

DEVELOPMENT OF BUREAUCRATIC INTEGRITY AND ETHICAL COMPETENCE IN PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION

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ABSTRACT

Superior bureaucratic competence is a major factor in ensuring the effectiveness of government and the quality of public services. The success of public administration is highly dependent on integrity, professionalism, and high ethical standards among state apparatus. Bureaucratic integrity is an important element in creating transparency, accountability, and building public trust in government institutions. Values such as honesty, responsibility, and commitment to the public interest must be the main foundation in every bureaucratic policy and action. The mental revolution acts as a transformative approach in instilling integrity values in the bureaucracy, by emphasizing changes in the mindset and work culture of state apparatus to be more oriented towards the interests of the community. The principles of good governance, such as clear division of labor, responsible authority, discipline, and fairness in managing human resources, are determining factors in creating an efficient and professional bureaucracy. In addition, modern bureaucracy is required to have leadership skills, innovation, and adaptation to global changes and technological advances. The application of the principle of reinventing government offers a solution to increase bureaucratic efficiency through innovation, healthy competition, and orientation towards results and public satisfaction. By prioritizing integrity, transparency, and a meritocracy-based system, the bureaucracy can be more responsive to the needs of the community and contribute to sustainable national development.

INTRODUCTION

In modern governance, the effectiveness of public administration is heavily influenced by the competence and ethical standards of its bureaucratic workforce. The ability of public officials to demonstrate integrity, professionalism, and adherence to ethical principles is a critical determinant of government efficiency and public trust. As nations face increasing challenges in governance ranging from administrative inefficiencies to widespread corruption the role of bureaucratic integrity and ethical competence has become more vital than ever. This study explores the development of human resource competence in public administration, with a particular focus on the values, characteristics, and ethics that shape bureaucratic effectiveness.

The foundation of a competent and ethical bureaucracy lies in the concept of integrity, which encompasses honesty, transparency, and accountability in government functions. Integrity in governance is not only a moral necessity but also a structural requirement to ensure that public

administration operates in the best interest of society. Research by (Bowman & West, 2021) highlights that integrity in public service stems from internal education within families, schools, and social environments, and it is later tested through organizational experiences. Despite numerous governmental reforms aimed at curbing unethical practices, corruption remains a persistent issue, often perpetrated by highly educated individuals who lack moral integrity. Consequently, strengthening ethical awareness and professional competence among bureaucrats is paramount in achieving good governance.

A critical framework for fostering bureaucratic integrity is the mental revolution, a concept that President Joko Widodo reintroduced into Indonesia's governance agenda (Guna & Kertati, 2024). Rooted in the ideals of the nation's founders, the mental revolution emphasizes a transformative approach to leadership and bureaucratic conduct. The theory of Henri Fayol remains highly relevant in guiding bureaucratic behavior, advocating principles such as division of labor, authority, discipline, unity of command, and prioritization of public interest over personal gain. These principles, when effectively implemented, create an administrative environment conducive to accountability and efficiency. However, rigid application of these principles can sometimes lead to bureaucratic stagnation, highlighting the need for a dynamic and adaptable approach to governance (Sørensen & Torfing, 2024).

One of the main challenges in public administration is the misuse of authority, which arises when officials exploit their power for personal or political gain. Authority in governance must be accompanied by responsibility, ethical awareness, and moral constraints to prevent abuse. The balance between centralization and decentralization is also a key consideration in governance structures. While centralization ensures uniform policies and national cohesion, decentralization empowers local governments to address region-specific challenges effectively (Febriandiela et al., 2024). The transformation of Indonesia's governance system, particularly the shift from Law No. 32 of 2004 to Law No. 23 of 2014 on regional governance, highlights efforts to redefine the roles and responsibilities of government at various levels.

Another essential aspect of bureaucratic competence is discipline, which dictates adherence to rules, punctuality, and responsibility. Effective governance depends on disciplined officials who respect legal frameworks and institutional norms. However, excessive rigidity in discipline can lead to conflicts within organizations, especially when different interpretations of regulations arise. Additionally, fairness and justice in bureaucratic structures ensure equal opportunities for all public servants, particularly in promotions and career advancements. The implementation of Law No. 5 of 2014 concerning the Civil Service is a step towards ensuring transparency and fairness in bureaucratic appointments, reducing favoritism and political interference in public administration.

To prepare bureaucrats for future challenges, educational institutions play a crucial role in equipping them with the necessary skills and ethical foundations (Bell & Smith, 2022). The national education system must emphasize not only academic excellence but also character-building, ensuring that future public administrators uphold values such as integrity, professionalism, and public service. A competency-based approach to bureaucratic training should prioritize innovative skills, leadership abilities, communication proficiency, adaptability, and collaboration. The concept of reinventing government, as proposed by Osborne and Gaebler, suggests that bureaucracies should adopt entrepreneurial approaches to enhance efficiency, customer orientation, and responsiveness. By integrating these strategies, governments can improve service delivery and regain public trust.

Development of Superior Human Resource Competence in Bureaucracy

The competence of human resources in bureaucracy plays a crucial role in determining the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration. Superior bureaucratic personnel are not only expected to possess technical skills but also demonstrate strong ethical values, leadership qualities, and a commitment to public service. In modern governance, the demand for competent bureaucrats has increased due to the complexities of policy implementation, public expectations for transparency, and the need for innovation in government institutions. Human resource development in bureaucracy involves continuous training, education, and the cultivation of values that align with ethical governance and public accountability (Rismayadi, 2024).

The development of superior human resource competence requires a structured approach that integrates education, professional training, and ethical reinforcement. Bureaucratic personnel must be equipped with innovative skills, leadership abilities, communication proficiency, collaborative mindset, and adaptive capabilities to navigate the dynamic challenges of governance. The ability to think critically, solve problems efficiently, and uphold ethical integrity are key competencies that distinguish a high-performing bureaucracy. Furthermore, continuous professional development programs, leadership training, and character-building initiatives contribute to enhancing bureaucratic competence.

A bureaucratic system that prioritizes human resource excellence must also emphasize ethical values as the foundation of public service (Borry & Reuter, 2022). Integrity, accountability, and professionalism are essential components that define the quality of bureaucratic governance. Without these values, even the most technically skilled bureaucrats may fail to fulfill their duties effectively. The importance of integrity in public administration has been widely acknowledged, as it ensures that bureaucrats remain committed to serving the public interest rather than pursuing personal or political gains. The implementation of policies that encourage transparency, merit-based promotions, and ethical decision-making further strengthens the competence of human resources in government institutions.

Additionally, the role of education and training institutions is vital in preparing future bureaucrats to meet the demands of modern governance. Universities, government training academies, and leadership development programs must incorporate practical knowledge, ethical education, and real-world problem-solving exercises to ensure that bureaucrats are well-equipped for their responsibilities. Public administration curricula should focus not only on administrative theories but also on case studies, ethical dilemmas, and policy analysis to provide bureaucrats with a comprehensive understanding of governance.

The development of superior human resource competence in bureaucracy is a multidimensional process that involves technical expertise, ethical integrity, leadership skills, and continuous learning. A government that invests in the professional and moral development of its bureaucratic workforce will be better positioned to implement policies effectively, gain public trust, and foster a transparent and accountable governance system. By ensuring that bureaucratic personnel uphold high standards of competence and ethics, the public sector can improve its service delivery and contribute to national development.

Bureaucratic Integrity in Government Administration

Bureaucratic integrity is a fundamental pillar of effective governance, ensuring that public administration operates transparently, ethically, and in the best interest of society. Integrity in government bureaucracy refers to the adherence to moral and ethical principles such as honesty, accountability, and professionalism in the execution of administrative duties (Saprudin, 2023). A bureaucracy that upholds integrity fosters public trust, strengthens institutional credibility, and minimizes the risks of corruption and abuse of power. However, maintaining bureaucratic integrity remains a significant challenge in many governments, as unethical behavior,

favoritism, and lack of accountability continue to hinder effective service delivery. The increasing number of corruption cases involving high-ranking officials highlights the urgent need for stronger ethical governance frameworks and stricter enforcement of integrity policies.

The foundation of bureaucratic integrity lies in clear ethical guidelines, strong leadership, and a culture of accountability within government institutions (Pioggia et al., 2021). Public officials must be guided by ethical codes that dictate acceptable conduct, decision-making processes, and responsibilities towards the public. Leadership plays a crucial role in setting ethical standards, as government leaders who demonstrate integrity create an environment that discourages corruption and promotes ethical behavior among subordinates. Additionally, establishing transparent mechanisms for public oversight, independent anti-corruption bodies, and merit-based appointment systems can further strengthen bureaucratic integrity.

To cultivate integrity in government administration, continuous ethical education and professional development are essential. Bureaucrats should receive regular training on ethics, governance principles, and legal frameworks to reinforce their commitment to integrity in public service. Furthermore, public participation and accountability mechanisms, such as whistleblower protections and transparent reporting systems, can serve as deterrents against unethical practices. Countries that have successfully reduced corruption often implement stringent regulatory measures while simultaneously fostering a culture of ethical governance through education and institutional reforms.

Bureaucratic integrity is not merely a policy requirement but a crucial element in achieving effective, fair, and responsive governance. A government that prioritizes integrity ensures that policies and services are delivered equitably, free from bias or personal interests. Strengthening integrity within the bureaucracy requires a combination of ethical leadership, robust legal frameworks, and a commitment to transparency and public accountability. By embedding integrity into the core values of governance, governments can enhance administrative efficiency, build public confidence, and create a more just and accountable public sector.

Mental Revolution as a Means of Instilling Integrity

The concept of *mental revolution* serves as a transformative approach to instilling integrity in bureaucracy by reshaping the mindset, values, and ethical standards of public officials. Originally rooted in Indonesia's struggle for independence, the idea of a mental revolution was reintroduced by President Joko Widodo as a national movement aimed at fostering integrity, discipline, and accountability in governance (Van, 2023). A mental revolution in bureaucracy emphasizes a shift from self-serving, corrupt practices to a culture of public service that prioritizes honesty, professionalism, and responsibility. This transformation requires a fundamental change in how bureaucrats perceive their roles not merely as government employees but as public servants committed to the welfare of society. By internalizing integrity as a core value, bureaucrats can move beyond mere compliance with regulations to genuine ethical commitment in their decision-making and daily administrative duties.

A successful mental revolution in bureaucracy requires strong leadership, structured ethical training, and institutional reforms that promote transparency and accountability (Jarbandhan, 2021). Leaders at all levels of government must set an example by demonstrating integrity in their actions, ensuring that ethical behavior is not just an expectation but a standard that is actively practiced. Ethical training programs should be embedded into bureaucratic education, reinforcing the importance of honesty, impartiality, and public interest over personal gain. Additionally, institutional mechanisms, such as merit-based recruitment, anti-corruption agencies, and whistleblower protections, must be strengthened to create an environment where ethical behavior is rewarded, and misconduct is swiftly addressed.

The impact of a mental revolution extends beyond individual bureaucrats, influencing the entire administrative system and governance structure. When integrity becomes a fundamental principle within government institutions, it fosters public trust, improves service delivery, and enhances policy implementation. Moreover, a mental revolution encourages bureaucrats to adopt an innovative and solution-oriented mindset, making them more responsive to the evolving needs of society. However, for this transformation to be sustainable, it must be reinforced through consistent policies, legal frameworks, and public engagement, ensuring that integrity remains an enduring characteristic of governance.

The mental revolution is a powerful means of cultivating integrity within bureaucracy by instilling ethical awareness, discipline, and a deep sense of public responsibility. By integrating this approach into governance, governments can build a more ethical, transparent, and accountable administrative system, ultimately leading to a more just and effective public service.

Bureaucratic Competence and Governance Principles

Bureaucratic competence is essential in ensuring effective governance, as it directly influences the efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness of public administration (Ahmed, 2024). Competent bureaucrats possess a combination of technical expertise, ethical integrity, leadership abilities, and problem-solving skills that enable them to carry out government functions effectively. Without these competencies, bureaucratic institutions risk becoming inefficient, unaccountable, and susceptible to corruption. Governance principles, on the other hand, provide a framework for guiding bureaucratic operations, ensuring that government institutions operate according to ethical standards and legal frameworks. Principles such as accountability, transparency, efficiency, responsiveness, and fairness are crucial in creating a public administration system that serves society effectively.

One of the key principles of governance is division of labor and specialization, which enhances bureaucratic efficiency by assigning tasks to individuals based on their expertise (Liao, 2022). Henri Fayol's theory of administrative management emphasizes that clear job roles and responsibilities allow for better productivity and minimize operational inefficiencies. However, excessive specialization can sometimes lead to rigid bureaucratic structures where employees become overly dependent on specific individuals, making it difficult to adapt to change. Thus, while specialization is necessary, it must be balanced with flexibility to ensure that bureaucratic institutions remain dynamic and responsive to evolving governance challenges.

Another fundamental governance principle is authority and responsibility, which ensures that public officials have the power to make decisions while remaining accountable for their actions. Authority in bureaucracy must be exercised responsibly, with clear ethical guidelines to prevent abuse of power. There are two primary forms of authority: formal authority, which is granted through official positions, and personal authority, which is derived from knowledge, expertise, and leadership qualities. Both forms must be exercised with a strong sense of integrity, ensuring that bureaucratic decisions align with public interest rather than personal or political gain. Furthermore, well-defined accountability mechanisms, such as performance evaluations, public audits, and transparency policies, help prevent the misuse of authority and promote good governance.

Discipline and ethical conduct are also crucial in maintaining bureaucratic competence. A disciplined bureaucracy operates efficiently, adheres to rules and regulations, and upholds high ethical standards in public service. However, rigid enforcement of discipline without considering context, flexibility, and fairness can lead to bureaucratic inefficiencies and resistance to innovation. Therefore, governance frameworks should promote a balance between discipline and adaptability, ensuring that bureaucrats remain committed to ethical principles

while also being open to new ideas and policy reforms. Additionally, fair and merit-based systems in recruitment, promotions, and performance evaluations further enhance competence by ensuring that government institutions are led by qualified individuals rather than political appointees.

Bureaucratic competence and governance principles are closely interconnected in shaping an effective public administration system (Nyadera & Islam, 2023; Ege et al., 2021; Mangla, 2024). A bureaucracy that prioritizes technical expertise, ethical leadership, and accountability contributes to efficient government operations and better service delivery. By adhering to governance principles such as division of labor, responsible authority, discipline, and fairness, public institutions can strengthen their ability to meet the needs of society while maintaining integrity and transparency. Ultimately, the success of governance depends on the ability of bureaucrats to balance competence, ethical responsibility, and public service commitment in their administrative roles.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTION

The development of bureaucratic competence and integrity is essential for ensuring effective governance, public trust, and ethical administration. A competent bureaucracy requires a combination of technical expertise, ethical integrity, leadership skills, and accountability, all of which contribute to efficient public service delivery. Governance principles such as division of labor, responsible authority, discipline, transparency, and fairness provide a structured framework for maintaining efficiency and preventing corruption within public institutions. The concept of a mental revolution reinforces the importance of instilling integrity in bureaucrats, encouraging a shift towards ethical governance and public service commitment. Additionally, strengthening bureaucratic education, implementing merit-based systems, and promoting ethical leadership are necessary steps in fostering a more competent and accountable government. Ultimately, a bureaucracy that upholds integrity, professionalism, and governance principles will be better equipped to address societal challenges, enhance service delivery, and contribute to national development.

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