

POLICY DISCOURSE ON WORK FROM ANYWHERE (WFA) FOR INDONESIA'S STATE CIVIL APPARATUS (ASN)

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Abstract

The policy discourse on Work From Anywhere (WFA) for Indonesia's State Civil Apparatus (ASN) has stirred controversies among the public. There is a general view in the public that the performance and productivity of ASN is still below their expectations, so that they are concerned that the WFA arrangement will hinder public services. On the other hand, the government argues that the WFA policy will be able to achieve effectiveness and efficiency. This paper analyzes the challenges and readiness of the government pertaining to WFA policy for ASN. Several challenges that may persist include, among others, geographical conditions, leadership, and public skepticism. Meanwhile, there are several aspects that must be prepared, such as digital infrastructure, human resources, organization and work procedures, data sources, as well as regulations. Indonesia may learn from the successful remote working policy implemented in Brazil, as a benchmark for the implementation of WFA policy in Indonesia. Commission II of the House of Representatives of Republic of Indonesia through its legislative function may encourage the government to prepare a comprehensive study based on the Cost-Benefit Analysis in formulating policies and mapping of ASN positions in the WFA system during the discussion concerning Draft Bill on ASN. In addition, Commission II of the House of Representatives of Republic of Indonesia must oversee the government's readiness with regard to the WFA policy.



Introduction

Recently, the news about the Government's discourse on Work from Anywhere (WFA) policy for all State Civil Apparatus (ASN) has gone viral. The proposal was based on the work arrangements for ASN during the Covid-19 pandemic, namely

Working from Office (WFO) - Working from Home (WFH) was deemed to be successful. As stated by the Bureau of Public Relations, Law and Cooperation of the State Civil Service Agency (BKN), the implementation of WFO-WFH practices during the Covid-19 pandemic showed that ASN and the



public they serve have proven to be quite adaptive (idntimes.com, May 12, 2022). The adjustment to the new work arrangement during the pandemic has a positive impact, namely the acceleration of digital transformation both within the government and society in general.

The United Nations (UN) e-Government Survey 2020 ranked Indonesia 88th in the development and implementation of the e-Government System/*Sistem Pemerintahan Berbasis Elektronik* ("SPBE"). The 2020 result which was announced in July, shows an increase of 19 ranks compared to the 2018 result, i.e., 107th and 116th in 2016 (menpan.go.id, October 9, 2020). Due to such successful implementation, the government believes that WFA policy will be able to enhance the effectiveness and efficiency of bureaucracy. According to Acting Head of Communications and Information at KemenPAN-RB, WFA arrangement is in line with the implementation of bureaucratic reforms and streamlining. In essence, the government is trying to streamline the organizational structure, to shift the structural positions to become more functional, and also to adapt to a more dynamic, agile and collaborative working system. (kompas.com, May 13, 2022).

However, this policy discourse still raises controversies among the public of Indonesia. People are of the view that public services will not be optimal if WFA practice is implemented for ASN. Public policy analyst, Agus Pambagio, said that the WFA policy for ASN still requires a comprehensive study and must take into account various aspects (kompas.com, May 14, 2022). Member of the Commission II of the House

of Representatives of the Republic of Indonesia, Aminurokhman, inquired the government to review the WFA policy more carefully and thoroughly, considering the main tasks and functions of ASN which are related to public services (dpr.go.id, May 12, 2022). This paper analyzes the challenges and readiness of the Government in implementing WFA policy for ASN.

Challenges in the Implementation of WFA policy for ASN

WFA policy was first introduced by the Minister of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, Sri Mulyani under the term of Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA), which is an alternative system by an organization to arrange work schedules and places so that FWA can focus more on outputs or deliverables rather than work procedures (Rau & Hyland, 2002). in Dida & Nova, 2020). The government believes that the WFA system is more effective and efficient in terms of time, place, and budget.

Nevertheless, the public is still questioning the effectiveness of the WFA policy. Research on the Flexible Work Arrangement (FWA) system shows that the FWA system has been able to improve employees' productivity, which will eventually boost the profitability of an organization/company. FWA is proven to be able to enhance satisfaction at work, organizational commitment, work life balance as well as to inspire employees to give their best performance (Kelliher, Kelliher & Anderson, 2009; Shagvaliyeva & Yazdabufard, 2014 in Dida & Nova, 2020).

Even though the effectiveness

of the WFA system has been proven by many experts, however its implementation in Indonesia will encounter many challenges:

First, leadership challenge. There are still many ASN leaders who still have conservative mindsets, meaning that they still adhere to the conventional system, which requires all of their subordinates to be physically present at the office (cnbcindonesia.com, May 12, 2022). This will be a challenge in itself in the implementing the WFA policy.

Second, geographical challenges. Many areas in Indonesia still have the status of blank spots. Hence, the implementation of e-government in these areas will be impossible at the moment. Presently, there are still 9,113 blank spot areas in the 3T (Underdeveloped, Remote and Frontier) areas and 3,345 in the non-3T areas (Beritasatu.com, December 13, 2021).

Third, public skepticism. There is a perception among the community that the performance of ASN will become less productive and will eventually hinder public services if the WFA arrangement is put in place. As such, KemenPAN-RB needs to immediately map the ASN positions who can take part in the WFA system and ASN positions who cannot take part in the WFA system. The mapping must be announced to all ASN and the society alike.

Readiness of the Government and Brazil's Experience

The WFA policy for ASN will certainly alter the pattern and order of government administration to some extent. Therefore, careful preparation must be done even though this policy is a 'follow-up policy' from the current

work arrangement. The following aspect must be prepared by the government:

First, digital infrastructure. Supporting facilities/infrastructure for e-government system include, among others, BTS (Base Transceiver Station), fiber optic, satellites, servers, firewall and bandwidth that can fulfill the requirements to implement the e-government, which is important to be well prepared in advance as a requirement for the implementation of WFA policy.

Second, human resources (HR). ASN must be prepared for the change in the work system, from manual to digital. This of course requires no simple preparation. ASN must be ensured that they have adapted to the digital work system.

Third, organization and work procedures. There needs to be a new formula to be used as a minimum standard in the implementation of WFA for ASN such as attendance mechanism, performance appraisal system, employee quality control, monitoring and evaluation and other matters related to changes to the WFA arrangement. In addition, work culture and leadership must also be prepared in order to minimize resistance to changes in the organizational culture.

Fourth, data sources. In order for decision making and public services to be optimal, the government needs to be ready to ensure that the data possessed by Ministries/Institutions/Regional Government Organizations, at the Central as well as Regional levels can be shared seamlessly with no more difficulties in obtaining data, problems such unsynchronized data, or data which is different from one agency to another so that it cannot be processed further.

Fifth, regulation. The government needs to prepare a legal basis for the implementation of WFA system. The existing regulation which supports the WFA policy is the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Utilization and Bureaucratic Reform (PermenPANRB) No. 8 Year 2021 concerning the Performance Management System of Civil Servants which governs ASN performance management system consisting of performance planning; implementation, monitoring and development of performance; performance assessment; follow-up, and ASN performance information system. In addition to the PermenPANRB, the monitoring of ASN performance is regulated under Government Regulation (PP) No. 24 Year 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline and Regulation of the Head of National Civil Service Agency (BKN) No. 6 Year 2022 concerning the Implementation of PP No. 24 Year 2021. However, the government still needs to formulate further regulations in relation to WFA in the form of more technical and specific regulations concerning WFA policy for ASN.

All potential costs and impacts that may occur during the implementation of WFA policy must be studied in a comprehensive manner by utilizing certain instruments, for example Cost-Benefit Analysis. This instrument can be used as a measuring tool in making decisions pertaining to WFA policy, to measure the components of costs, impacts and benefits that will be generated and then to select policy recommendations based on the calculations and analysis performed.

In addition, the Government may also learn from the experiences

of other countries in implementing WFA system. The more efficient bureaucracy created by the WFA system has been proven in many countries, one of which is Brazil with their remote working system which has succeeded in achieving cost efficiency in the administration of its government. The Brazilian government estimates that it has saved more than 1 billion reais (US\$ 180 million) by implementing the remote working arrangement. According to a report published by the Ministry of Economy of Brazil in 2020, the figure considers 859 million reais (US\$ 154 million) in fixed expenses relating to maintenance of physical offices and a reduction of 161 million reais (US\$ 29 million) in benefits to workers between April and August 2020. According to the framework developed by the Brazilian government, expenses relating to internet, electricity and phone calls, for example, are paid for by the public sector worker who chooses to operate from home. Extra hours worked outside the working schedule that is established in the rules set out by the government agencies are not accounted for (zdnet.com, September 29, 2020).

Meanwhile, based on the "Potential and Effective Remote Work in Brazil: Looking into the Gap Between Metrics" research data, the percentage of types of jobs that allow for remote working consists of science professionals and intellectuals (65%), directors and managers (61%), mid-level technicians and professionals (30%), administrative support workers (41%), members of the armed forces, police and firefighters (0%) (Felipe & Jose, 2021: 268).

The specific experience from Brazil that can be adopted by Indonesia is the criteria for the types

of jobs that can work from anywhere with certain proportions that have been accounted for. In addition, it is necessary to include in the regulations regarding matters that are not borne by the government for employees who choose to work from anywhere such as internet costs, utility bills, telephone costs, and extra work hours outside the working schedule. The implementation of WFA system for ASN in Indonesia can be carried out by taking into account the professional requirements of ASN in accordance with the provisions of Law no. 5 Year 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus.

Closing

WFA policy requires a comprehensive study, considering that this policy may alter the pattern and order of government administration. In view of the conditions in Indonesia, WFA policy will face various challenges such as leadership, geographical conditions, and public skepticism. Therefore, government's readiness is strongly required, such as digital infrastructure, human resources, data sources, organization and work procedures and regulations. The government may learn from Brazil as one of the successful countries in implementing WFA system. Commission II of the House of Representatives of Indonesia through its legislative function needs to encourage the government to prepare a comprehensive study by using Cost-Benefit Analysis in formulating policies and mapping ASN positions with the WFA system during the discussion on ASN Draft Bill. In addition, through its supervisory function, Commission II of the House of Representatives of Indonesia needs to monitor the government's readiness regarding WFA policies, from formulation to

policy evaluation.

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