

The Strategic Role of Students in Promoting Transparency and Accountability in Public Services in Compliance with the Law

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Abstract: *This research examines the role of students in encouraging transparency and accountability of public services in Indonesia from a legal perspective. By analyzing the relevant legal framework, including Law No. 14 of 2008 concerning public information disclosure and Law No. 25 of 2009 concerning public services, this study identifies several key roles of students in realizing public services. These roles include: supervising public policies through student organizations, using social media to voice public issues, conducting community satisfaction surveys, and actively participating in public forums. This research also explores how students can take advantage of the right to access public information to carry out monitoring and encourage service improvements. The research method was carried out by collecting data to reveal the discussion contained in this article. Reference collection is carried out by studying and reviewing a number of books, journals, and documents both in print and online and several other sources of data and evidence that are considered relevant and credible to the object of study. The results of the analysis show that students have a strategic position to contribute to realizing good government governance through increasing transparency and accountability of public services. This study concludes that the active role of students, supported by the existing legal framework, can be an important catalyst in encouraging public service reform in Indonesia.*

Keywords : *Students, transparency, accountability, public services, Indonesian law.*

Abstrak: Penelitian ini mengkaji peran mahasiswa dalam mendorong transparansi dan akuntabilitas pelayanan publik di Indonesia dari perspektif hukum. Dengan menganalisis kerangka hukum yang relevan, meliputi Undang-Undang No. 14 Tahun 2008 tentang keterbukaan informasi publik dan Undang-Undang No. 25 Tahun 2009 tentang pelayanan publik, penelitian ini mengidentifikasi beberapa peran kunci mahasiswa dalam mewujudkan pelayanan publik. Peran tersebut antara lain: melakukan pengawasan kebijakan publik melalui organisasi kemahasiswaan, memanfaatkan media sosial untuk menyuarakan isu publik, melakukan survei kepuasan masyarakat, dan berpartisipasi aktif dalam forum publik. Penelitian ini juga mengeksplorasi bagaimana mahasiswa dapat memanfaatkan hak akses informasi publik untuk melakukan pemantauan dan mendorong perbaikan pelayanan. Metode penelitian dilakukan dengan mengumpulkan data untuk mengungkap pembahasan yang termuat dalam artikel ini. Pengumpulan referensi dilakukan dengan mempelajari dan mengkaji sejumlah buku, jurnal, dan dokumen baik cetak maupun online serta beberapa sumber data dan bukti lain yang dianggap relevan dan kredibel dengan objek penelitian. Hasil analisis menunjukkan bahwa mahasiswa memiliki posisi yang strategis untuk berkontribusi dalam mewujudkan tata kelola

pemerintahan yang baik melalui peningkatan transparansi dan akuntabilitas pelayanan publik. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa peran aktif mahasiswa, yang didukung oleh kerangka hukum yang ada, dapat menjadi katalis penting dalam mendorong reformasi layanan publik di Indonesia.

Kata kunci: Mahasiswa, transparansi, akuntabilitas, layanan publik, hukum Indonesia.

Introduction

Quality service in government institutions is very important to maintain public satisfaction because good service can attract public attention. Good service management will meet community expectations. Service quality is influenced by various factors that are considered important by the public in using these services. Hermawan believes that public dissatisfaction with services could be caused by the inability of officers to provide information according to community expectations (Riyadi, 2019). Along with the development of post-reform democracy, people's demands for public services that are higher quality, more efficient, and free from corruption, collusion, and nepotism are increasing (Prasojo & Kurniawan, 2008).

The problem of poor public services in Indonesia is not new. Many state officials seem to complicate the service process, to the point where expressions like "if it can be made more difficult, why should it be made easier" or "if it can be slowed down, why should it be sped up." This mindset contradicts the basic function of public services, which is the government's obligation to meet community needs.

According to Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, public services are a series of activities carried out to meet the needs in accordance with applicable regulations for every citizen regarding goods, services, and/or administrative services provided by public service providers. Public services are the result of bureaucracy that is accepted by society, so they can be interpreted as activities carried out by public institutions to meet the interests and needs of citizens. The government is responsible for serving the community, especially for basic needs such as security and comfort (Hubaib, 2021).

Transparency and accountability in public services are the main foundations for realizing good governance in Indonesia. However, this transparency and accountability is difficult to realize in countries with totalitarian or authoritarian systems. In such a system, state policies are often taken unilaterally by the ruling elite, without involving the public. These elites feel they represent the public interest, so they do not consider it important to listen to people's aspirations or inform the public about their actions. As a result, people's rights are violated because the government is not transparent and irresponsible.

Students have an important role as agents of change in encouraging government transparency and accountability, especially in countries with

authoritarian regimes. As a critical and educated group, students function as guardians of democracy by voicing the aspirations of the people who are often ignored by the authorities. They have a moral responsibility to ensure that the government remains open and accountable for its policies. Apart from that, students play a role in providing education to the public regarding the importance of political participation and monitoring government performance, so that the public can be actively involved in the state process. When spaces for public aspiration are closed, students are often at the forefront of protests and demonstrations, demanding reform and fighting for people's rights. In this context, students are important pillars in fighting for justice and democracy amidst a government that is not transparent.

Students, as a critical element, have a very important strategic role in improving the quality of public services (Slamet et al., 2017). With transparency regarding public information regarding government performance, the public can actively participate in monitoring every policy taken by the government (Retnowati, 2012).

Research Methods

The research method used in this research is a literature study, where this research will use this method to collect data to reveal the discussion contained in this journal. Reference studies or reference lists can be interpreted as a series of programs related to collecting references, reading, writing, and processing targets in analyzing something (Zed, 2003). Thus, the process of collecting reference sources in analysis activities involves research and assessment of various sources of information. These sources include scientific journal articles, book literature, as well as various documents in both print and digital formats. In addition, various supporting data and other evidence that is considered closely related and reliable are also included in this process, according to the topic being researched. The process of finding various descriptions is carried out through the use of important terms that are related or appropriate to an information search tool. In other words, to find the required description, you can search using keywords that are closely related to the topic in the online search system. The next stage involves identifying typical topics or expressions that often appear to present scientific work in the journal. Then, continue with searching for the latest scientific publications and searching for various references in academic literature.

Results And Discussion

The Role of Students as Agents of Change

- a) Student involvement in monitoring public policy through student organizations

Students, as an important element in society, have great potential to become agents of change, especially in the context of monitoring public services. Through student organizations, they can play an active role in influencing and monitoring the policy process, creating a positive impact on the wider community.

In the course of Indonesian history, students have played a crucial role in driving the nation's social and political transformation. Their contribution was visible from the struggle for independence to the reform period at the end of the 20th century (Aspinall, E. 2015).

Entering the era of modern democracy, the function and involvement of students have experienced a significant shift. Currently, their role is no longer limited to street democratic actions but has developed into a more complex one. Students now act as critical observers as well as active participants in various stages of the process of formulating and implementing political policies (Mietzner, M. 2013).

b) Use of social media by students to voice public service issues

In the current digital era, social media has an important role in shaping people's views and raising various social issues. Students known as a group with a good understanding of technology and high social awareness have made optimal use of social media to highlight and discuss various problems related to public services. The presence of students on social media not only reflects their active participation as agents of change but also shows the great potential of this platform in supporting transparency and accountability in the public service sector.

In 2022, internet users in Indonesia who access social media will be those in the 19-24 year age group, most of whom are students, who will become the largest number of users after the 25-34 year age group (APJII, 2022). as the second largest group of social media users, students play an important role in utilizing social media for various purposes, including voicing views, discussing social issues, and actively participating in disseminating information. Their significant presence in cyberspace makes social media a strategic tool for encouraging social change and increasing public awareness of important issues.

This phenomenon shows how strong the role of students is in encouraging social change through social media. They can mobilize support, raise awareness, and influence public policy. Thus, social media not only functions as a means of communication but also as a strategic tool to fight for transparency and increase accountability in public services. This underlines the importance of collaboration between students, society, and government in creating a public service system that is better and responsive to citizens' needs.

Student Contribution to Oversight of Public Services

- a) Carrying out research and surveys of public satisfaction with public services
 Students are often involved in conducting research or surveys to measure the level of public satisfaction with public services. This is done either through academic projects, collaboration with government agencies, or through community service programs. These surveys and research help identify deficiencies and gaps in public services that may not be monitored by the government or official institutions (Setyawan & Rahardjo, 2017).
- b) Student participation in public forums and policy consultations
 Students are often involved in public forums held by the government or non-government organizations to provide input regarding public service policies. Student participation in these forums is very important because they can provide critical perspectives that represent the younger generation and the general public. These policy consultations often involve students involved in student organizations or advocacy groups (Haryanto, T. 2019).

The Role of Law in Supporting Student Participation

- a) Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning the Openness of Public Information
 Law Number 14 of 2008 defines public information as all forms of data produced, stored, regulated, sent, or received by government institutions. This information covers aspects related to the management and implementation of state duties, as well as other public bodies in accordance with the provisions of this law. Apart from that, public information also includes various matters that are relevant to the interests of the wider community.
 This law has several important objectives that reflect a commitment to transparency and public participation in governance. First, this law aims to ensure that the public has access to information regarding plans for making public policies. This is important to enable citizens to understand the policy direction the government will take. Second, this law encourages active community involvement in the public policy decision-making process. By opening access to information, it is hoped that the public can provide constructive input and participate more effectively in the democratic process. The third is to increase the active role of the community, not only in policy-making but also in monitoring the management of public bodies. This is expected to encourage the creation of better and more accountable governance. Fourth, this law aims to realize good government management, which is characterized by transparency, effectiveness, efficiency, accountability, and responsibility. These principles are an important foundation for democratic governance. Fifth, this law also aims to enable the public to understand the reasons behind government policies that have a broad impact on public life. With this understanding, it is hoped that the public can better understand and evaluate government decisions. Sixth, this

law aims to support the development of science and increase public intelligence. Seventh, this law also aims to improve the quality of information management and services in public institutions, so that it can produce better and better quality information services.

Through these goals, Law Number 14 of 2008 concerning Openness of Public Information seeks to create a more transparent, participatory, and accountable environment in government governance in Indonesia (Soedjarwadi, 2024). This law is an important legal basis for guaranteeing the public's right to information and encouraging wider public participation in the democratic process.

b) Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services

Indonesia has a public service law, namely Law Number 25 of 2009. The concept of public service in this law must be in accordance with service standards. Article 1 states that public service is an activity or series of activities to fulfill service needs in accordance with statutory regulations for every citizen and resident for goods, services, and/or administrative services provided by public service providers (Nurchotimah, 2021).

According to this law, public service is a process carried out to fulfill the rights of every citizen and resident to the services they need. This service includes the provision of goods, services, and administration managed by the government or other appointed bodies. Every individual in Indonesia has the right to receive services that comply with certain standards, which are regulated by statutory regulations. This aims to ensure that public services can be provided fairly, evenly, and without discrimination.

On the other hand, this law also protects the rights of students as part of society who have the right to receive public services. If there are deficiencies or injustices in the provision of services, students have the right to file a complaint and demand improvements. This legal protection provides a sense of security for students to participate without feeling afraid of threats or intimidation from parties involved in providing services.

Challenges and Solutions

a) Limited access to public information

Access to public information is a fundamental right in a democratic society, where citizens should have the ability to obtain information from the government and public institutions. However, in practice, there are a number of barriers that limit this access. Some commonly encountered obstacles include bureaucracy that is too complicated, lack of information published online, regulations that limit access, such as regarding information that is categorized as confidential, and low transparency from related institutions (Rasyid, 2020).

These obstacles ultimately make it difficult for the public to monitor public policy effectively and be involved in the decision-making process.

This limited access weakens public participation, which leads to reduced citizen involvement in monitoring and making government policies (Irawan, 2019).

Solution:

To deal with the problem of limited access to public information, a number of steps can be taken. There are several solutions, one of which is simplifying bureaucratic procedures and increasing transparency by publishing information online. Apart from that, it is also important to review regulations that limit access too much, as well as strengthen digital infrastructure to better support information openness (Rahardjo, 2021).

Increasing public awareness of their right to access information is also an important key to solving this problem. Public education and outreach regarding information access rights can help create a culture of openness among government and public institutions. By prioritizing openness, the government can increase public trust while creating a more transparent and accountable environment.

b) Lack of understanding of effective monitoring mechanisms

Supervision is a crucial element in maintaining accountability, both in the public and private sectors. However, in many organizations, supervisory mechanisms often do not function optimally due to a lack of understanding of the basic principles of supervision, procedures that must be followed, and tools that can be used to carry out supervision. Kasmir (2020) highlights that this lack of knowledge often causes supervision to be ineffective, which ultimately leads to inefficiency, fraud, and even violations of applicable regulations. Without a clear understanding of monitoring mechanisms, individuals and organizations often fail to understand their roles and responsibilities in overseeing the implementation of a policy or program. This causes many problems to be overlooked because supervision does not work as it should. A lack of effective supervision can cause organizational performance to be negatively affected, as well as exacerbate non-compliance problems (Robinson & Judge, 2019).

Solution:

The importance of providing training and education to all stakeholders involved in supervision, including managers and staff. This training can take the form of workshops, seminars, or online courses that discuss the basic principles of supervision and best practices that can be implemented. This step will help strengthen their capacity to carry out supervisory functions. In addition, it is also important to provide clear guidelines and manuals regarding supervisory procedures. These guidelines must be easy to access and understand by all parties involved in the supervision process. The use of technology that increases oversight efficiency, such as project management software, can also add value to the oversight process.

Regular evaluation of the supervision mechanism is also needed to ensure that the supervision system is running according to expectations. Discussion of evaluation results with the supervisory team will assist in continuous improvement efforts. Involving all stakeholders in the monitoring process not only creates a sense of responsibility but also encourages a better understanding of the importance of these mechanisms (Garrison et al. 2018)

c) Resistance from unscrupulous government officials

Resistance from government officials in implementing public policies or bureaucratic reform is a major challenge in the government system. This resistance often arises due to various factors, including corruption, abuse of authority, and personal interests that are not in line with the policies or reforms they want to implement (Hutagalung, 2019). On the other hand, this resistance can be caused by an organizational culture that supports the status quo, where change is considered a threat to the stability and comfort of existing officials (Nasution, 2018).

This resistance not only slows down the policy implementation process but can also hinder governance reform. This can have an impact on the low efficiency and effectiveness of public services, which will ultimately be detrimental to the wider community.

Solution:

To overcome this resistance, Sari (2021) and Syahputra (2019) suggest several strategic steps. One of them is strengthening training and education to improve the competence and qualifications of government staff. This step can help build their capacity to carry out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with the reforms implemented.

Additionally, it is important to build an organizational culture that supports transparency and accountability. Bureaucratic reforms aimed at simplifying administrative procedures and reducing political interference can also help overcome resistance from government officials. Citizen participation in the decision-making process and the use of information technology to increase transparency are also steps that can strengthen public trust in the government.

The application of information technology enables a more inclusive and transparent decision-making process. This helps strengthen the relationship between government and citizens, as well as creating space for the public to be actively involved in monitoring and formulating policies. Ultimately, these solutions can help reduce resistance and encourage more effective implementation of policies and reforms at the government level.

CONCLUSION

Students have an important role as agents of change in monitoring public service policies. Through student organizations, social media, community satisfaction surveys, and participation in public forums, students contribute to encouraging transparency and accountability in public services. Legal protection, especially Law No. 25 of 2009, strengthens their position to access information and obtain fair services.

However, students face various challenges in carrying out their roles, such as limited access to information, lack of understanding of monitoring mechanisms, and resistance from government officials. To overcome this, comprehensive steps are needed, such as improving transportation, simplifying bureaucratic procedures, public education, supervisory training, and bureaucratic reform that supports accountability.

Strengthening information technology is also key to strengthening the role of students as agents of change. By utilizing various digital platforms, students can expand the reach of their oversight and increase public participation in the policy-making process.

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