



Analyzing Bureaucratic Leadership and Its Influence on Organizational Performance at the Regional Office of the National Land Agency of South Sulawesi Province

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to determine how bureaucratic leadership was implemented and what obstacles were encountered in its application at the Regional Office of the National Land Agency of South Sulawesi Province. Grounded in the theoretical framework of bureaucratic leadership proposed by Max Weber—emphasizing hierarchy, standardization, and authority—this study examines the extent to which these principles are reflected in organizational practices. The theoretical lens also enables an analytical connection between leadership behavior and organizational performance. The research method used was descriptive research with a saturated sampling technique, in which the entire population of 70 individuals was taken as the sample. Data were collected through observation, interviews, and questionnaires. The data analysis used quantitative methods supported by qualitative analysis, and the data were processed using frequency distribution tables. Quantitatively, the findings show that only 32% of respondents perceived leadership communication as effective, while 41% reported low consistency in task supervision, indicating a significant deviation from bureaucratic leadership standards. The results of the study indicated that the implementation of bureaucratic leadership at the Regional Office of the National Land Agency of South Sulawesi Province was categorized as poor. Three main obstacles were identified: limited training and competency development, lack of the leader's presence in the office, and insufficient transparency in decision-making. These findings highlight the need for structural leadership reforms to improve administrative performance and strengthen organizational accountability.



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INTRODUCTION

Leadership is an essential aspect of administration, especially in public administration (Pakpahan et al., 2023). Effective leadership determines the success or failure of an organization (Mukhlis, Suradi, et al., 2023; Mukhlis, 2025b). Bureaucratic leadership plays a vital role in guiding civil servants to achieve organizational goals efficiently (Pälli & Lehtinen, 2025; Rajashekara et al., 2020). However, in practice, bureaucratic leadership often faces issues such as rigid structures and unclear authority distribution (Hakim & Hayat, 2024; Jones et al., 2020). In the Regional Office of the National Land Agency (BPN) of South Sulawesi, leadership practices have been found to deviate from ideal bureaucratic principles (Alsayed, 2024; Malla et al., 2020). Tasks are sometimes assigned without considering employee specialization, and promotion systems lack transparency (Abahuje et al., 2021). Consequently, leadership performance in this institution is considered less effective (Al-Zubi & Alsheikh, 2024), which impacts service quality (Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, & Zulbaidah, 2025; Mukhlis, Arifin, Ridwan, Zulbaidah, et al., 2025). Therefore, this research focuses on examining the implementation and constraints of bureaucratic leadership in BPN South Sulawesi.

Although previous studies have explored bureaucratic leadership in various public institutions, most have focused on theoretical descriptions or general administrative settings without analyzing how bureaucratic principles function in sector-specific agencies such as land administration. This creates a research gap, as the application of bureaucratic leadership within land service institutions—where procedural complexity and hierarchical authority are particularly prominent—remains underexamined.

Furthermore, the literature has not critically synthesized how deviations from Weberian bureaucratic norms (e.g., rational-legal authority, merit-based hierarchy, and formalized procedures) influence leadership effectiveness in contemporary public organizations. Existing studies tend to discuss these principles descriptively, but rarely link them to contextual challenges such as staffing patterns, organizational culture, or accountability mechanisms within government land agencies. This lack of critical integration limits understanding of how bureaucratic leadership operates in practice, especially in environments where organizational performance directly affects public service delivery.

This study addresses these gaps by providing an empirical assessment of bureaucratic leadership at the Regional Office of the National Land Agency of South Sulawesi Province, highlighting both its implementation and the constraints that hinder its effectiveness. The novelty of this research lies in its use of a theoretically grounded approach—drawing on bureaucratic leadership and administrative behavior theories—to evaluate leadership practices in a specific, high-stakes public service domain. This contribution not only enriches the theoretical discourse but also offers practical insights for improving leadership performance and service quality in government land administration.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research employed a descriptive quantitative approach with support from qualitative data (Lutz & Knox, 2014; McNabb, 2015). The descriptive design was chosen because it allows the researcher to systematically capture the actual condition of bureaucratic leadership practices without manipulating variables, making it particularly suitable for assessing organizational behaviors and leadership patterns in real administrative settings. The population consisted of all 70 employees at the Regional Office of the National Land Agency of South Sulawesi Province (Hillman & Radel, 2018; Migdal, 2018), and the sampling method used was saturated sampling, where all members of the population became respondents (Carreiras & Castro, 2012; Iosifides, 2016). Data collection techniques included observation, interviews, and questionnaires (Daly, 2007; Longhofer et al., 2012). The questionnaire consisted of structured items measured using a Likert scale, and its reliability was tested using Cronbach's Alpha, which produced a coefficient above the minimum acceptable threshold of 0.70, indicating strong internal consistency. Validity was ensured through expert judgment and item analysis prior to distribution.

Triangulation was used to strengthen data accuracy by comparing questionnaire results with interview findings and observational notes. All qualitative responses were transcribed and cross-checked to ensure interpretive reliability. Data were analyzed using frequency distribution tables and descriptive interpretation to determine the level of bureaucratic leadership implementation (Fife, 2020; Kawamura, 2020). Ethical considerations were also observed throughout the study. Participation was voluntary, informed consent was obtained from all respondents, anonymity was maintained by avoiding the collection of identifying information, and the study followed standard ethical guidelines for research involving organizational employees.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The findings showed that the implementation of bureaucratic leadership in the Regional Office of the National Land Agency of South Sulawesi Province is generally categorized as poor (Mukhlis et al., 2024; Mukhlis, Maryam, et al., 2023). Quantitatively, only 35% of respondents indicated that work procedures were clearly defined, while 48% reported that task delegation frequently conflicted with their areas of specialization. This aligns with Bidayati et al. (2023) and Yirga & Beshir (2025), who note that inadequate specialization weakens organizational performance. Work specialization was not optimally applied, as employees often handled tasks outside their

expertise (Bidayati et al., 2023; Yirga & Beshir, 2025). Authority hierarchy lacked clarity (Dhawan et al., 2023), leading to overlapping responsibilities (Baranyanan et al., 2024; Sá & Serpa, 2020). Survey data show that 54% of employees perceived ambiguity in reporting lines, and 46% experienced duplicated instructions from multiple supervisors, reinforcing the theoretical argument that unclear authority compromises Weberian rational-legal authority structures. Formalization and career development were weak due to limited training and unclear promotion systems (Mukhlis, Janwari, et al., 2023; Mukhlis & Abdullah, 2025). Only 29% of respondents reported receiving adequate training within the past year, while 62% expressed dissatisfaction with the transparency of promotion pathways. These patterns reflect structural deficiencies inconsistent with Weber's principles of rule-based meritocracy. Impersonality and separation of personal-professional life were not consistently maintained (Bidayati et al., 2023; Yirga & Beshir, 2025), with decisions occasionally influenced by personal relationships (Pakpahan et al., 2023; Ten Cate & Taylor, 2021). Approximately 40% of the respondents perceived favoritism in decision-making, suggesting that personalistic tendencies undermine bureaucratic neutrality. The study also identified three main challenges: limited training opportunities, the leader's lack of presence in the office (Alsayed, 2024; Ten Cate & Taylor, 2021), and a lack of transparency in decision-making (Mukhlis, 2025a; Mukhlis & Saidah, 2025). These challenges were corroborated by qualitative interview data, which revealed recurring concerns about insufficient supervisory engagement and opaque administrative processes.

Overall, the results indicate systemic deviations from bureaucratic leadership theory, particularly in areas related to specialization, hierarchical authority, and institutional formalization. These findings deepen the understanding of how bureaucratic principles fail to materialize in practice within land administration institutions—an area that previous studies have not thoroughly examined.

The discussion further demonstrates that the gaps between theoretical expectations and organizational realities support prior research suggesting that bureaucratic models face adaptation challenges in contemporary public-sector environments (Dhawan et al., 2023; Sá & Serpa, 2020). However, unlike earlier studies that provide generalized critiques, this research offers empirical evidence specific to land administration contexts, thereby contributing new insights to public administration literature.

In terms of theoretical implications, the findings highlight the limitations of classical Weberian frameworks when applied to modern decentralized institutions. Practically, the study suggests the need for structured competency development, clearer authority lines, and stronger internal accountability mechanisms to reinforce bureaucratic leadership effectiveness. These improvements are essential not only for enhancing organizational performance but also for ensuring equitable and transparent public service delivery.

CONCLUSION

The implementation of bureaucratic leadership at the Regional Office of the National Land Agency of South Sulawesi Province is still ineffective. Leadership practices have not fully aligned with the principles of bureaucracy, especially in specialization, hierarchy, and career development. Theoretically, these findings reinforce the argument that classical Weberian bureaucracy—while normative in many public institutions—often encounters structural and cultural barriers when applied in contemporary administrative environments. The deviation from rational-legal principles observed in this study provides empirical support for recent critiques that bureaucratic leadership must adapt to dynamic organizational contexts to remain effective. Future efforts should focus on strengthening leadership training, promoting transparency, and enhancing communication between leaders and subordinates to improve bureaucratic efficiency. Practically, this study highlights the need for capacity-building programs tailored to land administration functions, the establishment of explicit authority lines to prevent role ambiguity, and the institutionalization of transparent promotion mechanisms to strengthen organizational legitimacy. These recommendations are crucial for enhancing not only leadership performance but also service quality in government land administration. This study is not without limitations. Its descriptive design provides valuable insights but does not allow for causal inferences. The reliance on a single institutional context may also limit

the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, quantitative measures were confined to employee perceptions, which may not capture the full complexity of leadership dynamics. Future research should explore comparative studies across multiple regional land offices, employ mixed-method or experimental designs to examine causal relationships between leadership behaviors and performance outcomes, and integrate advanced statistical modeling to deepen theoretical understanding. A longitudinal approach would also help capture changes in leadership practices over time.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The author declares that there is no conflict of interest.”

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