Human Resources Professionalism in Public Administration: Efforts to Achieve Good Governance and Organizational Performance Improvement in the Era of Bureaucratic Reform

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Abstract.
This study highlights the significance of professionalism in human resources within public administration to achieve good governance and improve employee and organizational performance. The research methodology used was library research, involving text and discourse analysis to gather data from relevant literature on the topic.

The study’s findings indicate that the implementation of good governance in government bureaucracy is crucial for enhancing both employee and organizational performance. To achieve this, professionalism in human resources within public administration is essential, and the North Kalimantan government has adopted an alternative technocratic concept to support it. This concept emphasizes professional orientations and expertise.

To develop the capacity of public servants, the North Kalimantan government has initiated a capacity-building program in collaboration with various universities in Indonesia. The program targets three domains and levels: individual, organizational, and strategic policy systems. Leadership plays a critical role in the success of the capacity-building program.

Keywords: bureaucratic, good governance, professionalism, reform, organizational performance

1. Introduction

As a unitary state, Indonesia’s governance system is framed within the policies of decentralization and regional autonomy. The enactment of Law Number 12 of 2008 concerning Regional Government has brought a paradigm shift in governance from a centralized state to a state closer to the people. Governance is no longer solely focused on the government aspect but has shifted towards the aspect of governance. Bureaucratic professionalism is an essential requirement for achieving good governance [1].
Efforts to achieve good governance require professionalism from government officials. Professionalism emphasizes the abilities, skills, and expertise of government officials in providing responsive, transparent, effective, and efficient public services. Professionalism reflects the competence of officials, which can be effective when supported by an appropriate level of knowledge based on educational background along with workload responsibilities. It also reflects the potential of officials in terms of both abilities and behavior, including loyalty, innovation, productivity, and creativity [2]. According to Salim [3], competence is a fundamental element or characteristic of an individual. Specifically, for professionals, this serves as the basic criterion for effective performance.

According to Martin Jr., as cited in Thoha [4], the characteristics of bureaucratic professionalism that indicate the professionalism of employees include: 1) proficiency in using equipment; 2) readiness of employees to provide the necessary services to the public; 3) responsibility for every activity related to public interests in the governance system, requiring accountability to gain public trust in an institution or organization; 4) discipline, where loyalty is theoretically related to the level of discipline, especially in terms of adherence to applicable regulations; and 5) the attitude of government officials in delivering information to the public using understandable language, as well as listening to complaints and suggestions from the public as recipients of public services, while demonstrating politeness, respect, and care.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Concept of Professionalism

The term "professionalism" originates from the word "profession." In English, "profession" is defined as follows: A vocation or occupation requiring advanced training in some liberal art or science and usually involving mental rather than manual work, such as teaching, engineering, writing, etc. This refers to a job or position that requires in-depth training in the field of arts or sciences, and typically emphasizes mental abilities rather than physical skills. From the term "professional," the concept of "professional quality, status, etc.,” emerged, comprehensively referring to specific fields of work occupied by individuals with particular abilities [5].

Professionalism motivates individuals to engage in certain activities within society. It is based on expertise and a sense of calling, accompanied by a commitment to wholeheartedly accept that calling with a spirit of dedication is always ready to provide assistance to those in need amidst the darkness of life [6]. According to Zulkarnain and
Mirawati [7], professionalism refers to the reliability and professionalism through which tasks are performed with high quality, timeliness, intelligence, and easily understandable procedures that can be followed by clients. Therefore, professionalism can be understood as an ability or skill supported by knowledge and expertise, accompanied by a work ethic that must be demonstrated to carry out tasks correctly and thus complete a job or assignment efficiently and effectively.

### 2.2 Organizational Performance

According to Efendy, as cited in Hasibuan [8], performance refers to the work performance that is the result of an employee's work or the actual behavior displayed in accordance with their role in the organization. Meanwhile, Handoko, as cited by Hasibuan [8], states that performance is the process through which organizations evaluate or assess employee work performance. The success of an organization depends on knowledge management in the face of environmental changes.

According to Barney [9], an organization's sustained competitive advantage arises from the uniqueness of valuable, rare, imperfectly imitable, and non-substitutable resources. Puryantini et al. [10] further define organizational performance as a process used by leaders to determine whether an employee performs their job according to their tasks and responsibilities. Therefore, the measures used to represent performance were chosen based on observed organizational circumstances.

### 2.2. Good Governance

The National Administration Institute (LAN) defines good governance as the process of state power administration in providing public goods and services. Furthermore, from a functional perspective, governance can be evaluated based on whether the government has functioned effectively and efficiently to achieve the set goals or vice versa [11]. Abdullah [12] suggests that good governance became a popular terminology since the early 1990s, as if it was a newly discovered formula for the therapeutic mechanism of a country's governance to operate democratically. Good governance is now equated with and has displaced the old terminology, namely, good government, which is considered ineffective. In the administration of government, good governance is not actually a new formula but a principle that has existed for hundreds of years and should be the foundation of governance in modern democracies. It emphasizes the principles of participation, transparency, and accountability, and creates space for citizen involvement.
In recent decades, human resources in various organizations have become the focus of organizational management. The success of carrying out functions and achieving organizational goals is not only due to financial resources, capital goods, and other tools, but also because of the capabilities, motivation, and behavior of all workers or employees within the organization or company to actively and productively participate in company activities. This also applies to government organizations; therefore, ideally, all officials in the government are qualified individuals who meet the necessary criteria for their respective tasks, as well as possess motivation, discipline, and integrity in carrying out their work. This encourages the active participation of the community in the development process, and thus, government officials must be more capable and responsive in providing extensive services in various fields.

To effectively carry out government tasks, it is necessary to establish a good governance system. The success of this system is highly dependent on the capacity of the government officials. The same applies to the North Kalimantan province. The abilities, skills, and other qualities of the employees involved are crucial to the implementation and progress of development, as government officials are a strategic and determining aspect of empowering existing resources. Based on the above description, this study focuses on discussing the professionalism of government employees in realizing good governance and efforts to enhance organizational performance in the North Kalimantan province.

3. Methods

This study used a literature review approach (i.e., library research). According to Zed [13], library research goes beyond serving the functions mentioned above to obtain research data. Specifically, library research limits its activities to library collection materials, without requiring field research. Building on Hamzah’s opinion, library research has strong philosophical roots in post-positivism, thus classifying it as a qualitative research method.

On the other hand, Hadi, as cited in Ilham et al. [14], states that library research aims to provide a clear background and perspective on the current state of affairs. In library research, data is sourced from library materials such as books, journal proceedings, online platforms, and other relevant literary sources related to the topic under investigation. Data analysis was then conducted through stages of data presentation, data reduction, data presentation, drawing conclusions, and verification [15].
4. Results and Discussion

4.1. Results

4.1.1. Administrative Reform Realizes Good Governance

The implementation of good governance in government bureaucracy is rooted in improving employee performance, including organizational performance. This is in line with the opinion of Rumalolas and Wajdi [16], who stated that the implementation of good governance influences the improvement of employee performance in local government agencies, meaning that with a strong application of good governance principles, employee performance in an institution can be enhanced. Based on this, the Governor of North Kalimantan, H Zainal A Paliwang, urged government agencies to focus on realizing good governance (North Kalimantan Provincial Communication and Informatics Office 2022).

To ensure the establishment of good governance, one of the efforts that can be undertaken is bureaucracy reform. Bureaucracy reforms have become a necessity that must be fulfilled. As stated by the Secretary of the North Kalimantan Provincial Government, Suriyansah, during the Socialization of Administrative Reform Change Areas Towards the Improvement of Oversight Areas and Public Services in North Kalimantan Province in 2021, bureaucracy reform is necessary to achieve good governance. Administrative reform should be able to significantly improve organizational performance and service reform for the public (North Kalimantan Provincial Communication and Informatics Office, 2021). Similarly, Yan [17] states that Bureaucracy Reform (BR) must be continuously implemented in a planned and measurable manner to realize good governance and improve organizational performance. To achieve this, the professionalism of government officials was required.
4.1.2. The Professionalism of Civil Servants as Pillars Supporting Organizational Performance

The capability of bureaucratic civil servants is a pillar that supports the structure of the bureaucracy in governance. Achieving good governance is undoubtedly inseparable from the capabilities of its human resources. Enhancing the human resource capacity of civil servants is important to consider. This is in line with the findings of Darto et al. [18], who state that the enhancement of the human resource capacity of civil servants in North Kalimantan Province is an important issue that needs to be addressed. This statement is further supported by Fauzi [19], who emphasizes that government officials’ capacity development is important for improving their performance in carrying out their duties as public servants, as well as the regulation and deregulation of government policies.

Siagian [20] emphasized the importance of fostering the quality of bureaucratic civil service resources, considering their central role in bureaucratic organizations. Capacity development efforts are integral in the context of overall development. In other words, it is impossible to achieve any development without capacity development for the actors or systems that govern them. This is crucial to be implemented in order to establish good governance and clean governance in the environment of the North Kalimantan Provincial Government. In relation to service delivery, North Kalimantan Province needs to accelerate the realization of excellent services provided by its government. The aspects involved include service policies, infrastructure, public service information systems (SIPP), consultation and complaints, innovation, and the professionalism of civil service human resources (Public Relations Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, 2021).

Referring to the study by Maulansyah [21] the capacity development of civil service human resources carried out by the North Kalimantan Provincial Government has focused on the placement of professional and technical personnel, with activities including training, salary systems, working conditions, and recruitment. The processes implemented so far have been in accordance with established procedures, where all human resource development activities align with the achievement of set objectives, which are to fulfill the mission and vision of the institution in improving the quality of public services. Furthermore, in terms of organizational strengthening, which focuses on management systems, enhancing performance, and specific microstructural functions, activities such as intensive systems, personnel utilization, leadership, organizational culture, communication, and managerial structure have been carried out. However,
deviations have been observed in implementation, particularly regarding the employee development process, not aligning with the composition based on employee quality. Additionally, the mismatch between employees and their assigned positions results in suboptimal performance in carrying out their duties. The lack of readiness to assume new positions or the lack of understanding of the significance of employee development have led to issues and employees not performing at their maximum capacity.

To achieve good governance through organizational performance improvement, the initial step is to foster professionalism in civil-service human resources. The professionalism of civil servants reflects their ability to effectively carry out their tasks and functions, respond to national and global environmental dynamics, including the development of societal needs and demands, and create new innovations to achieve professional development and public service while aligning with the organization's goals [22]. Furthermore, to achieve effective civil service performance, it is crucial to have intellectually capable human resources that can comprehend the issues present in the community. The professionalism of employees is greatly determined by their level of competence, as reflected in their daily behavior within the organization. Higher levels of employee competence expedite the achievement of pre-planned organizational goals, while lower levels of competence may result in delays or deviations from the original plan [23].

In order for North Kalimantan Province to become an advanced and prosperous region, with human resources as the most crucial factor in an organization, civil servants in the government sector bear the responsibility for the success of governance and national development. Thus, the position and role of civil servants are vital as implementers of government activity. Thus far, local government officials have demonstrated optimal performance while dispelling negative impressions associated with government officials. Therefore, civil servants' capacity needs to be continually enhanced, especially in the administration of governance and the implementation of development, particularly in new autonomous regions.

### 4.1.3. Capacity Development of Civil Servants Through University Collaboration

One of the efforts of the North Kalimantan government to enhance the professionalism of civil service human resources is through capacity development. The capacity development of civil service human resources is realized through collaboration with several universities in Indonesia. Memorandums of Understanding (MoU) with these universities serve as tangible actions to achieve the vision and mission of a transformed, advanced,
and prosperous North Kalimantan by building and enhancing the competencies of civil servants. As a new autonomous region, this is evidence of the commitment of the North Kalimantan Provincial Government to improve government officials’ professionalism by producing highly competent and qualified human resources [7]. This aligns with one of the missions of North Kalimantan Province in achieving the development of healthy, intelligent, creative, innovative, productive, and competitive human resources.

4.2. Discussion

Capacity building, as an approach to governance, emerged in line with the growth of developing countries in Asia and Africa in the 1980s [24]. The concept of capacity building is becoming a concept related to the ability of an organization or institution to achieve goals effectively, efficiently, and sustainably [25]. In this context, the North Kalimantan provincial government is one of the provinces that require capacity development, considering that North Kalimantan is a newly formed region. As a newly established autonomous region, it is necessary to develop the capacity of the local government to establish a well-functioning institution and promote regional development [21]. In relation to the realization of good governance in organizational performance improvement efforts, the importance of acquiring or qualifying bureaucratic resources in terms of professionalism, expertise, specialization, and capabilities in policy information processing should be emphasized. According to Gibson in Brahmasari and Suprayetno [26], organizational performance depends on employee performance, meaning that the behavior of members of the organization, both individually and in groups, will have an impact on improving organizational performance.

Furthermore, in an effort to realize good governance and improve organizational performance within the North Kalimantan Provincial Government in the Bureaucratic Reform Era, an alternative concept called technocracy was offered. This concept refers to an orientation towards professionalism and expertise. Technocracy is a form of government where people with immense knowledge in science and/or technical expertise in an area are elected to the public office. Decision-makers are known as technocrats, and they are appointed or elected to hold office based on their expertise in a given field of knowledge (Corporate Finance Institute, 2021).

In more detail, the presence of bureaucratic analysts capable of assisting in policy information processing is necessary. Additionally, it has been emphasized that a professional, expert, and specialized bureaucracy is characterized by its ability to conduct review analysis, impact analysis, and translation of values [27]. To support a more
capable bureaucratic apparatus, efforts should be made to enhance the competencies of civil-service human resources. Thus, theoretical knowledge is crucial as it develops a person’s reasoning abilities to the extent that their intellectual capacities can be clearly expressed. Therefore, professionalism is needed in the implementation of local governance activities as it allows the integration of theory and practice. Including the North Kalimantan Provincial Government as a newly formed autonomous region.

In an effort to realize Good Governance and improve organizational performance in the era of bureaucratic reform through capacity building. Therefore, strategic policies and policy instruments are needed in the form of capacity-building programs directed at several domains and levels between the individual level, organizational level, system level, strategic policies, and capacity-building programs.

Referring to Fauzi [19] at the individual level, sustainable individual capacity development plays a role in shaping bureaucrats as active learners in their hierarchical positions, functions, and sectors. At the organizational level, strategic policies and capacity-building programs aim to build institutional mechanisms and motivational structures (incentives) for individuals to work, commit, develop, and achieve excellence. At the system level, strategic policies and capacity-building programs aim to establish institutional mechanisms and ground rules that allow for synergy between individual and organizational roles to collectively achieve governance goals.

A literature search revealed that capacity-building programs have been implemented by the North Kalimantan Provincial Government through collaboration with several universities in Indonesia. This provides an opportunity for civil servants in North Kalimantan to develop their capacities through education, which is expected to drive the wheels of the government [28]. However, the success of capacity-building programs relies on the leadership. Leaders play a crucial role in determining the success of organizational goals and can be observed through situational leadership, which entails how leaders guide their subordinates in various situations and conditions [29].

Similarly, in North Kalimantan Province, the most important factors determining the success of a new autonomous region are human resources and leadership [30]. Capacity development aims to enhance the professionalism of civil service human resources at each government institution. Considering that human resource management in bureaucracy is an area of change and a focal point of bureaucratic reform in Indonesia, the implementation of such changes, according to the Governor of North Kalimantan Province, cannot be realized without determination and commitment from leaders, as the key to implementing bureaucratic reform is leadership commitment (North Kalimantan Provincial Communication and Informatics Office, 2022). Meanwhile, to achieve
professional bureaucracy, there needs to be political will from the government to undergo significant changes in public bureaucratic organizations, enabling them to work professionally and responsively to public aspirations and needs. These changes include a shift in organizational perspectives towards goal achievement, starting with formulating the desired vision and mission to be carried out by the organization, building a flat and less hierarchical structure, and flexible work procedures that are not overly bound by formal rules [5].

As a new autonomous region, efforts to realize good governance and improve organizational performance in the era of bureaucratic reform have been carried out by the North Kalimantan provincial government through a capacity-building program, the implementation of which is directed at several domains and levels, including capacity building at the individual, organizational, system, and strategic levels. This is in line with the recommendations put forward by Fauzi [19] related to capacity-building programs.

5. Conclusion

The implementation of good governance in government bureaucracy is rooted in the improvement of employee performance, including organizational performance. To ensure the establishment of good governance, one of the efforts that can be made is through bureaucratic reform, which has become a necessary requirement. However, all of this must also be supported by the professionalism of human resources in the bureaucracy, including within the government of the North Kalimantan Province.

As a newly established autonomous region, it is necessary to develop the capacity of the local government to establish a well-functioning institution and promote regional development. This can be achieved through the concept known as an alternative technocratic approach. This concept refers to an orientation towards professionalism and expertise. In more detail, the presence of bureaucratic analysts capable of assisting in policy information processing is necessary. It is also emphasized that a professional, expert, and specialized bureaucracy is characterized by its ability to conduct review analysis, impact analysis, and the translation of values.

To support a more capable bureaucratic apparatus, efforts should be made to enhance the competence of civil-service human resources. Therefore, theoretical knowledge is crucial as it develops a person’s reasoning abilities to the extent that their intellectual capacities can be clearly expressed. Hence, professionalism is needed in the implementation of local governance activities as it allows for the integration of theory and practice. To achieve this, the government of North Kalimantan has
implemented capacity-building programs in collaboration with several universities in Indonesia.

As a recommendation, first, the capacity-building program should be directed toward different realms and levels. At the individual level, sustainable individual capacity development plays a role in shaping bureaucrats as active learners in their hierarchical positions, functions, and sectors. At the organizational level, strategic policies and capacity-building programs aim to build institutional mechanisms and motivational structures (incentives) for individuals to work, commit, develop, and excel. Meanwhile, at the system level, strategic policies and capacity-building programs are directed towards establishing institutional mechanisms and ground rules that allow for synergy among individual and organizational roles to collectively achieve governance goals. Second, the success of the capacity-building program relies on the leadership. Leaders play a crucial role in determining the success of organizational goals, and this can be observed through situational leadership, which entails how leaders guide their subordinates in various situations and conditions.

References


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