

Bureaucratic Leadership And Public Service Quality In A Local Tourism Agency

Fatmah M, Ngabito¹, Sandi Praha², Febrianto Hakeu^{3*}

^{1,2} Universitas Ichsan Gorontalo, Gorontalo, Indonesia

³ Universitas Ichsan Gorontalo Utara, North Gorontalo, Indonesia

ORCID/Email:

First AUTHOR : fatmahngabito161@gmail.com

Second AUTHOR : Sandyprahara329@gmail.com

Third AUTHOR : febrianto.hakeu@pgsd.uigu.ac.id

Corresponding author email: febrianto.hakeu@pgsd.uigu.ac.id

Article Info

Received: 11/01/2026

Revised: 27/03/2026

Accepted: 30/05/2026

Online: 30/06/2026

Abstract

This study examines the effect of bureaucratic leadership on public service quality at the North Gorontalo Regency Tourism Office. A quantitative cross-sectional census involved all 34 employees and used two 10-item Likert scales. The raw response matrices were rechecked and analyzed through descriptive statistics, item-response proportions, reliability analysis, Pearson and Spearman correlation, and simple linear regression. Bureaucratic leadership and public service quality received high mean total scores (46.74 and 46.59 of 50). Openness to employee input was the strongest leadership item ($M = 4.94$), whereas encouragement of service performance and professional motivation were the lowest-rated leadership items (both $M = 4.41$). For service quality, completion time as promised was highest ($M = 4.97$), while responsibility in resolving user needs was lowest ($M = 4.29$). The scales showed good internal consistency ($\alpha = .846$ and $.823$). Bureaucratic leadership was positively related to public service quality ($r = .611$; Spearman $\rho = .624$; $p < .001$) and explained 37.3% of its variance, $F(1, 32) = 19.016$, $p < .001$. The study contributes detailed evidence from a local tourism bureaucracy and identifies supervision, employee motivation, service responsibility, complaint handling, and measurement refinement as priorities for improvement.

Keywords: Bureaucratic Leadership; Public Service Quality; Local Government; Tourism Administration.



© 2026 by the author(s)

This article is an open access article distributed under the terms and conditions of the Creative Commons Attribution (CC BY) license (<https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/4.0/>).

INTRODUCTION

Public service quality is a central test of local-government legitimacy because citizens commonly evaluate government through direct encounters with frontline agencies. In tourism administration, service quality has a wider strategic meaning: licensing support, destination information, coordination with tourism businesses, community facilitation, and complaint handling shape both citizen trust and the competitiveness of local destinations. These functions require more than compliance with formal procedures. They require leaders who can translate public goals into coordinated employee behavior and consistent service experiences. Contemporary public-sector

leadership research shows that leadership is generally associated with beneficial organizational outcomes, although the magnitude of the relationship varies across administrative contexts, leadership styles, and measurement designs (Backhaus & Vogel, 2022). Leadership affects performance by clarifying priorities, modeling ethical conduct, enabling coordination, motivating employees, and creating conditions in which public service motivation can be expressed in daily work (Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022). Transformational leadership, for example, can improve civil servants' service performance through trust-based mechanisms (Fan et al., 2023), while inclusive leadership supports climates in which employees feel recognized and able to contribute (Ashikali et al., 2021; Ashikali, 2023).

Bureaucratic leadership remains especially relevant in local government because authority, accountability, and resource allocation continue to operate through formal structures. Yet effective bureaucratic leadership should not be equated with rigid command and control. It combines procedural consistency with integrity, communication, coordination, timely decision-making, supervision, and an orientation toward public value. Indonesian evidence similarly indicates that bureaucratic leadership can strengthen public service motivation and job performance when formal authority is used to support rather than constrain employees (Lesmana et al., 2022). Public service quality has also evolved from a provider-centered concept toward a citizen-centered and value-creation perspective. Public Service Logic emphasizes that service outcomes emerge through interactions among public organizations, employees, users, and other stakeholders rather than from one-way delivery alone (Osborne, 2021). Recent studies show that co-production, service-system coordination, and innovation capacity can improve the relevance and usefulness of public services (Hardyman et al., 2022; Gyllenhammar & Hammersberg, 2023). Digital transformation further changes citizens' expectations regarding accessibility, responsiveness, transparency, and continuity of service (Haug et al., 2024).

These developments are directly relevant to tourism agencies. Tourism services typically involve multiple organizational units, external businesses, community groups, visitors, and digital information channels. Leaders must therefore combine internal coordination with boundary-spanning collaboration. Integrative public leadership is increasingly viewed as a means of aligning actors across organizational boundaries (Parkkinen, 2025), while digital co-production can generate citizen, administrative, economic, and societal value (Scupola & Mergel, 2022; Mergel et al., 2025). Despite the growing international literature, empirical evidence from small local tourism agencies in Eastern Indonesia remains limited. The North Gorontalo Regency Tourism Office provides a relevant setting because the agency manages tourism development, promotion, business facilitation, and community engagement in a coastal region with dispersed destinations. The present study therefore asks whether bureaucratic leadership significantly influences the perceived quality of public services in this local agency. The study hypothesizes that better bureaucratic leadership is positively associated with higher public service quality. Its novelty lies in testing this relationship using complete employee coverage in a tourism-specific local bureaucracy while interpreting the results through public leadership, public value, and digital service perspectives.

RESEARCH METHOD

Research Design

The study used a quantitative, explanatory, cross-sectional survey design. It was conducted in 2026 at the North Gorontalo Regency Tourism Office, a local-government agency responsible for destination development, tourism promotion, tourism-business facilitation, creative-economy support, and community partnerships. The unit of analysis was the individual employee.

Population and Sample

The population consisted of 34 employees. Because the population was small and accessible, a census or saturated-sampling approach was used; consequently, every employee was included as a respondent. All 34 questionnaires were returned, producing a 100% response rate. This design removes sampling error within the agency, although it does not eliminate limits on generalization beyond the organization.

Variables and Instruments.

Bureaucratic leadership was the independent variable. It was operationalized through ten statements covering decisiveness, clarity of direction, consistency in applying rules, disciplinary example, fairness in task allocation, openness to employee input, coordination, encouragement of service performance, periodic supervision, and professional motivation. Public service quality was the dependent variable and was measured with ten statements concerning timeliness, information clarity, procedural ease, courtesy, employee capability, service completion, facilities, responsibility, complaint handling, and overall satisfaction. Responses used a five-point Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree/never) to 5 (strongly agree/always). Higher scores indicated more positive assessments.

Data Analysis

The two 34 x 10 response matrices reported in the thesis appendices were independently verified before analysis. Descriptive analysis covered respondent characteristics, total-score distributions, item means, standard deviations, response proportions, observed ranges, and item rankings. Instrument assessment used item-to-total correlations and Cronbach's alpha; alpha-if-item-deleted and response-pattern redundancy were also examined to clarify measurement quality. Pearson's product-moment correlation assessed the primary linear relationship, while Spearman's rank correlation served as a sensitivity check because both total scores were concentrated near their upper limits. Simple linear regression estimated the relationship using $Y = a + bX$. Model fit, the ANOVA result, standardized and unstandardized coefficients, 95% confidence intervals, and grouped descriptive patterns were reported. Statistical significance was evaluated at $\alpha = .05$.

Ethical Considerations

Participation was based on the organizational research process described in the source study. The article reports only aggregated responses; no individual employee is identified. Because the dataset consists of employee perceptions, the findings should be interpreted as organizational self-assessment rather than direct citizen evaluation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Profile

The 34 respondents represented the entire workforce included in the study. Women constituted 58.8% of respondents, and men 41.2%. Most respondents held a bachelor's degree (79.4%), while 20.6% held a master's degree. The workforce was relatively young: 47.1% were younger than 30 years, 29.4% were aged 30-40 years, and 23.5% were aged 41-50 years. The corrected percentages are presented in Table 1.

Table 1. Demographic Characteristics of Respondents

Characteristic	Category	n	%
Gender	Male	14	41.2
	Female	20	58.8
Education	Bachelor's degree	27	79.4
	Master's degree	7	20.6
Age	< 30 years	16	47.1
	30-40 years	10	29.4
	41-50 years	8	23.5

Measurement Quality and Descriptive Results

The bureaucratic-leadership scale had a mean total score of 46.74 (SD = 3.35; median = 47; observed range = 39-50), equivalent to an average item score of 4.67. The public-service-quality scale had a mean total score of 46.59 (SD = 3.14; median = 47.5; observed range = 39-50), equivalent to an average item score of 4.66. In both constructs, 28 of 34 respondents (82.4%) recorded total scores of at least 45. The concentration of scores at the favorable end indicates a strong positive organizational

assessment, but it also creates a ceiling tendency and reduces the variance available for distinguishing respondents. The bureaucratic-leadership scale demonstrated good internal consistency (Cronbach's alpha = .846), and its item-to-total correlations ranged from .505 to .781. Reanalysis of the ten service-quality items produced alpha = .823. This value differs from the .754 output displayed in the thesis because that output counted the total-score column as an eleventh item. Verification of the raw matrix also showed that nine service-quality items exceeded the thesis criterion of $r = .301$; the service-completion item (Y6) had $r = .258$ because 33 of 34 respondents selected the maximum score. Table 2 summarizes the construct-level statistics, while the following tables present the item-level evidence.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics and Reliability of the Study Variables

Variable	Items	Mean	SD	Alpha	Item-total r
Bureaucratic leadership	10	46.74	3.35	.846	.505-.781
Public service quality	10	46.59	3.14	.823	.426-.801

Data Verification and Item-Level Results

The expanded analysis was derived directly from the item-level tabulations in the thesis. Recalculation reproduced the reported total scores, the Pearson correlation of .611, the regression slope of .573, and R Square of .373. It also clarified several transcription inconsistencies: the bachelor's-degree percentage is 79.4% (27 of 34), not 72.97%; R Square is .373, not .73; and the service-quality reliability coefficient is .823 when only the ten questionnaire items are analyzed. These checks do not change the main hypothesis test, but they improve the precision and reproducibility of the article.

Item-Level Pattern of Bureaucratic Leadership

Table 3 shows that all leadership indicators received favorable ratings. The strongest result was openness to employee suggestions and input (X6; $M = 4.94$, $SD = .24$), with 94.1% of respondents selecting the maximum response and all respondents giving a positive response. Clear work direction (X2; $M = 4.82$) and employee coordination (X7; $M = 4.79$) followed. This pattern indicates that employees experienced the leadership environment as accessible and communicative while also recognizing the formal direction and coordination needed in a bureaucratic setting.

Table 3. Item-Level Descriptive Statistics for Bureaucratic Leadership

Code	Leadership indicator	Mean	SD	Positive response (%)	Maximum response (%)
X1	Decisive decision-making	4.50	0.71	94.1	58.8
X2	Clear work direction	4.82	0.39	100.0	82.4
X3	Consistent application of rules and procedures	4.76	0.43	100.0	76.5
X4	Leadership example in work discipline	4.76	0.43	100.0	76.5
X5	Fair allocation of duties and responsibilities	4.59	0.56	97.1	61.8
X6	Openness to employee suggestions and input	4.94	0.24	100.0	94.1
X7	Coordination of employees in program implementation	4.79	0.41	100.0	79.4
X8	Encouragement to improve service performance	4.41	0.66	91.2	50.0
X9	Periodic supervision of task implementation	4.74	0.45	100.0	73.5
X10	Motivation to work professionally	4.41	0.70	94.1	50.0

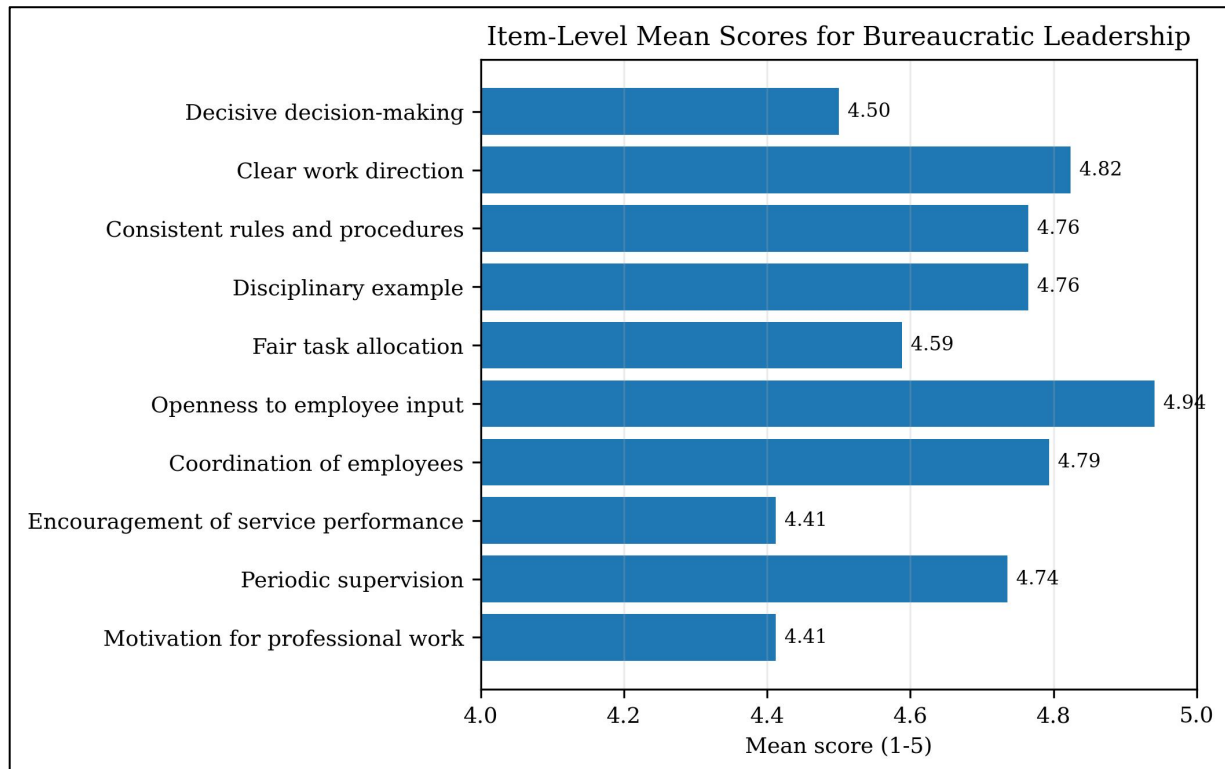


Figure 1. Mean Scores for Bureaucratic-Leadership Items

The comparatively lowest leadership indicators were encouragement to improve service performance (X8; $M = 4.41$, $SD = .66$) and motivation to work professionally (X10; $M = 4.41$, $SD = .70$). Although more than 90% of respondents still answered positively, only half selected the maximum score on each item. This difference is substantively important. Employees were highly positive about leaders being open, directive, and coordinative, but they were less unanimous about whether leaders consistently transformed those qualities into active performance encouragement and professional motivation. Consequently, the most immediate leadership-development need is not basic authority or rule enforcement; it is the regular use of coaching, recognition, feedback, and service-oriented motivation. Decisiveness (X1; $M = 4.50$) also displayed wider variation than most items, with responses ranging from 2 to 5. Fair task allocation (X5; $M = 4.59$) was favorable but below the construct average, suggesting that perceived fairness should remain visible in workload assignment and access to organizational opportunities. Two items, consistent rules and procedures (X3) and disciplinary example (X4), had identical response patterns across all 34 respondents. Their identical means, standard deviations, and item correlations suggest potential measurement redundancy. Future versions of the scale should distinguish procedural consistency from personal role modeling more sharply.

Item-Level Pattern of Public Service Quality

Public service quality was also evaluated positively, but the item pattern reveals a meaningful distinction between formal service completion and the broader experience of resolving user needs. Completion time consistent with the service promise (Y6) received the highest mean ($M = 4.97$, $SD = .17$); 33 respondents selected the maximum response. Facilities supporting user comfort (Y7; $M = 4.82$), clear service information (Y2; $M = 4.79$), procedural ease (Y3; $M = 4.76$), and polite behavior (Y4; $M = 4.76$) were also assessed very favorably.

Table 4. Item-Level Descriptive Statistics for Public Service Quality

Code	Public-service indicator	Mean	SD	Positive response (%)	Maximum response (%)
Y1	Fast and timely service	4.44	0.70	94.1	52.9
Y2	Clear and understandable service information	4.79	0.41	100.0	79.4
Y3	Procedures that are easy for the public to follow	4.76	0.43	100.0	76.5
Y4	Friendly and polite service behavior	4.76	0.43	100.0	76.5
Y5	Adequate employee capability in providing services	4.44	0.61	94.1	50.0
Y6	Completion time consistent with the service promise	4.97	0.17	100.0	97.1
Y7	Facilities that support user comfort	4.82	0.39	100.0	82.4
Y8	Responsibility in resolving public service needs	4.29	0.63	91.2	38.2
Y9	Effective handling of public complaints	4.56	0.61	94.1	61.8
Y10	Overall satisfaction with Tourism Office services	4.74	0.45	100.0	73.5

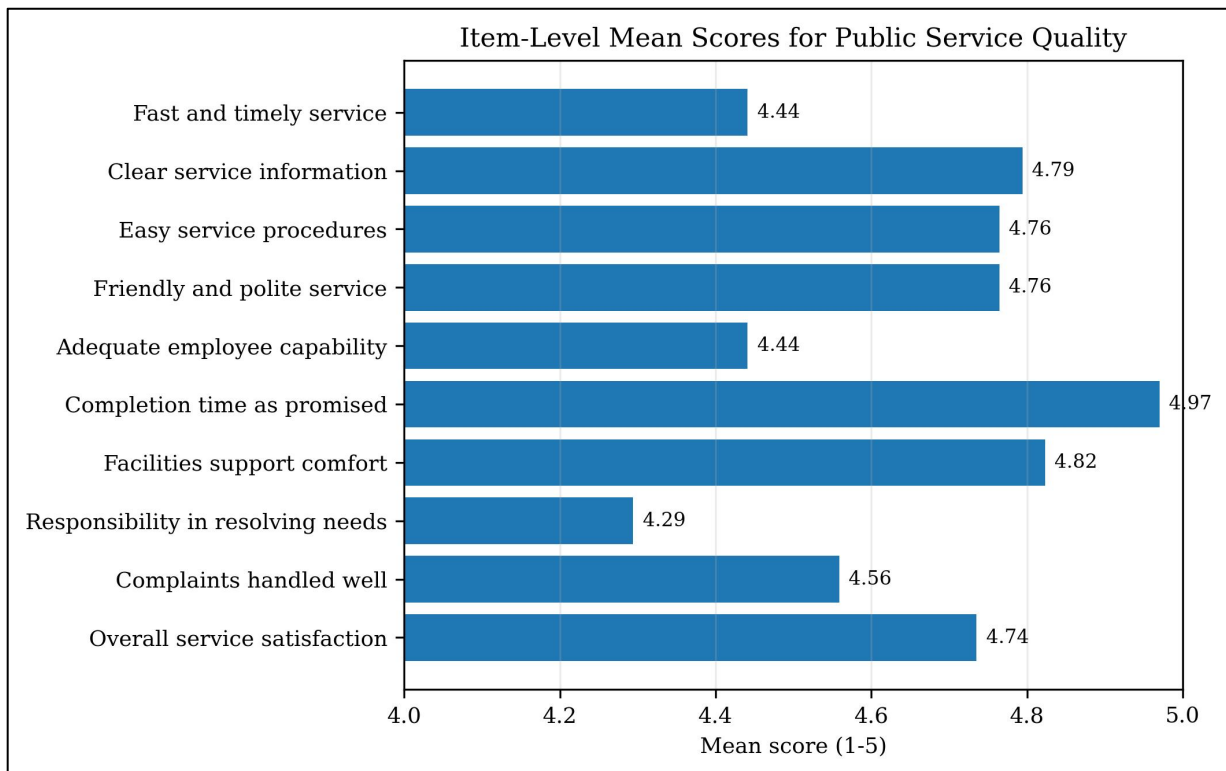


Figure 2. Mean Scores for Public-Service-Quality Items

The lowest service-quality indicator was responsibility in resolving public needs (Y8; $M = 4.29$, $SD = .63$). While 91.2% still gave a positive response, only 38.2% selected the maximum category. Employee capability (Y5; $M = 4.44$), speed and timeliness (Y1; $M = 4.44$), and complaint handling (Y9; $M = 4.56$) also trailed the overall service mean. These results suggest that the agency's formal timing and procedural promises were perceived more positively than the employees' sense of end-to-end responsibility for resolving user problems. A service may be completed within a stated period yet still require stronger ownership, follow-up, technical explanation, or complaint resolution. The identical response patterns for procedural ease (Y3) and friendly-polite behavior (Y4) again indicate redundancy in the observed matrix. More importantly, the near-unanimous maximum score on Y6 produced almost no variation and weakened its ability to discriminate between respondents. The result should therefore be interpreted as evidence of a strong perceived norm regarding promised completion time, rather than as proof that all external users consistently experience perfect timeliness. External citizen and tourism-business surveys are needed to validate this internal employee assessment.

Observed Distribution of Construct Scores

The total-score distributions further demonstrate the favorable but compressed response pattern. For bureaucratic leadership, 12 respondents (35.3%) recorded the maximum possible score of 50, and another 16 respondents scored between 45 and 49. For public service quality, seven respondents (20.6%) recorded the maximum, while 21 others scored between 45 and 49. Only six respondents in each construct scored 44 or lower. The observed frequencies are presented in Table 5 and Figure 3.

Table 5. Frequency Distribution of Total Construct Scores

Total score	Leadership n	Leadership %	Service quality n	Service quality %
39	1	2.9	2	5.9
40	2	5.9	0	0.0
41	0	0.0	1	2.9
42	2	5.9	2	5.9
43	0	0.0	0	0.0
44	1	2.9	1	2.9
45	8	23.5	5	14.7
46	0	0.0	4	11.8
47	5	14.7	2	5.9
48	0	0.0	6	17.6
49	3	8.8	4	11.8
50	12	35.3	7	20.6

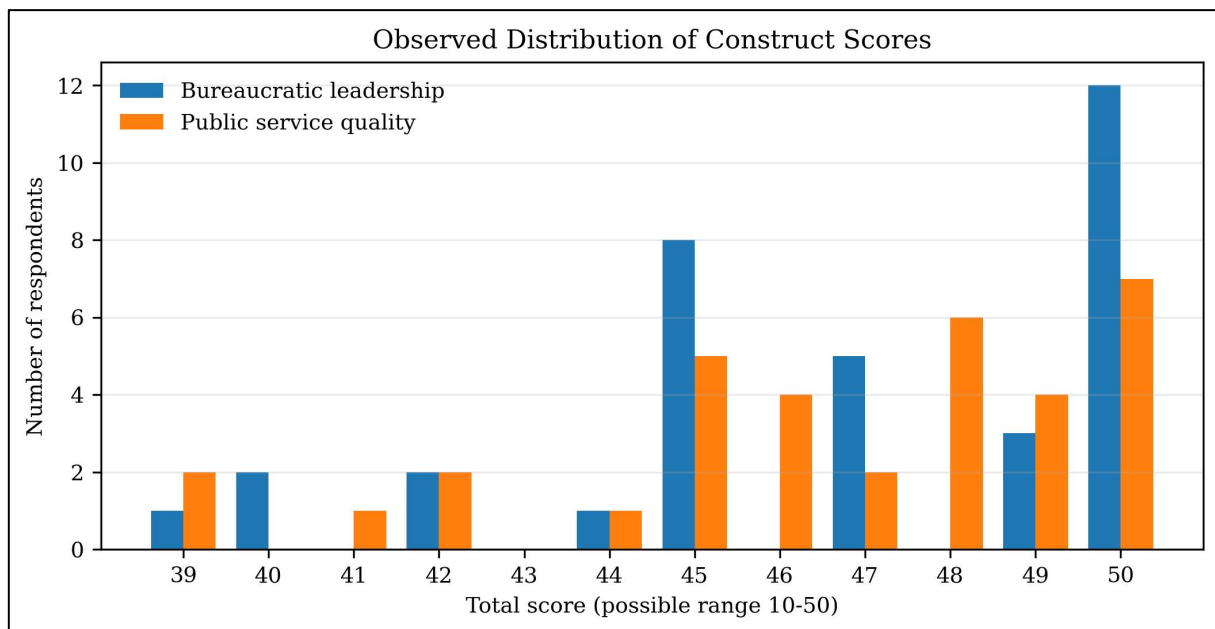


Figure 3. Observed Distribution of Bureaucratic-Leadership and Service-Quality Scores

Both distributions were negatively skewed because many respondents chose 5 on most items. This ceiling concentration is consistent with positive workplace perceptions, but it can inflate apparent consensus and make it harder to detect incremental improvements. It also means that future monitoring should not rely solely on agreement-scale averages. The agency should supplement internal surveys

with objective service-time records, complaint-resolution rates, repeat-contact rates, digital-service usage, and satisfaction data collected from citizens, tourism businesses, and community groups.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Detail

Table 6 compares the verified item-to-total coefficients for both scales. All ten leadership items exceeded the r -table criterion of .301 used in the thesis. For public service quality, nine items exceeded the criterion. Y6 produced $r = .258$ and $p = .141$ in the raw SPSS correlation matrix, even though the summary validity table in the thesis reported .458. The discrepancy is explained by the extreme concentration of Y6 responses rather than by a weak substantive concept: 97.1% of respondents chose the highest category, leaving insufficient variance for a strong correlation.

Table 6. Verified Item-to-Total Correlations and Validity Decisions

Item	Leadership r	Decision	Service quality r	Decision
1	0.505	Valid	0.426	Valid
2	0.757	Valid	0.801	Valid
3	0.775	Valid	0.799	Valid
4	0.775	Valid	0.799	Valid
5	0.752	Valid	0.664	Valid
6	0.510	Valid	0.258	Review
7	0.774	Valid	0.785	Valid
8	0.781	Valid	0.783	Valid
9	0.517	Valid	0.611	Valid
10	0.615	Valid	0.458	Valid

The overall reliability estimates remained satisfactory. Alpha was .846 for leadership and .823 for service quality. Removing Y6 would increase the latter only slightly to .829, indicating that the item does not materially damage overall consistency. Nevertheless, the instrument would benefit from replacing the highly absolute wording with a more discriminating statement, such as whether completion time is consistently communicated, monitored, and met across different service types. The identical X3-X4 and Y3-Y4 response patterns should also be addressed through revised wording and pilot testing. The measurement evidence therefore supports using the two total scores for the present exploratory analysis, while also showing that the questionnaire is not yet an optimized multidimensional scale. The article retains the original scoring to preserve comparability with the thesis, but interprets the results as a broad organizational perception index rather than a fully validated latent measurement model.

Correlation and Regression Results

The primary correlation and the rank-based sensitivity estimate are summarized in Table 7. Both coefficients indicate a strong, positive association. Figure 4 visualizes the upward relationship while also showing the concentration of observations near the upper limits of both scales and several cases that depart from the fitted line. Pearson correlation analysis showed a positive and statistically significant relationship between bureaucratic leadership and public service quality, $r = .611$, $p < .001$, 95% CI [.343, .786]. Because the total scores were concentrated near the upper end, Spearman's rank correlation was also calculated and produced a comparable result, $\rho = .624$, $p < .001$. The agreement between the parametric and rank-based estimates indicates that the positive association was not dependent solely on the linearity or normality assumptions of Pearson correlation.

Table 7. Association and Sensitivity Analysis

Statistic	Coefficient	p	95% CI	Interpretation
Pearson correlation	.611	< .001	[.343, .786]	Primary linear estimate
Spearman rank correlation	.624	< .001	-	Sensitivity check for ranked scores
Shared variance (r squared)	37.3%	-	-	Substantial, but not complete, overlap

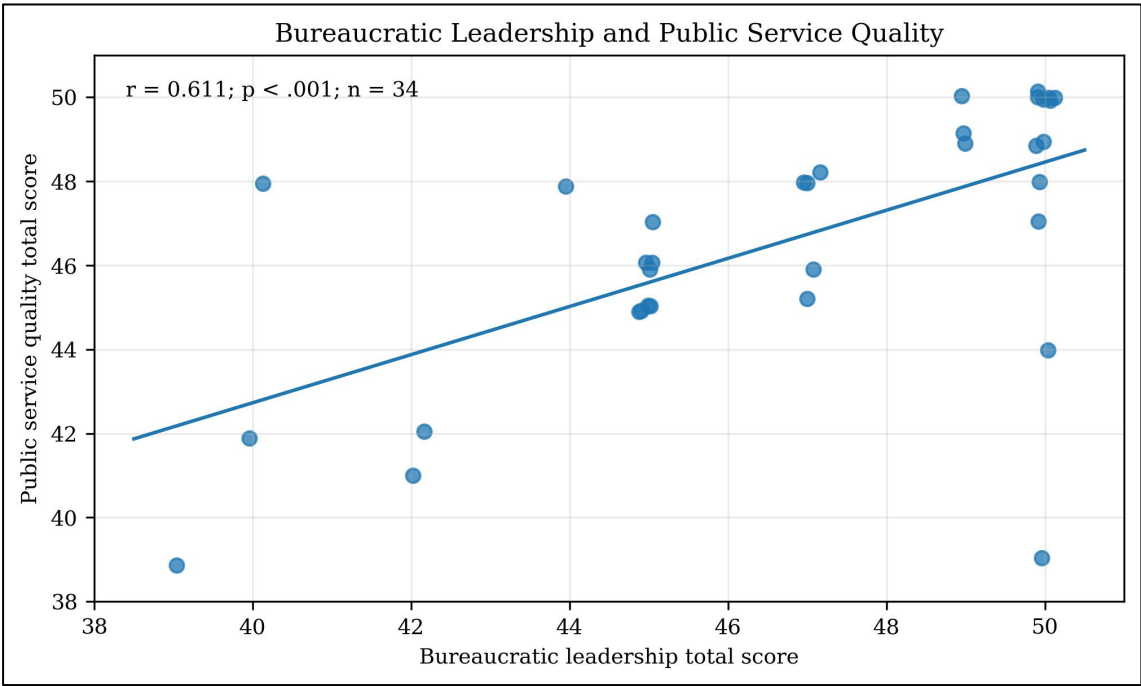


Figure 4. Relationship Between Bureaucratic Leadership and Public Service Quality

The simple regression model was statistically significant, $F(1, 32) = 19.016, p < .001$. Bureaucratic leadership explained 37.3% of the variance in public service quality ($R^2 = .373$; adjusted $R^2 = .353$), with a standard error of estimate of 2.529 points. The unstandardized slope was positive and significant ($B = .573, SE = .131, \beta = .611, t = 4.361, p < .001, 95\% \text{ CI } [.305, .840]$). The equation $Y = 19.818 + 0.573X$ means that each additional leadership point corresponded to an estimated .573-point increase in service quality. Table 8 separates the model and ANOVA statistics, while Table 9 reports the coefficients.

Table 8. Regression Model Summary and Analysis of Variance

Component	Statistic	Value
Model fit	R	.611
Model fit	R Square	.373
Model fit	Adjusted R Square	.353
Model fit	Standard error of estimate	2.529
ANOVA	Regression sum of squares	121.605
ANOVA	Residual sum of squares	204.631
ANOVA	Total sum of squares	326.235
ANOVA	$F(1, 32)$	19.016
ANOVA	Significance	< .001

Table 9. Simple Linear Regression Coefficients Predicting Public Service Quality

Predictor	B	SE	Beta	t	p	95% CI for B
Constant	19.818	6.154	-	3.220	.003	[7.282, 32.353]
Bureaucratic leadership	.573	.131	.611	4.361	< .001	[.305, .840]

The confidence interval for the slope remained entirely positive, which supports the directional hypothesis. Nevertheless, 62.7% of service-quality variation remained unexplained. Moreover, the score distributions and regression residuals reflected ceiling effects and a small number of discordant observations. The coefficient should therefore be treated as an important organizational relationship rather than as proof that leadership alone determines service quality. A grouped descriptive comparison provides an intuitive view of the relationship. Respondents with leadership totals of 39-44 had a mean service-quality score of 43.33. The mean increased to 46.15 among those with leadership scores of 45-47 and to 48.27 among those scoring 48-50. This monotonic increase is consistent with the regression result, although the groups are descriptive and were not used as independent categories in the hypothesis test.

Table 10. Public Service Quality Across Observed Leadership Score Bands

Leadership score band	n	Mean service quality	SD	Observed range
39-44	6	43.33	3.78	39-48
45-47	13	46.15	1.21	45-48
48-50	15	48.27	3.03	39-50

Discussion

The findings support the hypothesis that bureaucratic leadership positively influences public service quality. The effect is substantively meaningful: leadership alone accounted for more than one-third of the observed variation in service quality. This result is consistent with the meta-analytic conclusion that public-sector leadership is generally associated with favorable performance and employee outcomes (Backhaus & Vogel, 2022). It also complements research showing that leadership can activate public service motivation and translate organizational vision into service behavior (Hameduddin & Engbers, 2022; Fan et al., 2023). In this agency, the leadership construct included both formal-administrative and relational behaviors. Clear directions, consistent rules, fair task allocation, coordination, supervision, and motivation can reduce ambiguity in service processes. At the same time, openness to employee input and ethical example can increase trust and ownership. This combination is important because bureaucratic effectiveness depends not only on authority but also on the perceived legitimacy of how that authority is exercised. Recent public-sector studies similarly emphasize inclusive and ethical leadership as foundations for employee commitment and constructive behavior (Ashikali et al., 2021; Ashikali, 2023; Aunin et al., 2024). The tourism setting strengthens the practical importance of coordination. Public tourism services cut across promotion, destination management, licensing support, community organizations, business actors, and visitors. Integrative leadership helps align actors who have different resources and priorities (Parkkinen, 2025). The present result therefore suggests that internal bureaucratic leadership is a necessary platform for external collaboration: an agency that lacks clarity, accountability, and coordination internally will struggle to co-create value with tourism stakeholders.

The study also shows why leadership should be connected to a broader public-service logic. High-quality service is not achieved only by accelerating administrative transactions. It also depends on user experience, transparency, interaction quality, complaint handling, and the capacity to adapt services to citizens' needs. Value co-creation studies indicate that public organizations can improve service relevance by involving users and partners in the design and improvement of services (Hardyman et al., 2022; Scupola & Mergel, 2022; Mergel et al., 2025). Leaders at the Tourism Office should

therefore use their authority to institutionalize feedback, cross-unit learning, and stakeholder participation rather than relying solely on top-down instructions. Digital capability is another likely component of the unexplained 62.7% variance. Digital transformation changes internal routines and citizen expectations, but technology produces value only when it is connected to organizational redesign, usable interfaces, and clear service responsibilities (Haug et al., 2024). Proactive digital public services can reduce administrative burden and make access more equitable when data, workflows, and communication are aligned (Scholta & Lindgren, 2023). Studies of digital-service value further show that citizens assess both functional convenience and broader public values such as transparency, fairness, and participation (Luna et al., 2024; Buyannemekh et al., 2024). The high mean scores on both variables require cautious interpretation. They may reflect genuinely positive leadership and service conditions, but they may also indicate social-desirability bias, common-method variance, or limited willingness to criticize an internal organization. Because leaders and service quality were evaluated by the same employees at one point in time, the design cannot establish definitive causality. The regression should therefore be interpreted as a statistically predictive relationship that is theoretically consistent with causal influence, not as proof that leadership alone caused service improvements. Even with these limitations, the study offers a useful diagnostic for organizational development. Leadership training should focus on coaching, feedback, ethical decision-making, cross-unit coordination, and data-informed supervision. Service improvement should combine clear standard operating procedures with regular citizen and tourism-business feedback. Digital channels should be designed around user journeys, not merely converted from paper forms. Finally, performance monitoring should distinguish between internal employee perceptions and external user satisfaction so that favorable internal assessments can be tested against actual citizen experiences.

Interpreting the Leadership Profile

The item-level evidence refines the general conclusion that leadership matters. The agency's strongest leadership characteristic was openness to employee input. In a public organization, openness is not merely interpersonal courtesy; it enables information from operational levels to reach decision makers, allows problems to be recognized earlier, and increases the likelihood that employees will explain service barriers honestly. This finding is consistent with research emphasizing inclusive leadership and psychologically supportive climates in public organizations (Ashikali et al., 2021; Ashikali, 2023). Openness can improve service quality when it is converted into decisions, resource allocation, and follow-up rather than remaining an informal listening practice. Clear direction, coordination, rule consistency, and disciplinary example also scored highly. These are central bureaucratic functions because tourism services require multiple units to coordinate destination information, promotion, business facilitation, community programs, and administrative services. A leader who clarifies duties and aligns units reduces duplication and inconsistent information. The high coordination score therefore provides a plausible organizational mechanism for the observed relationship with service quality. It supports the broader evidence that public leadership affects performance by shaping priorities, trust, and employee behavior (Backhaus & Vogel, 2022; Fan et al., 2023). However, the lower relative scores for service-performance encouragement and professional motivation show that formal coordination is not sufficient. Employees may understand what must be done without receiving frequent developmental feedback, recognition, coaching, or encouragement to improve how the work is done. This distinction is important for reform-oriented bureaucracies. Leadership development should move beyond issuing instructions and monitoring compliance toward regular performance conversations that connect individual tasks with public value, citizen experience, and tourism-development outcomes. Hameduddin and Engbers (2022) similarly show that leadership can activate public service motivation when employees understand how their work contributes to meaningful public outcomes.

Interpreting the Service-Quality Profile

The service-quality results reveal a generally positive internal assessment, particularly for promised completion time, supporting facilities, information clarity, procedural ease, and courtesy. These indicators correspond to basic service reliability and accessibility. In a tourism agency, clear information and polite interaction matter because service users can include community groups, small

tourism businesses, event organizers, visitors, and partners who may have different levels of familiarity with government procedures. High ratings on information and procedural ease therefore indicate an organizational strength that should be preserved through standardized service information and consistent communication across channels. The lower score for responsibility in resolving user needs is the most actionable service finding. Responsibility extends beyond processing a request; it includes ownership, follow-up, coordination with other units, explanation of unresolved issues, and confirmation that the user obtained a usable outcome. The gap between the exceptionally high timing item and the lower responsibility item suggests that procedural completion may be stronger than end-to-end problem resolution. Public Service Logic is helpful here because it defines value in relation to the user's experience and outcome rather than the provider's completion of an internal process (Osborne, 2021).

Complaint handling, employee capability, and perceived speed also remain improvement areas despite their favorable absolute means. Complaint handling requires a documented channel, response standards, escalation responsibilities, and feedback to the complainant. Employee capability requires both technical knowledge of tourism administration and interpersonal competence. Perceived speed should be monitored by service type because an average internal assessment may conceal delays in more complex matters. These indicators can be strengthened through service mapping, case tracking, frequently asked questions, standard response scripts, and periodic review of unresolved requests.

Meaning of the Statistical Effect

The correlation of .611 and R Square of .373 represent a substantial relationship for a single organizational predictor. Leadership appears to explain more than one-third of variation in employees' service-quality perceptions, which is consistent with the theoretical expectation that leaders influence direction, coordination, standards, motivation, and monitoring. The comparable Spearman coefficient strengthens confidence that the association is not an artifact of a few scale intervals. The grouped results also show a clear rise in mean service quality across increasing leadership-score bands. At the same time, the unexplained 62.7% is not a statistical residue without practical meaning. It points to other determinants identified in the thesis and public-administration literature, including employee competence, organizational culture, digital capability, facilities, workload, standard operating procedures, internal control, public service motivation, and the quality of interorganizational collaboration. Digital transformation is especially relevant because citizens increasingly expect accessible information, trackable requests, consistent responses, and continuity across online and offline channels (Haug et al., 2024; Luna et al., 2024; Buyannemekh et al., 2024). Leadership should therefore be understood as an enabling condition. Leaders can authorize digital improvements, establish performance standards, allocate training, and convene stakeholders, but service quality also depends on the technical and institutional systems through which those decisions are implemented. This interpretation avoids the error of treating a significant regression coefficient as evidence that leadership can substitute for adequate staffing, technology, facilities, and process design.

Tourism-Governance Implications

The tourism context makes collaboration especially important. The Tourism Office serves not only individual citizens but also destination managers, community tourism groups, creative-economy actors, accommodation providers, guides, event organizers, and other government units. Many service problems cross organizational boundaries. Integrative public leadership can help align these actors around shared standards, data, and destination outcomes (Parkkinen, 2025). The high internal coordination rating provides a foundation, but external coordination should be measured separately through partner feedback and joint service-performance indicators. Digital services should be developed around actual user journeys. Converting a paper form into an online form is insufficient when users still face unclear requirements, disconnected databases, or no way to monitor progress. Research on digital public value emphasizes accessibility, transparency, administrative efficiency, and citizen usefulness (Scupola & Mergel, 2022; Mergel et al., 2025). For the Tourism Office, practical steps include a unified information page, downloadable requirements, named contact points, service-status tracking, digital complaint submission, response-time dashboards, and updated destination information. Co-production is also relevant to destination services. Community groups and tourism businesses possess operational knowledge that government employees may not observe directly. Regular service forums, post-service

feedback, stakeholder workshops, and digital reporting channels can convert this knowledge into service improvement. Such practices would extend the agency's strong internal openness toward a broader institutional openness that includes external users and partners (Hardyman et al., 2022; Gyllenhammar & Hammersberg, 2023).

Methodological Interpretation and Study Limitations

The census design is a strength within the organization because all 34 employees were represented and the questionnaire return rate was 100%. However, the results remain specific to one office and cannot be generalized statistically to all tourism agencies. The sample also consists of employees evaluating both leadership and service quality. Common source, common timing, and organizational loyalty may increase the association and contribute to the high means. External users were not surveyed, so the study measures perceived organizational service quality rather than independently verified citizen satisfaction. The cross-sectional design limits causal inference. The analysis demonstrates that leadership scores predict service-quality scores, but it cannot establish the temporal direction of influence. A high-performing service environment may also shape positive perceptions of leadership. Longitudinal data, before-and-after leadership interventions, or comparisons across offices would provide stronger causal evidence. Multilevel designs could additionally distinguish leadership effects at unit and individual levels. Measurement limitations also deserve attention. Ceiling effects reduced variability, two item pairs had identical response patterns, and one service item had an item-to-total coefficient below the thesis threshold. These issues do not invalidate the observed total-score relationship, but they indicate the need for instrument refinement. Future questionnaires should use more behaviorally specific wording, include negatively and positively framed items with care, pilot-test response variability, and obtain confirmatory evidence from a larger multi-agency sample.

Data-Based Improvement Priorities

The combined results support a sequenced improvement agenda. First, preserve the existing strengths in leadership openness, work direction, coordination, information clarity, procedural ease, courtesy, and facilities. Second, strengthen leadership behaviors with lower relative ratings through coaching, recognition, professional development plans, and explicit links between performance targets and public value. Third, improve end-to-end service responsibility by assigning case ownership, escalation pathways, response deadlines, and closure confirmation. Fourth, formalize complaint analysis and use recurring complaints as inputs for process redesign. Fifth, combine employee perception data with external user feedback and objective administrative records.

Table 11. Data-Based Organizational Improvement Priorities

Priority area	Evidence from the study	Recommended organizational response
Employee performance encouragement	X8 mean 4.41; 50.0% maximum response	Monthly coaching, recognition, and service-improvement targets
Professional motivation	X10 mean 4.41; 50.0% maximum response	Individual development plans and feedback linked to public value
Responsibility for resolving needs	Y8 mean 4.29; 38.2% maximum response	Case ownership, escalation protocol, and closure confirmation
Speed and employee capability	Y1 and Y5 means 4.44	Service-time monitoring, technical training, and workload review
Complaint handling	Y9 mean 4.56	Integrated complaint register, response standard, and trend analysis
Measurement quality	Ceiling effects; Y6 $r = .258$; duplicated item patterns	Revise instrument wording and validate with external service users

These recommendations convert the statistical findings into observable management practices. Their implementation should be followed by repeated measurement using revised instruments and external user data. Improvement would be demonstrated not only by higher survey means, which are already close to the maximum, but by reduced service variation, faster resolution of complex cases,

fewer repeated complaints, more consistent information, and stronger satisfaction among citizens and tourism stakeholders.

Proposed Monitoring Framework

Because the survey means are already close to the maximum, future evaluation should focus on change in the relatively weaker indicators and on evidence from service users. The current item means can function as internal baselines, but they should be paired with operational measures that are less vulnerable to social-desirability and ceiling effects. Table 12 translates the study findings into a monitoring framework that can be implemented by the Tourism Office without changing the core regression model. The framework separates leadership practices, employee capability, service-process performance, complaint resolution, and external validation. Monthly or quarterly monitoring is appropriate for operational indicators, while the perception survey can be repeated every six or twelve months after the questionnaire has been refined. A meaningful improvement would consist of convergence between stronger internal ratings and better objective or external outcomes, rather than a rise in internal ratings alone.

Table 12. Monitoring Framework Derived from the Study Findings

Monitoring area	Baseline	Recommended indicator	Frequency	Responsible function
Performance encouragement	X8 mean 4.41	Documented coaching sessions; proportion of staff receiving feedback	Monthly	Head of office and unit coordinators
Professional motivation	X10 mean 4.41	Development plans, recognition records, and training completion	Quarterly	Leadership and personnel function
Service responsibility	Y8 mean 4.29	Cases with named owner; closure confirmation; unresolved-case age	Monthly	Service units
Speed and capability	Y1/Y5 means 4.44	Median completion time; repeat contacts; competency assessment	Monthly/quarterly	Service units and personnel function
Complaint handling	Y9 mean 4.56	Complaints received, response time, closure rate, recurring themes	Monthly	Complaint manager
External service experience	Not measured in thesis	Citizen/business satisfaction, clarity, accessibility, and outcome usefulness	Semiannual	Independent survey team
Digital service performance	Part of unexplained variance	Online usage, completion rate, failed requests, response continuity	Quarterly	Digital-service administrator
Instrument quality	Y6 $r = .258$; duplicated patterns	Item variance, corrected item-total correlation, pilot reliability	Before each survey	Research/evaluation team

This monitoring approach preserves the study's central finding that leadership is a major service-quality lever while recognizing that leadership acts through systems, employee behavior, technology, and stakeholder interaction. The resulting evidence can support targeted decisions on training, workload, process redesign, digital investment, and interunit coordination, and can provide a stronger basis for evaluating whether leadership improvements are followed by better public outcomes.

CONCLUSION

Bureaucratic leadership has a strong, positive, and statistically significant relationship with public service quality at the North Gorontalo Regency Tourism Office. The regression model explains 37.3% of service-quality variation, confirming that leadership is a strategic organizational lever. The item-level results show that leadership openness, clear direction, and coordination are established strengths, while active encouragement of service performance and professional motivation require further development. Service information, procedures, courtesy, promised completion time, and facilities were assessed favorably, but end-to-end responsibility, capability, speed, and complaint handling provide clearer opportunities for improvement. The agency should preserve its highly rated leadership and service practices while prioritizing coaching, recognition, case ownership, complaint

management, technical capability, and citizen-oriented digital services. Future research should include citizens, tourism businesses, and community partners; compare several local tourism agencies; and use longitudinal or multilevel designs. Additional predictors should include employee competence, organizational culture, workload, digital maturity, facilities, public service motivation, collaboration, and internal control. The questionnaire should also be refined to reduce ceiling effects, differentiate overlapping items, and improve the discriminatory power of service-timeliness measures.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

The author expresses appreciation to the leadership and employees of the North Gorontalo Regency Tourism Office who supported the data-collection process. No external research funding was reported.

AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Conceptualization, F.M.N., F.H., and S.P.; Methodology, F.M.N.; Investigation, S.P.; Data Collection, F.H.; Formal Analysis, F.M.N., and S.P.; Writing Original Draft, F.H.; Writing Review & Editing, S.P., and F.M.N.; Visualization, S.P., and F.H.; Supervision, S.P.; Project Administration.

CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author declares no conflict of interest.

REFERENCES

- Ashikali, T. (2023). Unraveling determinants of inclusive leadership in public organizations. *Public Personnel Management*, 52(4), 650-681. <https://doi.org/10.1177/00910260231180286>
- Ashikali, T., Groeneveld, S., & Kuipers, B. (2021). The role of inclusive leadership in supporting an inclusive climate in diverse public sector teams. *Review of Public Personnel Administration*, 41(3), 497-519. <https://doi.org/10.1177/0734371X19899722>
- Asif, A., & Rathore, K. (2021). Behavioral drivers of performance in public-sector organizations: A literature review. *SAGE Open*, 11(1), 1-12. <https://doi.org/10.1177/2158244021989283>
- Aunin, J., Lüde, P., Sander, I., Vogel, R., & Wiesner, J. (2024). Perceived ethical leadership and follower outcomes in the public sector: The moderating effect of followers' need for autonomy. *Public Performance & Management Review*, 47(4), 986-1013. <https://doi.org/10.1080/15309576.2024.2359570>
- Backhaus, L., & Vogel, R. (2022). Leadership in the public sector: A meta-analysis of styles, outcomes, contexts, and methods. *Public Administration Review*, 82(6), 986-1003. <https://doi.org/10.1111/puar.13516>
- Buyannemekh, B., Picazo-Vela, S., Luna, D. E., & Luna-Reyes, L. F. (2024). Understanding value of digital service delivery by governments in Mexico. *Government Information Quarterly*, 41(2), Article 101936. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2024.101936>
- Fan, L., Feng, C., Robin, M., & Huang, X. (2023). Transformational leadership and service performance for civil servants of public organizations in China: A two-path mediating role of trust. *Chinese Management Studies*, 17(1), 215-230. <https://doi.org/10.1108/CMS-02-2021-0050>
- Gullmark, P. (2021). Do all roads lead to innovativeness? A study of public sector organizations' innovation capabilities. *The American Review of Public Administration*, 51(7), 509-525. <https://doi.org/10.1177/02750740211010464>
- Gyllenhammar, D., & Hammersberg, P. (2023). How to facilitate improvements in public service systems: Propositions for action. *International Journal of Quality & Reliability Management*, 40(6), 1429-1448. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJQRM-09-2021-0314>

- Hameduddin, T., & Engbers, T. (2022). Leadership and public service motivation: A systematic synthesis. *International Public Management Journal*, 25(1), 86-119. <https://doi.org/10.1080/10967494.2021.1884150>
- Hardyman, W., Garner, S., Lewis, J. J., Callaghan, R., Williams, E., Dalton, A., & Turner, A. (2022). Enhancing public service innovation through value co-creation: Capacity building and the innovative imagination. *Public Money & Management*, 42(5), 332-340. <https://doi.org/10.1080/09540962.2021.1981042>
- Haug, N., Dan, S., & Mergel, I. (2024). Digitally-induced change in the public sector: A systematic review and research agenda. *Public Management Review*, 26(7), 1963-1987. <https://doi.org/10.1080/14719037.2023.2234917>
- Lesmana, D., Rosadi, B., Hermana, D., Liu, R., & Winarno, A. (2022). Analyzing the effect of bureaucratic leadership on public service motivation and job performance. *Journal of Local Government Issues*, 5(2), 114-127. <https://doi.org/10.22219/logos.v5i2.20904>
- Luna, D. E., Picazo-Vela, S., Buyannemekh, B., & Luna-Reyes, L. F. (2024). Creating public value through digital service delivery from a citizen's perspective. *Government Information Quarterly*, 41(2), Article 101928. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2024.101928>
- Mergel, I., Edelmann, N., & Haug, N. (2025). Co-production phases in the development and implementation of digital public services. *Perspectives on Public Management and Governance*, 8(2), 93-105. <https://doi.org/10.1093/ppmgov/gvaf002>
- Osborne, S. P. (2021). *Public service logic: Creating value for public service users, citizens, and society through public service delivery*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9781003009153>
- Parkkinen, J. (2025). Integrative public leadership: A systematic review. *International Journal of Public Sector Management*, 38(4), 426-447. <https://doi.org/10.1108/IJPSM-03-2024-0093>
- Scholta, H., & Lindgren, I. (2023). Proactivity in digital public services: A conceptual analysis. *Government Information Quarterly*, 40(3), Article 101832. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2023.101832>
- Scupola, A., & Mergel, I. (2022). Co-production in digital transformation of public administration and public value creation: The case of Denmark. *Government Information Quarterly*, 39(1), Article 101650. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.giq.2021.101650>