organization, the more pressure for increased coordination, and vice versa.

There is vertical coordination and horizontal coordination in public organizations, which is further differentiated by intra - organizational coordination and inter - organizational coordination as mentioned in the table below:

	Vertical Coordination	Horizontal Coordination
Intra – organizational coordination	Between political and administrative executives, or between top civil servants and lower-level officials	Between departments within a ministry
Inter – organizational coordination	Between ministries and subordinate agencies	Between ministries or agencies

Sumber : (Verhoest et al., 2010)

Vertical coordination is represented in the principle of ministerial rule, meaning that the minister is responsible to the parliament or a president for everything that is going on in the ministries and subordinate agencies. At the same time, the minister is responsible for the design of the common policy of the government, which represents horizontal coordination among ministers and ministries, meaning that tasks and policies in different units on the same level are seen as related and must be balanced (Christensen et al., 2020). We could see one example of horizontal coordination, for example, between departments within a ministry. In 2013, the Directorate General of Corrections and the Directorate General of Immigration, both under the Ministry of Law and Human Rights Republic of Indonesia, formed a Memorandum of Understanding regarding cooperation in monitoring and improving public services.

How Indonesia Have Organized to Cope with COVID-19 seen through Specialization and Coordination Perspective

On 31 December 2019, the WHO China Country Office was informed of cases of pneumonia unknown etiology (unknown cause) detected in Wuhan City, Hubei Province of China. From 31 December 2019 through 3 January 2020, a total of 44 case-patients with pneumonia of unknown etiology were reported to WHO by the national authorities in China, on 11 March 2020, WHO officially declared the Covid-19 outbreak a global pandemic.

Indonesia was confirmed to face Covid-19 on 2 March 2020. By April 2020, the pandemic had spread to all 34 provinces in the country. The first cluster was initially identified as the "dance class cluster", since it was carried by a dance instructor and her mother; both of them were infected from a Japanese national. The Ministry of Health ordered the installation of thermal scanners for at least 135 airport gates and port docks, and announced that provisioning over 100 hospitals with isolation rooms (to WHO-recommended standards) would begin. On 13 March 2020, the president signed a presidential decree on "the COVID-19 Response Acceleration Task Force", led by the head of National Disaster Management Authority, Doni Monardo.

Ministry of State Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform released a national policy regarding the adjustment of the work system (work from home) on 16 March 2020, which can be evaluated further by looking at the spread of the virus. On 31 March 2020, President Joko Widodo announced that the government had decided to implement large-scale social restrictions. As schools were closing in some regions, Minister of Education Nadiem Makarim announced the readiness of the Ministry of Education to assist schools in online learning by providing free teaching platforms. Minister of Finance Sri Mulyani announced a shifting of infrastructure budget of 1 trillion IDR into healthcare and pandemic prevention.

There are some allowance deductions for government employees to be used on behalf of the health sector which is carried out in the budget revision. Ministry of Foreign Affairs expanded travel restrictions to temporarily abolish visa-free entry to Indonesia and deny transit or arrival for visitors who have been in Iran, Italy, Vatican City, Spain, France, Germany, Switzerland, and United Kingdom within the past 14 days.

On 21 April 2020, President Jokowi announced his decision to ban the Idul Fitri homecoming (Indonesia's largest tradition) starting from 24 April, to curb the spread of Covid-19 ahead of Ramadan; prohibition then continues in 2021. On 13 January 2021, Covid-19 vaccination in Indonesia was started, marked by giving vaccines to President Joko Widodo at the Presidential palace. The President announcement above explains there are vertical delegations of the task to Cope with Covid-19, from the President through the central government to the Ministries. Governance in Indonesia is carried out by forming government organizations in the regions or regional governments. The relationship between the central government and the local government is dependent and subordinate.

The initial step of Indonesia in coping with Covid-19 while President Joko Widodo ordered the Minister of Health and related Ministries to increase extra measures in coping with the global Covid-19 pandemic. Minister of Home Affairs signed Covid-19 Response Acceleration Task Force to be implemented by the Governor and Regent/Mayor. And in several months later, Minister of Home Affairs issued a regulation in the form of Circular letter concerning the Establishment of The Covid-19 Regional Task Units, which is addressed to the Governor and Regent/Mayor to Form a Provincial, Regency and City Covid-19 Handling Task Force, as well as to become the Head of the Regional Covid-19 Handling Task Force and cannot be delegated to other officials.

Realizing that the central government could not work alone in coping with Covid-19 global pandemic, so that synergy between state institutions is an absolute requirement to achieve success. Looking from the horizontal perspective, there is coordination between ministries, one of the examples is the collaboration

carried out by Minister of Home Affairs with Minister of Finance and Minister of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration relating to regulations and guidelines for regions according to the scope of their respective duties and authorities in the Enforcement of Restrictions on Micro-Based Public Activities. On 5 February 2021, the Minister of Home Affairs has issued an Instruction from the Minister of Home Affairs regarding Restrictions on Micro-Based Public Activities and the establishment of Command Posts for handling Covid-19 at the village and sub-district level.

Next on 6 February 2021 an Instruction from Minister of Village, Development of Disadvantaged Regions and Transmigration relating regarding the Use of Village Funds year 2021 in the implementation of Restrictions on Micro-Based Public Activities. Second, Circular of the Director General of Fiscal Balance Ministry of Finance on 8 February 2021 regarding the Adjustment of the Use of Budget Transfers to Regions and Village Funds coping with the Covid-19 pandemic. The Ministry of Health has sole authority to enforce large-scale social restrictions. but local governments, as well as the Covid-19 Task Force, can submit local large-scale social restrictions proposals to the ministry.

Cultural perspective and the main challenges in coping with the pandemic seen from this perspective

A cultural perspective is viewing a situation or concept through the eyes of an individual's native environmental and social influence. It is the influence that a culture and society has on a person's worldview and perspective. This is an important concept in the social sciences because it is important to consider how an individual or group may perceive something based on the cultural and societal norms that they are used to. This perspective refers to the way individuals are shaped by their environment as well as social and cultural factors. Cultural perspective helps provide a deep understanding to estimate the chances and challenges that may be faced by public organizations.

Every organization has its own culture. Organizational culture, such as in government ministries or below, related with the informal norms and values that evolve and gradually become important for the activities of formal organizations (Christensen et al., 2020). The cultural perspective is also different in public organizations from those in private organizations; this essay will discuss the cultural perspective in public organizations because of its connection with the handling of Covid-19 by the Indonesian government. The function of cultural perspective in the organizations is to provide appropriate guidance on behavior within the organizations through values and (informal) norms. This function was founded by the leaders, spread to the employees through various ways. In the end, it shapes perceptions, understandings, and (become) behaviors.

Jakarta, the capital city of the country, is the epicenter of the virus in Indonesia and has been leading in the acceleration of daily infections. Large municipalities are also a more conducive environment for the virus to thrive than small cities. The vast territory of Indonesia is a challenge in itself for task delegation, coordination, and supervision in coping with Covid-19. Regional governments' regulations that are not ready and not coherent with the central government about handling the pandemic. In addition, with limited resources, local governments are required to refocus and/or relocate programs and budgets on efforts to minimize the spread of the pandemic and the number of victims.

The unpreparedness of these resources has resulted in a stagnation of regulation in other real sectors such as education, people's welfare, and infrastructure. With the restrictions on the number of people, regional governments also seem less in adapting, so that the bureaucracy is considered to lead to a "silent" situation, which of course results in less-than-optimal public services. It can be seen from the difficulty of people in the regions to get access to Covid-19 treatment compared to people in the capital.

The government's response is struggling with short-term recovery but lacks a clear strategy to target the medium and long-term impacts of Covid-19. In the implementation, the Indonesian government is still

focusing on short-term prevention and countermeasures policies. Examples of existing policy countermeasures can be seen in the provision of assistance packages in the form of subsidies for the underprivileged. Existing subsidies are given to ensure that they can still live normally even if they do not work directly. This matter is good in a socio-economic context. However, it is considered unable to overcome the long-term impact of the Covid-19 pandemic, while there will be Christmas and New Year holidays, as well as regional head elections. Also, there is another thing that is a concern for the long-term impact of Covid-19, poverty. Seen from a cultural perspective, the main challenges to coping with Covid-19 are:

a. Convince the public

One of the examples is in the implementation of the vaccine. The obstacle in public is that some people doubt the effectiveness and efficacy of the Covid-19 vaccine. One of the reasons is there is a myth about vaccines can cause severe side effects and doubts about halal-haram, based on a survey conducted by the Ministry of Health, even after obtaining marketing authorization from the Food and Drug Supervisory Agency (BPOM) as well as from the Indonesian Ulema Council (MUI). This factor of public trust is also influenced by the speed and equitable vaccines' distribution and also the distribution of information from the Ministry of Health to the health services in the regions.

b. Conflict between central and local government policies

The high level of connectivity and economic integration in the Greater Jakarta regions (Jakarta, Bogor, Depok, Tangerang, Bekasi) makes it almost impossible to isolate Jakarta from the surrounding provinces. Lack of coordination between national and provincial governments undermines the effectiveness of regional efforts to control the virus. An example of weak coordination between the central and local government occurred in early March 2020 (between Special Capital District of Jakarta and West Java), because of the differences in views and attitudes in the technical implementation of Large-scale social restrictions then affect the implementation. Things like this have a huge potential to become a coordination conflict between local governments, both between the provincial government and district/city governments as well as between district/city governments. The lack of coordination in disguise reflects rivalry between local political actors and in the long term will disrupt civil supremacy.

Learning from the first year about the poor relationship between the central government and local governments, in the middle of the second year the central government activated the National Disaster Management Cluster. Consists of Health Cluster, Logistics Cluster, Protection and Evacuation Cluster, Education Cluster, and Early Recovery Cluster. It involves many actors ranging from ministries and institutions from the central government, local governments, private parties, and non-governmental organizations, and involves the wider community, in a coordinated and directed manner. Currently, the expected results are still awaited, because it is a challenge itself to integrate many parties spread across various islands in this country instead of a spark of self-interest that arises.

CONCLUSION

The vertical and horizontal specialization and coordination in public organizations are a relevant form of focus to see the way of government in Indonesia coping with Covid-19 pandemic that has hit almost all countries in the world, to gain a clear understanding through these instrumental perspectives about how the Indonesian government has worked in almost two years combined with data obtained in the field, to find out the stages according to the structure in public organizations in coping with this pandemic problem. The function of cultural perspective in organizations is no doubt a crucial perspective to shape perceptions and then behaviors of the organizations.

The regional authority is limited by the administrative boundaries of its territory and the authority of the Central Government. Meanwhile, the Covid-19 pandemic is spreading beyond the boundaries of regional authorities and administrative areas. Disaster control, such as the Covid-19 pandemic, needs to be returned to the full responsibility of the Central Government. This is done to ensure the unity of national policies so that the implementation process can run more effectively without overlapping.

National Disaster Management Cluster built by the government is expected to be one of the solutions to the challenges faced by the government, although the planning has been perfect, monitoring and evaluation are still needed. On the other hand, a communication strategy is also important to prevent irresponsible information that can mislead public perception, until the Safety and Economic Resilience of the Community, which is the government's top priority, can be realized.

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