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Journal Homepage : <https://www.journal.unrika.ac.id/index.php/jurnaltriaspolitika>**BUILDING GOOD URBAN GOVERNANCE THROUGH BUREAUCRATIC REFORM: BEST PRACTICES FROM SURABAYA, INDONESIA****Damaris Bernike Bellastuti^{1*}, Sri Suwitri²**^{1, 2} Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Sciences, Universitas Diponegoro, Indonesia

Abstract : Bureaucratic reform has become a strategic foundation for improving public service quality and strengthening governance in Indonesia. The city of Surabaya stands out as a leading case, achieving the highest Bureaucratic Reform Index in 2024 through consistent integration of digital innovation, human resource development, and participatory governance. This study analyzes Surabaya's best reform practices including the Public Service Mall, the WargaKu complaint system, Surabaya Single Window, and Satu Data Surabaya and how they contribute to the realization of Good Urban Governance. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, the research draws upon secondary data from official reports, academic studies, and government evaluations. The findings show that these reforms have significantly improved efficiency, transparency, accountability, participation, and responsiveness, transforming Surabaya into a more citizen-oriented administration. Nevertheless, the reform process also faced challenges such as bureaucratic resistance, digital inequality, and inter-agency coordination gaps, which were mitigated through leadership commitment and multi-actor collaboration. The study contributes both practically by identifying replicable reform strategies for other cities and theoretically by illustrating how localized bureaucratic reform operationalizes the principles of good urban governance in developing contexts. Future research is recommended to assess the long-term sustainability and adaptability of such reforms across cities with varying administrative capacities. Surabaya's experience demonstrates that sustainable governance is built not only through structural reform, but through continuous digital innovation, institutional learning, and citizen participation.

Keywords : bureaucratic reform; good urban governance; digital transformation; public service; accountability

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**INTRODUCTION**

Slow and inefficient bureaucracy remains a major obstacle to effective public service delivery in the country. Complex procedures, non-transparent budget management, and limited accountability often hinder government's responsiveness. The lack of openness in some agencies also restricts public participation in decision making. Consequently, bureaucratic inefficiency undermines public trust and satisfaction (Adekamwa et al., 2024) and limits access to essential services, such as administration and business permits, ultimately constraining regional economic and social development.

The quality of public services is crucial for citizen satisfaction. Studies have shown that timely service delivery, information transparency, professionalism, and reduced political intervention increase citizens' satisfaction with local government services (Lanin & Hermanto, 2019). Agile governance and digital transformation can enhance citizen satisfaction with public

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services (Lukman & Hakim, 2024). This indicates that overcoming bureaucratic sluggishness requires both stable governance and technological advancement.

Bureaucratic reform is considered a strategic solution to create a more efficient, transparent, and accountable system of governance. The reform aims to improve government structures and enhance public services by promoting technology use, strengthening human resource management, and introducing policies for public participation in decision making (Malik & Wahid, 2023). Bureaucratic reform also involves strengthening the integrity and professionalism of state officials through training and competency development.

A key element of bureaucratic reform is enhancing transparency through e-government to improve public services. However, success depends on sustained financial support and political commitment from all levels of government (Aritonang, 2017). Digital transformation strengthens reforms by enhancing public value through satisfaction, efficiency, and cost reduction (Anggara et al., 2024). However, technology alone is insufficient, capacity building remains vital, as limited human resource skills impede implementation, particularly in public sector accounting reforms (McLeod & Harun, 2014). These reforms are shaped by policy narratives that depict communities as service recipients and the government as a problem solver (B. S. Haryono et al., 2024).

Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia is an ongoing process involving technology integration, transparency, and human resource development. Despite these challenges, these efforts remain crucial for transforming public services (Fernandes & Fresly, 2017). Information and communication technology in government administration improves efficiency and enables broader public participation and oversight of bureaucratic performance. Human resource development and organizational culture changes play an important role in driving substantial changes (S. Haryono, 2018). Collaboration among stakeholders, including government, private sector, and civil society, is key to driving innovation and ensuring reform sustainability.

In regional governance, bureaucratic reform emphasizes efficiency, responsiveness, and accountability, as well as a comprehensive transformation of organizational structures, processes, and culture (Rahman, 2022). The goal is to establish a transparent, participatory, and service-oriented government through institutional restructuring, procedural simplification, human resource development, and the use of information and communication technology. Effective reform strengthens local institutions, enhances decision-making, optimizes resource use, and promotes innovation in governance by adopting new technologies and work methods to address complex societal needs.

The City of Surabaya stands out as one of Indonesia's leading examples of bureaucratic reform, having achieved the highest Bureaucratic Reform Index in 2024 (KemenPAN-RB, 2025). This achievement reflects the city's structured, technology-based, and participatory approach to governance transformation. Through consistent leadership and institutional innovation, Surabaya has successfully aligned its reform agenda with the principles of efficiency, transparency, and accountability in public administration.

One of Surabaya's major breakthroughs is the Public Service Mall (or known as *Mal Pelayanan Publik* (MPP)), which integrates various services—licensing, population documentation, taxation, and healthcare—into one accessible location and digital platform. This system simplifies administrative processes, reduces waiting times, and improves citizen satisfaction by providing one-stop services. Alongside the MPP, the Surabaya Single Window (SSW) consolidates multiple licensing procedures into a single online portal, reducing processing time from 45 days to under 10 days (Rahmawati & Hertati, 2022).

Transparency and public accountability are reinforced through *Satu Data Surabaya* and *Surabaya Open Data*, platforms that allow citizens to monitor budgets, programs, and government performance. These systems enhance oversight and promote participatory, data-driven feedback from citizens. Complementing them is *WargaKu*, a complaint-handling

platform that ensures quick and traceable responses to public issues, 90% of reports are resolved within 24 hours (May & Fanida, 2023), demonstrating high responsiveness and government openness.

The city also prioritizes human resource development as a pillar of bureaucratic reform. Continuous training and competency programs are supported by the Government Agency Performance Accountability System (or known as SAKIP), which evaluates performance based on measurable outcomes. In 2024, Surabaya achieved a SAKIP score of 3.78 out of 4.00, indicating strong accountability and professional capacity among civil servants (KemenPAN-RB, 2024).

To promote inclusive decision-making, Surabaya institutionalized digital participation through e-Musrenbang, a platform that allows residents to propose ideas and priorities for city development. This approach ensures that policies reflect community needs while fostering collaboration between government and citizens. Overall, Surabaya's reform illustrates how digital innovation, administrative simplification, and human resource empowerment can improve public service quality, strengthening public trust, and advancing sustainable city management.

In an urban context, Good Urban Governance is a manifestation of successful bureaucratic reform. This concept prioritizes principles such as transparency in decision-making, accountability in resource management, efficiency in service delivery, active community participation in city planning and development, as well as the enforcement of the rule of law (Bellastuti & Fathurrahman, 2023). The implementation of these principles not only improves the quality of life for city residents but also builds trust between the government and the community. Thus, good urban governance becomes the ultimate goal of bureaucratic reform, creating a more inclusive, just, and sustainable system of urban administration.

Contemporary studies reaffirm that good urban governance is not merely an administrative framework but a dynamic governance process that adapts to urban complexities and local contexts (Hendriks, 2014; Meyer & Auriacombe, 2019). Hendriks (2014) conceptualizes good urban governance as a shift from hierarchical, state-centered government to networked governance marked by pluralism, participation, and adaptive capacity. Meyer and Auriacombe (2019) emphasize that good urban governance contributes to urban resilience through transparency, collaboration, and citizen involvement as conditions for sustainable development.

Empirical and conceptual research across developing countries shows that effective urban governance requires institutional reform, civic participation, and digital transparency (Poorahmad, 2018). How decentralized urban governance enables responsive decision-making in rapidly growing cities (Aina et al., 2019). Similarly, Poorahmad (2018) finds that failing to institutionalize participatory planning leads to inefficiency and weak accountability in local administrations. These insights reveal that the success of governance reform depends on technological innovation and trust-based multi-actor collaboration.

Accordingly, the achievement of good urban governance is critical for cities facing the pressures of rapid urbanization, service complexity, and administrative reform. A good model of urban governance not only emphasizes efficiency but also institutionalizes accountability, participation, and foresight within government systems. Within the framework of bureaucratic reform, good urban governance serves as both a foundation and a transformative direction, ensuring that innovation, transparency, and participation are embedded in every dimension of city management to enhance citizens' trust and urban quality of life.

Empirical cases from Singapore and Melbourne show that strong institutional integrity, citizen participation, and long-term planning enhance urban livability (Coffey et al., 2020). While other Indonesian cities, such as Bandung and Makassar, have pursued digital reforms, Surabaya stands out for its comprehensive and institutionally integrated approach. This

experience demonstrates how localized bureaucratic reform through digital innovation and participatory mechanisms, such as e-Musrenbang and public complaint systems, can strengthen democratic engagement and policy responsiveness.

However, despite numerous success stories, there remains a limited understanding of how city-level bureaucratic reform contributes directly to the realization of good urban governance principles. Most studies on Indonesian bureaucratic reform focus on national-level or ministerial performance, overlooking the subnational context, where urban governance dynamics such as local leadership, inter-agency collaboration, and digital innovation play crucial roles. This study addresses this gap by focusing on Surabaya as a model of urban-level bureaucratic transformation.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the best practices of bureaucratic reform implemented in Surabaya and examine their contribution to the realization of Good Urban Governance. This study specifically explores how digital-based innovations, administrative simplification, and human resource capacity building have enhanced efficiency, transparency, and accountability in Surabaya's public administration. By doing so, it not only documents successful practices but also contributes to understanding how bureaucratic reform drives urban governance transformation in developing countries.

To guide the analysis, this study addressed the following research questions:

1. How have bureaucratic reform practices improved public service delivery in Surabaya?
2. How do these bureaucratic reform initiatives align with and reinforce Good Urban Governance?
3. What models and practical lessons from Surabaya's bureaucratic reform experience can be adopted or adapted by other Indonesian cities?

Surabaya's bureaucratic reform has made the city a national model for achieving good urban governance through technology-based administration. The city's innovations, from digitalized public services and simplified procedures to strengthened civil servant capacity through performance evaluation, show how reforms can enhance efficiency, transparency, and accountability. These practices provide valuable lessons for other Indonesian regions aiming to adapt Surabaya's strategies, supported by the central government's efforts to promote public-sector transformation.

This study proposes an analytical framework linking bureaucratic reform to good urban governance. Bureaucratic reform enables digital transformation, which reinforces urban governance outcomes in terms of efficiency, participation, and accountability. Through this integrated perspective, the study contributes practically by identifying replicable reform practices and theoretically by enriching the discourse on urban governance in developing countries. Surabaya's experience offers valuable insights for policymakers and scholars seeking to understand how bureaucratic innovation can foster inclusive, transparent, and sustainable urban governance.

METHODOLOGY

This study employs a qualitative approach to analyze bureaucratic reform in Surabaya and its contribution to Good Urban Governance. The qualitative design enables an understanding of reform dynamics, focusing on how administrative innovation, digital transformation, and participatory mechanisms are institutionalized in city governance. This approach explores policy processes and their alignment with the principles of good urban governance.

This research relies primarily on secondary data obtained from credible and verifiable sources. These include the Surabaya City Government Annual Reports (2023–2024), Bureaucratic Reform Evaluation Reports by KemenPAN-RB, and academic articles and media reports discussing Surabaya's reform initiatives. The use of secondary data is justified by the

comprehensive and publicly accessible nature of these documents, which provide detailed and official evidence of policy implementation and outcomes at the city level in China.

To ensure the validity and credibility of the findings, a triangulation method was applied by cross-verifying the data from multiple sources (Lawrence Neuman, 2014). Data from official government reports were compared with findings from scholarly research and statistical publications to confirm their accuracy and consistency. This analytical triangulation minimizes potential bias arising from single-source dependency and enhances the reliability of the interpretation, particularly regarding reform impacts and governance outcomes.

Data were analyzed using content analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2017), focusing on identifying the key elements of bureaucratic reform and their alignment with the principles of good urban governance. The analysis emphasized the main dimensions derived from both the national bureaucratic reform framework and the principles of good urban governance. Each reform initiative was evaluated based on its contribution to these dimensions, providing a systematic understanding of how Surabaya's reforms support the transformation of urban governance.

However, as this study relies solely on secondary data, it does not capture the lived experiences or perceptions of bureaucrats and citizens directly involved in the reform process. Future research should complement this approach through fieldwork, interviews, or participatory observations to explore behavioral and institutional dynamics in greater depth. Nonetheless, the secondary data analyzed here are sufficient to illustrate the structure, policy direction, and outcomes of bureaucratic reform in Surabaya.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Surabaya's success in implementing bureaucratic reform can be seen from its achievement of the highest Bureaucratic Reform Index in 2024. This success also reflects the significant structural and institutional changes in Surabaya. Therefore, this study discusses in detail the bureaucratic reform practices implemented in Surabaya, relates them to the principles of Good Urban Governance, and identifies lessons that other cities in Indonesia can learn in creating a more efficient and responsive government.

Bureaucratic Reform Practices in Surabaya

One of the most significant innovations in Surabaya's bureaucratic reform is the establishment of the Public Service Mall (Mal Pelayanan Publik / MPP), which integrates services from 27 government agencies and provides more than 700 types of public services through a single physical location and a digital platform. The MPP, known as *Siola*, enables residents to access essential administrative services such as licensing, population documentation, and healthcare without visiting multiple offices. Since its launch in 2017, MPP Surabaya has managed over one million service transactions annually, with processing times reduced by nearly 50% compared with previous procedures (Kurniawan et al., 2025). This initiative has strengthened the efficiency, responsiveness, and citizen satisfaction of the city government.

The Surabaya Single Window (SSW) represents another key milestone in the simplification of administrative procedures. This online platform integrates business licensing, construction permits, and other regulatory approvals, allowing citizens to manage their applications through a single portal. The system reduced permit processing times from 45 days to 7–10 days (Rahmawati & Hertati, 2022), minimizing potential bureaucratic delays and corruption risks. Together with the MPP, the SSW illustrates Surabaya's success in translating bureaucratic reform into measurable improvements in administrative performance and accessibility.

Transparency and accountability are further enhanced through the Satu Data Surabaya (Surabaya Open Data), which promotes open access to city government information. These platforms enable the public to track budget allocation, program implementation, and agency performance, thereby institutionalizing the data-driven governance. The WargaKu application (Wadah Aspirasi Rukun Warga, Rukun Tetangga, dan Kampung Unggul) facilitates direct citizen engagement by allowing residents to submit complaints and monitor responses in real time. Reports indicate that approximately 90% of complaints are resolved within 24 hours (May & Fanida, 2023), demonstrating the city's commitment to accountability, responsiveness, and citizen-centered governance.

Table 1. Efficiency Improvement

Reform Initiative	Previous Average Processing Time	After Reform	Improvement
MPP (Public Service Mall)	10–14 days	3–5 days	60% faster
SSW (Surabaya Single Window)	45 days	7–10 days	75% faster
WargaKu Complaint Handling	72 hours	< 24 hours	66% faster

Source: processed by the author, 2025

These data confirm that administrative digitalization and procedural integration significantly increase service efficiency and citizen trust. By reducing bureaucracy and improving response times, Surabaya has aligned its reform outcomes with the efficiency and accountability dimensions of *Good Urban Governance*.

Human resource development has become a critical pillar of Surabaya's bureaucratic reform. The city government provides continuous training and competency development programs for civil servants, covering both managerial and technical skills to strengthen professionalization (Djamil & Sunarya, 2024). Performance is monitored through the Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP), which evaluates outcomes rather than procedures. In 2024, Surabaya achieved a SAKIP score of 3.78 out of 4.00 (KemenPAN-RB, 2024), signifying strong institutional integrity and accountability. These measures foster a culture of performance-based governance that emphasizes results, ethics, and efficiency (Salomo & Rahmayanti, 2023).

Public participation has been institutionalized through e-Musrenbang, a digital participatory planning platform that enables residents to propose ideas and monitor the progress of city development projects (T. Kurniawan, 2018). By replacing manual, meeting-based planning with an online participatory mechanism, e-Musrenbang has expanded the inclusivity and transparency of urban policymaking. Citizens can now contribute suggestions from any location, ensuring that city priorities are informed by the real community needs.

Collectively, these innovations demonstrate that Surabaya's bureaucratic reform integrates digital transformation, administrative simplification, and human resource development into a cohesive framework for governance improvement. The city's consistent focus on technology, accountability, and citizen participation exemplifies how bureaucratic reform can drive *Good Urban Governance*. Through these institutional innovations, Surabaya has built a governance model that is efficient, transparent, and participatory, providing practical lessons for other urban administrations in Indonesia.

The Linkage between Bureaucratic Reform Practices in Surabaya and Good Urban Governance

The relationship between Surabaya's bureaucratic reform practices and Good Urban Governance illustrates how administrative transformation contributes to achieving efficiency,

transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, and rule of law. Surabaya's success in implementing reform-based innovation demonstrates that technology, human resources, and political commitment can jointly produce more inclusive, transparent, and performance-oriented governance in the public sector. Through the integration of digital systems, participatory mechanisms, and accountability frameworks, Surabaya has operationalized good urban governance principles within its urban administrative structure.

Participation: e-Musrenbang and Community Involvement in Planning

The implementation of e-Musrenbang exemplifies the city's commitment to participatory governance. This digital platform allows citizens to submit ideas and priorities for development planning directly online, removing the barriers of time, location, and hierarchy that previously limited access to Musrenbang forums. More than 100,000 residents participate annually, and engagement levels continue to increase each year (Anindito et al., 2022). This inclusive model ensures that policy decisions are more representative of community needs, while strengthening policy legitimacy. By institutionalizing participatory planning through digital means, Surabaya demonstrates that open citizen engagement can accelerate decision making and reinforce public trust.

Transparency: Open Data and Budget Oversight

Transparency in Surabaya is institutionalized through Satu Data Surabaya or Surabaya Open Data, which provides open access to information on budget use, performance reports, and project progress. These platforms encourage civic oversight and discourage the misuse of authority by making financial management traceable and open to public review. The use of real-time data dashboards has made the budgeting process more accountable and improved coordination across government units. Beyond providing information, these platforms also allow feedback loops, where citizens can respond to government performance, creating a more dynamic form of transparency that fosters mutual trust between the government and citizens.

Accountability: Performance Evaluation and Public Monitoring

Accountability is reinforced through the Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP), which measures outcomes rather than processes (Salomo & Rahmayanti, 2023). Each agency must produce publicly accessible performance reports to ensure transparency and participatory oversight. Complementing this is the WargaKu application, which provides a platform for citizens to submit and monitor complaints to ensure that the government responds promptly. Approximately 90% of complaints are resolved within 24 hours (May & Fanida, 2023), signifying high levels of responsiveness and accountability. These systems demonstrate that technological tools can strengthen the bureaucratic foundation for ethical, transparent, and responsive governance.

Efficiency and Effectiveness: Streamlining Processes and Improving Service Quality

Efficiency and effectiveness are achieved through administrative simplification and digital integration. The Surabaya Single Window (SSW) consolidates business and construction permits into one portal, reducing processing time from 45 days to 7–10 days (Rahmawati & Hertati, 2022). Simplified procedures and automation have improved service speed by 70% and reduced operational bottlenecks. These reforms enhance productivity and citizen satisfaction while promoting good financial management and resource optimization. The clear linkage between efficiency and good urban governance lies in Surabaya's ability to convert bureaucratic reform into measurable performance outcomes that directly improve citizens' daily interactions with the government.

Responsiveness: Digital Complaint Management and Two-Way Communication

Responsiveness is one of the most visible results of Surabaya's reform efforts to improve public services. Through the WargaKu platform, residents can report issues related to infrastructure, sanitation, and public services, which are promptly addressed by the relevant departments. On average, complaints are addressed within 24–48 hours, illustrating a responsive and citizen-centered approach (May & Fanida, 2023). The application functions as both a problem-solving mechanism and an analytical tool, helping city governments identify recurring community needs and adapt policies accordingly. This system exemplifies a feedback-oriented governance model that is essential for sustaining public trust and participatory accountability.

Rule of Law: Integrity Systems and Ethical Bureaucracy

The principle of the rule of law in Surabaya is strengthened through internal control mechanisms that uphold civil servant integrity and regulatory compliance. The SAKIP framework ensures that civil servants operate within performance-based and ethical standards, while the State Officials' Wealth Report and Saber Pungli task force prevent corruption and misconduct. The city's SAKIP score of 3.78 (KemenPAN-RB, 2024) demonstrates a well-functioning, oversight system. These measures ensure that administrative actions are consistent with legal norms, reinforcing institutional integrity and preventing the abuse of power within the bureaucracy.

Synthesis of Bureaucratic Reform Practices and Good Urban Governance Outcomes

To provide a clearer synthesis of how Surabaya's bureaucratic reform initiatives operationalize the principles of good urban governance, this section summarizes the key reform practices and their corresponding governance outcomes. The synthesis highlights how administrative innovation, digital transformation, and participatory mechanisms reinforce each other in promoting efficiency, transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, and adherence to the rule of law. Table 2 presents an overview of these alignments, illustrating how Surabaya's reform initiatives have translated good urban governance principles into measurable and sustainable governance outcomes.

Table 2. Alignment of Bureaucratic Reform Practices in Surabaya with Good Urban Governance Principles

Principle of Good Urban Governance	Bureaucratic Reform Practice in Surabaya	Outcome
Participation	Implementation of e-Musrenbang, enabling citizens to participate directly in city development planning through an accessible digital platform.	Over 100,000 participants annually; increased inclusivity, policy legitimacy, and community engagement in local governance.
Transparency	Launch of Satu Data Surabaya and Open Data platforms for public access to city budget, performance reports, and project progress.	Strengthened fiscal transparency and citizen oversight; reduced potential misuse of authority and improved institutional trust.
Accountability	Application of Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP) and WargaKu complaint system for public monitoring.	Outcome-based evaluation improved performance ethics; 90% of complaints resolved within 24 hours, demonstrating responsiveness and accountability.

Efficiency and Effectiveness	Development of Surabaya Single Window (SSW) integrating licensing, business permits, and other public services into a single portal.	Processing time reduced from 45 to 7–10 days, increasing operational efficiency and citizen satisfaction.
Responsiveness	Operation of WargaKu as a real-time feedback mechanism for reporting infrastructure, cleanliness, and service issues.	Faster complaint resolution (within 24–48 hours); enhanced two-way communication and adaptive service delivery.
Rule of Law	Enforcement of internal control mechanisms through SAKIP, State Officials' Wealth Report, and Saber Pungli anti-corruption task force.	Strengthened civil servant integrity and compliance; achieved SAKIP score of 3.78/4.00, ensuring transparency and ethical conduct.

Source: processed by the author, 2025

The synthesis in Table 2 illustrates that Surabaya's bureaucratic reform has effectively translated the core principles of good urban governance into measurable governance outcomes. The integration of digital platforms, participatory mechanisms, and performance-based accountability systems demonstrates a coherent model in which efficiency, transparency, accountability, participation, responsiveness, and the rule of law reinforce each other. Collectively, these initiatives have created a governance ecosystem that is citizen-oriented and performance-driven. However, sustaining these achievements requires continuous institutional adaptation, collaborative learning and political commitment. The following section discusses the key challenges and bureaucratic resistance that continue to shape the dynamics of Surabaya's reform implementation.

Challenges and Bureaucratic Resistance

Despite these achievements, Surabaya's bureaucratic reform journey has encountered persistent constraints rooted in institutional resistance, digital inequality, and coordination gaps. Many mid-level bureaucrats are reluctant to move away from conventional paper-based procedures, reflecting their limited adaptability to organizational change and digital transformation (Qonita, 2024). In addition, uneven digital literacy and access among citizens create barriers to the full utilization of online service platforms, illustrating how digital progress can inadvertently reproduce social inequality (Rani & Malau, 2025). Integrating data across agencies under Satu Data Surabaya and ensuring interoperability among systems, such as SSW and WargaKu, require intensive inter-agency coordination, regulatory adjustments, and continuous system refinement (Rani & Malau, 2025).

Strong and consistent leadership from the mayoral administration was instrumental in mitigating these challenges, ensuring that reform efforts evolved into a sustained institutional agenda rather than a temporary political project. Surabaya's success in maintaining reform continuity was supported by multi-actor collaboration involving local government agencies, private sector stakeholders, and community organizations working collectively to address administrative fragmentation and enhance inclusivity (Qonita, 2024; Rani & Malau, 2025). These dynamics demonstrate that technological advancement alone is insufficient to guarantee lasting reforms. Instead, adaptive management, collaborative learning, and institutional resilience are critical for embedding innovation within a city's governance culture and ensuring the sustainability of bureaucratic transformation in the long term.

Analytical Reflection

The linkage between Surabaya's bureaucratic reform and Good Urban Governance reflects the evolving character of local governance in developing urban contexts. Bureaucratic reform in Surabaya functions not only as an administrative improvement but also as a

transformative process integrating digital innovation, citizen participation, and institutional accountability. This combination shows that modernization in governance can simultaneously promote efficiency and inclusivity, where technological advancement supports both the service quality and democratic engagement.

From a theoretical perspective, Surabaya's experience contributes to a deeper understanding of localized governance transformation in developing countries. The realization of good urban governance principles depends not only on regulatory frameworks but also on the city's capacity to adapt its bureaucratic structures and nurture an innovation-oriented culture. This case highlights that effective governance arises when technological innovation is reinforced by political leadership, participatory mechanisms, and institutional learning, enabling reforms to persist beyond administrative and electoral cycles.

Surabaya's reform also illustrates that Good Urban Governance is not static but dynamic, shaped by the continuous interaction between structural reform and human agency. While digitalization provides tools for transparency and participation, the sustainability of reform depends on adaptive institutions capable of learning, collaborating, and evolving in changing socio-political environments. Hence, the Surabaya case underscores that governance quality in developing contexts is determined less by technology itself than by the institutional capacity to internalize governance principles into daily operations.

Overall, Surabaya's bureaucratic reform serves as a micro-model of Good Urban Governance, where reform is understood as an ongoing process of adaptation and innovation rather than a finite project. This integrated approach demonstrates how localized reform practices can advance both administrative efficiency and democratic accountability. This study offers valuable insights for policymakers and scholars seeking to promote sustainable, inclusive, and transparent urban governance in other cities across Indonesia and beyond.

Models and Practices Applicable in Other Cities: Lessons from Surabaya

The successful implementation of bureaucratic reform in Surabaya is supported by several crucial factors, including strong leadership, effective interagency collaboration, and strategic technology adoption. Leadership plays a pivotal role in sustaining reform momentum and ensuring institutional alignment. The concept of relational bureaucratic leadership emphasizes the importance of building trust and cooperation among stakeholders and creating a collaborative environment essential for addressing complex governance challenges in developing contexts (Ohemeng et al., 2018). In the digital era, leadership that encourages transparency, accountability, and inclusivity facilitates the successful implementation of e-government initiatives and institutional change (Singh et al., 2025).

Collaboration among institutions is vital to the success of reforms. Surabaya's experience during the COVID-19 pandemic illustrates how external shocks can accelerate cross-organizational collaboration and trust-based management, enabling bureaucracies to overcome long-standing inertia. Effective collaboration encourages managers to rely on their staff's professional expertise and innovative capacity when addressing complex administrative tasks (Bentzen & Torfing, 2023). However, inter-agency collaboration often faces obstacles, such as data incompatibility and institutional resistance. When these challenges are overcome, cities can establish smart governance systems characterized by seamless inter-agency coordination and integrated digital services (Gil-Garcia, 2012).

The integration of technology represents another cornerstone of Surabaya's bureaucratic reforms. Through initiatives such as the Surabaya Single Window, e-Musrenbang, Satu Data Surabaya, and WargaKu, the city has enhanced efficiency, transparency, and citizen participation. These platforms simplify administrative procedures, improve service responsiveness, and promote public accountability. However, successful technological reform requires more than infrastructure; it demands cultural change and improved digital

competencies among civil servants. Other cities aiming to replicate Surabaya's success should align technological innovation with institutional readiness and invest in digital literacy to ensure inclusivity and sustainability of the program.

Several practices from Surabaya have proven adaptable to other local governments in Indonesia. The e-Musrenbang platform can be adjusted for regions with limited Internet access using mobile or SMS-based systems, ensuring wider public participation in development planning. Similarly, complaint-handling systems such as WargaKu can be modified according to local infrastructure capacity, providing citizens with a transparent channel to monitor government responses. The Surabaya Single Window model can serve as a reference for reducing bureaucratic complexity, and Satu Data Surabaya offers a framework for improving budget transparency. These examples demonstrate that Good Urban Governance can be effectively localized when technology, inclusivity, and accountability are integrated into reform strategies.

Human resource development has also been central to the success of Surabaya's reform. The city government continuously strengthens civil servants' capacity through structured training and competency development programs. The Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP) ensures that performance is evaluated based on outcomes, promoting efficiency and professionalism in public service. Other regions can adapt this approach by designing localized training systems and introducing incentives for high-performing civil servants to participate. Strengthening human capital contributes not only to improved service delivery but also to more ethical and responsive public administration.

The simplification of standard operating procedures (SOPs) further contributes to efficiency and transparency in Surabaya. The integration of licensing services through the Surabaya Single Window significantly reduced processing times and transaction costs, benefiting both the government and citizens. Other cities can adopt similar process-streamlining measures by gradually digitizing administrative functions and establishing transparent monitoring systems. This approach promotes a culture of responsiveness and accountability, ensuring that public services are delivered efficiently and equitably to the public.

Overall, Surabaya's experience demonstrates that effective bureaucratic reform is not solely a technological or administrative endeavor but an institutional transformation grounded in adaptive governance. Cities aiming to emulate this success must balance technological innovation, leadership, collaboration, and human capacity development. The lessons derived from Surabaya reveal that sustainable reform depends on digital inclusivity, transparent budgeting, and value-driven leadership. By internalizing these principles, local governments across Indonesia can accelerate their transformation toward more efficient, accountable, and citizen-centered governance, embodying the principles of Good Urban Governance in practice.

Comparative Analysis between Previous Studies and Findings of Bureaucratic Reform and Good Urban Governance in Surabaya

To further clarify the contribution of this study and situate its findings within the broader scholarly discourse, this section provides a comparative analysis of previous studies on bureaucratic reform and urban governance and the empirical findings from the Surabaya case. While earlier studies tend to focus on national or normative perspectives, this research offers a city-level lens that captures how bureaucratic reform can operationalize the principles of Good Urban Governance. Table 3 presents a synthesis that highlights the theoretical, empirical, and practical contributions of this study, demonstrating how Surabaya's experience advances both governance theory and reform practice in Indonesia's urban context.

Table 3. Comparison between Previous Studies and the Findings of Bureaucratic Reform and Good Urban Governance in Surabaya

Aspect	Previous Studies	Findings from This Study (Surabaya Case)	Research Contribution
Focus of Bureaucratic Reform	Previous works largely emphasize reform at the national or ministerial level, often overlooking local implementation dynamics (Rahman, 2022).	Surabaya demonstrates structured and technology-based reform implemented at the city level through initiatives such as the Public Service Mall, digital platforms, and performance evaluation systems.	Extends bureaucratic reform theory by illustrating city-level operationalization of reform principles.
Digital Governance and Transparency	Earlier research explored e-government development but often lacked empirical assessment of its governance impact (Aritonang, 2017; Anggara et al., 2024).	Surabaya's Single Window (SSW), Satu Data, and Open Data initiatives have measurably improved transparency, accountability, and efficiency.	Contributes an empirical model linking digital transformation to Good Urban Governance outcomes.
Citizen Participation	Participation in local governance remains limited, often confined to formal consultations with minimal inclusivity (Lanin & Hermanto, 2019).	Surabaya institutionalized e-Musrenbang, allowing inclusive and continuous citizen participation in urban development planning.	Provides evidence of digital participation as a mechanism for democratic urban governance.
Accountability and Performance	Prior studies identify weak accountability systems and limited performance-based evaluation (McLeod & Harun, 2014).	Surabaya applies the Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP) and WargaKu complaint system to monitor outcomes and improve responsiveness.	Strengthens understanding of performance-based accountability mechanisms in local governance.
Collaborative Governance and Policy Learning	Few studies discuss inter-agency collaboration or policy replication across cities (Gil-Garcia, 2012).	Surabaya's model shows multi-actor collaboration between government, private sector, and communities, with reforms adaptable to other regions.	Contributes to collaborative governance theory and demonstrates potential for policy transfer and scaling.

Source: processed by the author, 2025

The comparative synthesis in Table 3 illustrates how this study expands the discussion of bureaucratic reform and Good Urban Governance beyond normative and centralized perspectives. Unlike earlier research that treated reform as a top-down administrative initiative, the Surabaya case highlights reform as a multilevel, participatory, and technology-driven

transformation. It empirically demonstrates that city governments can operationalize governance principles, such as transparency, accountability, and participation, through localized digital innovation and collaborative management.

Furthermore, the analysis confirms that effective bureaucratic reform requires not only institutional restructuring but also adaptive leadership, cross-sector partnerships, and citizen inclusivity in the policy-making process. By linking bureaucratic reform to measurable governance outcomes, this study contributes to a contextual and operational understanding of urban governance in developing countries. These findings position Surabaya as a replicable model of urban reform capable of informing local policy practice and global governance scholarship.

CONCLUSION

The success of bureaucratic reform in the city of Surabaya has played a crucial role in realizing Good Urban Governance, transforming local administration into a system that is more efficient, transparent, and responsive to citizen needs. The Surabaya City Government has utilized digital innovation as a strategic instrument to enhance governance quality through platformss such as e-Musrenbang, Surabaya Single Window, and WargaKu. These innovations have significantly improved public participation, reduced administrative complexity, and accelerated responsiveness in addressing public complaints. Surabaya has succeeded in creating a more inclusive, participatory, and accountable governance model that bridges the gap between the state and society.

Furthermore, the city's achievements are supported by strong institutional capacity and human resource development. Continuous training and competency enhancement programs for civil servants, combined with the implementation of the Government Agency Performance Accountability System (SAKIP), have strengthened professionalism and accountability in public institutions. Transparency in financial and performance management through Satu Data Surabaya and Open Data mechanisms allows citizens to monitor budget allocation and policy execution, thereby increasing public trust and reducing the potential for corruption or resource misuse. These initiatives confirm that digital transformation, when combined with institutional integrity and human capacity development, forms a strong foundation for sustainable urban governance.

Surabaya's experience offers a concrete example of how bureaucratic reform, when strategically integrated with digital governance, can operationalize good urban governance principles in a developing country context. Surabaya's reform practices, which span citizen participation, licensing simplification, performance measurement, and budget transparency, illustrate that technology is not merely a tool for modernization but a catalyst for governance transformation. Other Indonesian cities can learn from Surabaya's model by localizing these innovations according to their administrative capacity, fiscal resources, and sociocultural context. By doing so, they can adapt digital governance principles that foster transparency, efficiency, and accountability, while ensuring citizen inclusivity in policymaking processes.

To ensure sustainable reform, local governments must institutionalize bureaucratic transformation through continuous monitoring, evaluation, and adaptive policy mechanisms. Establishing specialized reform management units at the local level can help identify bottlenecks, track implementation progress, and recommend data-driven improvement. Sustained leadership commitment is essential to prevent reform stagnation and ensure that innovations are not personality-driven but systemically embedded within government institutions. Collaboration with universities, the private sector, and civic organizations will also strengthen reform continuity through shared knowledge, resource exchange, and cross-sector accountability.

At the national level, the central government plays a pivotal role in enabling cities and regions to replicate the success of Surabaya. Providing technical assistance, performance-based grants, and targeted funding can accelerate digital infrastructure development, human resource training, and interagency integration at the local level. National policy frameworks should also promote open governance and inter-city collaboration as mechanisms for scaling up reform practices across Indonesia. Strengthening multilevel governance, where national leadership supports local innovation, will ensure that bureaucratic reform evolves beyond compliance toward an adaptive, citizen-centric governance culture.

Despite these achievements, this study acknowledges its methodological limitations, as it relies primarily on secondary data sources. Such reliance may introduce institutional bias or omit informal governance dynamics that occur beyond the scope of formal documentation. Future research should therefore adopt mixed-methods or longitudinal approaches to examine the sustainability, inclusivity, and adaptability of bureaucratic reforms across diverse urban and regional contexts, particularly in smaller municipalities with limited administrative capacity. Comparative studies would enrich our understanding of how local bureaucratic reforms evolve under varying political, cultural, and institutional settings, providing a broader empirical foundation for governance theory development.

Ultimately, Surabaya's experience demonstrates that good urban governance is not achieved through structural reform alone but through consistent digital innovation, visionary leadership, institutional learning, and active citizen participation. These elements collectively redefine bureaucracy as a collaborative and adaptive system capable of delivering equitable, transparent, and high-quality public service. Surabaya's journey thus serves as both an empirical model and a theoretical reference for cities seeking to bridge governance performance with democratic responsiveness, advancing a more inclusive, accountable, and sustainable paradigm of urban governance in Indonesia and beyond.

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