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Job Equivalency from the Perspective of Organizational Restructuring and Civil Servant Career Development: A Case Study of the Siak Regency Government

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Abstract

Bureaucratic simplification has become a strategic agenda in Indonesia's public sector reform, particularly through the conversion of administrative positions into functional positions. This policy aims to create a more agile, professional, and competency-based bureaucracy while improving organizational effectiveness and public service performance. This study analyzes the implementation of position equalization from structural to functional positions from the perspectives of organizational restructuring and civil servant career development in Siak Regency, Riau Province. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed to explore the dynamics of policy implementation within local government institutions. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and document analysis involving key stakeholders responsible for human resource management and organizational governance. The analysis was guided by organizational design theory and career development theory to examine changes in organizational structure, authority distribution, coordination mechanisms, career planning, competency development, promotion opportunities, and career path certainty. The findings indicate that position equalization has contributed to a leaner organizational structure, improved functional specialization, and greater flexibility in public administration. However, several challenges remain, including competency mismatches, limited understanding of the functional position credit system, and uncertainty regarding long-term career advancement. These issues affect employee motivation and the effectiveness of career management practices. The study proposes an integrative implementation model that aligns organizational restructuring with competency-based career development and merit-based personnel management. Such alignment is essential for strengthening bureaucratic reform and ensuring sustainable professional development within local government institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

Bureaucratic reform has become a strategic agenda in Indonesia's public administration system to create a government that is more effective, efficient, accountable, and responsive to public needs (Alshoubaki & Harris, 2021). Since the enactment of the Grand Design of Bureaucratic Reform through Presidential Regulation Number 81 of 2010, the government has continuously implemented institutional reforms, administrative simplification, and improvements in human resource management within public organizations (Arif et al., 2020). One of the most significant reform initiatives in recent years is bureaucratic simplification through the reduction of hierarchical structures and the conversion of administrative positions into functional positions based on competencies and professional expertise.

The policy of position equalization was formally strengthened through the Circular Letter of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Number 384 of 2019 and subsequently regulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Number 17 of 2021 concerning the Equalization of Administrative Positions into Functional Positions (Supriyanto et al., 2025). This policy aims to establish a more agile bureaucracy, reduce unnecessary hierarchical layers, accelerate decision-making processes, and enhance the professionalism of civil servants through competency-based career systems (Biasutti et al., 2021; Murliasari et al., 2023; Werfhorst & Heath, 2019). Administrative positions, particularly administrator and supervisory positions, are transformed into functional positions with equivalent ranks and remuneration while emphasizing technical expertise and measurable performance outcomes.

From the perspective of public organization theory, structural transformation affects not only organizational arrangements but also authority distribution, coordination mechanisms, communication patterns, and employee career systems (Dolunay et al., 2017). Mintzberg (1983) argues that organizational effectiveness depends on the alignment between organizational structure and environmental demands. In modern public organizations, excessive hierarchical structures may hinder organizational responsiveness and innovation (Su et al., 2017). Consequently, organizational restructuring through position equalization is expected to support a more flexible and adaptive organizational design capable of addressing increasingly complex public service demands.

The implementation of position equalization also has important implications for civil servant career development (Su et al., 2017). Career development is a strategic component of human resource management that aims to ensure the continuous growth of employee

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competencies and organizational capabilities. According to Dessler (2017), career development encompasses career planning, competency development, promotion systems, performance appraisal, and career path certainty (Nasrulhaq et al., 2025). The transition from structural to functional positions fundamentally changes traditional career patterns within the public sector. Previously, career advancement was generally achieved through hierarchical promotion within administrative structures (Demin & Benevalenskaya, 2020). Under the new system, career progression is expected to rely more heavily on professional competencies, functional achievements, and performance-based assessments.

Although the policy is designed to strengthen professionalism and meritocracy, its implementation has generated various challenges in many government institutions (Lundström, 2015). Several civil servants experience difficulties adapting to new performance evaluation systems, particularly those related to functional position credit points and competency requirements. Concerns regarding career certainty, promotion opportunities, and professional recognition have also emerged among employees affected by position equalization (Arifin et al., 2024). These challenges indicate that the success of bureaucratic simplification depends not only on organizational restructuring but also on the readiness of human resource management systems to accommodate the new career framework.

In the context of local government administration, the implementation of bureaucratic simplification has required substantial adjustments to regional organizational structures (Rahayu et al., 2020). Local governments are expected to redesign their organizational arrangements in accordance with national reform policies while maintaining organizational effectiveness and service quality (Ferine et al., 2024). Siak Regency, Riau Province, represents one of the local governments that has actively implemented organizational restructuring following national bureaucratic reform directives. Through Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2025 concerning the Fourth Amendment to Regional Regulation Number 8 of 2016 on the Formation and Organizational Structure of Regional Apparatuses, the Government of Siak Regency reorganized its organizational structure by reducing the number of regional apparatus organizations and adjusting the distribution of functions and responsibilities across organizational units (Pollock, 2012).

The restructuring process has created significant changes in organizational arrangements and personnel management practices. The implementation of position equalization within the newly established organizational structure has influenced authority relationships, coordination mechanisms, and career development opportunities for civil servants (Glińska & Rudolf, 2019). As administrative positions were converted into functional positions, employees were required to adapt to competency-based career systems emphasizing professional specialization and credit-based performance assessment (Marinho, 2020). Con-

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sequently, the policy has become an important case for examining the interaction between organizational restructuring and civil servant career development within the broader framework of bureaucratic reform.

Previous studies have examined various aspects of bureaucratic simplification and position equalization. Aulia and Oktarizka (2025) found that position equalization in the Regional Secretariat of East Java Province contributed to improving civil servant professionalism, although challenges remained regarding competency adjustment and employee perceptions. Saripudin et al. (2022) emphasized the importance of rational institutional design in regional apparatus restructuring to ensure organizational effectiveness and efficiency. Meanwhile, Nuviandra and Kustanto (2022) reported that the implementation of position equalization in Sidoarjo Regency had not been fully optimized due to regulatory inconsistencies and uncertainties in career development pathways for functional officials.

Despite their valuable contributions, previous studies have generally focused either on policy implementation or organizational restructuring separately. Limited attention has been given to the relationship between position equalization, organizational restructuring, and civil servant career development within a single analytical framework. Furthermore, empirical studies examining these interconnected dimensions at the local government level remain relatively scarce, particularly in the context of regency governments undergoing structural transformation following bureaucratic simplification policies.

This research addresses these gaps by analyzing position equalization from both organizational and human resource management perspectives. Specifically, the study examines how the implementation of position equalization influences organizational restructuring and how it affects civil servant career development in Siak Regency Government. The study also seeks to formulate an integrative implementation model that aligns organizational restructuring objectives with competency-based career development principles. The findings are expected to contribute to the literature on public administration reform and provide practical recommendations for improving human resource management and organizational effectiveness in local government institutions.

The objectives of this study are: (1) to analyze the implementation of position equalization from structural to functional positions within the context of organizational restructuring in Siak Regency Government; (2) to examine the implications of position equalization for civil servant career development, particularly regarding promotion systems, competency development, and career planning.

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METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach to analyze the implementation of position equalization from structural positions to functional positions within the context of organizational restructuring and civil servant career development in Siak Regency Government. A qualitative approach was selected because it enables an in-depth understanding of organizational dynamics, policy implementation processes, and the experiences of civil servants affected by the position equalization policy (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018).

The research was conducted in the Government of Siak Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia. The research subjects consisted of key informants who were directly involved in the implementation of the position equalization policy. These informants included officials of the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM), organizational administrators, heads of regional apparatus organizations (OPD), and civil servants who experienced the transition from administrative positions to functional positions. Informants were selected purposively based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in organizational restructuring and personnel management processes.

The primary research instrument was the researcher, supported by interview guidelines, observation sheets, and document review forms. The interview guidelines were developed based on the dimensions of organizational restructuring proposed by Mintzberg (1983) and career development dimensions proposed by Dessler (2017), including organizational structure, authority distribution, coordination mechanisms, career planning, competency development, promotion opportunities, performance evaluation, and career path certainty.

Data were collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation studies. Interviews were conducted with selected informants to obtain information regarding policy implementation, organizational changes, and career development experiences following position equalization (Yin, 2016). Observations were undertaken to understand organizational practices and coordination patterns within government institutions. Documentation studies involved the examination of laws, regulations, regional policies, organizational documents, personnel reports, and other relevant administrative records related to bureaucratic simplification and position equalization policies (Creswell, 2009). The operational dimensions used in this study are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Research Operational Dimensions

Variable	Dimension	Indicator
Organizational Restructuring	Organizational Structure	Structural simplification, functional specialization

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	Authority Distribution	Delegation of authority, decision-making process
	Coordination Mechanism	Inter-unit coordination, communication patterns
Career Development	Career Planning	Career path clarity, career guidance
	Competency Development	Training participation, competency improvement
	Promotion System	Promotion opportunities, merit-based advancement
	Performance Appraisal	Performance evaluation mechanism
	Career Path Certainty	Career progression and professional development

Source: Adapted from Mintzberg (1983) and Dessler (2017)

Data analysis followed the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), consisting of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. Data condensation involved selecting, simplifying, and organizing information obtained from interviews, observations, and documents. The organized data were then presented in narrative and matrix forms to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn through continuous verification and comparison of findings from multiple data sources to ensure credibility and consistency.

To enhance the trustworthiness of the findings, data triangulation was employed by comparing information obtained from different informants, observation results, and documentary evidence. Method triangulation was also applied through the use of multiple data collection techniques. These procedures were intended to improve the validity and reliability of the research findings and provide a comprehensive understanding of the implementation of position equalization in Siak Regency Government.

RESULTS

Implementation of Position Equalization in Organizational Restructuring Perspective

The implementation of position equalization in Siak Regency Government was carried out as part of the national bureaucratic simplification policy aimed at creating a more agile, efficient, and competency-based bureaucracy. The policy was implemented alongside the organizational restructuring mandated by Regional Regulation Number 4 of 2025, which

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revised the organizational structure of regional apparatuses. Through this restructuring process, administrative positions at the administrator and supervisory levels were converted into functional positions according to organizational needs and employee competencies.

The findings indicate that the implementation process generally followed the provisions stipulated in the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Number 17 of 2021. The local government conducted position mapping, personnel placement, and organizational adjustments to support the transition from administrative to functional positions. The Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) played a central role in coordinating the implementation process and ensuring that the position equalization policy was aligned with the new organizational structure.

Table 3. Organizational Implications of Position Equalization in Siak Regency

Organizational Dimension	Main Findings	Implications
Organizational Structure	Reduction of hierarchical administrative layers	More streamlined organizational structure
Authority Distribution	Greater reliance on professional expertise	Increased functional responsibility
Coordination Mechanism	More collaborative and less hierarchical coordination	Improved organizational flexibility
Functional Specialization	Strengthened competency-based roles	Enhanced professionalism of civil servants
Human Resource Development	Increased need for competency development	Continuous training and mentoring required

Source: Processed from research findings (2026).

As presented in Table 3, the implementation of position equalization has affected several dimensions of organizational restructuring, particularly organizational hierarchy, authority distribution, coordination mechanisms, and functional specialization. From an organizational perspective, position equalization contributed to the simplification of bureaucratic hierarchy by reducing administrative layers and strengthening professional functions within government institutions (Risdwiyanto et al., 2024). The restructuring process enabled a clearer distribution of duties and responsibilities while encouraging a more flexible organizational structure. Decision-making processes became less dependent on hierarchical

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authority and increasingly relied on professional expertise and technical competence. This condition reflects the characteristics of a more professional bureaucracy, where organizational effectiveness is supported by functional specialization rather than formal structural positions (Suzuki & Hur, 2020).

The policy also influenced coordination mechanisms within local government institutions. Coordination patterns became more collaborative and less hierarchical, requiring functional officials to work across organizational boundaries in carrying out governmental functions. Although this change improved organizational flexibility, several informants reported challenges related to role adaptation, authority clarification, and understanding of the functional position system (Supriyanto et al., 2025). These challenges were particularly evident during the early stages of implementation when employees were adjusting to new responsibilities and performance assessment mechanisms.

Furthermore, position equalization strengthened the role of competency-based management in public administration. Functional officials were expected to perform duties according to their professional expertise and continuously improve their competencies through education, training, and other professional development activities (Carreras et al., 2025). However, the study found that some officials experienced difficulties adapting to the requirements of functional positions, particularly regarding competency standards and the credit point system. Therefore, continuous capacity-building programs remain necessary to support the effectiveness of the policy.

Overall, the implementation of position equalization has contributed to organizational restructuring in Siak Regency by simplifying bureaucratic structures, promoting professional specialization, and improving organizational flexibility. Nevertheless, the sustainability of these improvements depends on the government's ability to strengthen competency development, clarify organizational roles, and ensure effective coordination within the new organizational framework.

Implications of Position Equalization on Civil Servant Career Development

The implementation of position equalization has significantly influenced the career development system of civil servants in Siak Regency Government. Prior to bureaucratic simplification, career advancement was generally associated with hierarchical promotion through administrative positions. Following the conversion of administrative positions into functional positions, career progression increasingly depends on professional competence, performance achievement, and the fulfillment of functional position requirements. This shift reflects the government's commitment to strengthening a merit-based personnel management system.

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The findings reveal that position equalization provides both opportunities and challenges for civil servant career development. On the one hand, the functional position system offers broader opportunities for professional specialization and competency enhancement. Civil servants are encouraged to develop expertise relevant to their respective fields through training, certification programs, and continuous professional development. Such conditions support the creation of a more professional bureaucracy and improve the quality of public service delivery.

On the other hand, several informants expressed concerns regarding career certainty after the transition to functional positions. Unlike the previous structural system, where promotion pathways were relatively clear through hierarchical levels, career advancement in functional positions depends largely on the accumulation of credit points and competency achievements. Limited understanding of these mechanisms has created uncertainty among some officials regarding future promotion opportunities and long-term career prospects.

The study also found that competency development has become a crucial factor in supporting career advancement. Functional officials are required to continuously improve their technical and professional capabilities to meet the standards of their positions. Consequently, the role of government institutions, particularly BKPSDM, becomes increasingly important in providing training, mentoring, and career development programs that facilitate employee adaptation to the new system.

Furthermore, the implementation of position equalization has encouraged a stronger performance-oriented culture within local government institutions. Career progression is increasingly linked to measurable work achievements and professional contributions rather than administrative authority alone. This condition is consistent with the principles of meritocracy and competency-based human resource management. However, to ensure the effectiveness of the policy, clear career pathways, transparent promotion mechanisms, and sustainable competency development programs are required. These measures will help reduce uncertainty among civil servants while strengthening motivation, professionalism, and organizational commitment within the reformed bureaucratic system.

Table 4. Implications of Position Equalization on Civil Servant Career Development

Career Development Dimension	Positive Implications	Challenges Identified
Career Planning	Greater focus on competency-based careers	Uncertainty regarding career pathways

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Competency Development	Increased participation in training and professional development	Competency gaps among some officials
Promotion System	Promotion based on merit and professional achievement	Dependence on credit point accumulation
Performance Appraisal	Stronger performance orientation	Limited understanding of evaluation mechanisms
Career Path Certainty	Opportunities for professional specialization	Concerns about long-term career advancement

Source: Processed from research findings (2026).

As shown in Table 4, position equalization has generated both positive and negative implications for career development. The policy encourages competency-based advancement and strengthens professional specialization; however, uncertainty regarding promotion pathways and limited understanding of the credit point system remain important concerns among functional officials (Glińska & Rudolf, 2019; Pollock, 2012). These findings suggest that competency development and career management should become key priorities in supporting the implementation of position equalization.

The study also found that competency development has become a crucial factor in supporting career advancement. Functional officials are required to continuously improve their technical and professional capabilities through training, mentoring, and professional development programs (Ding et al., 2021). Furthermore, career progression is increasingly linked to measurable performance outcomes rather than administrative authority alone. Therefore, transparent promotion mechanisms and clear career pathways are essential to strengthen employee motivation and ensure the sustainability of bureaucratic reform.

DISCUSSION

Based on the findings, the study proposes an integrative model of position equalization implementation that combines organizational restructuring with civil servant career development. The model was developed to address several challenges identified during the implementation process, including competency mismatches, limited understanding of the functional position credit system, uncertainty in career advancement pathways, and the need for stronger coordination within the restructured organization (Ding et al., 2021).

The proposed model consists of three interrelated components: organizational alignment, competency development, and career management. Organizational alignment emphasizes the synchronization between organizational structure, job design, and functional re-

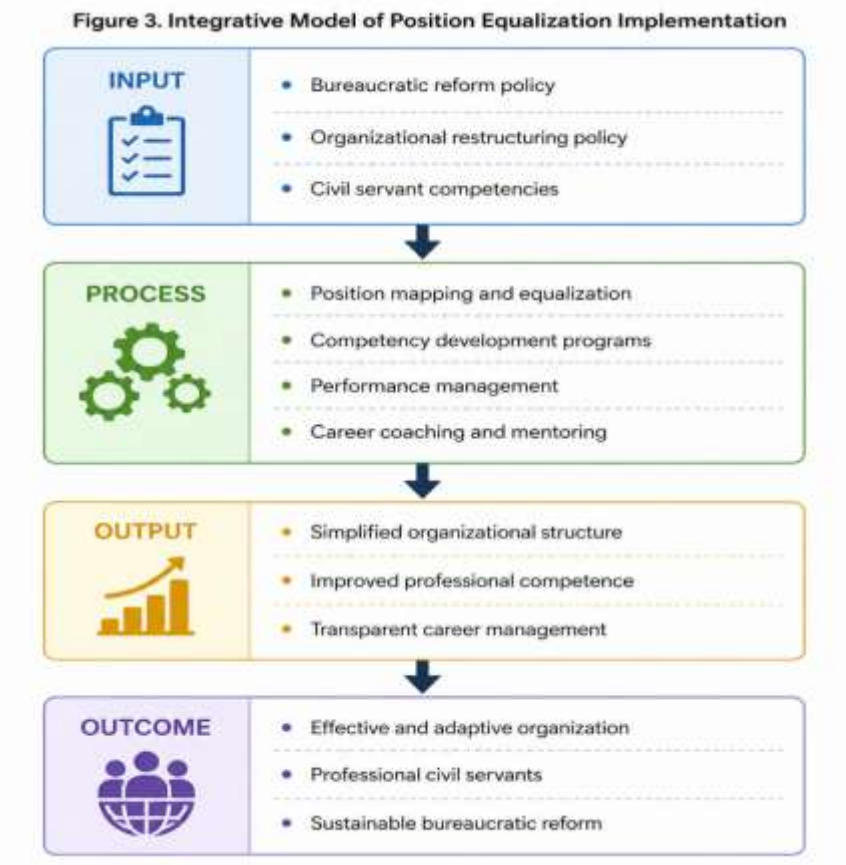
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sponsibilities to ensure that position equalization supports institutional effectiveness. Competency development focuses on continuous training, professional certification, mentoring, and capacity-building programs to strengthen the technical capabilities of functional officials (Marinho, 2020). Meanwhile, career management aims to provide transparent promotion mechanisms, clear career pathways, and performance-based evaluation systems that support long-term professional growth.

The implementation process begins with organizational and job mapping to identify competency requirements and functional position needs. Subsequently, competency development programs are provided to support employee adaptation to new responsibilities. The process is reinforced through a merit-based career management system that integrates performance appraisal, credit point achievement, and promotion opportunities. These components interact continuously to create a professional, adaptive, and performance-oriented bureaucracy.

Figure 3. Integrative Model of Position Equalization Implementation



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The model suggests that successful position equalization cannot rely solely on structural transformation. Instead, it requires the integration of organizational restructuring and human resource management policies. Through this approach, local governments can strengthen bureaucratic effectiveness while ensuring career certainty and professional development for civil servants. Therefore, the proposed model provides a practical framework for improving the sustainability of bureaucratic reform and supporting the development of a competency-based public administration system.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of position equalization in Siak Regency has demonstrated that bureaucratic simplification contributes to organizational restructuring by reducing hierarchical layers, strengthening functional specialization, and promoting a more competency-based public administration system. Despite these positive organizational outcomes, several challenges remain, particularly regarding competency alignment, career certainty, adaptation to the functional position credit system, and the need for continuous professional development. This study further reveals that the effectiveness of position equalization depends not only on structural transformation but also on the integration of organizational restructuring with competency development and merit-based career management. Based on these findings, this research proposes an integrative implementation model that aligns organizational design, competency enhancement, and transparent career management as interconnected dimensions supporting sustainable bureaucratic reform. The study contributes to the public administration literature by providing a comprehensive analytical framework that links organizational restructuring with civil servant career development, offering both theoretical insights and practical guidance for local governments implementing bureaucratic simplification policies.

Recommendations

Future research should investigate the long-term organizational consequences of position equalization by integrating organizational restructuring, digital transformation, and competency-based human resource management within a single analytical framework. Comparative studies involving central and local government institutions, as well as cross-country analyses, would provide broader insights into the effectiveness of bureaucratic simplification policies under different governance systems. Additionally, future studies are encouraged to develop and empirically validate the integrative implementation model proposed in this research using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) or longitudinal evaluation designs to examine causal relationships among organizational restructuring,

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competency development, career management, employee performance, and public service outcomes.

Limitations and suggestions for further study

This study has several limitations that should be acknowledged. First, the research was conducted using a qualitative approach within a single local government institution, namely the Siak Regency Government. Consequently, the findings reflect the specific organizational context and may not be directly generalizable to other local governments or public sector organizations with different institutional characteristics. Second, the study primarily relied on interviews, observations, and document analysis, which may be influenced by participants' perceptions and organizational conditions during the implementation period. Third, although this study proposes an integrative implementation model of position equalization, the model has not yet been empirically validated using quantitative techniques or tested across different organizational settings.

Future research is encouraged to examine the implementation of position equalization across multiple provinces, ministries, or local governments through comparative studies to identify contextual factors influencing policy effectiveness. Quantitative or mixed-method approaches are recommended to empirically validate the proposed implementation model and examine the causal relationships among organizational restructuring, competency development, career management, organizational effectiveness, and public service performance. Longitudinal studies are also needed to evaluate the long-term impacts of position equalization on civil servant career progression, employee motivation, organizational commitment, and institutional performance. Furthermore, future research should explore the integration of Digital Human Resource Management (Digital HRM), Human Resource Analytics, and Artificial Intelligence to support competency-based career management and strengthen the sustainability of bureaucratic reform in the public sector.

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