



Strengthening Organizational Research Governance at the Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency

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Abstract

Regional research governance plays a strategic role in supporting evidence-based public policy. However, the research governance of the Makassar City Government still faces organizational capacity limitations, characterized by low responsiveness to sectoral policy needs, suboptimal utilization of research and development results, fluctuations in research productivity, weak coordination across regional agencies, and the lack of institutionalization of incentive systems, competency mapping, collaborative culture, organizational communication, and adaptive managerial structures. This study aims to analyze organizational strengthening in improving research governance capacity at the Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency. The study used a qualitative phenomenological approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation, and document review. Research informants consisted of leaders, structural officials, functional research officials, and relevant stakeholders. The results show that organizational strengthening has not been optimal and is still partial. The incentive system is not performance-based, personnel utilization is not supported by competency mapping, leadership and communication are not fully structured, the work culture still tends to be administrative, and the managerial structure is still in the transition stage towards a more adaptive work model. This study proposes a model for strengthening regional research governance organizations, including institutionalizing output-based incentives, competency-based personnel placement, collaborative leadership, a culture of knowledge sharing, cross-sector communication, adaptive work structures, and a sustainable research agenda.

Keywords: capacity building, organizational strengthening, research governance, evidence-based policy, regional government

Introduction

Regional development in the modern era of governance demands strong, adaptive, and problem-solving-oriented research governance. The complexity of regional development issues can no longer be addressed solely through administrative approaches and bureaucratic routines, but rather requires the support of scientific knowledge, empirical data, and systematic policy analysis. In this context, research plays a strategic role as a supporting instrument for the formulation, implementation, evaluation, and control of public policy.

Regional research and development institutions ideally function as policy knowledge hubs, organizations capable of connecting data, research results, sectoral needs, and the public decision-making process. This function is crucial because regional development issues are multidimensional and cross-sectoral, encompassing areas such as public services, spatial planning, the environment, health, education, the local economy, regional innovation, and urban poverty alleviation.

However, the empirical situation within the Makassar City Government indicates that organizational strengthening in regional research governance still faces several fundamental challenges. The capacity of research and development organizations is not yet fully capable of optimally supporting sectoral policy needs. BRIDA Makassar City still faces limitations in responding to the needs of regional officials, particularly in providing a scientific basis for the formulation of regional policies and regulations.

These problems are evident in three main aspects. First, the organization's capacity to respond to sectoral policy needs remains limited. Second, the utilization of research and development results remains relatively low because a number of studies have not been fully utilized as a basis for policymaking. Third, regional research productivity continues to fluctuate, indicating a weak, sustainable research planning system.

Thus, the problem of regional research governance is not only related to limited human resources for researchers but also rooted in organizational capacity. Strengthening research governance cannot be achieved solely by improving the competency of individual staff; it must also address work systems, coordination structures, planning mechanisms, research result utilization procedures, leadership, communication, organizational culture, and the performance orientation of regional research institutions.

Based on this background, this study aims to analyze organizational strengthening in enhancing research governance capacity at the Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency.

Literature Review

Organizational strengthening in regional research governance can be explained through a capacity building perspective. Grindle (1997) explains that organizational strengthening is directed at improving management systems, organizational structures, coordination mechanisms, incentive systems, leadership, organizational culture, communication, resource utilization, and the organization's ability to adapt to environmental demands.

Hilderbrand and Grindle (1997) emphasized that public sector capacity is the government's ability to carry out its functions effectively, efficiently, and responsively to community needs. This capacity is determined not only by individuals but also by the work environment, institutional structure, task networks, human resources, and organizational systems.

The UNDP (1998) views capacity development as a systemic and strategic process. Organizational capacity is not simply measured by the number of employees or formal structures, but also by the organization's ability to manage strategies, work processes, resources, institutional relationships, and evaluation mechanisms. In the context of regional research governance, this approach emphasizes the importance of research planning systems, databases, priority agendas, coordination across regional agencies, and monitoring the utilization of research results.

Lusthaus et al. (2002) explain that organizational performance is influenced by organizational capacity, the external environment, organizational motivation, management, financial capacity, and sustainability. This perspective reinforces the view that a strong regional research organization is one capable of developing a research agenda aligned with development needs, conducting quality studies, managing resources appropriately, and ensuring that research results are utilized by policymakers.

From an organizational design perspective, Galbraith (1977), through his Star Model, emphasized that organizational effectiveness is determined by the alignment between strategy, structure, processes, reward systems, and human resources. Mintzberg (1979) also explained that organizational effectiveness requires appropriate coordination mechanisms between strategic leadership, line management, core operations, technostructure, and support staff. Meanwhile, Senge (1990), through his concept of a learning organization, emphasized the importance of a learning culture, a shared vision, and the organization's ability to continuously improve work patterns.

Based on these various perspectives, organizational strengthening in regional research governance can be interpreted as a systematic process to strengthen the internal capacity of research institutions through improvements in structure, management, work processes, communication, coordination, leadership, organizational culture, collaborative networks, planning systems, and mechanisms for utilizing research results in public policy.

Materials And Methods

This research employed a qualitative method with a phenomenological approach. This approach was used to understand the experiences, perceptions, and meanings constructed by organizational actors in the process of strengthening regional research governance.

The research was conducted at the Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency. Data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with purposively selected informants, namely the Head of the Agency, the Head of the Research Division, the Head of the General and Personnel Subdivision, research functional officials, and relevant stakeholders. Secondary data were obtained through a review of planning documents, strategic documents, research activity reports, and institutional documents.

Data collection techniques included in-depth interviews, field observations, and document reviews. Data were analyzed through three stages: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing and verification. To maintain data credibility, this study utilized triangulation of sources and techniques.

Results and Discussion

Incentive System

Research results indicate that the incentive system at BRIDA Makassar City is not fully performance-based. Incentives are still dominated by Employee Income Supplements, the amount of which is heavily influenced by regional fiscal capacity. This situation prevents incentives from fully becoming a strategic instrument for encouraging research productivity.

Furthermore, rewards for high-performing employees are still situational, for example, through involvement in certain activities that allow for additional honorariums. While these measures can be a form of appreciation, they have not yet been institutionalized as a formal incentive system based on research outputs.

These findings indicate the need to shift the orientation of incentives from being position-based and administrative to incentives based on performance, research achievements, scientific publications, innovation, policy briefs, and the impact of research results on regional policy. Incentives do not always have to be financial, but can include institutional recognition, career development opportunities, access to training, academic awards, and involvement in the organization's strategic agenda.

Personnel Utilization

Personnel utilization at BRIDA Makassar City is not yet supported by formal and systematic competency mapping. Employee placement still largely follows administrative needs and organizational dynamics, rather than fully based on the alignment of individual competencies with regional research needs.

Interview results indicate that mapping employee talents, interests, expertise, and performance records needs to be conducted in a more targeted manner. Employees with competencies in data analysis, report preparation, data collection, scientific writing, and policy recommendation development should be placed according to their areas of expertise.

This finding underscores the importance of the person-job fit principle in strengthening research organizations. Research effectiveness is determined not only by the number of employees, but also by the organization's accuracy in placing personnel according to their competencies, experience, and job requirements. Therefore, personnel

utilization needs to be guided by a competency-based system, performance evaluation, capacity development, and clear role allocation.

Leadership

Leadership plays a strategic role in strengthening research organizations. Research results indicate that BRIDA Makassar City's leadership is aware of the importance of performance accountability, employee potential development, and the need for additional human resources. However, these leadership practices have not been fully institutionalized in a standardized work system.

Leadership in research organizations is not merely administrative and instructive. Leaders need to fulfill the roles of facilitator, director, liaison, and evaluator. Effective leadership must be demonstrated through clear direction, measurable monitoring, research output-based evaluation, and open communication between leaders and researchers.

In the context of BRIDA Makassar City, collaborative leadership is needed to align research agendas with the needs of regional government agencies, strengthen internal coordination, build employee motivation, and ensure that each research activity produces recommendations relevant to regional policy.

Organizational Culture

BRIDA Makassar City's organizational culture still exhibits administrative tendencies and is not fully based on knowledge collaboration. Old work patterns are still evident, with certain employees considered more capable dominating the workload, while opportunities for development for others are not yet fully equitable.

Furthermore, the culture of discussion, knowledge sharing, and collaboration between internal employees and academic partners still needs to be strengthened. Research organizations require a work culture that is open, adaptive, flexible, and based on shared learning.

Strengthening organizational culture needs to be directed at establishing a culture of knowledge sharing, regular meetings between leaders and researchers, involving functional officials in the research process, and strengthening cross-actor collaboration. Thus, BRIDA functions not only as an administrative institution but also as a learning organization that generates knowledge to support public policy.

Communication and Coordination

Communication is a crucial element in strengthening an organization. Research shows that internal communication at BRIDA Makassar City is conducted through various media, such as WhatsApp, face-to-face meetings, and online meetings. Communication with academic partners is also conducted through coordination meetings, particularly prior to the implementation of research stages.

However, institutional communication between BRIDA and other regional agencies remains suboptimal. The low level of attention paid by regional agencies to research results indicates that BRIDA's external communication function as an institution producing policy recommendations still needs to be strengthened.

Strengthening communication needs to be directed at establishing a cross-regional agency coordination forum, a regional research information system, a mechanism for disseminating research results, and developing policy briefs that can be used directly by policymakers. Effective communication serves not only as an exchange of information but also as a strategic mechanism for building agenda alignment, program integration, and utilizing research results in public policy.

Managerial Structure

The managerial structure of BRIDA Makassar City is undergoing a transition from a bureaucratic structure to a work pattern based on functional positions and working groups. The conversion of structural positions to functional research positions demonstrates an effort towards a more research-oriented organization.

However, this transition still requires clarity on the division of roles, coordination mechanisms, performance indicators, and evaluation systems. A working group-based structure can be a more adaptive alternative if supported by a clear division of tasks, standard operating procedures, and measurable accountability mechanisms. An adaptive managerial structure is needed to enable BRIDA to respond more quickly to regional research needs, avoid overlapping authority, strengthen collaboration, and ensure the sustainability of the research agenda.

Discussion

Research results indicate that organizational strengthening is a fundamental dimension in developing regional research governance capacity. Within Grindle's (1997) framework, organizational strengthening encompasses improvements to management systems, incentive systems, personnel utilization, leadership, organizational culture, communication, and managerial structure. All of these elements are interrelated in determining an organization's ability to translate institutional mandates into concrete, relevant, and sustainable research performance.

First, an incentive system that is not yet performance-based indicates that research productivity is not fully supported by adequate reward mechanisms. In fact, in research organizations, output-based incentives can encourage improvements in the quality of studies, publications, innovation, and policy recommendations.

Second, personnel utilization that is not based on competency mapping indicates the need to develop a more objective human resource management system. Employee placement needs to consider expertise, experience, interests, and research needs to enable the organization to work more effectively.

Third, leadership needs to be strengthened, shifting from an instructive pattern to a collaborative and evaluative leadership. Research organization leaders must be able to build a shared vision, direct the research agenda, monitor outputs, and ensure research results are policy-relevant.

Fourth, organizational culture needs to shift from an administrative one to a learning one. Research requires discussion, collaboration, the exchange of ideas, and openness to data. Without this culture, research results risk remaining merely administrative documents.

Fifth, communication needs to be institutionalized through regular forums, digital information systems, dissemination mechanisms, and policy recommendation formats that are easy for regional officials to use. Research results will have no impact if they are not communicated effectively to policymakers.

Sixth, managerial structures need to be made more adaptive. Changes to functional positions and working groups must be accompanied by clarity of roles, work standards, performance indicators, and regular evaluations. Without a clear structure, organizational reform can create role ambiguity and weaken work effectiveness.

Based on these discussions, this study proposes a model for strengthening regional research governance organizations, consisting of seven main components: (1) research output-based incentives; (2) competency-based personnel utilization; (3) collaborative and evaluative leadership; (4) learning-based organizational culture; (5) data-based cross-sector communication; (6) an adaptive managerial structure based on working groups; (7) a sustainable research agenda and mechanisms for utilizing research results.

This model emphasizes that regional research governance is not sufficient simply to produce research reports. BRIDA needs to transform into a policy knowledge center capable of translating research results into policy briefs, academic papers, program roadmaps, intervention models, and policy recommendations that can be used directly by local governments.

Research Implications

Theoretically, this study strengthens the relevance of capacity building theory, particularly Grindle's organizational strengthening dimension, in the context of regional research governance. This research demonstrates that the capacity of a research organization is determined not only by individual competency but also by the quality of the organizational system that houses it.

Practically, this research has implications for the Makassar City Government to strengthen BRIDA as an evidence-based policy support institution. This strengthening can be achieved through the development of a performance-based incentive system, employee competency mapping, strengthening collaborative leadership, establishing a culture of knowledge sharing, developing a research information system, establishing a cross-regional coordination forum, and developing a sustainable regional research agenda.

Conclusion

This study concludes that organizational strengthening in research governance at the Makassar City Regional Research and Innovation Agency has not been optimal and remains partial. The incentive system is not performance-based, personnel utilization is not supported by competency mapping, leadership and communication are not fully structured, the organizational culture still tends to be administrative, and the managerial structure is still in the transition stage towards a more adaptive work model.

The effectiveness of regional research governance requires integrated organizational strengthening. This strengthening needs to be directed at institutionalizing output-based incentives, competency-based personnel placement, collaborative leadership, a culture of knowledge sharing, cross-sector communication, an adaptive work structure, and the development of a sustainable research agenda. With this strategy, BRIDA Makassar City can transform from an administrative research and development institution into a policy knowledge hub capable of producing, communicating, and ensuring the utilization of research results in regional development policies.

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