

Leadership Functions of The Village Head Of Bunuyo, Paguat District, Pohuwato Regency: An Evaluative Study of Leadership Performance in Improving Service Quality

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Abstract

The success of village governance in Indonesia depends heavily on the leadership capacity of the village head as the frontline administrator responsible for public service delivery. This study aims to describe and evaluate the leadership functions of the Village Head of Bunuyo, Paguat District, Pohuwato Regency, with particular attention to how these functions translate into service quality for the community. A qualitative descriptive approach was employed using a single instrumental case study design. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with the Village Secretary, section heads, village apparatus, and community members, complemented by direct observation and secondary document review. Data analysis followed the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, involving data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification conducted concurrently with data collection. The findings indicate that the leadership of the Village Head of Bunuyo, assessed across five functional dimensions instructive, consultative, participative, delegative, and controlling has generally been implemented well. However, the instructive and consultative functions still require strengthening, particularly in the clarity and timeliness of directives and in structured two-way communication with village apparatus. The study recommends that the Village Head sustain and reinforce existing leadership practices, maintain harmonious relationships with all village government elements and the wider community, and continue building collaborative governance to support the vision of a progressive, safe, intelligent, and healthy Bunuyo community. These findings contribute empirically to the limited literature on village-level leadership functions in Indonesia and offer practical guidance for improving bureaucratic performance and public service quality at the grassroots level of government..

Keywords: leadership functions; village head; leadership performance; service quality; Pohuwato Regency



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INTRODUCTION

The success of any organization is largely determined by the people who carry out its day-to-day operations, and public service organizations at the village level are no exception. Individuals bring distinct dispositions, needs, aspirations, and expectations into the workplace, which makes an understanding of human behavior essential for anyone seeking to lead effectively, both within and beyond formal organizational boundaries. Behavior is fundamentally goal-oriented: people act because they are driven by the desire to achieve one or several objectives, and this behavior can be understood as the interaction of motivational and goal-related elements within a given environment. Village apparatus, as the implementers of governance and development at the grassroots level, must be nurtured through structured career and performance systems if they are to perform their public mandate effectively.

Motivating village apparatus cannot be separated from their underlying needs and interests, which function as the driving force behind their participation in organizational activities. Contemporary observations of local government performance, however, continue to reveal persistent gaps between formal duties and actual execution: tasks that could reasonably be completed within minutes are sometimes stretched over several days, punctuality remains inconsistent, and some personnel exhibit limited initiative once routine tasks are exhausted. Delegation of authority is widely recognized as an important mechanism for closing such gaps, since properly delegated tasks combined with adequate support and trust have been shown to enhance employee performance and accountability within an organization (Al-Jammal, Al-Khasawneh, & Hamadat, 2015; Abu Rumman & Alzeyadat, 2019; Muhammed et al., 2025).

Contemporary society places high expectations on leadership that can steer organizations according to sound managerial principles while also promoting the welfare of subordinates and the wider public. Effective leadership manifests through legitimate authority exercised via appropriate leadership techniques, which in turn encourage members to carry out their duties and responsibilities with awareness and accountability. Classical performance theory further emphasizes quality, quantity, timeliness, and cost-effectiveness as core evaluative criteria, while ecological perspectives on public administration stress that leadership performance is strongly shaped by the surrounding environment—an observation particularly relevant to rural districts such as Pohuwato, where infrastructural and resource constraints frequently condition administrative outcomes (Argaw et al., 2021; Dahlan & Fatmawada, 2020).

Empirical scholarship on Indonesian village governance underscores that the quality of leadership at the village level is central to the broader project of decentralization introduced under Law No. 6 of 2014 concerning Villages. This legislation devolved substantial authority, funding, and responsibility to village governments, intending to strengthen community-driven development and grassroots democracy (Antlöv, Wetterberg, & Dharmawan, 2016). Evidence from across Indonesia, however, shows that the realization of this democratic potential remains uneven, often constrained by limited managerial capacity, elite capture, and variable community engagement (Martinez-Bravo, 2014; Afandi, Anomsari, Novira, & Sudartini, 2023). Comparable dynamics have been documented in customary village leadership arrangements elsewhere in Indonesia, where the legitimacy and effectiveness of a village leader are closely tied to their ability to balance formal governance mandates with community expectations and local social structures (Steenbergen, 2016; Rahman & Wardana, 2022).

A substantial body of leadership theory provides the analytical foundation for evaluating village head performance. Trait-based approaches emphasize personal attributes such as intelligence, emotional maturity, and achievement motivation as predictors of leadership success, while group-exchange theories highlight the reciprocal relationship between leaders and followers as a condition for effective goal attainment. Situational and contingency approaches, most notably Fiedler's contingency model, argue that leadership effectiveness depends on the fit between leadership style and the favorableness of the situation, as measured through leader-member relations, task structure, and positional power (Reams, 2026; Altmäe, Türk, & Toomet, 2013). Complementing these, transformational leadership

research demonstrates that leaders who combine vision, communication, and organizational-culture stewardship can meaningfully improve performance outcomes specifically within village government offices, reinforcing the relevance of transformational and relational leadership qualities for the Indonesian village context (Amrullah, Haryono, & Wahyuningsih, 2022; Astuty & Udin, 2020).

Within Indonesian administrative theory, effective leadership is commonly analyzed through five interrelated functions: instructive, consultative, participative, delegative, and controlling. The instructive function concerns a leader's capacity to translate decisions into clear, actionable directives; the consultative function reflects two-way communication in which the leader seeks and considers input before or after decisions are made; the participative function involves actively engaging subordinates and community members in both decision-making and implementation; the delegative function concerns the leader's willingness and ability to entrust authority to trusted subordinates while preserving accountability (Al-Jammal et al., 2015; Abu Rumman & Alzeyadat, 2019); and the controlling function relates to the leader's capacity for guidance, coordination, and oversight to keep organizational activities aligned with established plans. These functions are further supported by capacity-building and human-resource development literature, which links managerial skill, education level, and consultative body engagement to the overall performance of village heads (Afifah & Nuswantara, 2021), and by studies on soft-skill-based leadership development among village heads in coastal and rural Indonesian communities (Djafri, Botutihe, Pauweni, Smith, & Badu, 2022).

Improving public service quality remains one of the central justifications for strengthening village leadership. Determinants of village administrative service quality have been shown to include not only leadership style but also institutional competence, digital readiness, and human-resource management (Djou et al., 2023; Dahlan & Fatmawada, 2020), while the accelerating shift toward digital-based public services in the Industry 4.0 era adds further pressure on village leaders to modernize service delivery without eroding personal accessibility and trust (Danu, Supardi, Sutanto, & Riko, 2023). Broader comparative and cross-sector leadership-competency research, spanning primary health care governance, telework performance management, and gender-inclusive leadership development, similarly affirms that leadership competencies are transferable across very different organizational settings, lending further credibility to a functional, competency-based framework for evaluating village head leadership (Argaw et al., 2021; Bravo-Duarte, Tordera, & Rodríguez, 2025; Chuang & Eversole, 2022).

Despite the breadth of leadership literature at national and cross-national levels, empirical studies that specifically evaluate the day-to-day exercise of the five leadership functions by an incumbent village head particularly in smaller, resource-constrained districts such as Paguat, Pohuwato Regency remain scarce. This study addresses that gap by presenting an evidence-based, practically grounded evaluation of the leadership functions performed by the Village Head of Bunuyo. The research is intended to serve a dual purpose: for local and village governments, it provides a basis for evaluating and improving the performance of village apparatus; for the academic community, it contributes empirical evidence to the still-limited literature on village head leadership functions, while offering the public greater insight into how village-level bureaucracy actually operates.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

This study adopted a qualitative descriptive approach using a single instrumental case study design to examine the leadership functions of the Village Head of Bunuyo, Paguat District, Pohuwato Regency. The single instrumental case study design was chosen because the leadership of the Bunuyo Village Head, while unique to its local context, was considered sufficiently representative to illustrate how a village-level public organization can deliver quality services to its community.

Subjects and Object of the Study

To capture the leadership function comprehensively, the study mapped its subjects and objects within an interconnected organizational ecosystem. Research subjects spanned all relevant layers of village governance, ranging from the Village Secretary and section/affairs heads to members of the wider Bunuyo community who interact with village services. This layered subject selection was intended to triangulate perspectives on leadership performance from within the village apparatus as well as from service recipients.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through in-depth interviews with a purposively selected set of informants, direct field observation of leadership practices and service delivery processes, and documentation review of relevant secondary records related to village administration and governance.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted systematically using the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, which allows the researcher to move dynamically between data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification throughout the research process rather than treating these as strictly sequential stages. This iterative approach enabled continuous refinement of emerging themes related to the five leadership functions instructive, consultative, participative, delegative, and controlling as new data were gathered.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Instructive Function

Within the instructive function, the leader as the decision-maker is responsible for translating decisions into clear directives for the apparatus to execute. A leader's decisions carry weight only insofar as they can be converted into actionable instructions, and instructions in turn have meaning only when actually carried out; effective leadership therefore requires the capacity to mobilize people toward implementing decisions that have already been made. Clear direction, in this sense, functions as guidance and coaching that can enhance apparatus performance in pursuit of organizational goals (Argaw et al., 2021).

Findings show that the Village Head of Bunuyo combines firmness toward apparatus with a supportive, guiding disposition intended to keep subordinates motivated rather than merely compliant. This approach appears designed to avoid a sense of coercion among apparatus when carrying out instructions. The Village Head was observed to be open and supportive: when an apparatus member was late completing an assigned task, the Village Head approached the individual directly to understand the delay, remained willing to participate in completing the task, and even provided technical guidance demonstrating an awareness of the apparatus's practical limitations. This pattern of instructive leadership, which pairs directive clarity with coaching support, is consistent with literature emphasizing that leadership effectiveness benefits from a supportive orientation alongside task direction (Amrullah, Haryono, & Wahyuningsih, 2022; Astuty & Udin, 2020).

An organization's vision similarly embodies values, aspirations, and future organizational needs, expressed through the services and products it offers, the needs it addresses, the communities it serves, and the values and aspirations it pursues, while a mission tends to be broader and more generic in scope. In the village context, this ultimately translates into a shared aim of building capable human resources and a prosperous community through good service, which requires the village's vision and mission to be operationalized through a coherent set of missions that guide governmental tasks.

Consultative Function

The consultative function is inherently a two-way communicative process whose success depends largely on the leader. In the early stages of decision-making, a leader frequently requires

supporting information and therefore consults with relevant apparatus members—sometimes narrowly, with only those deemed to hold necessary information, and at other times more broadly, gathering opinions and suggestions before a planned decision is finalized. Consultation may also take the form of larger meetings involving most or all apparatus, and even community members acting as stakeholders, particularly when a decision carries significant weight for the wider community.

Consultation can likewise flow upward, with apparatus—individually or in groups—offering suggestions or opinions to the Village Head before or after a decision is made. By exercising this consultative function, leadership decisions are more likely to gain support and be implemented smoothly, contributing to overall leadership effectiveness. Exercising the consultative function well requires the leader to become an attentive listener, a skill that is not always easy to cultivate; the leader must be genuinely convinced that constructive ideas, suggestions, and aspirations can emerge from any member, regardless of position. Findings indicate that the Village Head of Bunuyo maintains harmonious working relationships with the apparatus, with individual members completing their assigned duties while remaining willing to collaborate on shared responsibilities—particularly those directly related to public service delivery. The Village Head was also found to be transparent and communicative, willingly providing direction whenever apparatus members appeared uncertain about assigned tasks. Communication regarding leadership decisions typically occurs through regular meetings, which facilitate discussion of task progress, surface any implementation obstacles, and allow collective deliberation on future courses of action. This structured, forum-based consultation mirrors recommendations in the literature that leaders build capacity through consultative bodies and structured feedback mechanisms to strengthen overall leadership performance (Afifah & Nuswantara, 2021). Nonetheless, findings suggest that this function still requires strengthening: the Village Head is encouraged to further affirm that valuable input can come from any individual, and to consistently recognize the competencies, achievements, strengths, and limitations of apparatus members so that the consultative function can be sustained effectively over time.

Participative Function

The participative function requires the leader to actively engage those under their leadership, both in decision-making and in implementation. Each apparatus member should be given the opportunity to participate in activities derived from the organization's core duties, according to their respective roles, in a coordinated and directed manner characterized by cooperation rather than encroachment on others' responsibilities. Deliberative forums (*musyawarah*) become particularly important in this respect, as they represent a key channel through which participation in organizational programs is exercised.

In addressing urgent matters, the Village Head of Bunuyo demonstrated a capacity to respond swiftly and appropriately, mobilizing apparatus members without delay to resolve pressing issues. In line with the participative function, the Village Head actively works to engage the people under their leadership: each apparatus member is given the opportunity to participate in activities derived from core duties according to their position, while the Village Head does not remain passive once instructions are issued but also takes part in the implementation process. Coordinated cooperation of this kind clarifies the position and role of each apparatus member, enabling them to identify precisely what forms of participation are appropriate and when they can be exercised for organizational benefit. Efforts to cultivate participation, therefore, extend beyond simply carrying out instructions to actively contributing information and input that can improve or refine decisions—an orientation consistent with broader governance literature emphasizing inclusive participation as a determinant of institutional legitimacy and effectiveness (Antlöv, Wetterberg, & Dharmawan, 2016; Afandi et al., 2023).

Delegative Function

The delegative function grants authority to make and establish decisions, whether with or without the approval of the leader. Exercising this function requires the leader to distinguish which core organizational tasks can and cannot be delegated to trusted individuals, since delegation is fundamentally rooted in the trust a leader places in subordinates deemed capable, and those receiving delegated authority must, in turn, uphold that trust and exercise it responsibly. A leader must embrace

delegation because organizational progress and development cannot be achieved by the leader alone; deliberation and consultation continue to play a role by helping delegated authority-holders remain aligned with the leader's general policy direction, particularly when they must make decisions of a more fundamental nature. In distributing authority, a leader must also weigh the aspirations of subordinates not only regarding which tasks should be delegated, but also regarding who is best positioned to represent the interests and aspirations of the apparatus.

The findings show that the Village Head of Bunuyo exercises the delegative function on the principle that trust flows from leader to apparatus, with the expectation that those entrusted with delegated authority preserve and responsibly discharge that trust. When the Village Head delegates authority to section heads or affairs heads within the team, it reflects a balanced working relationship between leadership and subordinates, enabling apparatus to understand precisely how to exercise delegated authority and responsibility both effectively and efficiently. This pattern is consistent with evidence that well-structured delegation supported by adequate managerial oversight improves employee performance and decision-making effectiveness without eroding organizational accountability (Al-Jammal, Al-Khasawneh, & Hamadat, 2015; Abu Rumman & Alzeyadat, 2019; Muhammed et al., 2025).

Controlling Function

The controlling function represents an effective leadership capability in which the leader directs members in a coordinated and purposeful manner, enabling the maximal achievement of shared organizational goals. This function can be realized through guidance, direction, coordination, and close supervision; while the leader here, the Village Head must remain actively engaged in controlling activities, this does not preclude involving group members, in this case the apparatus of Bunuyo Village, in the process.

Controlling is closely tied to planning, and the two functions are mutually reinforcing: control can only be meaningfully exercised where planning already exists, and the implementation of plans improves when controlling is carried out properly. Controlling functions as a process for achieving Bunuyo Village's organizational objectives, exercised by the Village Head through transparent oversight of the apparatus's work results measured against expected outcomes. The Village Head bears responsibility for controlling all ongoing activities to ensure apparatus adhere to applicable rules and regulations, and in fulfilling their respective duties and functions, Bunuyo apparatus share a common commitment with the Village Head to deliver quality services to community members in need.

The Village Head strives to cultivate a pleasant working atmosphere within the village office by maintaining intensive communication with all apparatus. Community complaints commonly involving inherited land disputes that apparatus acting as mediators are unable to resolve independently are regularly discussed by the Village Head, who works to resolve such matters directly. The Village Head of Bunuyo bears responsibility for administering village governance and works to build synergy among all elements of village government through communication, while collaborating with the Bunuyo community to advance government programs across all sectors. Although ultimate responsibility rests with the Village Head, effective leadership is understood to depend on synergistic governance involving all village government elements together with the community. The Village Head's demonstrated social sensitivity expressed through service quality, attitude, and sustained positive relationships with the community has contributed to the effective, satisfying, and well-regarded conduct of village governance and leadership. Such relational effectiveness is consistent with contingency perspectives on leadership, which emphasize that favorable leader-member relations are among the most influential determinants of situational favorableness for effective leadership (Reams, 2026; Altmäe, Türk, & Toomet, 2013).

Relationships cultivated throughout the Village Head's leadership have effectively fostered mutual understanding, care, and respect, in line with the view that effective human relations require leaders to treat others as subjects rather than objects meaning that a leader must attend closely to each individual under their leadership. Such attention matters because leadership success is strongly determined by the support of each individual, support that can only be secured within a genuinely

effective human-relations environment. Good relations between the Village Head and all village elements are therefore a critical factor in sustaining leadership dynamics: the Village Head gains the opportunity to absorb useful input for developing and advancing the village, while those under their leadership gain the opportunity to convey constructive feedback that, in turn, contributes to the village's continued progress.

CONCLUSION

This study evaluated the leadership functions of the Village Head of Bunuyo, Paguat District, Pohuwato Regency, across five dimensions: instructive, consultative, participative, delegative, and controlling. The findings indicate that leadership performance across all five functions has generally been implemented well, contributing positively to service quality for the Bunuyo community. Nonetheless, the instructive and consultative functions remain areas requiring further strengthening, particularly in ensuring the clarity and consistency of directives and in deepening structured, two-way consultation with village apparatus. It is recommended that the Village Head sustain and reinforce existing leadership practices across all five functions, while continuing to build and maintain harmonious relationships with every element of village government and the wider community. Preserving unity among village government elements remains an important measure of leadership success, and continued attentiveness to community needs will help ensure that governance under the Village Head's leadership remains effective, well-regarded, and capable of overcoming future challenges without losing community support. Sustained and, where needed, strengthened leadership practice will help ensure that Bunuyo Village's governance continues to progress toward its shared vision of a community that is advanced, safe, intelligent, and healthy. Future research would benefit from comparative case studies across multiple villages within Pohuwato Regency and from mixed-methods designs capable of statistically validating the relative influence of each leadership function on measurable service-quality outcomes.

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The authors declare no conflict of interest

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