
The Influence of Change Planning, Change Communication, Change Readiness, and Participation on the Success of New Policy Implementation: A Study of Local Government Agencies in Indonesia

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Abstract

The implementation of new policies in the public sector in Indonesia often faces significant challenges, including employee resistance, ineffective communication, and low participation in the change process. This study aims to explore the factors influencing the successful implementation of new policies in local government agencies using a qualitative approach. Through in-depth interviews with employees directly involved in policy implementation, this study explores their perceptions of change planning, change communication, change readiness, and employee participation. Initial findings indicate that employee readiness and clear change communication are crucial factors in reducing resistance and accelerating the adoption of new policies. Furthermore, active employee participation in change planning has been shown to increase policy acceptance. The study also found that despite thorough planning, without effective communication and employee mental readiness, organizational change is difficult to succeed. These findings underscore the importance of building strong organizational readiness, designing transparent communication, and encouraging employee participation in the change process. A practical recommendation from this study is to improve change management by facilitating open dialogue and more inclusive participation at every stage of policy implementation.

Keywords: change management, change communication, change readiness, employee participation, policy implementation, public sector, organizational change.

INTRODUCTION

Organizational change in the public sector is a complex and inevitable process, particularly in the era of digital transformation and increasingly rapid globalization. Public organizations, such as local government agencies, often face significant challenges in addressing and implementing policy changes. This is primarily due to internal resistance from employees, weak interpersonal communication, and a lack of preparedness for the changes. With the increasingly pressing need for bureaucratic reform, implementing new policies is crucial for achieving efficiency and effectiveness in public services. However, several studies have shown that the implementation of new policies in the public sector, particularly at the local government level, often fails. One of the main factors hindering successful policy implementation is ineffective change management, which encompasses planning, communication, readiness, and employee participation.

Previous research conducted by Ndruru (2025) Research shows that in the public sector, successful change implementation depends heavily on employee

participation and open communication. Employee participation at every stage of change fosters a sense of ownership in the policies being implemented. This facilitates the adaptation process and reduces resistance to frequent changes. Furthermore, clear and transparent communication plays a crucial role in ensuring that the goals and benefits of the change are understood by all parties involved.

In this study, the successful implementation of new policies in local government agencies in Indonesia is influenced by various interacting factors, namely change planning, change communication, change readiness, and employee participation. Thorough change planning is a crucial starting point in developing strategies and steps for policy implementation. Clear planning helps employees understand the direction of change and how it will be implemented. Effective change communication plays a key role in ensuring that the objectives, benefits, and impacts of the policy are understood by all parties involved, thereby reducing confusion and uncertainty. Change readiness, both in terms of managerial support and employee mental readiness, significantly determines whether the change will be well-received or faced with high resistance. In this regard, management must ensure that employees feel prepared and empowered to face the change. Finally, employee participation in the change process is a crucial element that strengthens a sense of ownership of the implemented policy. When employees are involved in the planning and implementation of change, they tend to feel more responsible for the policy's success, which in turn accelerates policy adoption. Therefore, this study aims to delve deeper into how these four factors interact and contribute to creating effective change in the public sector, as well as how each factor can support each other in reducing barriers and increasing the success of implementing new policies.

However, despite the importance of participation and communication, not all local government agencies are able to implement change effectively. According to data released by the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (Kementerian PANRB, 2023), only 36% of 514 local governments successfully implemented new policies in accordance with the standards established in bureaucratic reform and the merit system. This fact indicates a gap between sound policy design at the central level and often suboptimal policy implementation at the regional level. This gap is also influenced by low organizational readiness for change and weak change management implemented at the regional level.

Organizational readiness for change is a critical factor influencing the effectiveness of new policy implementation. This readiness involves the extent to which employees and managers in a government agency can accept and support the changes to be implemented. This readiness depends not only on managerial support but also on employee attitudes and the availability of necessary resources to support the change. As Vanny explained, (2022) An organization's readiness for change is heavily influenced by top management commitment and sufficient resources to support policy implementation. A lack of adequate readiness leads to uncertainty and anxiety among employees, which in turn exacerbates resistance to new policies.

On the other hand, thorough change planning and effective communication are two important factors that can minimize resistance to change. Good planning includes analyzing organizational needs, establishing a vision for change, and

developing clear and measurable strategies to achieve desired goals. Poor planning can lead to policy implementation failure, as employees and stakeholders do not clearly understand the purpose of the change. Kotter to Aisyah (2024). In his theory of change management, he states that good planning must include creating a clear vision, effectively communicating that vision, and empowering employees to participate in the change process. Without careful planning, desired changes will not be achieved and can even be detrimental to the organization.

Change in public organizations in Indonesia is often hampered by a conservative and hierarchical organizational culture. This culture often slows the change process and increases employee resistance. For example, in many local government agencies, change policies are often imposed from above without involving employees in planning or decision-making. This leads to employee dissatisfaction and distrust of the new policies being implemented. Therefore, a more inclusive approach to the change process is needed, prioritizing employee participation, open communication, and organizational readiness for change.

Research conducted by Al-Haddad and Kotnour (2015) provide insight into the importance of integrating change planning, communication, readiness, and participation in successful policy implementation. They argue that for successful organizational change, all of these factors must be implemented simultaneously and mutually supportive. In this regard, their research provides a strong foundation for this study, which aims to further analyze how these factors influence the successful implementation of new policies in local government agencies in Indonesia.

The various challenges in policy implementation at the local government level are also inseparable from the diverse and complex characteristics of local government systems. Each region has distinct social, cultural, and structural conditions, which influence responses to new policies. Therefore, understanding the local context is crucial when implementing policy change. This study aims to delve deeper into the influence of change planning, change communication, change readiness, and employee participation on the successful implementation of new policies, taking into account local variables that may influence the implementation of these changes.

The importance of understanding the factors influencing the successful implementation of new policies is also related to efforts to achieve the goals of more effective bureaucratic reform. Successful bureaucratic reform will positively impact the performance of public organizations, increase the efficiency of public services, and improve the quality of government-public relations. However, achieving this requires careful planning, transparent communication, and active employee participation at every stage of change. Therefore, a thorough understanding of the factors influencing the implementation of change in the public sector is crucial for improving the quality of public services in Indonesia.

This article draws on various relevant change management theories to understand the factors that influence the successful implementation of new policies in the public sector. Lewin's classic change model in Rustandi (2022), which includes three main stages—unfreezing, change, and refreezing—provides an important basis for planning and implementing change in organizations. This model

emphasizes the importance of organizational preparation before change is implemented and stabilizing the change after implementation. In addition, Kotter in Grobler (2019) developed a more detailed change model with eight steps, including developing a clear vision, effective communication, and employee empowerment, which can be adapted to the context of public policy. Following this line of thought, Al-Haddad & Kotnour (2015) proposed a conceptual framework that integrates thorough planning, effective communication, strong change readiness, and employee participation as key factors for successful organizational change. They argued that successful policy implementation depends not only on structural factors but also on employee mental readiness and involvement in change planning. Furthermore, Mudhoffar's research (2024) demonstrates that open communication and employee participation are key to reducing resistance to change and increasing the success of policy implementation in the public sector. Based on these theories, this study focuses on how planning, communication, preparedness, and participation can support each other to achieve effective change in local government agencies.

The conceptual framework in this study is based on the aforementioned change management theories, with an emphasis on four key factors believed to play a crucial role in the successful implementation of new policies in local government agencies: change planning, change communication, change readiness, and employee participation. These four factors are interrelated and work together to create an environment conducive to successful change. Thorough change planning provides a strong foundation for developing clear and targeted implementation steps, enabling the organization to understand the objectives and steps to be taken. Effective change communication is crucial in ensuring that all parties involved, especially employees, understand the rationale and objectives of the change, as well as how the change will affect their work. Good communication also helps alleviate tension and uncertainty that may arise during the change process. Change readiness, which involves support from management and employee mental readiness, is a key factor in reducing resistance to new policies. When employees feel prepared and supported by the organization, they are more likely to accept change. Furthermore, employee participation in change planning and implementation plays a crucial role in creating a sense of ownership of the policies being implemented. This participation allows employees to contribute to the design of the changes they undergo, which increases their commitment to them. With this framework in mind, this study aims to explore in more depth how these four factors interact and influence the successful implementation of new policies, and to make a significant contribution to the development of change management in the public sector. Practically, this study hopes to provide useful insights for local governments in designing more inclusive and effective change strategies, with the goal of achieving successful policy implementation that positively impacts the community.

METHOD

This research method uses a qualitative approach to gain a deeper understanding of the influence of change planning, change communication, change

readiness, and employee participation on the successful implementation of new policies in local government agencies in Indonesia. A qualitative approach was chosen because it allows researchers to gain deeper insight into employee perceptions, experiences, and views regarding policy implementation and the factors influencing its success. As stated by Pugu (2024), qualitative research provides the opportunity to explore social dynamics and local contexts that may not be revealed through quantitative approaches.

The primary data in this study was obtained through in-depth interviews with employees directly involved in the implementation of new policies in local government. These interviews aimed to explore their experiences and perspectives on factors influencing the success of organizational change, as well as how they perceived the change process occurring in their workplaces. Furthermore, focus group discussions were conducted to gain a collective understanding from various employees regarding change communication, readiness, and participation in the change. This technique aligns with Priadana's perspective (2021), which emphasizes the importance of in-depth interviews and group discussions to obtain richer and more comprehensive data in qualitative research.

Informants were selected purposively, with the criteria being employees who had been involved in the implementation of the new policy for at least one year. This was intended to ensure that informants had a sufficient understanding of the ongoing change process and its impact on organizational performance. The collected data were then analyzed using thematic analysis techniques, in which researchers looked for patterns or themes emerging from interviews and focus group discussions to identify factors influencing the success of policy implementation. Thus, this study aims to provide a more in-depth overview of the challenges and opportunities inherent in the change process in the public sector.

RESULTS

This study aims to explore the influence of several factors, such as change planning, change communication, change readiness, and employee participation, on the successful implementation of new policies in local government agencies. Based on in-depth interviews with employees in various local government agencies in Indonesia, we identified several key themes reflecting employee perceptions and experiences regarding factors influencing successful policy implementation. The results of this study provide an in-depth look at how each of these factors operates in the field and contributes to policy success or failure.

1. Thorough Change Planning

One of the key findings of this study is the importance of thorough change planning. Many employees felt that the implementation of new policies often lacked clear and detailed planning. This led to confusion and uncertainty about the goals of the change and the best way to achieve them. Most respondents stated that poor change planning exacerbated resistance to new policies.

Several employees reported that they were not involved in the change planning process. They simply accepted policies that had been set from above without adequate explanation. This was reflected in an interview with an employee

at the Education Office, who stated:

"We were simply given instructions without a clear understanding of the policy's objectives. There was no adequate explanation of how this policy would benefit all of us." (Interview, 2025).

Conversely, employees who felt involved in the planning process, even if only to a limited extent, tended to be more prepared and receptive to new policies. This suggests that more inclusive change planning involving employees at various levels significantly impacts implementation success.

Table 1 General employee impressions of change planning

Change Planning	Employee Response
Involvement in planning	"There was no involvement in change planning."
Clarity of purpose of change	"We don't know what this policy is trying to achieve."
A clear strategy	"We were just given instructions, without a clear strategy."
Assessment of planning	"We feel the planning is not mature enough and inadequate."

Data Source: 2025 Interview Results

2. Effective Change Communication

Clear and open communication has also been shown to significantly influence employee acceptance of new policies. Interviews revealed that many employees felt inadequately informed about the reasons behind policy changes and how they would be implemented. One of the key findings of this study was that when communication is effective, whether through face-to-face meetings, circulars, or digital media, employees are more likely to accept the changes.

However, poor communication often leads to confusion and uncertainty. For example, an employee at the Natural Resources Management Agency (BMR) stated:

"We were only given a brief announcement, and we didn't know much about how these changes would affect our day-to-day work. It all felt very sudden and confusing." (Interview, 2025).

Table 2 main themes in change communication

Change Communication	Employee Response
Communication frequency	"Communication happens very rarely."
Clarity of message	"The message conveyed is very general and not specific."
Transparency of information	"We often feel like we're not being given complete information."
Communication channels used	"We were only informed via a vague email."

Data Source: 2025 Interview Results

3. Organizational Readiness for Change

An organization's readiness for change is equally important. Many employees expressed that while they supported change, they felt they lacked the skills or resources to effectively implement new policies. Support from top management, even when present, was often limited to policy announcements without adequate

training or resources to support their implementation.

An employee at the Health Department stated:

"We agree with these changes, but we don't have the training or resources to implement the new policies. We feel stressed and unprepared." (Interview, 2025).

This shows that organizational readiness does not only depend on managerial support, but also on strengthening the necessary resources, be it training, equipment, or systems that support the implementation of change.

Table 3 levels of readiness for change based on employee responses

Readiness for Change	Employee Response
Management support	"Management is supportive, but not concrete enough."
Training provided	"We didn't get adequate training."
Availability of resources	"We lack the resources needed for change."
Employee mental readiness	"Some of us feel unprepared for this change."

Data Source: 2025 Interview Results

4. Employee Participation in the Change Process

Employee participation in the change process was another important theme that emerged in this study. Employees who felt involved in the planning or implementation of change tended to have positive attitudes toward new policies. They felt valued and felt a sense of responsibility to support the policy. Conversely, employees who felt ignored or excluded from the change process tended to exhibit higher levels of resistance.

One example of an interview that reflects this is from an employee at the Regional Development Planning Agency, who said:

"We feel disrespected because we weren't consulted about these changes. We just went along with what was already decided." (Interview, 2025).

High participation will create greater engagement and reduce resistance to change. This is important because it can build employee commitment to new policies.

Table 4 shows findings related to employee participation

Employee Participation	Employee Response
Involvement in planning	"We were not involved in the planning of the changes."
Openness to input	"We feel our input is often ignored."
Employee initiative	"We feel more engaged when we are given the opportunity to innovate."
Sense of ownership of policy	"When we are involved, we feel more responsible."

Data Source: 2025 Interview Results

Based on interviews with employees from various local government agencies, it can be concluded that the successful implementation of new policies is heavily influenced by factors such as change planning, change communication, change readiness, and employee participation. Thorough change planning and effective communication have been shown to increase the chances of successful policy

implementation. Furthermore, organizational readiness and employee participation also play a crucial role in creating a supportive climate for change.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that local government agencies need to pay greater attention to these aspects to ensure successful implementation of new policies. Top management support, adequate training, and employee empowerment in the change process are essential elements of public sector change management.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings, several practical recommendations can be implemented by local government agencies to improve the success of new policy implementation. First, more inclusive and detailed change planning should be conducted, involving employees at various levels of the organization. This will help ensure that the designed change strategy truly reflects the needs and challenges faced by the agency. Furthermore, more open and structured communication should be prioritized to ensure that all employees understand the objectives, benefits, and impacts of policy changes. Effective communication can also reduce uncertainty and resistance to new policies. Second, strengthening employee readiness through training programs and support from top management is crucial to ensure employee readiness for change. Management must also ensure that the resources necessary to support policy implementation are available and sufficient. Third, active employee participation in the change process should be given greater attention. Inviting employees to contribute to policy planning and implementation will increase their sense of ownership and reduce resistance. Local governments should create mechanisms to accommodate employee input and provide space for them to innovate and participate in solutions to problems they face. By implementing these recommendations, it is hoped that new policies will be better received by employees and more successfully implemented within public organizations.

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