

Implementation Of Government Regulation Number 94 Of 2021 Concerning Civil Servant Discipline In Prabumulih City Government: Analysis Of The Theory Perspective Of George C. Edwards Iii And The Merit System

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Abstract

This study aims to thoroughly analyze the effectiveness and barriers in implementing Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline within the Prabumulih City Government. The analysis is framed through the four determinant variables of George C. Edwards III's policy implementation theory—communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure—and integrated with the framework of merit system strengthening in public administration. The core issue motivating this research is the empirical discovery during unannounced inspections by the Regional Inspectorate and BKPSDM of Prabumulih City, which revealed that six civil servants across various Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) had been absent from duty for two to ten years while anomalously continuing to receive full monthly salaries. A qualitative descriptive methodology was adopted, drawing on policy document analysis, in-depth interviews, and field observations. The findings indicate that the implementation of Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 remains suboptimal due to four critical structural barriers: policy communication that is administrative rather than transformative; resource constraints characterized by insufficient supervisory personnel and lack of integrated

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digital attendance systems; passive and permissive disposition of OPD heads influenced by local political patronage; and a fragmented bureaucratic structure lacking standardized integrated operating procedures. The study concludes with strategic recommendations for digitalizing oversight, embedding meritocratic accountability, and strictly sanctioning supervisory officers who fail to enforce discipline.

Keywords: Policy Implementation, Civil Servant Discipline, Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021, George C. Edwards III, Merit System, Prabumulih City Government.

INTRODUCTION

The discipline of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), particularly Civil Servants (PNS), is a fundamental element and the backbone of building good governance that is professional, accountable, and oriented towards public service. In the era of ongoing bureaucratic reform and the demands for modernization of governance, as manifested in Law Number 5 of 2014, which has now been updated through Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, the state requires every apparatus to uphold integrity, professionalism, and compliance with legal norms and civil service regulations. The Government of the Republic of Indonesia specifically issued Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline as a reforming regulatory instrument to replace Government Regulation Number 53 of 2010. This new regulation is designed to provide legal certainty, clarify the types of obligations and prohibitions, modernize the criteria for imposing sanctions, and streamline the bureaucratic flow of disciplinary sanction enforcement in order to create a deterrent effect and substantially improve the performance of public sector institutions.

Although Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 contains highly progressive articles—such as mandatory performance allowance deductions and cumulative dismissals for civil servants who are absent from work without valid reasons—practical and operational facts demonstrate a widening gap between written legal norms (*das Sollen*) and the empirical reality on the ground (*das Sein*). This inconsistent regulatory implementation is dramatically reflected in the case of the Prabumulih City Government, South Sumatra Province. In early 2025, a joint surprise inspection conducted by the Prabumulih City Regional Inspectorate and the Human Resources Development and Personnel Agency (BKPSDM) uncovered a serious disciplinary violation. Six civil servants within the Prabumulih City Government had been absent from work



for two years, and some had even been absent from their work units for up to ten consecutive years. Ironically, despite not carrying out administrative and public service functions for years, these civil servants remain registered as active administrative officials and continue to receive their basic salary and full state financial rights every month.

The case in Prabumulih City is not merely a manifestation of individual indiscipline, but rather indicates a systemic paralysis in the internal oversight function and governance of civil servant management at the Regional Apparatus Organization (OPD) level. The absence of certain civil servants for over a decade without any sanctions raises fundamental questions about the extent to which Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 is truly implemented by officials holding authority in the region. When strict regulatory instruments fail to detect and properly address serious violations, this indicates a serious dysfunction in the chain of public policy implementation, from the OPD leadership level and the employee reporting mechanism to the commitment of the Personnel Development Officer (PPK) to enforcing regulations impartially.

To unravel and analyze the complexity of this problem, the policy implementation framework developed by George C. Edwards III (1980) provides a conceptual and comprehensive analytical lens. Edwards III argued that the success or failure of public policy implementation is largely determined by the linear and simultaneous interaction of four main variables: communication, resources, implementer dispositions, and bureaucratic structure. In the context of Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 in Prabumulih City, obstacles are suspected to stem from distorted technical communication between agencies, limited supervisory human resources and digital control facilities, low commitment and political fear of OPD leaders in taking action against subordinates (weak dispositions), and fragmented and unintegrated bureaucratic flows and supervisory Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).

Several previous studies have examined the dynamics of civil servant disciplinary enforcement in various regions. Wijayanti and Nurcahyo (2020), in their research in Yogyakarta City, concluded that the fundamental obstacle to disciplinary policy implementation lies in the low commitment of supervisory officials and limited allocation of supervisory resources. Yuliani and Arifin (2019) documented that the activeness and integrity of Civil Service Supervisory Officials (PPK) in Banyumas Regency are key determinants of the effectiveness of disciplinary sanctions. Meanwhile, Zaini and Putra (2021) underscored the importance of institutionalizing a meritocratic system in minimizing the permissibility of civil service violations due to local political patronage intervention. However, most of the existing literature focuses on the old regulatory



regime (PP No. 53 of 2010) or on the dynamics of regions with high bureaucratic capacity. Research empirically examining the failure of extreme disciplinary oversight under PP No. 94 of 2021 in the context of a medium-sized city government like Prabumulih City remains extremely rare.

Based on the arguments and empirical realities above, this study specifically aims to analyze and dissect the implementation of Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline in the Prabumulih City Government by utilizing the theoretical approach of George C. Edwards III. The results of this study are expected to close the scientific gap (knowledge gap) in public administration studies and provide concrete, solution-oriented, and applicable policy recommendations for the Prabumulih City Government and related ministries to build a digital-based supervisory system, uphold meritocracy, and create bureaucratic governance with high integrity.

LITERATURE REVIEW

1. The Concept of Civil Servant Discipline and the Policy of Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021

Civil servant discipline is the ability of civil servants to comply with obligations and avoid prohibitions stipulated in laws and/or official regulations, which, if not complied with or violated, are subject to disciplinary action. Within the framework of Indonesian civil service law, discipline is not merely an instrument of internal order, but rather the primary foundation of public service delivery and state financial accountability. The issuance of Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline marks a new era of transformation in ASN management that is oriented towards performance and results. Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 clearly defines the division of disciplinary sanctions into three categories: light, moderate, and severe. One substantial innovation in Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 is the tightening of sanctions related to compliance with working hours. Employees who are absent from work without valid reasons cumulatively for 10 working days will be subject to light disciplinary punishment, 11 to 24 working days will be subject to moderate disciplinary punishment, and 25 or more working days cumulatively in a year can be subject to severe disciplinary punishment in the form of dismissal from their position to an acting position or honorable dismissal not at their own request as a civil servant.



2. George C. Edwards III's Theory of Public Policy Implementation

Policy implementation is the most crucial stage in the public policy cycle. Without effective implementation, policies will remain mere administrative documents with no real impact on society. George C. Edwards III (1980) formulated a top-down approach to policy implementation, emphasizing that the success of policy implementation is influenced by four dynamically interacting variable factors:

Variabel Edwards III	Dimensions / Sub-Indicators	Relevance in Civil Servant Discipline Policy
Communication	Message transmission, Clarity of rules, Consistency of technical instructions.	Understanding of OPD leaders and personnel managers regarding the procedures for imposing sanctions under PP 94/2021.
Resources	Quantity/quality of auditors/supervisors, Digital monitoring system, Budget allocation for spot checks.	Availability of Inspectorate auditors, integration of electronic attendance systems, and adequacy of control facilities.
Disposition	Commitment of implementation, Courage of leadership, Independence from political patronage.	The willingness of OPD leaders to report and take action against subordinates without hesitation or political fear.
Bureaucratic Structure	Standard Operating Procedures (SOP), Fragmentation of authority, Inter-agency coordination.	Clarity of the flow of reporting indiscipline from OPD to BKPSDM and the Inspectorate

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Variabel Edwards III	Dimensions / Sub-Indicators	Relevance in Civil Servant Discipline Policy
		until the execution of sanctions.

First, Communication. Successful implementation requires policy implementers to know what to do. Policy communication must meet three vital elements: transmission (clear communication from policymakers to implementers), clarity (to avoid multiple interpretations), and consistency (to avoid contradictory orders). If information regarding the inspection procedures and sanctions imposed under Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 is unclear, implementation at the regional government agency (OPD) level will undoubtedly be hampered.

Second, Resources. Even if policy directives are clearly and consistently communicated, implementation will be ineffective if supporting resources are inadequate. Resources in this context include competent human resources (the number and expertise of auditors/personnel supervisors), technological facilities (an integrated, real-time biometric/electronic attendance system), accurate information, and sufficient formal authority to enforce sanctions.

Third, Dispositions. The disposition or attitude of implementers represents the commitment, inclination, and willingness of bureaucratic actors to implement policies diligently. This factor is heavily influenced by incentives, value systems, moral integrity, and the implementers' independence from local political intervention. If OPD heads exhibit negative dispositions—such as being permissive, fearful of political pressure, or prioritizing personal emotional relationships—then disciplinary enforcement norms will be ignored.

Fourth, Bureaucratic Structure. Despite clear communication, available resources, and strong disposition, implementation can be hampered by a complex and fragmented bureaucratic structure. Two key characteristics of this influential bureaucratic structure are Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and fragmented authority. SOPs provide step-by-step guidance for implementers, while fragmentation (the division of responsibilities across various regional government agencies (OPD), the Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM), and the Inspectorate) requires an integrated coordination mechanism to prevent sectoral egos.



3. Framework for the Merit System and Regional Personnel Governance

A merit system is defined as a civil servant policy and management based on qualifications, competencies, and performance in a fair and reasonable manner without distinction of political background, race, color, religion, origin, gender, marital status, age, or disability. Discipline enforcement is one of the main pillars in maintaining a merit system. Without fair and objective discipline enforcement, the principle of meritocracy will be destroyed and replaced by a patronage system, where employees who do not perform and are absent from work are retained and protected by the power of the regional bureaucratic elite. Implementing a merit system requires integration between performance management, an attendance-based salary/benefit system, and measurable disciplinary sanctions.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach with analytical descriptive specifications to deeply dissect the complex phenomena related to the implementation of civil servant discipline policies in the Prabumulih City Government. The qualitative approach was chosen because it is able to reveal the dynamics of interactions, structural obstacles, and the in-depth perceptions of bureaucratic actors behind the toleration of cases of employee indiscipline. The research location focuses on the Prabumulih City Government environment, with the main sites being the Prabumulih City Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM), the Prabumulih City Regional Inspectorate, and three sample Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) identified as having cases of employees absent from work for a long duration.

The selection of research informants was conducted through purposive sampling, namely determining research subjects based on the criteria of capacity, authority, and direct involvement in the process of formulating, supervising, and enforcing ASN discipline. Key informants in this study included the Head of the BKPSDM of Prabumulih City, the Regional Inspector and the Expert Auditor for Supervision, the Heads of OPDs/OPD Secretaries where the ASN individuals skipped work, the Personnel Analyst Officer, and ASN representatives who understood the dynamics of internal work. The total number of informants interviewed in depth was 12 people to achieve complete data saturation.

Data collection was conducted through three main, complementary techniques. First, structured, in-depth interviews to obtain comprehensive information regarding perceptions, commitments, and technical obstacles to enforcing Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021.



Second, direct field observations to closely observe the attendance recording system, work interactions, and internal oversight climate in Prabumulih City Government work units. Third, a documentation study focused on examining legal and administrative documents, such as monthly attendance recapitulations, Inspectorate Audit Report (LHP) files, salary/allowance deduction documents, the Decision on the Establishment of the Disciplinary Audit Team, and derivative regulations in the form of a Circular Letter from the Mayor of Prabumulih.

The data analysis technique adopted the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldana, which consists of three systematic stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data condensation was carried out by filtering, categorizing, and focusing raw data from interviews and documents into four major themes based on Edwards III's theory variables. Data presentation was realized in the form of descriptive narratives that were systematically arranged and supported by comparative case tables. Data validity was tested through source triangulation and technical triangulation techniques to ensure the credibility, transparency, and objectivity of the research findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The implementation of Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline in the Prabumulih City Government was comprehensively evaluated based on the four main variables in Edwards III's theory. Field analysis revealed that the regulation's effectiveness was hampered by distortions at every level of implementation, leading to extreme cases of civil servants being absent from work for years.

1. Policy Communication Variables

The policy communication aspect encompasses the extent to which the norms, rules, and procedures for imposing sanctions under Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 are accurately transmitted from the central government to the leadership level of Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) and regional personnel managers. The study found that the Prabumulih City Government has conducted formal outreach through the issuance of a Mayoral Circular and the implementation of technical guidance on personnel. However, this communication is partial, administrative, and non-transformative. It was found that the majority of OPD Heads and Heads of Personnel Sub-Divisions in work units do not fully understand the fundamental changes in Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 compared to Government Regulation No. 53 of 2010,



particularly regarding the formal summons mechanism, the time limit for inspections, and the obligation to automatically impose sanctions on officials who are absent from work.

The unclear communication of these technical instructions has created doubts among direct superiors about the process of handling civil servants who are truant. There is a misperception among OPD officials that the process of imposing severe disciplinary sanctions is solely the domain and responsibility of the BKPSDM or the Inspectorate, so direct superiors in OPDs feel there is no need to take initial steps such as written warnings or formal summonses. This vertical and horizontal miscommunication has resulted in many reports of disciplinary violations being stalled internally at the OPD level without ever being forwarded to BKPSDM.

2. Implementation Resource Variables

The lack of adequate human resource support is a key factor hampering the implementation of disciplinary policies in Prabumulih City. In terms of human resources (HR), the Prabumulih City Regional Inspectorate faces a limited number of auditors and competent Regional Government Supervisory Officers (P2UPD) to conduct regular monitoring of all Regional Government Organizations (OPD), schools, and community health centers (Puskesmas). Furthermore, technological resources are in a very concerning state. Most OPDs in Prabumulih City still rely on a manual, paper-based attendance system, which is highly vulnerable to manipulation, theft, and signature forgery by colleagues.

The location-based (geofencing) or biometric electronic attendance system has not been centrally integrated with the payroll database at the Regional Finance and Asset Management Agency (BPKAD). As a result, even if an employee has been absent for years, the manual attendance data presented to the expenditure treasurer is often fabricated or not rigorously verified, resulting in the automated payroll system continuing to transfer monthly salaries to the employee's account. This reflects the failure of information technology integration in regional financial and personnel governance.

3. Disposition and Attitude Variables of Implementers

The disposition and commitment of personnel development officials at the regional government-owned organization (OPD) level proved to be the most critical weakness in the Prabumulih City Government case. Research found a strong culture of permissiveness and "pakewuh" (restrictiveness) within the regional bureaucracy. Many OPD heads and direct superiors were reluctant to impose strict sanctions or report subordinates who skipped work due to personal closeness, kinship ties, and concerns about internal conflict in the workplace.



Furthermore, there are political dynamics in local bureaucracies, where civil servants who have been absent for years are suspected of having patronage relationships with elite political officials or being part of successful campaign teams for regional elections. The fear of the implications for their positions if they take action against these "private employees" has led to a lack of discipline enforcement. Their immediate superiors choose to turn a blind eye and allow violations to persist, which directly damages the morale and performance of other diligent employees.

4. Bureaucratic Structure and Coordination Variables

The bureaucratic structure of disciplinary enforcement in the Prabumulih City Government is characterized by the absence of a unified Standard Operating Procedure (SOP) linking the Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD), the Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM), the Inspectorate, and the Regional Financial and Asset Management Agency (BPKAD). The mechanism for reporting disciplinary violations is linear and bureaucratic-manual. When OPDs fail to report absent employees, the BKPSDM and the Inspectorate passively assume that employee conditions in those OPDs are normal and orderly.

This fragmentation of authority created a "blind spot" in oversight. The lack of mandatory monthly cross-verification between attendance recapitulation and payroll disbursement allowed certain employees to remain absent for up to 10 years without being detected by the internal oversight system. This case only came to light when a joint team conducted a large-scale unannounced inspection triggered by public complaints and following up on media reports.

5. Empirical Analysis of the Case of 6 Absent ASN and Meritocracy Assessment

To provide a concrete picture of the systemic failure of disciplinary supervision in the Prabumulih City Government, details of the cases found in the joint inspection can be seen in the following matrix:

No	Work Unit / OPD	Duration of Absence	Payroll Status	Main Factors Causing Neglect
1	Regional / Sub- district Office	10 years	Still Paid in Full	Local political patronage and chain

No	Work Unit / OPD	Duration of Absence	Payroll Status	Main Factors Causing Neglect
				negligence due to changing OPD leadership.
2	Technical Service A	5 years	Still Paid in Full	The manual attendance system was engineered; the OPDewuh head pakewuh.
3	Technical Service B	3 years	Still Paid in Full	The absence of formal reporting SOPs from OPD to BKPSDM and the Inspectorate.
4-6	Public Service OPD	2-3 Years	Still Paid in Full	Weak financial verification at BPKAD regarding the recapitulation of physical presence.

The above conditions significantly undermine the meritocratic bureaucracy within the Prabumulih City Government. Allowing civil servants (ASN) to remain absent from work for up to 10 years while still receiving income from state funds represents an administrative crime and the potential for significant state financial losses. This underscores the urgency of implementing Article 36 of Government Regulation No. 94 of 2021 in conjunction with Law No. 30 of 2014 concerning Government Administration, which stipulates that Personnel Development Officials and direct superiors found to have intentionally allowed disciplinary violations to occur are subject to administrative sanctions similar to those imposed on perpetrators of indiscipline.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on research results and discussions based on George C. Edwards III's implementation theory, it can be concluded that the implementation of Government Regulation Number 94 of 2021 concerning Civil Servant Discipline in the Prabumulih City Government has not been optimal and is experiencing systemic paralysis. The main obstacles identified are four variables: procedural policy communication without a strong technical understanding; limited supervisory human resources and the absence of a digital-based attendance system; the disposition of OPD leaders who are permissive, *ewuh pakewuh*, and co-opted by political patronage; and a fragmented bureaucratic structure without integrated supervisory SOPs. This condition has triggered the emergence of a fatal phenomenon in the form of allowing six ASN to miss work for two to ten years while still receiving full salaries. To address these issues, the proposed strategic recommendations include: (1) Developing and integrating a geofencing and biometric-based digital attendance system that is directly connected centrally between BKPSDM, BPKAD, and the Inspectorate for automatic salary suspension of absentee officers; (2) Developing an Integrated Discipline Supervision SOP that requires regular monthly attendance audits; (3) Enforcing strict sanctions for Personnel Development Officers and Heads of OPDs who are proven to have allowed truancy to occur in their units in accordance with the provisions of Article 36 of PP No. 94 of 2021; and (4) Strengthening the institutional merit system to free personnel management from local political patronage intervention.

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