Bridging The Authorizing–Operating Gap: Thematic Reform, Ocat, And Local Poverty Reduction in Indonesia

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Abstract
Indonesia's Thematic Bureaucratic Reform redirects administrative change toward measurable outcomes on national priorities, yet translating this authorizing environment into everyday operating capacity remains uneven. This study assesses the extent to which thematic reform strengthens local government organizational capacity for poverty reduction in an Indonesian regency (Polewali Mandar) and identifies mechanisms to close the authorizing–operating gap. Using a qualitative single case design and an adapted Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT), we triangulate interviews, coordination-forum observations, and policy documents to profile six capacity dimensions. The aggregate pattern shows stronger structural–procedural capacity than behavioral–collaborative capacity: Governance and Leadership scores 3.33 and Organizational Management 3.00, while Values and Organizational Culture scores 2.33 and External Relations 1.80, indicating limited internalization of collaborative work norms and thin multi-stakeholder partnerships. The paper contributes by, first, empirically demonstrating the authorizing–operating gap in thematic reform through a structured OCAT profile; second, adapting OCAT to a bureaucratic context to distinguish structural capacity from collaborative capacity that matters for whole-of-government implementation; and third, proposing concrete organizational mechanisms to translate forum decisions into auditable frontline routines, namely permanent thematic squads, collaboration-weighted performance incentives, and flexible thematic micro-budgets. These findings guide policymakers and practitioners seeking reform designs that reliably connect architecture to execution, enabling co-produced poverty services and more consistent outcome gains.
Keywords: Thematic Bureaucratic Reform; Organizational Capacity; OCAT; Whole of Government; Co-production; Poverty Alleviation; Indonesia.

1. INTRODUCTION

Indonesia's Thematic Bureaucratic Reform (TBR) seeks to move the reform agenda beyond internal procedural tidying toward demonstrable impacts on national priorities, including poverty alleviation. The policy shift, codified in PermenPANRB No. 3/2023, reframes reform from compliance to results and invites local governments to orchestrate interdependent tasks that rarely sit neatly inside a single agency. In practice, this requires a whole of government posture that aligns mandates, information, resources, and routines across organizations so that frontline services can address the multidimensional nature of poverty. As of March 2024, Polewali Mandar's poverty rate stood at 14.73 percent, higher than the West Sulawesi average at 11.21 percent and the national rate at 9.03 percent, which underscores the district's relevance as a critical site to examine whether authorization truly travels into operating routines. (BPS Sulawesi Barat, 2024; BPS, 2024).

Yet translating an authorizing environment into everyday operating capacity is not automatic. Polewali Mandar illustrates this tension. Despite adopting TBR for poverty alleviation, the regency's poverty rate remained above provincial and national averages while its Bureaucratic Reform Index declined from 69.41 in 2022 to 63.07 in 2023. These indicators suggest that reform instruments and structural arrangements exist, but their promise has not been fully converted into consistent, auditable routines at the point of service.

The implementation gap also appears in the configuration of organizational capacity. Using an adapted Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT), preliminary profiling shows relatively higher scores in structural and procedural dimensions such as governance and leadership and organizational management, while behavioral and collaborative dimensions such as values and organizational culture and external relations remain low. This pattern is visible both in aggregate and across agencies, indicating that structural "hardware" is present but the collaborative "software" that makes cross agency work stick is still thin.

This study engages that problem directly. We ask to what extent TBR strengthens the organizational capacity of a local government to reduce poverty, and which mechanisms can reliably bridge the

authorizing to operating gap so that strategy discussed in forums becomes execution in frontline routines. To answer the question, we employ a qualitative single case design in an Indonesian regency and adapt OCAT to the bureaucratic context. The adaptation retains six dimensions that are pertinent to TBR implementation: governance and leadership, organizational management, human resource management, financial management, values and organizational culture, and external relations. The shift from the original program management articulation toward a culture focused dimension is deliberate, given that bureaucratic performance frequently hinges on shared values and work norms that license or inhibit collaboration.

The empirical profile that emerges underscores the nature of the challenge. Governance and leadership averages around 3.33 and organizational management about 3.00, while values and organizational culture averages 2.33 and external relations 1.80 in the aggregate, with consistent weakness in partnerships across agencies. Put simply, the stage for reform has been built, but the actors have not yet changed how they interact on that stage. This asymmetry helps to explain why outcome improvements are uneven despite visible structural progress.

Conceptually, the study is situated at the intersection of implementation studies and organizational capacity. The TBR policy defines an authorizing environment that clarifies direction and convenes coordination. Organizational capacity determines whether that authorization travels into operating routines that generate consistent results in complex, multi actor settings. OCAT provides a practical way to render this travel visible by disaggregating capacity across six mutually reinforcing dimensions. In a poverty alleviation portfolio, this matters for three reasons. First, it shows whether coordination forums and budget instruments are matched with the human and cultural conditions that enable collaboration. Second, it reveals if financial mechanisms and managerial processes actually pull agencies into joint work rather than parallel reporting. Third, it surfaces the often neglected boundary of government capacity, namely external relations with civil society, private sector, and academia, which can extend reach and legitimacy when properly mandated and resourced.

Methodologically, we purposively sample strategic and technical actors across Balitbangren, Social Affairs, Health, Education and Culture, Village Community Empowerment, Manpower, the Inspectorate, and the Organization Bureau. We triangulate semi structured interviews, observation in coordination settings, and document analysis. This design allows us to read formal structures against lived routines and to link capacity scores to concrete managerial mechanisms such as team design, performance appraisal, budget discretion, and the cadence of review meetings.

This positioning yields a specific contribution to the literature and to practice. First, the study provides empirical evidence of the authorizing to operating gap in a live TBR implementation by pairing OCAT scoring with qualitative explanation. Second, it formalizes an adaptation of OCAT for the public bureaucracy that distinguishes structural capacity from collaborative capacity, which is critical to whole of government implementation. Third, it proposes actionable organizational mechanisms to turn strategy into execution. These mechanisms include permanent cross agency thematic squads with named roles and weekly rhythms, collaboration weighted performance incentives that are visible in appraisal and tied to TPP, and flexible thematic micro budgets to finance rapid, bottom up interventions proposed by squads and reviewed quarterly. Together, they create a bridge from strategic forums to frontline routines and help convert reform architecture into sustained operating capacity.

Finally, the study speaks to policymakers who seek credible pathways from policy design to service outcomes in poverty programs. By making capacity visible and by identifying specific levers that can be embedded within existing TBR instruments, the analysis offers a way to focus managerial attention where it is most likely to improve results. The rest of the paper proceeds as follows. The next section reviews relevant scholarship on bureaucratic reform, organizational capacity, and collaborative governance. We then detail the research design and OCAT adaptation, present findings across the six dimensions, and conclude with implications for policy and for the design of reform instruments that reliably connect authorization with operation.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW
2.1 Bureaucratic reform and collaborative governance

Public sector reform has moved from rigid Weberian control toward results oriented approaches that value collaboration and citizen focused performance. The core ideas travel through New Public Management, New Public Service, and New Public Governance, which together emphasize efficiency, participation, and networked delivery (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Denhardt & Denhardt, 2000;

Osborne,   2006).

In Indonesia, Thematic Bureaucratic Reform aligns with a whole of government posture that seeks to connect mandates, processes, and accountability across organizations to counter fragmentation (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007).

Whole of government matters for poverty programs because interdependent tasks rarely sit neatly inside a single agency; reforms must create shared routines, interoperable information, and joint responsibility for results.

As a wicked problem, poverty requires state capability that supports problem driven and iterative adaptation, which calls for learning and experimentation rather than one off compliance (Head & Alford, 2015; Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017).

New Public Governance also underscores co production with civil society, business, and universities so that government does not carry the burden alone (Osborne, 2006); this is consistent with network governance arguments that link structure and management to effectiveness (Provan & Kenis, 2008).

2.2 Organizational capacity in the public sector

Organizational capacity is more than a stock of resources. It is the ability to mobilize managerial systems so that inputs become publicly valuable performance (Ingraham, Joyce, & Donahue, 2003; Horton et al., 2003). From an open systems view, organizations must keep structures and processes aligned with shifting environments (Scott, 2003; March & Olsen, 1989).

In developing country settings, a good enough governance lens advises focusing on the highest leverage and politically feasible improvements rather than long lists of ideals (Grindle, 2004). For poverty portfolios, three capacity nodes usually prove decisive: functional cross agency coordination, credible and interoperable beneficiary data, and results based budgeting that enforces shared accountability. These nodes are the heart of the collective capacity that TBR intends to build.

2.3 State capability, authorizing environments, and the Indonesian policy frame

A state capability perspective stresses the role of an authorizing environment that legitimizes collaborative problem solving and learning (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017). In Indonesia, the frame includes the Bureaucratic Reform Road Map and the retargeting under the Ministerial Regulation No. 3 of 2023, plus the national evaluation system that defines priorities and coordination spaces while inviting local translation (KemenPANRB, 2020, 2023a, 2023b).

The gap appears when instruments exist but incentives, role design, and learning loops do not yet change how agencies work together; in such cases, practice gravitates back to administrative reporting rather than shared execution.

2.4 Evaluation framework: adapting OCAT to bureaucracy

This study adopts the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool from the Cash Learning Partnership. Although designed for humanitarian organizations, OCAT is flexible and allows contextual adaptation, which makes it useful for a public bureaucracy setting (CaLP, 2016).

We assess six dimensions that fit thematic reform implementation: governance and leadership, organizational management, human resource management, financial management, values and organizational culture, and external relations.

The thesis replaces the original program or project management articulation with values and organizational culture. Conceptually, program management is already embedded within the organization wide cycle of planning, budgeting, and monitoring, so a separate dimension would duplicate organizational management. Empirically, interviews and observations show that cross agency performance is governed by values and habits: sectoral ego, the internalization of civil service values, and collaboration norms (Schein, 2010; Hofstede, 2001).

The capacity profile in your materials confirms this choice: culture and external relations are weakest while governance and organizational management are relatively stronger, which means behavioral conditions must grow alongside structural mechanisms.

2.5 Synthesis and the research gap

The literature and Indonesia's policy frame suggest that thematic reform can supply structure and direction, yet transformation depends on whether collaborative capacity grows with structural capacity (Christensen & Lægreid, 2007; Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017).

Two gaps remain. First, there is limited empirical work that links thematic reform to a fine grained local capacity profile. Second, few assessments distinguish structural capacity from collaborative capacity even though poverty reduction depends on both. By adapting OCAT and applying it to a live case, this

article addresses those gaps and proposes mechanisms that connect strategy forums to frontline execution.

3. METHODS

3.1 Research design

This study uses a qualitative single-case design with an organizational ethnography orientation to understand how Thematic Bureaucratic Reform (TBR) travels from authorization to everyday operating routines in one Indonesian regency. The design allows close reading of real institutional contexts in which reform is discussed, decided, and enacted.

The ethnographic orientation is used pragmatically: the study observes coordination spaces and work settings without full participant immersion, so that forum discourse can be read together with observed routines and documentary traces. Fieldwork took place from February to August 2025.

3.2 Site and unit of analysis

The unit of analysis is the Polewali Mandar Regency Government, selected because it represents the implementation challenges of translating TBR from normative policy to practice in poverty reduction.

The site offers an informative test case: formal TBR instruments are present, yet performance pressures remain high and coordination demands are cross-agency.

3.3 Sampling and participants

Informants were identified through purposive sampling to capture both strategic and technical perspectives. Participants include key officials and staff from seven implementing agencies and two support units: the Regional Development Planning Agency (Balitbangren), Social Affairs Agency, Health Agency, Education and Culture Agency, Village Community Empowerment Agency (DPMPD), Manpower and Transmigration Agency (Disnakertrans), and the two support units, the Regional Inspectorate and the Organization Bureau. This cross-level and cross-unit coverage is intended to surface how coordination, work practices, and culture are experienced across roles, and it includes focus group discussions with five technical agencies (OPD).

Where possible, informants were selected who had firsthand involvement in poverty-related planning, budgeting, or service delivery, to reduce secondhand accounts.

3.4 Instruments and data collection

Data were collected through three techniques. First, semi-structured interviews guided by the six OCAT dimensions were conducted with the above agencies. Second, non-participatory field observation was carried out in coordination meetings and relevant work settings. Third, a document study examined plans (e.g., RPJMD), evaluation materials (e.g., RB/SAKIP reports), and related policy documents.

Interview guides used the adapted OCAT categories so that descriptive accounts could be linked to capacity dimensions without forcing responses.

Observations focused on cadence, participation, and follow-up in coordination spaces, so that forum intent could be compared with operational routines.

Documentary analysis was used to corroborate interview claims and to trace how indicators, budgets, and responsibilities were framed on paper. Data were collected from February to August 2025 through semi structured interviews with key informants and focus group discussions with five technical agencies (OPD), complemented by observation in coordination meetings and review sessions.

3.5 OCAT adaptation and coding frame

The capacity evaluation adopts the Organizational Capacity Assessment Tool (OCAT) from CaLP and adapts it to a public bureaucracy context. The adapted OCAT retains six dimensions germane to TBR implementation: Governance and Leadership, Organizational Management, Human Resource Management, Financial Management, Values and Organizational Culture, and External Relations.

In this adaptation, Values and Organizational Culture replaces the original program or project management articulation. The rationale is conceptual and empirical: program management is already embedded in the integrated planning–budgeting–monitoring cycle of local government, while interviews and observations show that collaboration is often enabled or constrained by values, norms, and habitual ways of working. Elevating culture to a standalone dimension therefore captures a key lever for cross-agency performance.

The coding frame followed these six dimensions, with sub-codes for enablers, barriers, good practices, and implementation gaps, so that recurring patterns could be seen across informants and sources.

3.6 Data processing and analysis

All interview, observation, and document materials were organized in digital and manual files, indexed to sources and linked to OCAT dimensions. The analysis proceeded in stages: (1) data

organization, (2) close reading for context, (3) thematic coding using the six OCAT dimensions, and (4) interpretive synthesis against the capacity framework and the local reform context.

The interpretive stage examined the gap between normative policy design and observed practices to explain how and why capacity profiles take shape, and where mechanisms are needed to bridge strategy forums to frontline routines.

3.7 Validity, reliability, and trustworthiness

Validity was supported through triangulation of sources and methods and member checking with focal informants. Reliability was pursued as logical consistency and traceability rather than statistical replication, using a documented audit trail and a consistent interview guide aligned to OCAT. These procedures follow Creswell's guidance on credibility in qualitative designs.

The multi-source strategy reduces single-informant bias; member checking mitigates misinterpretation; and structured guides improve comparability across agencies.

An audit trail of transcripts, field notes, and coding decisions supports dependability and transparency.

3.8 Ethics and limitations

This study reports only anonymized roles and statements. If the target journal requires formal ethics clearance numbers, insert the institutional approval details here once available.

As a single-case design, generalization is analytic rather than statistical. The strength lies in thick description and a structured capacity profile that can be compared with other jurisdictions in future work.

4. Findings

The OCAT assessment of the Polewali Mandar Regency Government shows a clear imbalance between structural–procedural capacity and behavioral–collaborative capacity. Structural dimensions appear stronger, while the dimensions that depend on everyday collaborative work are weaker.

Table 1 Aggregate OCAT scores by dimension

Dimension	Aggregate score
Governance & Leadership	3.33
Organizational Management	3.00
Human Resource Management	2.67
Financial Management	2.87
Values & Organizational Culture	2.33
External Relations	1.80

Note. OCAT scale 0–4. Source: author's fieldwork and OCAT scoring (2025).

Table 1 presents the aggregate means: Governance and Leadership 3.33, Organizational Management 3.00, Financial Management 2.87, Human Resource Management 2.67, Values and Organizational Culture 2.33, and External Relations 1.80. These values indicate that formal frameworks and managerial routines exist, yet the translation into collaborative work habits and external partnerships remains limited.
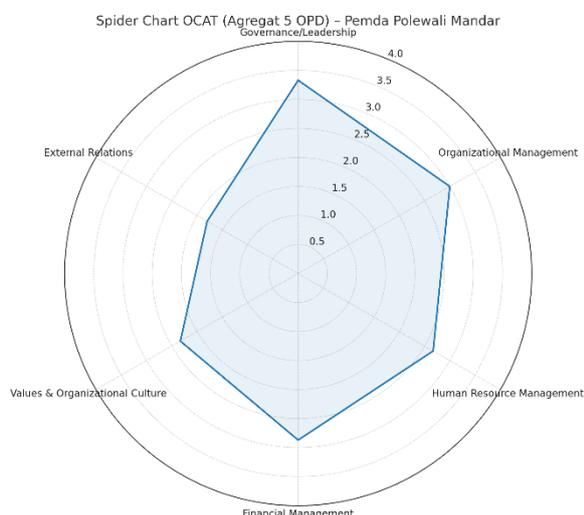

Figure 1 OCAT capacity profile (aggregate).

Note. OCAT scale 0–4; higher scores indicate stronger capacity.

Figure 1 visualizes the same profile. The shape is wide on governance and management, and narrow on culture and external relations. This makes the overall asymmetry visible at a glance and prepares the ground for the mechanism-focused discussion.

4.1 Governance and Leadership (3.33)

Capacity in this dimension is comparatively strong. A formal coordination architecture is in place through the Regional Team for Poverty Alleviation (TKPKD) under Balitbangren's orchestration, and programs like Gertak Ekstrim signal leadership intent to unify direction and beneficiary data. A planner noted that the forum is designed to collect inputs across agencies and tie them to a shared data system. The main constraint is rhythm. Meeting cadence is uneven, which reduces the probability that strategic ideas become clear assignments with timelines and follow up.

4.2 Organizational Management (3.00)

Budget tagging helps steer agency programs toward poverty priorities. The Organization Bureau's pre evaluation forum keeps indicators aligned and documents compliant. Field practice, however, shows frequent quarterly revisions of action plans. Flexibility is useful, yet the pattern suggests that monitoring works more as administrative review than as a learning loop that improves cross agency processes.

4.3 Financial Management (2.87)

The tagging system maintains discipline but narrows fiscal space for bottom up innovations by technical agencies. Informants report that proposal flows from technical units are limited while waiting for priority signals, which holds back promotive and preventive health activities and quality improvement in education. These areas matter for breaking poverty cycles.

4.4 Human Resource Management (2.67)

This is a consistent weakness. TBR work is often treated as an add on, without a permanent cross agency thematic team with named roles. Coordination depends on personal initiative rather than institutional mechanisms, and structured cross agency training is not yet in place. Learning by doing dominates, which produces uneven understanding of indicators and intervention logic.

4.5 Values and Organizational Culture (2.33)

Civil service values such as collaboration and accountability are socialized but not yet internalized. The most cited barrier is sectoral ego, reflected in reluctance to work on tasks perceived as outside the unit's purview and in budget driven program choices. Weekly performance dialogues are emerging to foster transparency, yet they are not strong enough to shift long standing habits.

4.6 External Relations (1.80)

The capacity to build partnerships is the lowest. Drafted action plans do not explicitly include penta helix actors. Collaborations largely remain at vertical agencies, banks, and zakat bodies, coordinated at leadership level, while operational partnerships with NGOs, universities, and businesses are rare. The absence of a clear mandate and earmarked budget lines for partnerships discourages technical units from co producing services.

4.7 Cross agency variation and what it implies

Agency-level scores are reported in Table 2 and complement the aggregate profile in Table 1 and the visual in Figure 1. Governance and Leadership ranges from 3.00 to 3.67, with Social Affairs recording the highest value, while the other agencies cluster around 3.33. Financial Management shows Social Affairs at 3.33, DPMPD at 3.00, and the others at 2.67.

External Relations is uniformly low across agencies (about 1.67–2.00). This indicates a system wide partnership gap rather than a unit specific anomaly and suggests that capacity building should prioritize partnership mandates, simple procurement templates, and small flexible budget lines to seed co produced interventions.

Table 2. Per-agency OCAT scores (five technical agencies)

Agency/ OPD	Governance & Leadership	Organizational Management	Human Resource Management	Financial Management	Values & Organizational Culture	External Relations	Mean
Education and Culture	3.33	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.33	1.67	2.61

Agency (Disdikbud)							
Manpower and Transmigration Agency (Disnakertrans)	3.00	2.67	2.67	2.67	2.33	2.00	2.56
Community Empowerment and Village Governance Agency (DPMPD)	3.33	2.67	2.67	3.00	2.33	1.67	2.61
Health Agency (Dinkes)	3.33	3.33	2.67	2.67	2.33	1.67	2.67
Social Affairs Agency (Dinsos)	3.67	3.33	2.67	3.33	2.33	2.00	2.89

Note. OCAT scale 0–4; higher scores indicate stronger capacity. Source: author's fieldwork and OCAT scoring (2025).

Interpretation of the variation.

Across agencies, the spread in Governance and Leadership is narrow, which suggests that structural arrangements are broadly similar. Social Affairs leads in both governance and financial management, while Education and Culture and DPMPD sit close to the middle. Health shows the strongest organizational management among the five. The uniform weakness in External Relations indicates a shared constraint rather than an outlier case, which helps explain why collaborative outputs remain uneven even when structural tools are in place.

Plausible organizational reasons.

The pattern is consistent with differences in task environment and data readiness. Agencies that sit closer to beneficiary targeting and social protection coordination tend to score higher in governance and financial discipline, because they operate under stronger external scrutiny and clearer eligibility rules. By contrast, partnership practice depends on routines that are not yet standardized across agencies: role design for non-state actors, a simple data-sharing note, and small earmarked lines that allow pilots with NGOs, universities, and business associations. In the current setting these enablers are thin, so partnership capacity stays low across the board.

Implications for targeted capacity building.

The variation points to where effort will pay off. For Social Affairs, the next step is to translate structural strength into documented partnership routines with non-state actors. For Education and Culture and DPMPD, priority lies in stabilizing review rhythms and using short after-action notes to turn monitoring into learning. For all agencies, the same minimal toolkit is needed to lift External Relations: a standing cross-agency squad with named roles, a simple partnership template and data-sharing protocol, and a small thematic micro budget to finance quick co-produced interventions.

4.8 Reading the profile systemically

The six dimensions reinforce one another. Strength in governance and management yields results only when matched by human resources, culture, and partnerships. Informants and review notes suggest that

since 2023 structural tools have been in place, while the challenge is to convert forum decisions, minutes, and review recommendations into documented execution habits at service points. This explains why aggregate scores can be decent on structure while collaborative outcomes remain uneven.

5. DISCUSSION

The capacity profile shows a clear asymmetry between the structural and the collaborative sides of government work. Formal arrangements score better, while culture and partnerships lag. This pattern is consistent with the idea that reform can create an authorizing environment yet still struggle to reach everyday routines (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017; Christensen & Lægreid, 2007). The aggregate figures in this case confirm the skew, with External Relations around 1.80 and Values and Culture around 2.33, which helps explain uneven results even when formal instruments exist.

Governance and leadership. Leadership has established coordination forums and signaled intent to unify direction and data through a regional team for poverty alleviation. Interview evidence indicates that the forum is used to collect inputs across agencies and link them to a shared data system. The missing piece is rhythm. Irregular meetings reduce the chance that ideas turn into clear assignments with timelines and documented follow up. A practical step is to treat the main forum as an adaptive governance space with a short risk register on data updates, referral follow up, and staff rotation that leaders review each week.

Organizational management. Budget tagging and a pre evaluation forum help align indicators and keep documents compliant, yet monitoring often functions more as administration than as a learning loop (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). Field notes indicate there is no dedicated midyear refocusing space. A feasible remedy is to pair each quarterly review with a brief after action reflection that records two lessons and one concrete change for the next cycle, and to schedule a short midyear refocusing clinic so that adjustments are intentional rather than ad hoc.

Financial management. Tagging maintains priority discipline but narrows fiscal space for bottom up ideas from technical units. Interviews suggest that proposal flows from technical units tend to wait for priority signals, which slows promotive health work and quality improvements in education. A small thematic micro budget would let cross agency squads test quick intervention packages with quarterly outcome checks. This aligns with a good enough governance lens that backs feasible and high leverage improvements over long ideal lists (Grindle, 2004).

Human resource management. Thematic tasks are still treated as add ons rather than embedded roles, and coordination relies more on personal initiative than on institutional design. Several informants described routines that have not changed much despite new forums. A concrete design is to create small cross agency squads with named roles, a weekly rhythm, and a visible task board so that accountability is shared and traceable. Short modular training tied to squad tasks can level understanding of indicators and intervention logic, which fits a state capability view that values problem driven and iterative adaptation (Andrews, Pritchett, & Woolcock, 2017).

Values and organizational culture. Civil service values are socialized but not yet internalized. The most persistent barrier is sectoral ego, visible when units avoid issues seen as outside their remit or prioritize programs simply because a budget is available. Weekly performance dialogues can normalize collaboration by asking each squad to report one resolved bottleneck and one pending obstacle, with recognition for cross unit help, so collaboration becomes habit rather than slogan.

External relations. Partnerships concentrate at leadership level without strong operational follow through. Engagement often involves vertical agencies, banks, or zakat bodies, while operational work with NGOs, universities, and business associations is rare. The consistently low External Relations scores across agencies confirm this as a system wide constraint and justify a minimal partnership toolkit with clear roles, a simple data sharing protocol, and small earmarked lines so technical units can seed co produced services.

Reading across dimensions. The six elements move together. Structural strength in governance and management will matter only when human resources, culture, and partnerships also move. As Alwi (2025) reminds us, bureaucracy does not move on its own. It needs network management to help people interact, collaborate, and handle interdependence. In practical terms, pair authorizing forums with small permanent squads, simple partnership templates, and shared indicators so non state actors can contribute as co producers rather than remain occasional invitees.

Implications for managers. Three levers are specific and feasible here. First, install permanent cross agency squads with weekly rhythms so leadership decisions meet technical routines. Second, weigh

collaboration in performance appraisal and in the income supplement so cross agency outcomes are rewarded. Third, open a small flexible thematic budget to finance bottom up ideas with quarterly learning reviews. These steps respond directly to what interviewees reported and put Alwi's (2025) call for deliberate network management into day to day practice.

6. CONCLUSION

This study asked whether Indonesia's Thematic Bureaucratic Reform travels from authorization to operation in local poverty work. The adapted OCAT profile shows stronger structural capacity in governance and organizational management, and weaker collaborative capacity in values, culture, and external relations. This asymmetry helps explain why outcome gains can be uneven even when formal instruments and forums exist.

The contribution is threefold. First, it documents the authorizing to operating gap with a structured capacity profile rather than with narrative claims alone. Second, it formalizes an OCAT adaptation for public bureaucracy that separates structural capacity from collaborative capacity. Third, it proposes practical mechanisms that make strategy visible in everyday routines.

The core message is simple. Results improve when collaborative capacity grows together with structural capacity. That growth is a managerial task that can be addressed with specific team designs, incentives, and small flexible resources, not only with new rules.

7. Policy and practical implications

The actions below are specific, feasible, and compatible with the current reform frame.

1. Create small permanent thematic squads across agencies. Name the roles, set a weekly rhythm, and use a shared task board so that accountability is visible and traceable.

2. Stabilize leadership cadence. Keep a short risk register on data updates, referral follow up, and staff movement. Review it each week so that forums protect implementation rhythm.

3. Open a flexible thematic micro budget. Allow squads to try quick intervention packages. Review outcomes each quarter and record two lessons and one practice change.

4. Embed collaboration in performance appraisal and in the income supplement. Reward cross agency outcomes, not only unit outputs, and make the criteria public.

5. Run partnership pilots with NGOs, universities, and business associations. Provide a simple partnership template, a basic data sharing protocol, and small earmarked lines so technical units can co produce services.

6. Turn quarterly reviews into learning loops. Pair each review with a brief after action reflection. Check follow up at the next meeting.

7. Provide short modular training tied to squad tasks. Level understanding of indicators, beneficiary data, and intervention logic across agencies.

8. Limitations and future research

This is a single case design. Generalization is analytic rather than statistical. The value lies in thick description and in a structured capacity profile that other districts can compare.

Data are qualitative and rely on interviews, observation, and documents. Credibility was supported by triangulation and member checks, yet interpretive bias remains a risk. Future work can follow the same site over time to track capacity shifts as squads, incentives, and micro budgets are installed. Comparative studies across districts can also show how politics, leadership style, and fiscal conditions shape the bridge from authorization to operation.

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