

Challenges of the Republic of Indonesia's Passport Services from Quality of Government Perspectives

Sri Kuncoro Bawono^{1*}, Koesmoyo Ponco Aji¹, Anindito Rizki Wiraputra¹, Rita Kusuma Astuti¹

¹Immigration Polytechnic & School of Strategic and Global Studies University of Indonesia

*Correspondence Email: chorobawono@gmail.com

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Abstract: *Providing better public services has become the main task of the Indonesian government. In terms of passport services, the Indonesian government, through the Directorate General of Immigration, has made efforts to improve passport services for all Indonesian citizens. The Directorate General of Immigration has introduced some programs to provide a better passport service. However, the government was still facing some challenges if considered through the quality of government perspectives. This paper will reveal some challenges that are faced by the government in terms of the quality of government, including the absence of corruption, the rule of law, and impartiality. As a result, the Directorate General of Immigration is on the right track to provide quality passport services by implementing some innovations. Nevertheless, the government still needs to work on the anti-corruption programs.*

Keywords: *Public services; quality of government; passport*

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Introduction

The government policy in the second period of President Joko Widodo's administration is currently focused on reforming the bureaucracy and improving the quality of public services. In the presidential inauguration speech for the period 2019 to 2024 in front of all members of the People's Consultative Assembly, President Joko Widodo said that the main task of the bureaucracy is to ensure that the benefits of services carried out by the government must be felt directly by the community. This statement is the main concern of public service delivery institutions, including the Directorate General of Immigration.

It is undeniable that the public's evaluation of the public services provided by the Directorate General of Immigration is focused on the service for Indonesian passport applications carried out at every immigration office. Through the passport service, the public generalizes the overall performance of the Directorate General of Immigration in carrying out public services. If they consider the passport service good, they can generally judge that the public service for the Directorate General of Immigration is good. Likewise, on the contrary, if they think that the passport services provided by the Immigration Office are not optimal, the public considers that the Directorate General of Immigration has not been able to carry out its main duties and functions properly.

In its seventy-third year of service, the Directorate General of Immigration and its employees have remained dedicated to improving the quality of Indonesian passport services. Diverse policies established centrally by the Directorate General of Immigration, as well as innovations done independently by

each immigration office, are only implemented to meet the demand for high-quality public services within the community.

Implementing version 2.0 of the Immigration Management Information System (SIMKIM) is an example of the Directorate General of Immigration's centralized policy implementation. The system began testing at the beginning of 2019 as part of an initiative to revitalize the previous version of the immigration management information system. Through this approach, it is intended that immigration oversight of Indonesian passport applications can be improved. In addition, the service for Indonesian passport applications may be carried out more efficiently with this method.

In addition to executing the above-mentioned centralized policies, each immigration office is permitted to implement numerous innovations to enhance the quality of its public services. The Tanjung Balai Karimun Immigration Office, for instance, has established an Independent Passport Pavilion. So that personnel in the Tanjung Balai Karimun Immigration Office working area can efficiently process passport applications. Applicants can upload passport application files through the Automated Passport Pavilion application prior to visiting the Immigration Office for pictures and interviews.

By these advances, the Directorate General of Immigration and the Immigration Office have demonstrated their dedication to offering the best possible service to the community, particularly in regard to the issuance of Indonesian passports. Although most of the public believes that passport-issuing services have improved, the Directorate General of Immigration must recognize

that there are still steps to be taken to ensure the delivery of high-quality public services.

One of the challenges that must be faced by the Directorate General of Immigration in the passport service of the Republic of Indonesia today is how each immigration office can provide passport services that can meet public needs that reflect the conception of quality government (The Quality of Government). If the implementation of Indonesian passport services can meet the criteria of a quality public service, of course, the passport applicant community can feel the impact directly, thereby increasing public satisfaction and a positive image of the Directorate General of Immigration.

Based on the results of research related to the quality of passport services of the Republic of Indonesia, it was revealed that passport services at several immigration offices already have good quality. As in Riko and Priyanti 's research (2022), it is revealed that passport services at the Karawang Non-TPI Class I Immigration Office have been able to meet the five dimensions of public services. Tarigan and Mirta (2019) also revealed that, based on quantitative research, passport services conducted by the Denpasar Immigration Office have good service quality. In addition, Rifai (2022) stated that the e-passport service implemented by the Directorate General of Immigration has increased public perception in terms of convenience, practicality, trust, and satisfaction in the community.

This shows that, in general, Indonesian passport services carried out by the Directorate General of Immigration through immigration offices throughout Indonesia have shown positive indications both in terms of public service dimensions and citizen satisfaction. However, this

condition needs to be studied more deeply through the concept of the quality of government.

The *concept of the quality of government* is an approach to see how a government can be said to be quality. High-quality governance can benefit economic growth and social development (Holmberg et al., 2009). In addition to the economic aspect, good governance can also play a role at the individual level, such as increasing the level of happiness of the community (Frey and Stutzer, as cited in Rothstein & Teorell, 2008).

To achieve a quality government, the concept of the quality government should be applied in every public institution. However, the concept of the quality of the government has not been discussed much in the research agenda conducted (Rothstein & Teorell, 2008). From the research conducted by researchers, research that discusses topics related to the quality of government, especially in immigration services in Indonesia, is still very limited. One of the studies that examines the quality of government at the Directorate General of Immigration was conducted by Arifin and Bawono (2019). They argue that the concept of the quality of government should be implemented in immigration inspection. But in its application, this concept has not been fully applied. So that research on this topic, especially this, needs to be carried out further on other immigration services to see how the Directorate General of Immigration contributes to achieving quality government.

As part of the Directorate General of Immigration's evaluation of the Indonesian passport service, it is necessary to perform a comprehensive study of the Indonesian passport issuance service. In this article, we will discuss the

achievements and challenges faced by the Directorate General of Immigration in applying the concept of the quality of government to passport services in Indonesia.

Method

This research was conducted using a qualitative approach through observation and literature study. Observations were made to obtain real data and information related to passport services at several immigration offices in Indonesia. While literature studies are conducted to explore theories, concepts, and information related to the quality of public services. Then the analysis is carried out by processing findings in the field and framing them in the concept of the Quality of Government. This method is used to explore how the description of passport services of the Republic of Indonesia implemented by the Directorate General of Immigration and the challenges faced to produce quality public services in accordance with the concept of the quality of government.

Result and Discussion

The Quality of Government

Quality governance is an ideal condition for every community. As recipients of public services, the community desires that government-provided public services meet their demands without difficulty. Community members are also able to evaluate the extent to which a governmental institution has supplied services. This is the basis for their evaluation of the government's own quality.

In their article, Rothstein and Teorell (2008) describe an idea of what points government institutions must have to produce a quality government. The current definition of good governance

does not correspond to the realities on the ground. Numerous past publications on quality governance by experts should have been more comprehensive. Not only that, but other definitions must also be refined. Up until now, there has been no explanation of what quality government looks like.

There are some debates in the approach that reflect how an institution can be considered as The Quality of Government; this is due to the absence of a standard definition in the concept of The Quality of Government. Some parties assume that the quality of government is a form of the concept of good governance. However, Rothstein and Teorell have different views on this matter. Rothstein and Teorell argue that the concept of quality governance as good governance, which was previously on the government's agenda, needs to be widened, so creating differences between its fundamental principles and their implementation. This results in substantial differences between public institutions. In addition, it is believed that good governance is too focused on economic gains and has disregarded non-economic issues such as social trust and diverse community life.

On the other hand, it is regarded as excessively limited to define quality government as the absence of corruption. Corruption has been viewed as a severe threat to the effectiveness of government. It is also recognized that corruption has a direct impact on society and not just on the quality of government as a provider of public services. Yet, other activities performed by unscrupulous government institutions, such as nepotism, clientelism, cronyism, and discrimination, can also negatively impact public perception and the quality of government and government services (Rothstein and Teorell).

From the above discussion, Rothstein and Theorell develop a suitable idea for evaluating how effective governance might be considered of high quality. A quality government, according to them, must possess qualities of impartiality.

Some scholars have defined what impartiality looks like in the Cupit government (2000), which explains that what is meant by an impartial action is an action that is carried out without being motivated by a certain consideration, such as personal relationships with other parties or considering likes or dislikes with someone. Karni (1998) defines impartial action as a moral act that sees something without preconceived notions. So that impartial action can be considered a government action carried out regardless of the background of the people it serves.

The Absence of Corruption

Corruption has become a serious element affecting the quality of public services, and it cannot be denied. In response, the Directorate General of Immigration has worked to improve the quality of public services by removing several corruption loopholes. By constructing integrity zones through Corruption-Free Areas (WBK) and Clean and Serving Bureaucratic Areas, institutions are strengthened (WBBM). Several immigration offices that have passed the requirements of the Ministry of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform are assigned to the integrity zone.

Integrity-building is the government's current top priority for preventing corruption and creating a clean and effective bureaucracy. According to Jeremy Pope, as cited in Respationo (2013), national integrity must be built to tackle corruption. Corruption-free

national growth can be attained through the national realization of integrity.

In the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative Reform No. 60 of 2012 on Guidelines for the Development of Integrity Zones towards WBK/WBBM in Ministries/Institutions/Regional Governments, the Ministries/Institutions/Regional Governments have been instructed to establish integrity zones. This Integrity Zone is a designation granted to public entities that commit to achieving a corruption-free area and a clean and serving bureaucratic area by various initiatives to avoid corruption, reform bureaucracy, and enhance the quality of public services provided by these institutions.

The designation of integrity zones is meant to encourage each institution to compete in providing quality public services free of corruption. Moreover, this is a push for the ranks of the Directorate General of Immigration to enhance the quality of their services by establishing integrity zones through WBK and WBBM.

In 2021, it was reported that 49 Immigration Work Units (Satker) across Indonesia had successfully constructed an Integrity Zone with the names WBK and WBBM. There are 11 immigration offices designated as Clean and Serving Bureaucracy Region, 2 directorates designated as Corruption-Free Area, 32 immigration offices designated as Corruption-Free Region, and 4 immigration detention centers designated as Corruption-Free Area (Directorate General of Immigration, 2021).

This number is an accomplishment in and of itself for the Directorate General of Immigration, and it is anticipated that it will have a greater impact in combating corruption. Immigration offices that have been designated as a zone of integrity, both

as corruption-free areas and clean-serving bureaucracies, should be able to improve their processes and work culture on an ongoing basis to plug the gaps in corrupt behavior caused by dishonest personnel. Obviously, if implemented, it might serve as a model or standard for the immigration office and other government institutions to improve the quality of government, particularly in combating corruption.

Nonetheless, the integrity zone is currently only regarded as an annual performance achievement of an immigration office, which is extremely unfortunate because the declaration of the integrity zone, which consumes a significant amount of budget, time, and energy, will be in vain and will become a mere ceremonial activity.

This statement is supported by the published corruption case brought by the Corruption Eradication Commission against the head of the Mataram Immigration Office. In December 2019, the head of the Mataram Immigration Office was found guilty in a Rp. 1.2 billion bribery case (Rachmawati & Ika, 2019). Ironically, this case was revealed less than a year after the Mataram Immigration Office announced the building of a Corruption-Free Zone/WBK within the Mataram Immigration (MandalikaPost.com, 2019). This case shows conclusively that even though the integrity zone has been declared, it will not be completely free of corrupt acts.

The positive aspect of this episode is that it demonstrates to the Directorate General of Immigration that the noble efforts to fight corruption through the establishment of WBK and WBBM continue to face obstacles. Hence, the Directorate General of Immigration will be able to draft a follow-up action plan to address corruption issues inside the immigration ranks.

One attempt that can be undertaken is to offer all staff counseling regarding corrupt criminal behavior. This must be done so that all employees are informed of acts such as what constitutes corrupt behavior and are not ignorant of them. This is consistent with what Kurniawan and Prasojo (2017) disclosed in their article. They demonstrated that the criminal act of corruption resulted from disregarding the applicable legal provisions; therefore, it was required to enhance the abilities of all employees, particularly the head of the immigration office.

The Rule of Law

Achieving quality public services requires the existence of the rule of law or a law/regulation that regulates each execution of public services. AV Dicey (1915) claimed that the fundamental concept of the rule of law is that all individuals are subject to the law and are treated equally before the law. In addition, the World Justice Project, as cited by Yasin (2019), indicates that the existence of the rule of law or legal regulations can minimize corruption and raise the value of justice in society. In the contemporary era of public transparency, any public institution that provides services to the public must adhere to this idea.

This is also directly tied to society's impartiality and justice. According to Rothstein and Theorell (2008), impartiality and the existence of legal provisions are connected. They presume that a government that can implement a system based on appropriate regulations is impartial.

The implementation of all institutional actions in accordance with existing legislation has indirectly promoted social justice. First, the public is aware of the established processes

controlling the delivery of public services so that they do not suspect that the administration of public services is concealing something. In addition to preventing improper administration. By a transparent process, the public receives clarity regarding the services they receive in terms of procedures, time, quality of service, and items offered, allowing them to estimate the type of service they will receive.

The Minister of Law and Human Rights Regulations, who is responsible for creating the procedures for providing passport services, has shown a significant application of the rule of law in the context of passport service by enacting Regulation No. 8 of 2014 of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights Regarding Ordinary Passport and Emergency Passport Issuance. This regulation is a procedure of passport issuance that has to be obeyed by all the immigration offices in Indonesia. This ministerial regulation specifies requirements, application procedures, and standardization of passport and SPLP forms, designs, and security features.

The Directorate General of Immigration and the Immigration Office have socialized these laws through a variety of media to increase public openness. For instance, through immigration office wall posters, brochure distribution, and social media like websites or Instagram. This is done merely to offer the community information and assurance regarding the provided services. To prevent maladministration in the implementation of Indonesian passport services.

In addition, as a measure of control or review from the community for the delivered services. Each immigration office also performs a community satisfaction survey, one of the indicators of which is the congruence between service methods and

client sentiment. For instance, the customer satisfaction index in some immigration offices, such as Karawang, Samarinda, and Jakarta, shows a positive score (Irawan, 2017; Putri et al., 2023; S & Kosasih, 2019). This is a sort of oversight for the application of the rule of law in the delivery of public services.

Impartiality

Impartiality is another indicator of quality governance. A government can be of good quality if the administration of public services does not discriminate between each recipient of public services. In his journal, Teorell (2009) found a correlation between the impartiality of public institutions and increased public trust in these institutions. In addition, impartiality indirectly affects economic growth and can improve people's happiness. Therefore, all public institutions need to provide an impartial service to all of the citizens.

In that regard, the Directorate General of Immigration has been trying to eliminate discrimination and promote impartiality in passport services. By utilizing information technology, the Directorate General of Immigration demonstrates its commitment to providing impartial services to the citizen. Since 2017, the Directorate General of Immigration has launched some applications that are intended to improve the queuing mechanism in the passport services. It is a crucial action that is taken by the Directorate General of Immigration. It is because some problems that happened in the queuing process lead to discrimination and partiality.

In 2017, the Directorate General of Immigration introduced a new application named *Aplikasi Pendaftaran Antrian Paspor Online (APAPO)*. This application is a queue number obtaining system for

prospective applicants at the immigration office. The applicant must download this application from the Playstore for Android-based mobile phones or the Apple Store for iOS-based mobile phones to use it. In addition, registration is possible through the antrian.imigrasi.go.id website. The applicant is prompted to create an account using a National Identity Number after downloading the application (NIK).

With this application, potential applicants can quickly identify when and where they can appear at the immigration office of their choice. The system will then determine the queue number based on the timetable and send email notifications to the registered account. On the designated date, the applicant may go immediately to the Immigration Office with the previously emailed documentation. Via the Online Passport Queue Registration Application (APAPO), the Directorate General of Immigration has strived to provide equal access to public services without regard to the background of each applicant. Thus, applicants can obtain a queue number rapidly.

Then, in 2021, this application was updated to a more advanced system named M-Paspor. Compared to the previous APAPO, M-Paspor offers some benefits, as mentioned by Pratama and Utami (2023), such as: With M-Paspor, the applicants can reschedule the previously scheduled interview time. Further, with M-Paspor, the applicant also could upload their document online.

With those applications, the immigration passport service has been changed significantly in providing impartial and non-discriminatory services. Before the Online Passport Queue Registration Application was implemented. At that time, immigration services, particularly in regard to

passports, were deemed to be rather deficient. Most of the population associates immigration with brokers. Sam Tobing, Inspector General of the Ministry of Justice and Human Rights, stated that brokers and thuggery still existed at one of Jakarta's immigration offices, as reported by Tempo online (Hadi, 2011).

At that time, only those who could pay scalpers or administrators extra were able to cut the queue. The public, who are responsible for their own passports, experiences a distinct circumstance. On one occasion, they had to wait since sunrise to obtain a queue number. This scenario is extremely alarming, particularly in the administration of public services.

Applicants for a passport experience different things currently. The Application for Online Passport Queuing Registration has received a largely positive response from the public, based on the findings of interviews conducted as part of research conducted by the Immigration Analyst Association and Immigration Polytechnic at Immigration Offices in the Jabodetabeka and Surabaya regions (Lestari, 2020). Most candidates interviewed believed that the mere existence of the application was sufficient to obtain a queue number. Even with this application, they have the same opportunity to obtain a passport queue number as other possible applicants. In addition, they can know when to show up for an interview and take biometric photographs.

In terms of impartiality, the backlog for passport applications a few years ago was a far cry from the principle of impartiality that should govern the provision of public services. This is what has ruined Immigration's reputation. Immigration is seen as incapable of managing the community-equalizing

public services supplied by the government. Complaints are filed because individuals who require passports but cannot afford to pay brokers may have difficulty obtaining a queue number. Yet, those prepared to pay extra through brokers can secure a queue number quicker.

Using the online application for registering for the passport queue, every citizen has the same opportunity to register for the passport queue. Herein lies the immigration office's impartiality in providing public services. The Immigration Office is not biased towards applicants. Rich or poor, government officer or not, everyone has the same chance, which is to submit an application through the General Directorate of Immigration application system.

Using this passport application, brokering tactics will gradually decline. This is owing to the inability of intermediaries to exploit vulnerabilities exploited by applicants who need assistance obtaining queue numbers. In addition, the online queue application for passport registration requires a Resident Identification Number when registering each applicant's user ID. Thus, if the efforts to provide this unbiased public service are successful, public confidence and satisfaction will improve. Indirectly, therefore, the Directorate General of Immigration will provide high-quality public services.

Conclusion

From the above analysis of the actual situation of the Directorate General of Immigration and the Immigration Office, it can be concluded that the Directorate General of Immigration's passport services are currently on track to be regarded as one of the quality governments in accordance with Rothstein's concept. This

is evidenced through policies that promote impartiality, the rule of law, and efforts to fight corruption through the establishment of integrity zones.

Yet, there are still concerns over the eradication of corruption. Corruption is currently pervasive in every aspect of society, making it a difficult problem to address. Hence, the responsibility of the Directorate General of Immigration in supervising illegal acts of corruption performed by the Immigration Office must be expanded through the implementation of rules and systems that close corruption loopholes.

In the meantime, the three parts of The Quality of Government outlined previously have become an excellent starting point for enhancing the quality of existing services. Based on the three components of The Quality of Government, it is hoped that in the future, the ranks of the Directorate General of Immigration can continue to develop public services provided to the public, not only in passport service but also in every implementation of the immigration function, which is now the responsibility of the Directorate General of Immigration per Law No. 6 of 2011 on Immigration.

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