

Archive and Bureaucratic Reform: The Abandoned Public Service

Swani Sona Saragih^{1*}

¹*Faculty of Government Management, Institut Pemerintahan Dalam Negeri, Sumedang, Indonesia*

**Corresponding author. Email: sona.ipdn@gmail.com*

ABSTRACT

As a record of information of all organizational activities, archive functions as a center of memory, decision-making aid, and evidence of the organization's existence, as well as serves other organizational interests. Without archive to record organizational activities, an organization will encounter many obstacles in implementing its programs and activities and making organizational development. In addition, without archive, its existence will also be questionable. In the reform era, the energy of the Government of Indonesia was drained to provide good public services. But, the archiving conditions were very pathetic and neglected. It can be seen from the number of files that were improperly and incorrectly organized, lost, damaged, or even sold. This was due to the institution's lack of understanding of the use value of recorded archive. The strategy to improve the archiving condition was to organize it by taking into account the archive's life cycle, the period of its creation, the period of determining the use value of archive, the selection of the right media to record the archive, the official script, the period of use, the mechanism for managing letters, storage, and rediscovery, the period of disposal of the utilization of the archive that has primary and secondary use value, as well as the procedures for saving, maintaining, and protecting the archive.

Keywords: *Archive, Bureaucratic Reform, Public Services*

1. INTRODUCTION

Former President of Panama Richardo J. Alfaro stated, "A government without archive is like a soldier without weapon, doctor without medicine, farmer without seeds, or craftsman without tools. Archives testify to the successes, failures, growth and glory of the nation" or in other expressions, "a world without archive will become a world without memory, without culture, without legitimate rights, without understanding the historical roots, science, and collective identity." Whatever its form, an organization will definitely create an archive. The archive is a very important material for planning, implementation, supervision, and even serves as a national life history and the foundation used by leaders in leading an organization [1].

Without information, there will be no decision making. One vital source of information is archive. Without an archive, decision makers do not have corporate memory for reference and do not have accountability for taking decisions [2]. The number of archives that are unorganized indicates the weakness of the leaders' understanding of the importance of archive. The absence of a filing system in

the government bureaucracy is common—files are scattered difficult to find when needed, lost or sometimes even deliberately discarded because of the lack of understanding of the informational use value recorded in the archive.

This neglected condition of archives, especially in Indonesia, is compounded by a bureaucratic system that does not apply the archival organization to managing archives based on their frequency of use. Current dynamic archives are in Archival Unit I which is stored and managed in each organizational work unit. Archival Unit II includes integrated, stored, managed, maintained, and restored dynamic inactive archives along with vital procedure archives, permanent storage/repository, submission of general informational archives to the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI). It accompanied by the mechanism of depreciation and destruction of archives.

Many leaders were still ignorant of the usefulness of the Archive Retention Schedule. Suprayitno mentioned that the paradigm of the government itself still considered archive only as a pile of dusty paper or as a useless item [3]. It was considered materials that have no use value so that it did not need to get serious attention; let alone as the

evidence of the rights and obligations of the government or citizens. Even more unfortunate, organizational and financial support for archiving programs was very limited, especially for current dynamic archive. Good handling of archives starts when the archives are created, used, and presented repeatedly (current dynamic archive). This good handling in early stage will facilitate the handling of archives after they become inactive dynamic archives or even static archives [4, 5]. Active and inactive dynamic archives must be managed properly, since they are instrumental to achieve accountability, transparency, and public trust as evidence of achievement of work, as an authoritative (valid) source of information that is used as a reference when making decisions and delivering program and government service.

Archival Unit I and II, which are archival institutions in every government organization, usually deal only with inactive and static archives. It should reform itself in order to play a greater role in designing dynamic current archive system so that the life cycle of archive—from its creation, use, and preservation—can be integrated to provide continuum of information. According to Mc. Kemmish, an integrated dynamic archive system can facilitate government, sustain accountability, build identity, memory, and provide a source of authoritative information that has added value [6]. For archival workers, if the concept can be realized, it will add commercial value in the form of opening up services for archive users such as students, lecturers, researchers, and general public who interests in archive or history.

At this point we can see that the use value of an archive is not limited to only a written communication between the communicator and the communicant. Archive can also act as a solution or a response to a problem at hand. In this case, it is analogous to expressions that can be seen, heard, and read using certain recording media. It can be translated into various things so that the best solution can be found. In other words, archive can facilitate the search for a solution by presenting information or data needed to solve a problem.

In accordance with the concept of bureaucratic reform, all bureaucratic mechanisms change according to the demands of modernization. Archival activities should also undergo reform accordingly. The main factor of the ineffectiveness of archival organizations is the lack of available human resources both in terms of quality and quantity. This condition can be seen in some government offices that lack of knowledgeable staff in the field of archive. According to Lasa, the value of the information stored in archives is strongly influenced by several factors including the quality of manpower, timeliness, amount and relevance methodology [7].

2. METHOD

This research used a descriptive qualitative method. The required data were obtained from interviews and observations at the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia (ANRI). It was supported by literature review to

provide reasonable and convincing conclusions about archival management. This study also aimed for an explanation about public service reform through the lens of archive management system.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1.1. Bureaucratic Reform of Public Services

If we want to progress, we must dare to change positively. It means that people must think to move forward with “the goal for progress,” i.e. getting a better livelihood. The underlying spirit will lead to modernization, a renewal that changes the existing systems in society. The step to achieve it is by making an update to people’s way of thinking [8].

The concept of bureaucratic reform is a kind of “changing-for-the-better.” Within its accelerating framework, many sophisticated structures transform into simple structures, a financing bureaucracy becomes a bureaucracy that is financed. A very well-known term for it is reform to cut the rent bureaucracy. The purpose of bureaucratic reform is to improve public service [9]. In Indonesia, as being concluded by the World Bank’s *the World Development Report 2010* and the Governance and Decentralization Survey (GDS) [10], the quality of public services was still very low.

Poor public services were not surprising conclusion, considering that voluminous facts were easily found to confirm it. Archive as a public service institution has a motto: “archive as the unifying node of the nation.” It expressed the Archive’s strong commitment in providing valid data for the survival of the nation. In this context, building awareness of the importance of archival management in realizing orderly administration was a crucial task.

3.1.2. Directional Archive Management

To achieve an effective and efficient archival management, archival institutions must implement directional archive management; for instance, (1) planning for archival work programs that are easily understood and implemented by each work unit, (2) forming an archival organization that implements, develops, fosters, and procures competent human resources along with required facilities and infrastructures, (3) conducting archival activities based on the categorization of dynamic (current-inactive) and static archive system so that the function of public services can be realized, i.e. the availability of accurate and fast information services based on the work efficiency and effectiveness, (4) establishing an archive conservation mechanism, since its creation, use, and disposal (destroyed or stored permanently), by depreciation, acquisition, rescue, and preservation of archives (archive storage in electronic media and procuring oral history of important events from historical actors), (5) promoting continuous archiving in order to

build strong awareness of the importance of archive, (6) realizing e-government as an archiving information network system by accessing the use of information technology to provide facilities for the public to access information, (7) procuring archival services such as consultants and technical guidance to help in saving and structuring archive, and to make provision of competent human resources, (8) formulating regulations, technical guidance, implementation instructions, or guidelines for the implementation of archival management as a strategy of fostering, saving, and developing archives, (9) always coordinating with the National Archives of the Republic of Indonesia as a state agency that is fully responsible for archives and tasked with the supervision of every institution that has implemented filing system, (10) evaluating any potential and actual problems in the field of archives in order to improve future archival system, since the process of creating archives always follows the flow of technological developments.

Based on the archival management system, the role of archival institutions is very broad, not only in dynamic archive management, but also in static archive management or archive administration. Archive management concerns with the life cycle of archive. The life cycle of archive includes creation and receipt (correspondence, forms, reports, drawings, copies, microform, computer input, output), distribution (internal and external), use (decision making, documentation, response, reference, legal requirements), maintenance (file, retrieve, transfer), and disposal (inactive storage, archive, discard, destroy) [11]. At least, there are four main reasons why archive management is necessary: (1) it is a center of collective memory of institutions (corporate memory), (2) it is a provider of data or information for decision making, (3) it is a material supporting litigation support, and (4) it is paperwork depreciation [12].

3.1.3. Public Service Reform through Archive Management System

The public service aspect, according to Machmoed Effendhi [13], is related to secondary use values as evidence of national responsibility and preservation of the nation's culture: information and evidence including static archive management. The implementation of static archive management falls under the authority of regional archival institutions (provinces and regencies/cities), including several activities such as archive acquisition, appraisal, description, restorative or curative conservation, information service, and sources publication [14].

The International Standard Archive Description (ISAD) has implemented an archive management system such as archive acquisition mechanism, which is an archive appraisal attempt to increase collections concerning the use value of archive. Archive processing or inventory efforts to save archives, as well as efforts to find back archives (finding aid), are intended to facilitate the means of accessing archives [15]. Based on the International Council on Archives (ICA) [16], archival

management needs to pay attention to two guidelines: the principal of provenance (the principle of the organization of the archive creator) and the principal of original order (the principle of the initial set-up system) [17]. To utilize archives in a long run and prevent damage to them (physical and information damage), care and maintenance must be carried out. The provision of specialized rooms equipped with air conditioners (transit rooms, reading rooms, access facilities, references), the comfort of the room, reading aids, the quality of the archives, and the security from fire hazards or from unauthorized people are the keys to the successful public information services. Procurement of magazines or bulletins as a news source is also part of the public information service.

By understanding the archiving system, it is expected that there will be no more problems with archives such as piles of archives, lost archives, corrupted archives, etc. In reforming bureaucracy, archives are supposed to be a means of accountability, responsibility, and public trust. But, it tends to be ignored frequently. Until now, it is still difficult to realize the procurement of archival units in every government agency. The obstacles include the lack of funding to provide hardware and software. However, when the hardware and software are ready, somehow the funding and human resources do not run properly, and vice versa. Moreover, the support from the high level leaderships is also frequently given half-heartedly. This condition causes the neglect of the role of archives so that the effectiveness and efficiency of public services cannot run optimally.

4. CONCLUSION

The role of archival institutions is very broad; not only minding with record management, but also with archive management or administration. The main problem is the difficulty in establishing proper archival unit in every government agency. The reasons for the problem vary, from the lack of funding to procure and maintain hardware and software, the lack of competent human resources, and the lack of support from the high level leaderships. This condition causes the negligence on the role of archives, especially in bureaucratic reform.

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