

# Public Administration: State apparatus leadership in the present era

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**Submission date:** 13-Sep-2022 03:07PM (UTC+0700)

**Submission ID:** 1898703858

**File name:** 186-Article\_Text-357-1-10-20220901.pdf (161.05K)

**Word count:** 4834

**Character count:** 27229



## Public administration: State apparatus leadership in the present era

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### Abstract

**Aim:** Becoming an effective leader is a challenge in today's era. Where it is hoped that there will be many changes that leaders can make with new paradigms of public administration and management, it takes the appropriate answer for leaders as a public administration challenge.

**Methodology:** The method used in this research is descriptive qualitative. The data comes from texts and related journal articles.

**Findings:** The results of the study indicate that leaders who are considered under the new leadership paradigm who can answer the challenges of public administration are those who are willing to change and continue to learn. Transformational leaders are the answer to the challenges of public administration in today's era. In the current time that continues to experience rapid dynamic changes, leaders who are open to transformation are needed so that they will not allow organizations, especially the state, to be left behind by the times.

**Implications/Novel Contribution:** As it is no longer appropriate to apply the traditional leadership notion from the previous age, a new leadership paradigm has started to develop in the current era. This research gives a broad overview of the leadership necessary to keep their team on track with the changes while also adapting to the situation in order to fulfil the needs of the moment.

**Keywords:** Public Administration, State Apparatus Leadership, Leader.

**Received:** 09 January 2022 / **Accepted:** 13 April 2022 / **Published:** 19 June 2022

### INTRODUCTION

Leadership is something that is still relevant to be studied even though it is not a new theme. The concept of leadership is as old as the history of people trying to create groups and manage individuals to complete particular tasks (Asrar-ul Haq & Anwar, 2018). The strategies or policies implemented in the government cannot be separated from the role of the leader. In the context of the state administration system, the part of the leadership of the state apparatus is indispensable. It is because the leader is believed to be one of the main factors determining the direction of a nation's journey. The essence of leadership is an influence usually understood in terms of the leader's success in motivating followers to contribute to efforts to realize a common goal (van Knippenberg, 2020). Especially in the era of economic globalization and informatization as it is now, public institutions globally are required to provide higher quality public services in response to demands from citizens (J. Wu & Walker, 2020).

The transformation process in various areas of life happens in the system and through public administration. The action of transformation towards a particular solution comes with a fundamental change in structure, process, and behavior or habits (Buschmeyer, Schuh, & Wentzel, 2016). Thus, public administration has intellectual and moral responsibilities in various organizations to answer various development problems and challenges faced by the nation and state. The process-oriented approach sees public administration as an interconnection of information, communication, interaction, and decisions (Ziekow, 2021). With the era of global competition that is increasingly developing, there is also a need for a public administration process that is faster, better, with quality standards, and is also efficient (Battilani et al., 2022). It is believed that the administrative system evolution happens if the administrative apparatus sets clear priorities, reduces layers of bureaucracy, and eliminates inefficiencies (Matei & Bujac, 2016).

Administrative reform is a way of designing and implementing policies by introducing deliberate efforts to change the actual institutional arrangements, processes, and procedures of public administration (Capano, 2021). Meanwhile, public administration reform so far has only been directed at human resources of the apparatus,

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institutions, systems, and management has not been able to provide significant input. Moreover, the service model that only emphasizes the structure and technical aspects of service with the target of service personnel has not yet given satisfactory results. One of the reasons is the lack of attention to reform in the leadership aspect of the state apparatus. The reason is that leaders are humans who have advantages over others, especially strong, persistent, passionate, and must also know everything. Although there are not many leaders, their role in the organization determines the success and the success of the organization's goals. As is the case with transformational leadership, it will also affect the work of his subordinates (Jam, Donia, Raja, & Ling, 2017; Khan, Rehmat, Butt, Farooqi, & Asim, 2020; Waheed, Khan, Khan, & Khalil, 2012).

The movement of life and organizational dynamics can then be seen to depend on a small group of people organizing the organization. Even more extreme, the progress of humanity comes from a small number of exceptional people who appear to represent their group or nation towards a particular goal to be achieved. People who belong to this group are the so-called pioneers, pioneers, thinkers, creators, and organizational experts. They fall into the category of leaders. The leadership of an effective leader is the key to the success of an organization (Benmira & Agboola, 2021; Farooq, Akhtar, Hijazi, & Khan, 2010). Leaders often have to combine different types of actions because they inevitably have to be faced with multiple tasks and goals, and they need to balance competing demands on resources that may be scarce (van der Hoek, Groeneveld, & Beerkens, 2021; Waheed, Klobas, & Kaur, 2017).

Meanwhile, viewed from the perspective of public administration, in the 21st century, some challenges demand a new paradigm in management, change leaders, and the ability to manage information and knowledge-based employee productivity. It is a logical consequence that demand from the community towards the government tends to be higher in quantity and quality. An increasingly qualified state apparatus service follows a tendency like this. The old ideas or paradigms that place the public as servants of the state apparatus must be changed more fundamentally and thoroughly. Employees often assume that leadership development is positive and desired by employees and contributes well to the organization's progress (Haq, Ramay, Rehman, & Jam, 2010; Kjellström, Stålné, & Törblom, 2020; Waheed & Hussain, 2010). Thus, leaders in the state apparatus who are the most important actors and become role models must make changes, especially in their minds. Especially in recent years, leadership has been studied with more emphasis on the team level in which it is carried out by the team as a whole, not exclusively by those at the top or in formal leadership positions (Q. Wu & Cormican, 2021). Meanwhile, over the next decade, it will be even more important for governments to improve their performance to tackle new problems in new ways to gain public trust (Gerton & Mitchell, 2019).

## METHOD

The approach method used in this study is a qualitative description. This approach could solve a problem formulation and improve practice through observation, analysis, and description (Koh & Owen, 2000). The data were collected from previous study articles related to public administration, especially the leadership of the state apparatus. This study aims to describe how public administration faces the challenges of the leadership of the state apparatus in the era of the new paradigm as it is today.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Public Administration: Challenges in Today's Era

Public administration must face many challenges, including economic globalization, education, unemployment, social responsibility, and environmental conservation. There are also quality of life that needs to be improved, moral and ethical norms that must be applied, a diverse workforce, and demographic configurations that are shifting science and technology that are used and exploited, further in politics, natural disasters, global warming, social inequality, multicultural management, paperless bureaucracy, and up to the quality of leadership. Meanwhile, in Indonesia itself, the big challenge faced, as in all countries, is the tendency to prioritize self-interest, which prioritizes maintaining status and is also resistant to change. In addition, everything tends to be centralized, and with great authority often even use it to fulfill their own needs and interests.

Based on these, nine bureaucratic pathologies can be added, like the inability of leaders to apply the right leadership style and having an orientation more on power and not on service. In addition, there is low

professionalism in the government bureaucracy, primordialism, cronyism, nepotism, neglected norms and ethics, unobeyed principles, and dysfunctional bureaucracies. Next, there is no conducive organizational culture in the creation, growth, and maintenance of a work ethic described in loyalty to the state, work discipline, obedience, and perseverance. Finally, there is an inconsistency in policies' impact on increasing a decrease in public and business confidence levels in the government.

Public administration is an interdisciplinary science. Challenges in public administration show that it touches almost all aspects of organizational life as economic, social, cultural, political, ethical, and moral. Reform and improvement of organizational performance have a significant relationship with the leadership and competence of leaders of government organizations and the business world. In addition, the challenges of public administration as a result of globalization are the occurrence of cultural clashes and the decline of local values that have resulted in the leaders of public administration being able to adapt to the changes continuously. Meanwhile, the consequences of the changes must be followed by a paradigm shift in administering the state government, including changing the way of thinking or mindset.

In dynamic changes, the debate about the role of public administration in the economic system seems to be more directed towards efforts to provide a positive agenda for the government to play a conducive role. Although the current workload and government activities have become very large, what is needed is not a minimum government but a limited governance framework with a positive agenda of responsibility. Then the role of public administration in society is (1) to ensure an even distribution of national income to the community; (2) to protect people's privacy rights to ownership of wealth, as well as guarantee the freedom for the community to carry out responsibilities for themselves in the fields of health, education, and services for the elderly; (3) preserving the traditional values of society which vary substantially from one generation to the next as well as providing guarantees and support from sources so that these values can grow and develop according to the demands of changing times, and can continue to live together peacefully, harmoniously, and in harmony with other cultures in their environment.

If viewed carefully, these matters are still relevant to the conditions of development of the development paradigm in third-world countries, including Indonesia. The clear trend is that the national government continues to develop in the era of globalization as the challenges can never be avoided and may continue to depend on other countries or on other global institutions that have an interest in the balance and resilience of the global economic system. Therefore, the challenges of public administration are also related to the nation's competitiveness.

In the context of leadership, education indicators are necessary because fundamental education is the main instrument in the framework of leadership regeneration of a nation. For example, in developed countries, such as Singapore, the leaders currently holding the reins of government are the result of regeneration in the 1960s and 1970s. In addition, seen from the limited job opportunities, the number of unemployed is increasing. With this condition and situation, the government must make more urgent efforts to deal with it. The reason is that failure to handle it will result in increased unemployment and harm to society. Meanwhile, other problems related to the workforce are the relatively small amount of wages and relatively low productivity.

The impact of the low level of education and employment has become a serious challenge to be reviewed by the public administration. Indeed, various government efforts have implemented public policies, but in their implementation, they can still touch substantially. Meanwhile, the development of public administration also affects regional governments such as provinces, districts, and municipalities in forming opportunities to build direct economic relations with the global economy, for example, increasing the administrative area. Even so, the additional administrative regions have not been able to reduce socio-economic problems and improve the quality of services to the community.

The challenges of public administration then become very complex. Thus, a breakthrough is needed if you want to get out of the multi-dimensional crisis as soon as possible. Meanwhile, from the perspective of public administration, a state and nation are essential to increase the welfare of all its citizens. Regardless of the ideology and political system adopted, every country wants to achieve its goals as a 'welfare state.' Meanwhile, achieving this goal requires various organizations that are sturdy and reliable, both inside and outside the government conditions to face challenges with different intensities which will be faced in the future.

### **The Development of Public Administration in the Current Era**

Every country in the 21st century faces strategic environmental conditions different from the 20th century. Great hopes come from all countries to take advantage of the developing opportunities in the world economic order in the 21st century. Unfortunately, based on the studies and statistical data, Indonesia was still in a multi-dimensional crisis at the beginning of this century. The cause is international developments, yet many other fundamental factors come from within the organization.

Among the factors causing the multi-dimensional crisis is a fundamental problem that lies in the weakness in the systems development and processes of public administration. One of them is the low commitment of the state apparatus leadership. Includes deviations from various dimensions of values that should be a reference for individual behavior and policies that cause the values and principles of good governance and are part of the state administration system that is neglected or not fully paid attention to. The state's institutional structure, the business world, and the nation's society have become fragile.

Meanwhile, various problems and questions can arise and continue to develop along with the complexity and dynamics of the development of state and nation problems. Then it becomes valid to question the role and benefits of public administration in dealing with the country's issues. Specifically, the changed configuration should trigger the development of theories in public administration. However, because globalization and the 21st century are multifaceted, the variants of public administration theory developed to answer the challenges have become diverse.

In terms of the socio-cultural dimension, globalization encourages the flow of labor that crosses national boundaries that inevitably can cause cultural clashes. As a result of this, more and more joint venture companies will emerge. It can encourage theoretical thinking about management in multicultural organizations because the globalization process will not fully lead to cultural and philosophical global homogeneity. The diversity of cultural backgrounds, domestic and international, will be the driving force for the multicultural organizations arising from this globalization process.

The process of globalization then should not be interpreted in a narrow way that is only seen from an economic perspective but also includes the dissemination of political values seen as universally applicable, such as respecting human rights, democracy, good governance, and so on. That way, a change occurs between the state and society where it becomes more symmetrical between power between the state and civil society. Then came the theories that aimed to find a new balance between the power structures in society by making bureaucratic actions and policies more accountable, participatory, and transparent. By increasing civil society's power in managing their interests, the market or the private sector will have more social responsibility.

In addition, the function of the bureaucracy must become an intermediary between a civil society representing special interests in the community and the state representing the public interest. Meanwhile, the task of the bureaucracy is to create a state of society that can-do self-empowerment. The conventional public administration theories may not be able to accommodate this configurational development. On the other hand, the process of globalization demands a change in thinking and abilities. The inability of bureaucrats and good government to understand the new configuration will create a capacity gap that can lead to dysfunction.

### **Leadership: A New Paradigm in Today's Era**

One of the factors determining the direction of development of public administration is the new paradigm of leadership. This new paradigm expects leaders to have the ability to lead organizations in the 21st century. Meanwhile, leadership is the core of administration and management. Whereas the essence has a central role, leadership is placed at the organizational level in a very strategic position. In addition, it is believed that the leader can guide the organization towards predetermined goals. In various studies and empirical experience, it has been proven that the role of organizational leadership has been the mover, lever, driver, protector, servant, and person in charge of various organizations' activities. That way, the traditional role of a leader can include controlling, giving orders, acting like a judge, and guarding what is no longer following the demands of the organization's internal and external environment.

In the current era, the leadership of the state apparatus's new paradigm departs from the view that public leaders must be able to accurately and completely identify themselves and the conditions and aspirations of the people they lead. Also, the developments and strategic environmental problems faced in various fields of life and

<sup>8</sup> the paradigms and administrative systems in which it has a role. Meanwhile, the leader's responsibility is to provide answers wisely and efficiently and be productive to the various problems and challenges faced by his era together with the group of people he leads.

Based on this concept, it is not enough for a leader to only meet particular competencies and qualifications but must be able to do more than that, namely to become a reliable agent of change. The leadership configuration can be said to be built from three elements: the leader, the condition of the community, and the development of the national and international environment that is changing continuously. Therefore, it becomes valid if leadership qualifications and competencies are questioned as requirements for effective leadership, especially in the face of the complexities of the development and dynamics of 21st-century change. So, concerning this, it is necessary to question the paradigm and system of public administration that can be considered relevant and needed to face various problems and challenges that may come from internal or external. In addition, it is also a forum for interplay and interdependence in the leadership process, and changes occur.

It is not surprising then that a public leader must be able to see himself present in a broad context. In addition, leaders must also be able to see the values that are suitable to be followed and can be a reference for life and the lives of the people of their nation. The leader must be able to capture the meaning of his presence as part of the state administration system that determines the structure and dynamics of the complex institutional process of state and nation society in relations between nations which is a medium for realizing the ideals and goals of the state.

At the national level, the complexity and dynamics of the strategic environment development are marked by multi-dimensional problems and challenges in the social, economic, political, institutional, defense and security fields. They are marked by, among other things, weak economic structure and competitiveness, law enforcement, implementation autonomy as well as decentralization. Other factors are large foreign debt, poverty and unemployment rates, democratization, disintegration, and leadership competitiveness. Meanwhile, at the international level, there are estimates that the development of the global environment is characterized by increasingly complex situations, conditions, challenges, and demands which are always changing, uncertain, and often even unfriendly.

<sup>3</sup> The strategic environment development has demanded leaders to be solid and reliable. They must be able to anticipate future developments, build a vision, mission, and strategy, and develop policy steps, institutional systems, and government management that are considered relevant to complex developments, problems, and challenges at national and international levels. Therefore, the role of leaders in motivating, moving, encouraging, and inspiring is very important. Because the role of leadership in facing the challenges of the 21st century not only puts itself at the top of the organization but also must be at the bottom along with all organizational resources that support it to move forward. A helpful role in high-involvement leadership is designed for an organization built for the speed, flexibility, quality, and service essential to global competition.

<sup>1</sup> Meanwhile, from a leadership perspective, the answer to transformational and transactional action is the answer to the challenges of public administration if a change is based on thoughts that support the principles of gradual and peaceful changes. The leader's market, culture, role, and role model is still a determinant in the change process. Especially in Indonesia, in any area, people still really appreciate the essence of a leader. Leaders must also show consistency in making changes. Then democratic norms, transparency, and competence should also be used as guidelines in carrying out this function. Must avoid the most preferred or disliked elements if a change happens. This method can help in legitimizing and also supporting a leader.

On the other hand, at the level of leadership of the state apparatus, leaders must behave in a manner that is expected to respect the principles of modern public administration. So far, stability has become a paradigm in government, but in the current era, pluralism and the implementation of checks and balances must begin to be developed in the legislature, executive, and judiciary. Therefore, it is necessary to have a people's representative institution that functions more clearly where the DPD or Regional Representative Council is formed. In addition, the president, as the country's leader, has also been elected by direct election so that it is not seen at the top of the power pyramid. Likewise, regional leaders are elected directly. Even so, things still happened that deviated from what was expected. The reason is that not all leaders who run for office have the required qualification and competency standards which sometimes lead to political support.

However, in today's era, we need leaders who can empower the community and are open to change. The community sees a leader who has strength and wisdom towards everyone by helping his subordinates. Then the leaders who can survive in this current era are those who can develop over time. Moreover, in this era, a new leadership paradigm is required, following the peaks of change and not just being able to oscillate in dynamic changes. Then it becomes substantial for everyone in the organization to contribute their creativity in self and organizational development efforts.

Leadership then has to be broad and deep in that it can spread across functions and departments at all levels. In the 21st century, leaders are also needed who can help their followers to become leaders for themselves so that they are not the only ones who can rule, are charismatic, and are also the sole reinforcer. It can be seen that leadership with the new paradigm is a leader who continues to learn, maximizes energy, and is sensitive, simple, and multi-focused. Thus, the quality of a leader becomes important while quantity is no longer a competitive advantage. Moreover, the most important thing for future leaders is those who always learn through formal education or from experience on the job. For this reason, leaders need to continue to explore knowledge. It is significant because knowledge is vital energy for every organization.

### CONCLUSION

Based on the research above, the leadership of the state apparatus is the most important thing in realizing the goals of the organization and the state. In the current era, a new leadership paradigm has begun to emerge as it is no longer suitable for applying the traditional leadership concept in the previous era. This is a challenge for public administration. It was found that the right way to overcome this challenge is to have leaders who are open to change and willing to learn and add knowledge and work experience so that they can be applied to empower the people they lead and also the wider community. Therefore, transformational leaders are considered very suitable for facing the challenges of public administration in today's era. Transformational leaders will facilitate the organization in dealing with dynamic changes from time to time. In today's era, leaders who are only selfish and not open to change are no longer suitable to be used as determinants of the direction of policy and the nation's future.

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