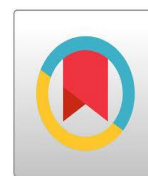


Job Equalization Policy Implementation and Competency Development of Civil Servants: A Case Study of Policy Analysts



Implementasi Kebijakan Penyetaraan Jabatan dan Pengembangan Kompetensi Pegawai Negeri Sipil: Studi Kasus Analisis Kebijakan

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ARTICLE INFORMATION	
<p>Keywords Job Equalization Policy; Policy Analysts; Competency Development; Public Sector Reform; Implementation; Bureaucratic Transformation;</p>	<p>ABSTRACT This study investigates the implementation of the job equalization policy and the development of civil servant competencies in East Manggarai Regency, with a focus on the functional position of policy analysts. The research is motivated by concerns that the nationwide conversion of structural positions to functional ones, while administratively mandated, may not be accompanied by adequate competency development, particularly in under-resourced regions. Employing a qualitative case study design, the study collected data through interviews, document analysis, and field observations, and analyzed the findings using thematic coding supported by Edwards III's implementation model, Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework, and Spencer's competency theory. The results reveal that although structural transitions were formally implemented, the substantive preparation for new functional roles remains insufficient. Communication was top-down and unclear; training opportunities were severely limited; and performance indicators were misaligned with functional responsibilities. Most policy analysts lacked the technical and behavioral competencies required for their roles, resulting in diminished organizational performance and weakened public service outcomes. The absence of institutional support mechanisms, such as mentoring and performance benchmarks, further hindered adaptation and professional growth. The study concludes that successful implementation of job equalization policies requires more than administrative compliance—it demands strategic investment in human capital, institutional learning, and localized policy adaptation. This research contributes to public administration literature by illustrating how structural reforms must be paired with competency development to realize their intended impact, especially in decentralized, capacity-constrained environments.</p>
<p>Kata Kunci Kebijakan Penyeimbangan Pekerjaan; Analisis Kebijakan; Pengembangan Kompetensi; Reformasi Sektor Publik; Pelaksanaan; Transformasi Birokrasi;</p>	<p>ABSTRAK Penelitian ini mengkaji implementasi kebijakan penyetaraan jabatan dan pengembangan kompetensi pegawai negeri sipil di Kabupaten Manggarai Timur, dengan fokus pada posisi fungsional analisis kebijakan. Penelitian ini didorong oleh kekhawatiran bahwa konversi posisi struktural menjadi posisi fungsional secara nasional, meskipun diwajibkan secara administratif, mungkin tidak disertai dengan pengembangan kompetensi yang memadai, terutama di daerah yang kurang beruntung. Menggunakan desain studi kasus kualitatif, penelitian ini mengumpulkan data melalui wawancara, analisis dokumen, dan pengamatan lapangan, serta menganalisis temuan menggunakan pengkodean tematik yang didukung oleh Model Implementasi Edwards III, Kerangka Kerja Aliran Ganda Kingdon, dan Teori Kompetensi Spencer. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa meskipun transisi struktural telah diterapkan secara formal, persiapan substansial untuk peran fungsional baru masih belum memadai. Komunikasi bersifat top-down dan tidak jelas; kesempatan pelatihan sangat terbatas; dan indikator kinerja tidak selaras dengan tanggung jawab fungsional. Sebagian besar analisis kebijakan kekurangan kompetensi teknis dan perilaku yang diperlukan untuk peran mereka, mengakibatkan penurunan kinerja organisasi dan hasil layanan publik yang</p>

	<p>melemah. Ketiadaan mekanisme dukungan institusional, seperti pembimbingan dan tolok ukur kinerja, semakin menghambat adaptasi dan pertumbuhan profesional. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa implementasi kebijakan penyetaraan jabatan yang sukses memerlukan lebih dari sekadar kepatuhan administratif—ia membutuhkan investasi strategis dalam modal manusia, pembelajaran institusional, dan adaptasi kebijakan yang disesuaikan dengan konteks lokal. Penelitian ini berkontribusi pada literatur administrasi publik dengan menggambarkan bagaimana reformasi struktural harus dipadukan dengan pengembangan kompetensi untuk mewujudkan dampak yang diinginkan, terutama dalam lingkungan desentralisasi yang terbatas kapasitasnya.</p>
<p>Article History Send 27th July 2025 Review 6th September 2025 Accepted 27th October 2025</p>	<p>Copyright ©2026 Jurnal Aristo (Social, Politic, Humaniora) This is an open access article under the CC-BY-NC-SA license. Akses artikel terbuka dengan model CC-BY-NC-SA sebagai lisensinya.</p>



Introduction

The transformation of Indonesia's bureaucratic system has increasingly focused on fostering an efficient, professional, and citizen-oriented public service. One of the strategic reforms introduced by the central government is the job equalization policy, which involves converting structural positions—especially Echelon III and IV—into functional positions. This reform, grounded in Law No. 5 of 2014 on the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), aims to streamline bureaucratic hierarchies and emphasize technical expertise over administrative rank. According to (the Ministry of Administrative & [MenPAN-RB], 2022a), the conversion to functional roles such as policy analysts is intended not only to reduce redundancy but also to foster performance-driven governance that can respond more effectively to the complexities of public service.

Bureaucratic reform, however, goes beyond structural realignment. As (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2007) contend in *The New Public Service*, reform must encompass cultural shifts that promote innovation, collaboration, and professional responsibility among civil servants. The effective implementation of job equalization, therefore, must be evaluated not merely in terms of structural compliance but also in the ability of civil servants to adopt new professional standards and skillsets aligned with their functional roles. The shift toward policy analyst positions, in particular, signifies an institutional commitment to evidence-based governance and data-driven policy formulation at the regional level.

To understand this policy transformation, (Kingdon, 2011) Multiple Streams Framework offers an analytical lens to explore how a policy reaches the decision agenda through the convergence of problem identification, policy alternatives, and political support. In the case of job equalization in Indonesia, the problem stream emerges from administrative inefficiency and overlapping functions; the policy stream proposes functional positions as a solution; and the political stream is driven by presidential mandates and reform agendas. These streams converged in a policy window that facilitated widespread structural changes, including over 300,000 administrative roles converted to functional ones by the end of 2022 (the Ministry of Administrative & [MenPAN-RB], 2022b).

Despite its ambitious scope and legal foundation, the implementation of this reform at regional levels, such as in East Manggarai Regency (Nusa Tenggara Timur), faces substantial challenges. Among them are disparities in human resources capacity, limited training infrastructure, organizational resistance to cultural shifts, and budget constraints. The case of policy analysts—one of the key functional roles introduced—illustrates these issues clearly. In East Manggarai, 68 civil servants were reassigned to policy analyst roles, yet most

had not undergone formal training or competency certification. These individuals, often accustomed to administrative rather than technical responsibilities, struggled with analytical tasks requiring specialized policy knowledge and methodological rigor.

This competency gap is particularly critical given the strategic importance of policy analysts in regional governance. As intermediaries between executive leadership and policy implementation, policy analysts are expected to perform complex tasks such as needs assessment, cost-benefit analysis, and policy impact evaluation. The successful execution of such tasks presupposes not only technical proficiency but also soft skills such as critical thinking, problem-solving, and communication. According to (Spencer & Spencer, 1993), such competencies are developed through structured training, experiential learning, and sustained mentorship. However, evidence from East Manggarai indicates a lack of comprehensive competency development programs, exposing a disconnect between structural reforms and human capital readiness.

Several previous studies have examined similar reform contexts to provide comparative insight into the novelty of this research. For instance, (Ramadhany et al., 2025) in their study “Pengembangan Kompetensi Jabatan Fungsional Analisis Kebijakan Hasil Penyetaraan di BPSDM Provinsi Jawa Timur” found that policy analysts resulting from job equalization still face limitations in relevant training curricula and mentoring mechanisms, which hinder optimal competency transformation. Likewise, research by (Hamid & Nursafitri, 2024) on “Implementasi Penyetaraan Jabatan di Kabupaten Kolaka Timur” revealed that structural transition was not accompanied by the adaptation of performance appraisal systems toward competency-based criteria, leading to the persistence of administrative evaluation patterns. Furthermore, a study conducted in Agam Regency by (Rasyid & others, 2023) entitled “Pelaksanaan Penyetaraan Jabatan Fungsional Bagi ASN di Kabupaten Agam” demonstrated that many civil servants struggled to meet credit point requirements due to insufficient technical competencies after conversion. These studies collectively show that while structural changes have been broadly implemented, they rarely explore the lived experiences of civil servants in peripheral regions or the linkage between institutional readiness and competency transformation. Therefore, this study seeks to address this specific gap by focusing on East Manggarai as a peripheral administrative unit where reform outcomes remain underexplored.

Literature on bureaucratic reform emphasizes that structural change without concurrent capacity development undermines the very goals of reform. In the Korean context, for example, (Moon & Moon, 2020) highlighted that sustainable public service reform must

be accompanied by continuous investment in skills development and institutional learning. Similarly, (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017) argued that flattening bureaucratic hierarchies must be matched with role redefinition and competency alignment. Drawing from these perspectives, it becomes evident that Indonesia's job equalization policy may falter if human resource development is treated as an afterthought rather than a core strategy.

In East Manggarai, the urgency of this alignment is intensified by region-specific challenges. As a relatively remote and underdeveloped area, the regency grapples with a scarcity of professionals, minimal access to policy analysis tools, and underfunded training mechanisms. The result is a functional bureaucracy in form but not in substance. The lack of organizational readiness, combined with inconsistent support from leadership and the absence of standard operating procedures (SOPs) for new roles, contributes to implementation gaps. Moreover, there is limited coordination between central and local governments in designing a unified roadmap for competency enhancement. These systemic limitations render the transition to functional positions, particularly that of policy analysts, fragile and potentially ineffective.

An overview of related literature further confirms the gap between policy design and policy implementation in the realm of human capital development. Research by (Rahmawati, 2019) emphasized that while job equalization improves administrative agility, its success depends on the readiness and support systems available to civil servants. Notably, these studies underline the need for locally tailored strategies that bridge central policy directives and regional execution capacities. However, there is limited empirical work focusing specifically on the post-restructuring experiences of civil servants in functional roles, especially in peripheral regions like East Manggarai. This lack of contextualized evidence constitutes a knowledge gap that this study seeks to address.

This study, therefore, aims to examine the implementation of the job equalization policy in East Manggarai Regency, with a focus on the development of competencies among policy analysts. Using the integrated frameworks of Kingdon's Multiple Streams Model, Edwards III's implementation theory, and Spencer's competency theory, this research analyzes how institutional, procedural, and behavioral factors influence the transition from structural to functional roles. The central hypothesis is that the success of job equalization is contingent upon the quality of competency development, the presence of enabling environments, and the alignment between policy design and organizational capability.

Specifically, the study investigates (1) how the job equalization policy was implemented in East Manggarai, (2) the nature and extent of competency gaps among newly

appointed policy analysts, and (3) strategic responses that could enhance the policy's impact on public service performance. By focusing on a single regency, the study generates in-depth insights that may be extrapolated to similar administrative contexts across Indonesia. Moreover, the research offers actionable recommendations for local governments, national ministries, and public administration scholars seeking to operationalize reform objectives beyond structural adjustments.

The novelty of this research lies in its empirical examination of the interaction between policy implementation and human capital development within a regional bureaucracy. Unlike previous studies, which have largely focused on central or provincial institutions, this study centers on a peripheral regency where administrative transformation faces resource and capacity constraints. It uniquely explores how policy analysts navigate professional adjustments and organizational learning in environments with limited institutional support, thereby bridging the gap between aggregate policy evaluations and individual-level reform experiences. Its scope includes both policy process and personnel development, making it a comprehensive contribution to Indonesia's ongoing administrative reform discourse.

Method

This chapter outlines the research design and methodological approach employed to examine the implementation of the job equalization policy and the development of civil servant competencies in East Manggarai Regency, particularly focusing on the functional position of policy analysts. The methodology integrates qualitative case study design, purposive sampling, and thematic data analysis based on theoretical frameworks developed by Kingdon, Edwards III, and Spencer. The following sections elaborate on each stage of the methodological process.

This study adopts a qualitative research design using a case study approach. The choice of qualitative methodology aligns with the study's objective to explore in-depth, context-specific phenomena concerning policy implementation and competency development. According to (Creswell & Creswell, 2018), qualitative research is particularly suitable for understanding complex social processes from the perspective of actors involved. In this case, the implementation of job equalization and its effect on policy analysts requires interpretive inquiry to uncover patterns, perceptions, and institutional dynamics.

The selection of East Manggarai Regency as the case study location is justified by its early and comprehensive adoption of the job equalization policy, including the conversion of

supervisory positions into functional roles. Additionally, the region represents a rural and peripheral governance context, making it relevant for examining implementation challenges in resource-constrained settings.

Data for this study were collected using three primary techniques: in-depth interviews, document analysis, and field observation. The triangulation of data sources ensures credibility, dependability, and confirmability of the findings.

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with a total of 20 informants, including structural officials, newly appointed policy analysts, training facilitators, and personnel managers within the East Manggarai government. These interviews explored experiences, challenges, and perceptions related to the job equalization policy and competency development processes. Relevant documents, including government regulations, local policies (Peraturan Daerah Kabupaten Manggarai Timur Nomor 3 Tahun 2021), training modules, competency maps, and internal reports from the Regional Personnel Agency (BKPSDMD) were reviewed. These texts provided contextual and legal grounding for the implementation analysis. Direct observations were made during training sessions, routine work activities of policy analysts, and official coordination meetings. These observations helped capture the behavioral aspects and real-time interactions among actors affected by the policy change.

The combination of these techniques allowed for a comprehensive understanding of the interplay between institutional reform and human resource development. The research employed purposive sampling to select participants who were directly involved in the implementation of the policy or were occupying newly equalized functional roles.

Participants were chosen based on three main criteria: (1) direct involvement in the formulation or execution of the equalization policy, (2) current or recent assignment as a policy analyst under the new structure, and (3) possession of insight into the challenges and strategies related to competency development. These criteria ensured that the selected informants had the most relevant and nuanced perspectives. The sample included 10 policy analysts, 5 structural managers, and 5 senior officials responsible for human resource development. The sample was also balanced in terms of gender and institutional representation across different regional offices.

While the sample size may appear limited, it is consistent with the nature of qualitative inquiry, which prioritizes depth and saturation over breadth (Patton, 2002). Each respondent provided rich, detailed narratives that were systematically coded for thematic patterns.

Data analysis followed a structured thematic approach using ATLAS.ti software to ensure systematic coding, categorization, and interpretation. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and document excerpts were first reduced by summarizing, selecting, and coding the most relevant parts. This stage involved filtering out non-essential information while retaining all content related to policy implementation and competency development.

Codes were created based on both deductive categories derived from the theoretical framework (e.g., “communication barriers,” “training gap,” “structural support”) and inductive themes emerging from field data (e.g., “informal mentoring,” “role confusion”). A total of 78 codes were identified and grouped into four major categories aligned with Edwards III’s policy implementation model.

Thematic results were then interpreted in light of the research questions and theoretical framework. Patterns across interviews and documents were compared to highlight contradictions, alignments, and critical narratives. Particular attention was paid to how competency gaps affected the perceived success of the equalization policy. Triangulation was achieved by cross-verifying data from multiple sources. Member checking was conducted with four key respondents to ensure the accuracy of interpretations. Reflexive journaling was also maintained by the researcher to control for potential bias.

This study integrates three interrelated theories to analyze the data and guide interpretation :

Kingdon’s model is used to explore how the policy of job equalization emerged and was placed on the government’s agenda. The analysis examines how the convergence of the problem stream (bureaucratic inefficiency), policy stream (technical competency solutions), and politics stream (executive mandates) opened a policy window for reform (Kingdon, 2011).

This model provides a basis for evaluating the implementation process, emphasizing four critical factors: communication, resources, disposition of implementers, and bureaucratic structure. Each factor is operationalized into codes and themes in the data analysis (Edwards, 1980).

Competency is treated as an intervening variable affecting policy outcomes. Spencer’s model categorizes competencies into five components: motives, traits, self-concept, knowledge, and skills. This framework was particularly relevant in identifying the gaps between the demands of the policy analyst role and the capabilities of those appointed (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

These theories were selected for their conceptual complementarity: Kingdon to explain the policy’s origin, Edwards III to analyze its implementation, and Spencer to evaluate its competency-related outcomes. The intersection of these theories facilitates a holistic understanding of reform dynamics in a decentralized, resource-limited bureaucracy. To enhance clarity and ease of understanding, a visual flow chart (see Figure 1) has been integrated below. This chart demonstrates the logical flow and theoretical linkage between the three frameworks used in this study, emphasizing the transition from policy formulation to competency outcomes.

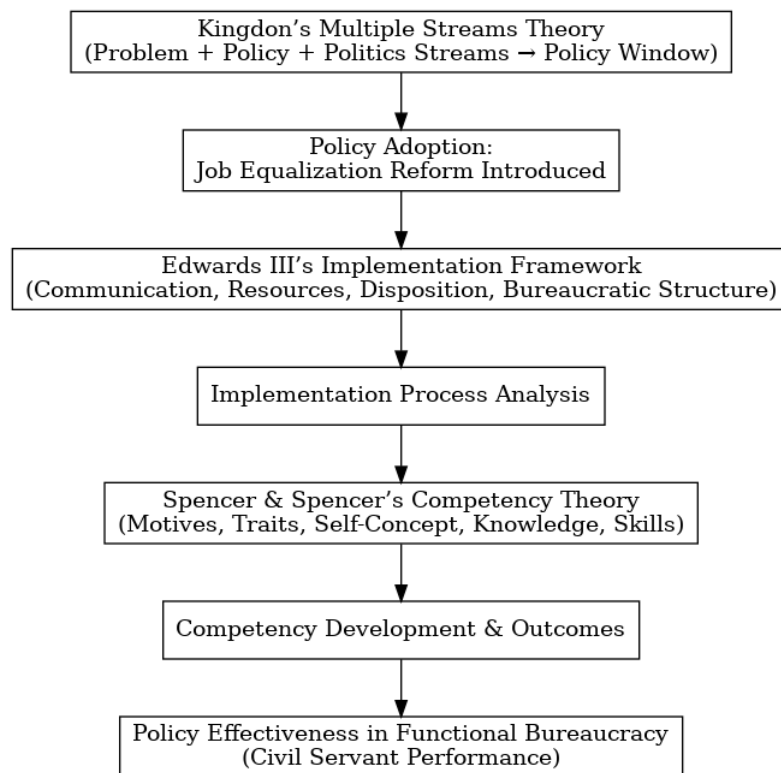


Figure 1. Integrated Theoretical Framework Flow Chart

The above flow chart visually illustrates the conceptual integration across three analytical levels : 1). Kingdon’s Multiple Streams Theory explains how job equalization entered the policy agenda through the convergence of streams. 2). Edwards III’s Implementation Framework highlights the mechanisms of policy execution, showing how communication, resources, and structure influence implementation. 3). Spencer and Spencer’s Competency Theory anchors the micro-level human capital transformation, showing how individual competencies mediate the effectiveness of the reform.

This integrative visualization strengthens the coherence between macro-level agenda setting, meso-level implementation, and micro-level competency outcomes, following Creswell & Plano Clark (2018) in mixed-methods framework design

Results and Discussion

This chapter presents the findings of the study on the implementation of the job equalization policy and the development of civil servant competencies in East Manggarai Regency, focusing on the functional position of policy analysts. The results are categorized into five main sub-sections: (1) Implementation of the Job Equalization Policy, (2) Competency Gap Analysis, (3) Factors Affecting Competency Development, (4) Impact on Performance and Public Service, and (5) Local Institutional Challenges and Strategic Responses. The analysis is based on data collected through interviews, field observations, and document reviews, processed using ATLAS.ti software. To ensure coherence and analytical clarity, each subsection in this chapter is systematically organized beginning with the presentation of empirical data, followed by interpretative discussion, and concluded with analytical insights aligned with the theoretical framework. This structure enhances the readability and logical flow of findings, consistent with the qualitative analysis model proposed by Creswell (2018) in “Qualitative Inquiry & Research Design.

Implementation of the Job Equalization Policy

The implementation of the job equalization policy in East Manggarai Regency was initiated with structural reorganization mandated by Regional Regulation No. 3 of 2021. This policy converted 273 supervisory positions (Echelon IV) into functional positions, including 68 civil servants reassigned as policy analysts. However, field evidence reveals that the transformation process was predominantly administrative rather than substantive.

Most respondents highlighted the limited scope of socialization, which failed to convey the functional implications and expectations of the new roles. Communication about the policy was top-down, formal, and often limited to ceremonial briefings or written circulars. Interviews with personnel officials confirmed that there were no detailed technical guidelines provided to support the role transition. According to the implementation model by Edwards III, the success of a policy relies on four key factors: communication, resources, disposition of implementers, and bureaucratic structure. In this context, communication was largely ineffective. Respondents repeatedly expressed confusion about the scope of their responsibilities and the deliverables expected from them as policy analysts.

Moreover, structural readiness was not aligned with the policy's objectives. Although organizational charts were revised, there was no simultaneous development of SOPs or performance indicators to guide the new functional roles. As a result, many policy analysts continued performing administrative duties from their previous structural roles, blurring the intended differentiation.

Competency Gap Analysis

A central finding of this study is the significant gap between the competencies required for the policy analyst role and those possessed by the reassigned civil servants. According to Table 1.10 in the source document, only 35% of policy analysts held educational qualifications related to public policy or administration, while 70% had no prior training in policy analysis or evidence-based policymaking.

Figure 4.2 and Table 4.3 present a gender-based distribution of the sample and coded quotations extracted from interview data. Thematic coding revealed frequent mentions of “lack of data literacy,” “inadequate report writing skills,” and “limited understanding of evaluation frameworks.”

The gaps identified can be categorized as follows :

- ✓ **Technical Skills Deficit:** Respondents lacked competencies in data analysis, policy formulation, and impact evaluation. Many admitted to never using analytical software or policy modeling tools.
- ✓ **Knowledge Deficiency:** There was minimal familiarity with regulatory frameworks and public policy theories that underpin evidence-based recommendations.
- ✓ **Soft Skills Limitation:** Communication, problem-solving, and collaboration—critical for policy analysis—were underdeveloped, as most respondents came from hierarchical, task-based administrative backgrounds.
- ✓ **Spencer and Spencer's competency framework** was used to analyze these gaps, showing that traits, self-concept, and motives were also misaligned with the analytical, adaptive mindset required in functional roles.

Factors Affecting Competency Development

The development of competencies among policy analysts was hampered by structural and operational deficiencies. From Table 1.4 and Table 4.6, key influencing factors include training availability, institutional support, and resource allocation.

Training Access

Data from the BKPSDMD shows that in 2022–2023, only 1 out of 68 policy analysts had attended relevant functional training. The majority of respondents were not aware of competency maps or Individual Development Plans (IDPs), and training budgets were underutilized. Table 1.2 highlights that 75% of newly equalized functional positions did not receive technical training post-transition.

Institutional Support

There was a lack of mentoring, coaching, and peer review mechanisms. Many respondents stated they were left to “figure things out on their own.” Table 4.5 illustrates that communication from top management regarding the expectations of the analyst role was sparse and inconsistent.

Budget Constraints

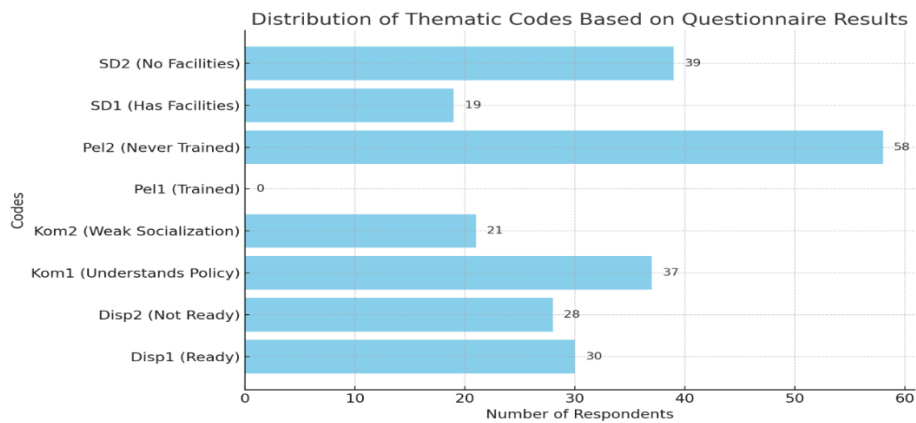
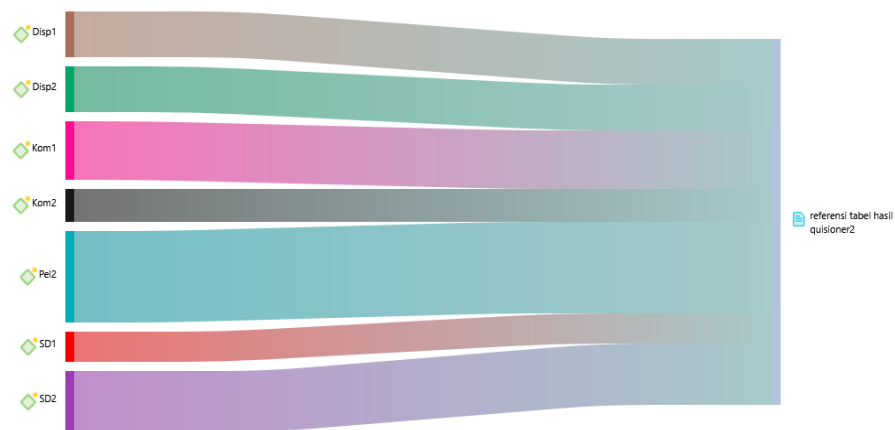
Budget analysis confirmed that only 30% of the total human resource budget was allocated for training and development, while the remainder was used for operational and administrative expenditures. This financial limitation severely curtailed the scope of structured learning.

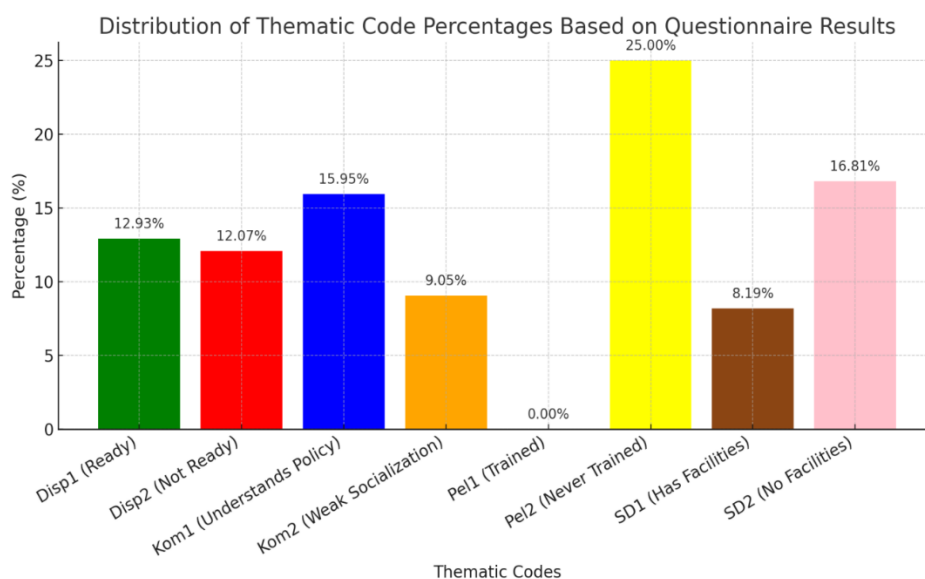
Leadership Disposition

Leadership commitment was inconsistent. Some department heads were supportive of the functional role and encouraged innovation, while others discouraged non-administrative activities and treated analysts as clerical staff. Sankey diagrams (Figures 2 to 4) visualize the coding density across four categories: communication, training, resources, and implementer disposition. These visualizations reinforce the systemic nature of barriers to competency development.

Table 1. Frequency Distribution and Percentage of Thematic Codes from the Questionnaire Results of ASN Policy Analyst Positions in East Manggarai Regency

Code	referensi tabel hasil quisioner2 Gr=232		Totals
	<i>Absolute</i>	<i>Column-relative</i>	<i>Absolute</i>
● Disp1Gr=30	30	12,93%	30
● Disp2Gr=28	28	12,07%	28
● Kom1Gr=37	37	15,95%	37
● Kom2Gr=21	21	9,05%	21
● Pel1Gr=0	0	0,00%	0
● Pel2Gr=58	58	25,00%	58
● SD1Gr=19	19	8,19%	19
● SD2Gr=39	39	16,81%	39
Totals	232	100,00%	232





Impact on Performance and Public Service

The competency gap had direct implications for organizational performance and the delivery of public services. Table 1.11 outlines that :

62% of policy analysts reported challenges in producing analytical reports or policy briefs. 48% noted delays in decision-making processes due to their limited ability to formulate recommendations. 70% stated that performance evaluations continued to assess them using outdated administrative criteria. This misalignment between role expectations and actual performance indicators contributed to job dissatisfaction and reduced motivation. Respondents expressed concern that their promotion and career progression might be stalled due to the absence of functional performance benchmarks. The lack of role clarity also affected public service delivery. In sectors such as health, education, and infrastructure, policy recommendations were either generic or absent, leading to continued reliance on central directives rather than local analysis. According to interview excerpts in Table 4.3, policy analysts felt excluded from strategic planning discussions, further weakening their contribution to evidence-based governance.

Local Institutional Challenges and Strategic Responses

The study identified several institutional challenges unique to East Manggarai Regency that compound the broader national issues in implementing job equalization policies. These include :

- ✓ Geographical Isolation: Difficult terrain and limited connectivity hinder access to training centers and professional networks.

- ✓ Human Resource Shortages: With a limited pool of qualified personnel, departments struggled to assign individuals to appropriate functional roles.
- ✓ Lack of a Development Roadmap: The absence of a local strategy for functional competency development resulted in fragmented and reactive initiatives.
- ✓ Despite these challenges, the research uncovered emerging adaptive strategies. For example, several departments initiated internal knowledge-sharing sessions, and a few policy analysts collaborated with NGOs and universities to enhance their capabilities. However, these efforts remain sporadic and unsystematized.

Based on interviews with senior officials, the local government is considering drafting a roadmap for competency development that includes :

- ✓ Competency needs assessments;
- ✓ Budget allocation for annual training programs;
- ✓ Institutionalized mentoring systems;
- ✓ SOPs and performance metrics tailored for functional roles.
- ✓ These proposed responses, if adopted and funded appropriately, could significantly improve the outcomes of the job equalization policy and transform functional positions into effective instruments of public sector innovation and governance.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that while the structural implementation of the job equalization policy was executed administratively, its substantive success is limited by competency deficits, weak institutional support, and fragmented development strategies. The next chapter will discuss these findings in relation to theoretical models and prior studies, while also offering critical reflections on policy implications.

Discussion

This chapter interprets and discusses the key findings presented in the previous chapter, examining them through the lens of relevant theoretical frameworks and comparative literature. It assesses how the implementation of the job equalization policy in East Manggarai Regency reflects broader patterns and challenges in public sector reform, particularly in terms of human resource capacity, institutional readiness, and policy coherence. The analysis integrates Edwards III's policy implementation model, Kingdon's Multiple Streams Framework, and Spencer's competency theory to provide a structured and critical evaluation of the findings. The results indicate that while the structural implementation of the job equalization policy was formally completed, its substantive realization—especially in the case of policy analysts—remains deficient.

According to Edwards III's framework, successful policy implementation depends on four interdependent variables: communication, resources, disposition of implementers, and bureaucratic structure. The East Manggarai case illustrates deficiencies across all four dimensions.

First, communication emerged as a major obstacle. Policy messages were conveyed primarily through administrative circulars and ceremonial announcements, with little technical guidance provided to the newly appointed functional officials. This lack of structured communication caused confusion and ambiguity about the scope of duties, expected outputs, and performance benchmarks associated with the policy analyst role. As Edwards III emphasized, poor communication can lead to misinterpretation, resistance, and policy drift. In this case, the absence of a clear communication strategy impeded the functional transition and hindered capacity-building initiatives. Second, the availability and quality of resources were inadequate. The local government's allocation of only 30% of its personnel development budget to training constrained efforts to equip civil servants with the competencies required for their new roles. This scarcity of financial resources was compounded by logistical limitations and a lack of training infrastructure, particularly for remote and technically demanding roles like policy analysis. The situation echoes findings in similar studies conducted in Morowali and Banten, where the absence of targeted training and mentoring impeded the effectiveness of job equalization reforms. Edwards III highlights that policy failure is often attributable to resource misalignment, which is evident in the case of East Manggarai. Third, the disposition of implementers—namely, their motivation, understanding, and acceptance of the policy—was uneven. Many policy analysts continued to operate as clerical staff, reflecting a failure to internalize the functional role. The study found that this behavior was not necessarily due to resistance but rather to a lack of preparation and role clarity. This finding resonates with Spencer and Spencer's view that competencies are not only technical but also behavioral and motivational. Without a shared self-concept of professional identity, civil servants struggle to transition effectively from hierarchical, task-based roles to outcome-oriented functional positions. Fourth, structural rigidity within the bureaucracy undermined the policy's goals. The conversion of structural roles to functional positions was not accompanied by institutional reforms such as revised SOPs, competency maps, or tailored performance indicators. This gap created a situation where functional officials were evaluated using outdated metrics, discouraging innovation and analytical work. The mismatch between institutional form and function is a well-

documented obstacle in public sector reform, as noted by Pollitt and Bouckaert (2017), who argue that structural changes must be followed by substantive operational redesign.

The findings also support Kingdon's argument that policy adoption does not guarantee successful implementation. While the job equalization policy emerged from a convergence of problem recognition (bureaucratic inefficiency), policy proposals (functional roles), and political will (executive mandates), its implementation in East Manggarai failed to sustain that alignment. The absence of continuous political support and a coherent local adaptation strategy closed the "policy window" before functional roles could be fully institutionalized. Additionally, the study reveals that competency development—treated here as an intervening variable—plays a decisive role in determining policy outcomes. Spencer's model outlines five components of competency: motives, traits, self-concept, knowledge, and skills. In East Manggarai, civil servants appointed as policy analysts lacked all five dimensions to varying degrees. For example, the lack of formal training limited their technical skills, while the absence of mentoring and role models hindered the development of self-concept and professional identity. Even those with motivation to adapt reported being constrained by institutional inertia and unclear expectations.

The consequences of this competency gap are not merely theoretical; they manifest in diminished performance and reduced service quality. Policy analysts were unable to provide data-driven recommendations or strategic insights, leading to policy inertia and missed opportunities for evidence-based governance. This situation validates earlier findings by Moon and Moon (2020) in Korea, where reform efforts stalled due to a mismatch between structural changes and human capital investments.

Comparative literature further emphasizes that functional reform requires a synchronized approach combining structural realignment, capacity development, and leadership engagement. Studies by Rahmawati (2019) and Kurniawan (2018) showed that the mere conversion of roles does not enhance performance unless it is supported by coherent training, evaluation frameworks, and career incentives. In the case of East Manggarai, the absence of such mechanisms created a disconnect between policy objectives and organizational behavior.

Nevertheless, the study also identifies potential areas for strategic intervention. Some departments have begun experimenting with internal knowledge-sharing platforms and informal mentoring arrangements. While these initiatives are limited in scale, they demonstrate institutional learning and adaptive capacity. If supported by formal policy and funding, such efforts could evolve into scalable models for competency development and

organizational transformation. Furthermore, the proposed development roadmap by the local government—which includes training needs assessments, annual competency plans, and tailored SOPs—reflects an awareness of the existing gaps. These responses align with recommendations from the literature on public administration reform, which emphasize the importance of context-sensitive, incremental, and participatory implementation strategies.

In conclusion, the discussion underscores the multifaceted nature of policy implementation, particularly in the context of bureaucratic reform. The case of East Manggarai reveals that structural change, while necessary, is insufficient without concurrent investment in competencies, institutional support, and adaptive leadership. The integration of Edwards III's, Kingdon's, and Spencer's frameworks provides a comprehensive explanation of why the job equalization policy, in its current form, has not fully achieved its intended outcomes. Going forward, the success of such reforms will depend on the government's ability to translate formal policies into substantive change through strategic planning, inclusive implementation, and continuous learning.

Conclusion

This study concludes that the implementation of the job equalization policy in East Manggarai Regency, particularly concerning the functional position of policy analysts, has been predominantly administrative in nature and lacks substantive transformation. While the structural conversion of positions was successfully executed, the absence of comprehensive competency development programs, inadequate communication, limited resources, and weak institutional support undermined the effectiveness of the reform. Using the theoretical frameworks of Edwards III, Kingdon, and Spencer, the research reveals that successful policy implementation must be supported by readiness in human capital, institutional infrastructure, and adaptive leadership.

The key finding of a significant competency gap—both in technical and behavioral aspects—illustrates the disconnect between policy design and implementation outcomes. The policy analysts studied lacked essential skills in policy analysis, data literacy, and regulatory comprehension, primarily due to the absence of training, mentoring, and performance standards tailored to the new roles. Moreover, the persistence of outdated evaluation systems and the lack of operational guidelines further diminished the performance of these newly assigned functional officials.

This study contributes to the discourse on public sector reform by highlighting the centrality of competency development in structural transformations. It recommends that future implementations of similar reforms be accompanied by a clear roadmap for training, budgeting for human resource development, mentoring systems, and localized adaptation strategies. By focusing on the lived experiences of civil servants in a resource-limited, peripheral context, the study adds empirical depth to the understanding of bureaucratic change in decentralized governance environments.

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