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Innovative Veteran Public Service Policy in the Republic of Indonesia

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ABSTRACT

Aims The current research aimed to analyze the process of public service policy innovation to strengthen the government's connection with veteran of the Republic of Indonesia through improved public services.

Participants & Methods This was an exploratory and descriptive study carried out in Indonesia in 2020. Researchers used a survey of academic literature in the field of public policy to identify relevant concepts for the study of public service innovation. Data was collected from a variety of sources, including government documents and print and electronic media serving as secondary data. The data was then processed and described in narrative form reflecting the realities of the collected information and analyzed accordingly.

Findings The innovation in service policy focused on simplifying the service policy preparation process and facilitating easier implementation. Most of the innovation outcomes addressed solving public service challenges. This showed that public service policy innovators are focused on tackling practical issues with tangible impacts.

Conclusion Key challenges in veteran services include long service times, outdated infrastructure, and limited contact with veterans due to aging.

Keywords Veteran; Innovation; Policy; Public Services

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Introduction

Veterans are members of society, and their welfare and social security needs must be addressed. The Republic of Indonesia's veterans are former liberation warriors who are now old. Social security service activities for veterans are part of the implementation of the Republic of Indonesia's Law No. 15 of 2012 on Veterans' Rights. The Veterans and Reserves Administration Office provides social security services for veterans of the Republic of Indonesia, which include collecting data on veteran benefit application forms in each level II region and then forwarding the forms to Office of Veterans Administration and Reserves, as well as screening acceptance of registration for prospective Indonesian veterans and reserve members. Indonesian State Army in its territory, and so on. Office of Veterans Administration and Reserves, as a government instrument for implementing Law No. 15 of 2012, is entrusted with assisting veterans by handling veteran benefit application form files, which is the first stage in a series of procedures for applying for veterans' rights; Of course, they must give excellent service.

Digitalization has a major impact on changes in consumer behavior and the re-orientation of online services by public service providers in public and business sectors. It includes using information and communication technology and the internet adopted by the public sector, known as e-government (E-GOV), to intensify the use of websites in bridging relationships between public institutions and users. Public service innovation policies have developed rapidly in many Western countries [1-3], spreading to developing countries, including Indonesia. By implementing innovation, public organizations will improve the quality of public services [4, 5] and service performance [6-8]. To achieve effectiveness and efficiency, the government largely depends on innovation, successfully utilizing resources and technology [9, 10].

The urgency and priority of policy innovation in the public sector have encouraged most governments to implement policy innovation towards excellent public services following society's demands [11-13]. Likewise, the Indonesian government is committed to developing public service innovation through Government Regulation Number 38 of 2017 concerning regional innovation by regulating how organizations, ministries, institutions, and regional governments carry out regional innovation. The scope of public service policy innovation includes governance and delivery innovation [14-17]. Innovation by the government, in this case, the city/regional/provincial government, is the creation of creativity to improve services, and the aim is community satisfaction.

Governance is seen from the process of socio-political interaction between the government and society in various fields related to the interests of society and government intervention. Apart from intervention through regulations, the policy of providing awards and competitions for public organizations is an alternative to spur innovation in public sector organizations. The number of competitive reward schemes in public service has grown significantly as a means of celebrating high performance and spreading good practice [18-21]. Since 2003, the United Nations, through the Department of Economic and Social Affairs, has launched The United Nations Public Service Awards (UNPSA) to appreciate innovations that governments and public organizations have successfully implemented on five continents. Many countries, including the Indonesian government, also followed this initiative. The Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment of the Republic of Indonesia has been holding a public service innovation competition since 2014, which aims to recruit innovators as state representatives at UNPSA.

In everyday life, humans communicate either directly or face-to-face or long distance (distance communication), which can be personal or public. Communication can be carried out using spoken language (verbal) and sign language (non-verbal). In essence, many verbal and non-verbal signs can be expressed as a form of communication; therefore, no matter how much effort, we cannot communicate because our behavior is communication and has its message value [22]. Communication is an important element in government organizations and is considered the organization's heart, so without communication, there is no organizational activity, and the organization will die [23, 24]. For government communication to run effectively and on target, the government, as the main actor who initiates communication, needs to do the following things: First, choose the proper channels and media to use, considering the expected outcomes and impacts. Second, try to minimize obstacles that may arise in government communication. Third, master effective communication practices to help government administrators manage more effectively. Fourth, change the government's approach to public information from traditional to professional communication strategies.

Communication is transferring understanding of ideas or information from one person to another [25-28]. This transfer of meaning requires data transmission and specific skills to create a successful exchange of information. The most concerning communication issue is how communication can be effective towards other people by seeking support, building relationships, and influencing people who use services to want to do what the government wants. The government makes decisions and asks community members to conduct government programs and other professional relationships [22,29-31].

It is necessary to pay attention to the factors that influence effective communication: a) Communication must be timely and on target; b) Communication must be complete; c) Communication needs to pay attention to situations and conditions; d) Communication needs to avoid unpleasant words; e) Communication must be persuasive [32-35]. The current research aimed to analyze the public service policy innovation process to intensify the government's closeness to the veteran Republic of Indonesia in public services.

Participants and Methods

Design

This qualitative study was conducted in Indonesia in 2020 and focused on veterans' social security services guided by public service principles, such as simplicity, clarity, time certainty, accuracy, security, responsibility, completeness of facilities and infrastructure, ease of access, discipline, politeness, and friendliness as well as comfort with these factors which encourage and hinder veterans' social security services.

This study employed a descriptive-exploratory approach to describe research results. However, the descriptions were not intended to draw general conclusions [36, 37]. Data processing relied on secondary data which was obtained indirectly by the researcher through oral and written sources [38-40]. Secondary comprised pre-existing information that complemented the study's data needs. Data collection used documentation technique from literature and research sources such as books, journal articles, and media reports that examine public service policy innovation and its relationship to digital transformation.

Public service policy actors included the governmental entities. However, not all aspects of policy implementation could be managed by the government alone; synergy between the government, society, and the business sector was necessary. Communication played a significant role in mediating and implementing public service policies.

Purposive sampling was used, and interview participants were selected based on their competence in addressing the issues being studied. Interviewees included the Head of Veterans in Semarang City, 3 Heads of Veteran Affairs, 5 employees, and 5 veterans, for a total of 14 participants with the mean age of 59±0.6. The research also examined the vision and mission, organizational structure, human resources, archives, documents, and legal frameworks underpinning veterans' social security services (Table 1).

Instrument

An interview guide was used as a framework to ensure interviews remained focused and relevant to the research questions. Prior to conducting interviews, data was either searched for or existing data was further explored.

Field notes from interviews and observations were recorded throughout the research. Supporting materials such as books, writing instruments, recording devices, cameras, and other tools were employed during the data collection process.

Table 1. Respondents' Background Information.

Characteristics	Frequency
Gender	
Male	8 (57.14)
Female	6 (42.86)
Months since retirement	
1-3 months	3 (21.43)
4-6 months	1(7.14)
7-9 months	2 (14.29)
10-11 months	4 (28.57)
12 months or more	4 (28.57)
Career background	
Retired from active service	1 (7.13)
Military official	3 (21.43)
Non-commissioned officer	2 (14.29)
Warrant officer	3 (21.43)
Special officer	3 (21.43)
Officer	2 (14.29)
Education background	
Comprehensive school	2 (14.29)
Upper secondary school	3 (21.43)
Vocational school or equal	1 (7.14)
University of applied sciences or warrant officer	4 (28.57)
University or cadet degree	4 (28.57)

Data analysis

Data collection involved interviews with relevant parties, field observations, and documentation. Data condensation was the process of selecting, simplifying, and transforming raw data collected in the field. This process occurred continuously throughout data collection. Field reports were condensed, key points were highlighted, and patterns or themes were identified. This ongoing process culminated in the final steps of data presentation and conclusion drawing/verification.

Based on the matrix results, researchers concluded that there was sufficient detail regarding the focus, interview results, findings, theory, and discussion.

Peer debriefing, source triangulation, and technical triangulation were used to assess the validity of the research data. Researchers verified an informant's responses by comparing them with the responses of other informants, or by cross-referencing interview data with observations and document data.

Findings

The social security services for veterans of the Republic of Indonesia in terms of service principles were as follows:

Simplicity

Public service procedures were not complicated, easy to understand, and easy to implement. Procedures had to be as simple as possible so veterans, as recipients of the services, could easily follow the

established guidelines. A service must be simple and open to users, particularly veterans. Regarding the simplicity of service, the head of veterans of the Republic of Indonesia stated:

"Whether it's easy or not depends on the veteran because sometimes veterans can immediately catch and accept what we explain. Veterans are older, on average around 80 years and over, so their hearing and understanding are starting to decline, so we need to explain in as much detail as possible the procedures and requirements that must be met. If necessary, veterans must bring a guardian, either a wife, child, or grandchild, to accompany them so that the service and communication process can be facilitated. Regarding the requirements for veteran registration, I think it is very easy and quite simple. He only needs to bring a sprint of departure and return on duty as well as a certificate of appreciation to fulfill these requirements, which we then process to become a veteran. Just wait".

The same sentiment was also expressed by veteran fighters:

"I think the procedure is quite easy, very easy. The technical requirements are also quite clear for veterans. Veterans come to register in the foregoing section to submit information that they are veterans. After that, after being processed and the certificate of title is down, the veteran registers again for veterans' funds, after the documents for veterans' funds are complete, the veteran registers again to apply for veterans' benefits. So, you have to take care of them one by one. However, that was before, and now the procedure has been made easier, so once you apply you can immediately apply for 3 files, namely the title veterans benefits, honour fund and widows/widowers benefits, or what is called Three in One. Veterans can get their rights in terms of veterans benefits if the disbursement of funds remains in Civil Servant Savings and Insurance Fund ".

According to the statements regarding the simplicity of services, the Veterans Office, as the provider of social security services, was good at explaining the procedures and requirements that must be fulfilled by prospective veterans. This involved delivering service information clearly. The three-in-one system was implemented to simplify and speed up processing, allowing all necessary files—degree certificates, honorary funds, and veterans' allowances—to be processed in one submission at the veteran's office. However, in the process of providing social security services, information distortion often occurred. As a result, it was common for veterans to have missing documents, which posed a basic problem during the service process. Employees, therefore, were prepared to step in and patiently explain the process to prospective veterans in detail.

Clarity

The head of Veterans Services stated:

"Regarding the technical and administrative requirements, I think it is clear, veterans come to apply or register as veterans (for prospective veterans) then we explain what the requirements are, then the veteran comes back with the required requirements documents, then we process them and the veteran just has to wait for the results. The procedural flow after the file is received must also have been conveyed by the employee in charge".

This is in line with the statement of a veteran fighter:

"The requirements needed were explained well by the employees here, I was guided by what I needed. The series of file administration was also explained to me. Yes ... after the documents were complete, I was told to wait".

This demonstrated the government's seriousness in ensuring veterans' welfare by providing services free of charge. Additionally, employees refused gifts or tokens of appreciation from veterans, in accordance with the government's prohibition against civil servants accepting gifts from those they serve.

Certainty of time

Public services should ideally be completed within a predetermined period. However, this was not always the case, as mentioned by the head of the Veterans Office:

"For prospective veterans, he was previously an ordinary soldier who had not yet applied for a veteran, so starting from the initial application he registered and we made a registration form. The requirements were that we had to synchronize the pension scheme, family card, and KTP first, then the certificate he had. The name and date of birth must be the same in all requirements because it refers to the disbursement of funding at Civil Servant Savings and Insurance Fund later, therefore we have to be careful. It also depends on him coming about three days after he asked for information regarding the requirements. The requirements include SKCK (police record certificate). In this case, depending on the police, it could be one day or more, this could be an obstacle in terms of time. Then other requirements, namely family cards, marriage certificates, and KTPs, need to be legalized by the Population and Civil Affairs Office and the KUA (religious affairs office), which of course also takes time. If all the requirements have been met by the prospective veteran, we can accept it and then process it. Apart from that, veterans have other activities besides taking care of these requirements. So here we cannot guarantee or confirm how long the process will take, so the time can be flexible depending on the veteran himself too".

The same thing was conveyed by veterans:

"Yes, waiting for the file to come down is a long time, even though there is Three in One, the wait is still years. Yes, I hope it can be faster. But I'm just grateful".

Similar statements were also made by veterans:

"Yes, it's quite a time, he said the fastest it would be a year before it drops. But other veteran friends have just come down for 3 years. If I wait almost 2 years, then come down".

According to observations, the certainty of the given timeframe could not be guaranteed. This was the main obstacle veterans encountered when processing social security files. Completion times were based on conditional factors, such as the service officer's capacity and the workload at the agency.

Accuracy

Public service products must be accurate, appropriate, and legally valid. The head of the Veterans Office stated:

"It has hit the target because the purpose of establishing this veteran's office is to serve veterans, so all the veterans who come here. All service procedures are also appropriate, starting from registration until the paperwork is completed. The services we provide are based on Law No. 15 of 2012 concerning veterans' rights, where it is known that this law was issued by the government to guarantee veterans get their rights and also as a sign of appreciation for veterans".

Veterans also conveyed:

"Yes, it's right on target, everyone who comes here is a veteran. All services are focused on veterans, and the services provided to veterans prioritize accuracy and comfort. The service activities we carry out are also based on the law so they are legal".

Based on these statements, it was clear that the Veterans Office prioritized veterans as the recipients of social security services. The accuracy of both the service targets and the social security products, such as candidate files, honorary funds, and veterans' benefits, was evident. The final products provided by the Veterans Office were accurate, appropriate, and legal, reflecting the duties of the Veterans Affairs employees.

Security

The public service processes and products provided veterans with a sense of security and legal certainty. As the head of the Veterans Office explained:

"*Regarding security, we are a military agency whose security is automatically classified as being ready. There is already security for correspondence, we here as government employees have also taken the soldier's oath to be faithful and faithful".*

The following is a similar statement according to veterans:

"The security here is very safe, our background is military and the location of our office is also a TNI headquarters. For security purposes, correspondence can be guaranteed to be safe. There's never been any crime here, so far it's safe".

This indicated that the Veterans Office provided a secure and comfortable service process for veterans. This was reflected in the agency's military background and daily security routines. Additionally, all officers involved in providing social security services took a soldier's oath, which emphasized loyalty to the state. Legal certainty was also guaranteed to veterans processing their social security files.

Discipline, politeness, and friendliness

Service providers must be disciplined, polite, courteous, friendly, and sincere in delivering services. This was conveyed by the head of the Veterans Office:

"In my opinion, these veteran office employees are disciplined, they come and go home on time, and rarely anyone comes late. Every morning there is also a roll call here so if an employee arrives late they will be caught, but it is rare for an employee to be late. In terms of friendliness, in my opinion, the employees providing services are very friendly, apart from being old veterans, they are also our country's heroes whom we must respect and appreciate. Apart from that, if we serve in a friendly, courteous, and sincere manner, it will build good relationships and increase the sense of satisfaction for veterans. I also always emphasize to the employees here to always be kind, friendly, polite to veterans, because we as state officials are obliged to provide good service".

Similar statements were also made by veterans:

"I like the service provided by the veteran office employees here because the employees are friendly, patient, and polite. They are also very painstaking and clear in explaining. As a parent here, I feel appreciated. The attention they provide is also very good".

Based on the interviews and statements above, it can be seen that the Veterans Office employees provide services with discipline, friendliness, and politeness, reflecting high professionalism in serving veterans. Furthermore, the employees' humorous attitudes and extra attention add value to their services.

Supporting factors and obstacles faced in veterans' welfare and social security services at the Veterans Office

Several factors either support or hinder the delivery of social security services at the Veterans Office. Supporting factors facilitate smooth and proper delivery, while inhibiting factors prevent the service from working efficiently or meeting expectations. Identifying these factors allows for future service improvements.

Supporting factors

Supporting factors are those that contribute to the success of veterans' social security services at the Veterans Office. The following are the key supporting factors:

Human resources

Human resources (employees) are vital to an organization's or agency's ability to perform its duties. The Veterans Office has sufficient staff, which is one of the main factors enabling the smooth provision of social security services for veterans. The staff show strong self-awareness and dedication in serving veterans wholeheartedly, ensuring veterans receive their rights as national heroes who fought for and defended Indonesia. Their work is also a form of respect and appreciation for veterans' past services.

Agency authority

The Director General of Defence Potential exercises agency authority in overseeing veterans' social

security services, including the processing of candidate files, honorary funds, and veterans' allowances. Agency authority refers to the legal power granted to institutions that allows officials to carry out their functions. Therefore, the Director General of Veteran office has the authority to manage veterans' rights related to social security. This system was introduced in response to numerous complaints about long file processing times. To minimize delays, the Director General of Veteran office implemented a "Three-In-One" system, ensuring veterans can quickly receive the rights they deserve as heroes of the Republic of Indonesia.

Obstacle factor

Inhibiting factors are those that slow down or obstruct the veterans' social security service process. The following are the key inhibiting factors:

Facilities and Infrastructure

The lack of adequate facilities and infrastructure at the Veterans Office can hinder service delivery. Veterans have reported discomfort in the waiting room, which is furnished only with sofas. Researchers' observations confirm that these sofas are not comfortable. Additionally, the computers used in the office are outdated, with some still running on old Pentium processors, further impeding service efficiency.

Communication

Effective service delivery requires clear communication. Veterans' capacity to absorb information varies: some have a low capacity due to age, making it difficult for employees to convey and explain information. Most veterans are over 70 years old, which affects their hearing and responsiveness. For veterans with a higher capacity to absorb information, communication is easier and more effective.

Service time

Service time refers to the duration an agency requires to complete a task. However, the service time at the Veterans Office cannot be determined in advance, and there is no set time limit for the process. One major reason for service delays is the time required to process veterans' data or application files at the office.

Discussion

The current research aimed to analyze the public service policy innovation process to intensify the government's closeness to the veteran Republic of Indonesia in public services.

There are several models of public services whose use depends on the conditions and situation of the area where the service is provided [41, 42]. This strengthens the previous argument, which states that innovation is difficult because there must be a novelty and must also meet the innovation indicators themselves, such as 1) relative advantage, 2) compatibility/contextuality, 3) complexity, 4) observability, and 5) trialability [43-45]. Innovation in the public sector does not have to emphasize the element of novelty but can be done by replicating existing programs or policies. Many factors need to be considered in replicating an innovation in the public sector, for example, culture, human resource capabilities, and costs. Replication carried out in the regions was not successful, not because the process or program was wrong, but instead because of the lack of commitment of regional heads to implement it.

Innovation and public policy are like two sides of a coin. On the one hand, innovation provides new knowledge and experience useful for developing public policy. Service program innovation proves that it provides service changes to the community for the better [41, 42, 45]. This shows that service and innovation appear most often, followed by health, education, ministry, police, agriculture, health centers, and the like. It means that the word service innovation dominates in the context of public policy discussions in Indonesia in 2020. Furthermore, some words are small but have quite significant meanings, such as service integration, service technology, and innovation units and agencies.

Next, to see a portrait of public service innovation in 2020, it will be based on the Top 99 Innovations in 2020 released by The Ministry of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform, using indicators of innovators, types of innovation, goals and outcomes, policy sectors and geographical aspects. From the innovator aspect, Regional Governments, which include Provincial Governments, Regency Governments, and City Governments, will be the dominant innovation actors in 2020, reaching 75%. Meanwhile, the Central Government's role carried out by Ministries and Institutions only contributes 25%, providing theories, guidelines, and methods to strengthen policy innovation. Policy innovation efforts have a "new" and valuable aspect, so they are expected to impact efforts to build positive community participation positively. Innovation is implemented at the policy evaluation stage and applied since public policy formulation, implementation, and monitoring [2, 46, 47]. From the public knowledge management instituted by the organization, it is not because of leadership or crisis factors that force the organization to make changes. The Regency Government dominates with a contribution of 43%, followed by the Regency and City Governments with 16% each, indicating that the lower the innovator level, the more innovation there is. It is not only because of the large quantity but also because of the flexibility and diversity of variations in more operational public services that the Regional Government can propose.

Meanwhile, looking at innovation type, the process type is the most popular at 39%, followed by service products at 36%, and governance type at only 25%. Furthermore, from the policy sector, the

government's public service innovations in 2020 are divided into five significant aspects: Health, education, civil servants (ASN), licensing, and taxes. What is meant by this type of process is how the government attempts to cut through bureaucratic lines, which have been the subject of many public complaints. Meanwhile, service products are related to easy access to existing public services [2, 48, 49]. Meanwhile, the type of governance is related to service management. The high type of service processes and products reflects that innovators tend to focus on service efficiency efforts, which reflect the demands of society, which wants public services that are easily accessible and not complicated. Meanwhile, from the aspect of objectives and outcomes, most proposed public service policy innovations in 2020 are related to problem-solving efforts, which reached 34%, followed by public satisfaction at 27%.

It differs from the public service policy innovations in the health sector carried out by the government that are not directly proportional to the pandemic conditions several years ago. Public service innovations handling COVID-19 are divided into the quick response or quick wins category, the public knowledge category, and the mass resilience category (massive/social resilience). The public hopes that the government will provide innovations regarding handling COVID-19 or innovative prevention of transmission, but based on the results of the data presented, there is only one innovation related to handling COVID-19. It shows that both the central government and regional governments are still not ready and do not have broad ideas regarding innovations to be carried out to help people who are hampered by pandemic conditions.

Finally, from a geographical aspect, the trend in the development of public service innovation is mostly carried out by the government on the island of Java, reaching 64%. This happens because the location of the Central Government, which consists of Ministries and State Institutions, is in the DKI Jakarta Administrative area, where the province is on the island of Java. Apart from that, unequal distribution of human resources and facilities between Java Island and Outside Java Island also contributes. This data shows that innovators tend to be oriented towards immediately visible results and have an impact on resolving issues to increase public satisfaction, compared to process aspects consisting of efficiency, effectiveness, and transparency. Therefore, innovation must become a national movement. The government needs to make continuous improvements [3, 42, 50] to make people comfortable daily.

To reduce the time and streamline lengthy service procedures, the Directorate General, as the agency overseeing the Veterans and Reserves Administration Office, can implement a new file management system by utilizing technology. Specifically, transitioning to an online file processing system would expedite file handling and eliminate the need for manual file submissions, thus significantly reducing processing time

Conclusion

Key challenges in veteran services include long service times, outdated infrastructure, and limited contact with veterans due to aging.

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