



## The work culture of public civil servants in Pauh District, Padang City

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### ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the work culture of Civil Servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN) in the administration of government at Pauh District, Padang City, and to explain the urgency of work culture in improving the quality of public services. The research employed a qualitative approach with a descriptive method. Data were collected through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation involving 12 informants consisting of district leaders, ASN staff, and community members as service recipients. The findings indicate that the work culture of ASN in Pauh District still requires strengthening, particularly in the aspects of time discipline, service professionalism, communication, and accountability. Analysis using the New Public Service (Denhardt & Denhardt) framework reveals that indicators such as service accessibility, community satisfaction, timeliness, fulfillment of information needs, fairness in service delivery, problem-solving ability, and accountability have not yet been fully optimized. The transformation of work culture toward democratic and participatory public service can only be achieved through strengthening work ethics, developing competencies, and enhancing individual awareness among civil servants regarding their responsibility to serve the public.

*Keyword:*

*Work Culture, Civil Servants,  
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### INTRODUCTION

Work culture constitutes a normative foundation that shapes individual and collective behavior within an organization. Organizational values emerge from habits, norms, and beliefs that are repeatedly internalized until they form patterns of behavior considered acceptable

and normal. When these values are associated with the quality and execution of duties, they develop into what is known as work culture. Work culture reflects not only how individuals perform their tasks but also the overall quality of the institution itself. (Schein, 2010, p. 18).

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In the context of public bureaucracy, the work culture of Civil Servants (ASN) remains a strategic and relevant issue. Bureaucratic reform in Indonesia over the past two decades demonstrates that changes in regulations and organizational structures have not fully transformed the mindset and behavior of public officials. Cultural change does not occur spontaneously; it requires a systematic and planned transformation process involving human resources as the primary agents of change. Without consistent internalization of values, unproductive work patterns tend to persist.

Problems related to ASN work culture generally involve time discipline, communication professionalism, low initiative, and weak public service orientation. Phenomena such as tardiness, suboptimal service delivery, and dependence on superior instructions reflect the dominance of reactive bureaucratic work patterns (Robbins & Judge, 2017, p. 556). When such practices continue without firm supervision and sanctions, they evolve into institutional habits that are perceived as normal. In the long term, this condition reduces service quality and weakens public trust in government institutions.

Moreover, ASN work culture is often characterized by tendencies to prioritize personal or group interests over public interests. The lack of ethical awareness, cases of abuse of authority, and weak accountability indicate that integrity values have not been fully internalized. The accumulation of negative habits may ultimately damage the image and quality of public human resources.

Transformation of work culture is increasingly important within the New Public Service (NPS) paradigm, which emphasizes that public bureaucracy must serve citizens democratically, fairly, and accountably. (Dwiyanto, 2015, p. 45).

Service-oriented work culture can be measured through indicators such as service accessibility, community satisfaction, timeliness, transparency of information, problem-solving ability, fairness, and accountability. These indicators serve as benchmarks for assessing whether work culture supports high-quality public service.

Administratively, Padang City consists of 11 districts and 104 villages, one of which is Pauh District located in Cupak Tengah. As a frontline local government unit, Pauh District plays a strategic role in providing direct services to the community. The complexity of social and administrative issues requires professional, responsive civil servants with productive work culture. (Parasuraman, Zeithaml, & Berry, 1988, p. 16). However, practices that do not fully reflect positive work culture are still observed, particularly in discipline, communication, and performance optimization.

Human resource quality demands integrity, neutrality, competence, and professionalism. (Mardiasmo, 2018, p. 20) Yet, transformation is often hindered by resistance to change and low individual awareness. Cultural transformation must begin with internal awareness among civil servants to improve work ethics and adapt to increasingly dynamic service demands. (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015, p. 3).

Therefore, this study analyzes the work culture of Civil Servants in Pauh District and examines whether it aligns with positive values supporting public service quality or continues to reflect less productive traditional patterns.

## **LITERATURE REVIEW**

### **Concept of Work Culture**

Work culture is part of organizational culture related to values, norms, and habits influencing individual work behavior. Schein (2010) identifies three levels of organizational culture: artifacts, espoused values, and basic

underlying assumptions. These elements shape relatively stable behavioral patterns.

Robbins and Judge (2017) argue that strong organizational culture enhances employee commitment and organizational effectiveness, while weak culture leads to inconsistency.

Triguno (2004) defines work culture as behaviors grounded in professionalism, discipline, integrity, and responsibility in government tasks. Thus, work culture is a collectively internalized value system influencing organizational performance.

### **Work Culture in Public Bureaucracy**

Public bureaucracy differs from private organizations due to regulatory constraints, accountability principles, and public interest orientation. However, bureaucracy often remains rigid and procedural.

Dwiyanto (2017) notes that Indonesian bureaucratic reform faces challenges because work culture is still influenced by paternalistic and power-oriented patterns.

Common phenomena include:

1. Slow service delivery
2. Low initiative
3. Dependence on superiors
4. Limited transparency

Structural reform alone does not automatically produce cultural change.

### **New Public Service Theory**

The New Public Service (NPS) theory developed by Denhardt and Denhardt (2015) critiques market-oriented New Public Management. NPS positions citizens as owners of public interest to be served democratically.

Seven principles include:

1. Serving citizens, not customers
2. Seeking the public interest
3. Valuing citizenship and participation
4. Thinking strategically, acting democratically
5. Recognizing accountability complexity

6. Serving rather than steering

7. Valuing people, not just productivity

This framework is used to assess ASN work culture orientation.

### **Public Service Quality**

Zeithaml, Parasuraman, and Berry (1990) identify five service quality dimensions: tangibles, reliability, responsiveness, assurance, and empathy.

In Indonesian bureaucracy, service quality indicators include:

1. Accessibility
2. Timeliness
3. Community satisfaction
4. Transparency
5. Fairness
6. Accountability

Service quality involves both procedure and behavior.

### **Relationship Between Work Culture and Service Quality**

Schein (2010) emphasizes that organizational behavior reflects internalized values. Positive values improve service quality, while permissive cultures reduce satisfaction.

Robbins and Judge (2017) highlight culture as an informal social control mechanism shaping behavior standards.

### **Previous Studies**

Dwiyanto (2017) found that bureaucratic reform remains suboptimal due to unchanged work culture.

Previous studies indicate that discipline and professionalism affect community satisfaction, yet most are descriptive and conducted at higher government levels.

Research at the district level remains limited.

## **METHODS**

This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach. This approach is used to explore and understand social phenomena in depth, particularly related to work culture and public service practices within the district office.

A qualitative design allows the researcher to capture meanings, perceptions, attitudes, and behavioral patterns that cannot be measured numerically. The descriptive nature of the study aims to provide a systematic and factual portrayal of the existing conditions without manipulating variables.

### **Data Sources**

The study utilizes two types of data sources:

#### **Primary Data**

Primary data were obtained directly from the field through interviews and observations. These data provide firsthand information regarding actual work behavior, service practices, and institutional dynamics.

#### **Secondary Data**

Secondary data were collected from official district documents, including attendance records, organizational reports, service guidelines, and other administrative documents. These documents serve to support, validate, and triangulate the primary findings.

#### **Informants**

The research involved 12 participants, selected purposively based on their roles and relevance to the research focus. The informants consisted of:

1. The District Head
2. The District Secretary
3. Civil servants (ASN staff)
4. Community members receiving public services

The inclusion of both internal officials and external service users ensures data triangulation and provides a more balanced perspective on work culture and service quality.

#### **Data Collection Techniques**

Data were collected through three main techniques:

##### **Observation**

The researcher conducted direct observations of daily work activities, attendance patterns, service interactions,

and organizational routines to understand actual behavior in its natural setting.

##### **In-depth Interviews**

Semi-structured interviews were conducted to explore informants' experiences, perceptions, and evaluations regarding work discipline and service performance.

##### **Documentation**

Official records and administrative documents were reviewed to obtain formal evidence and institutional data that support field findings.

##### **Data Analysis Technique**

Data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles and Huberman, which consists of three interconnected stages:

##### **Data Reduction**

The researcher selected, focused, simplified, and organized raw data obtained from the field. Irrelevant information was discarded, while significant findings related to work culture and service quality were categorized.

##### **Data Display**

The reduced data were presented in the form of narrative descriptions, matrices, and thematic groupings to facilitate interpretation and pattern identification.

##### **Conclusion Drawing and Verification**

Conclusions were drawn continuously throughout the research process. Findings were verified by re-checking field data, comparing multiple sources (triangulation), and ensuring consistency between interviews, observations, and documentation

## **RESULTS**

### **Time Discipline**

The research findings indicate that time discipline among Civil Servants (ASN) in Pauh District has not been consistently implemented. Based on observations and in-depth interviews, several issues were identified:

1. Tardiness in arriving at work

2. Extended break periods
3. Leaving work before official working hours end
4. Inadequate supervision of attendance

These findings suggest that time discipline has not yet been internalized as a core value within the work culture, but rather remains merely an administrative obligation. Several informants stated that leadership supervision has not been conducted consistently and that sanctions for violations have not been firmly enforced.

Conceptually, time discipline is a fundamental indicator of bureaucratic professionalism. When working hours are not respected as a commitment to public service, a perception may arise that serving the public is not the primary priority. This condition directly affects delays in administrative processes and leads to declining public satisfaction.

#### **Service Professionalism**

Service professionalism has not fully reflected high-quality public service standards. The findings reveal:

1. Service attitudes that are not consistently friendly
2. Lack of initiative in assisting citizens to understand procedures
3. A procedural orientation rather than a solution-oriented approach

Some community members reported that although services were provided in accordance with procedures, they lacked empathy and responsiveness in resolving administrative issues. Civil servants tended to focus on document completeness rather than ensuring that citizens' needs were genuinely fulfilled.

This condition indicates that the prevailing work culture still positions procedures as the ultimate goal rather than as instruments to achieve public satisfaction. Professionalism is not yet fully grounded in service-oriented values but

remains centered on administrative compliance.

#### **Public Communication**

Communication between civil servants and the community remains suboptimal in several aspects:

1. Unclear delivery of information
2. Limited socialization of new policies
3. Communication styles that are overly formal and less persuasive

Members of the public continue to experience confusion regarding administrative requirements and service procedures. Information is not entirely transparent or easily understood. One-way communication patterns demonstrate that the paradigm of participatory public service has not been fully realized.

Within the framework of work culture, communication reflects openness and respect for citizens. Ineffective communication suggests that organizational culture has not fully internalized dialogic service principles.

#### **Accountability**

The accountability aspect reveals several weaknesses:

1. Documentation of responsibility is not systematically organized
2. Performance evaluation is not conducted in measurable terms
3. Public feedback mechanisms are not optimally managed

Accountability is still perceived primarily as administrative reporting rather than as a moral and professional commitment to public service. In modern governance paradigms, accountability represents a central indicator of institutional legitimacy.

When accountability documentation is not systematically maintained, it becomes difficult to measure performance and implement continuous improvement.

## **DISCUSSION**

The findings demonstrate that the work culture of Civil Servants in Pauh District is not yet fully aligned with the New

Public Service (NPS) paradigm developed by Denhardt and Denhardt. NPS emphasizes that bureaucracy must serve citizens democratically, participatively, and accountably.

### **Misalignment with the Principle of "Serving Citizens, Not Customers"**

The principle of "Serving Citizens, Not Customers" in the New Public Service (NPS) framework emphasizes that citizens are not merely service recipients, but rights-bearing members of a democratic community. Public officials are therefore expected to facilitate participation, protect public interest, and ensure fairness not simply complete administrative transactions efficiently.

In the context of this study, the findings show several concrete forms of misalignment with this principle:

#### **Procedural Orientation Over Substantive Outcomes**

Service delivery in Pauh Sub-district tends to prioritize procedural compliance rather than substantive problem resolution. Officers focus on whether documents meet formal requirements instead of ensuring that citizens fully understand the process or successfully resolve their administrative issues.

This reflects a compliance-driven mindset, where fulfilling internal rules becomes the primary goal, rather than achieving meaningful service outcomes for citizens. In the NPS perspective, procedures are instruments to serve public interest-not ends in themselves.

#### **Limited Recognition of Citizens as Rights Holders**

The interaction between ASN and the public often positions citizens as applicants who must adjust to bureaucratic rules, rather than as rights holders entitled to clear, fair, and accessible services.

Indicators of this misalignment include:

1. Minimal explanation of procedures unless explicitly requested
2. Limited initiative to assist vulnerable or less-informed citizens
3. Lack of proactive guidance when documents are incomplete

Such patterns suggest that the service culture remains hierarchical. Citizens are treated as subjects navigating bureaucracy rather than as partners in governance.

#### **One-Way Communication**

The communication pattern observed is predominantly formal and one-directional. Information flows from officer to citizen without sufficient dialogue or feedback mechanisms.

Under NPS, public service requires deliberative interaction, where citizens' concerns are acknowledged and considered. The absence of participatory communication indicates that democratic engagement in service delivery is still weak.

#### **Weak Public Interest Orientation**

The NPS principle emphasizes prioritizing collective public interest over institutional convenience. However, administrative rigidity such as strict adherence to office hours without flexibility for urgent public needs suggests that institutional routine sometimes takes precedence over community needs.

This demonstrates that the work culture remains internally oriented (bureaucratic stability) rather than externally oriented (public value creation).

#### **Accountability as Administrative Reporting**

Accountability practices are largely focused on internal documentation rather than responsiveness to citizens. The absence of structured feedback channels or systematic evaluation of citizen satisfaction indicates that accountability is perceived as hierarchical responsibility to superiors, not horizontal responsibility to the public.

The persistence of administrative-procedural patterns indicates that cultural transformation has not yet reached the level of underlying assumptions (Schein's basic assumptions). While formal regulations may reflect modern governance principles, everyday behavior still embodies traditional bureaucratic norms: hierarchy, rule-centeredness, and risk avoidance.

To align with the NPS principle of "Serving Citizens, Not Customers," transformation must involve:

1. Reframing citizens as democratic stakeholders rather than administrative applicants
2. Encouraging dialogic communication and participatory mechanisms
3. Shifting performance indicators from procedural compliance to public value outcomes
4. Strengthening ethical awareness that public office exists to serve collective interests

Without such cultural reorientation, service delivery will remain transactional and administrative, rather than democratic and citizen-centered.

### **Weak Internalization of Integrity and Discipline Values**

The weak internalization of integrity and discipline values is reflected in inconsistent time discipline within the organization. Practices such as arriving late, extending break times, or leaving before official working hours are not merely technical attendance issues; rather, they indicate that commitment to duty has not been fully embedded as a moral and professional responsibility.

From the perspective of organizational culture theory (Schein), observable behavior (artifacts) is a manifestation of espoused values and deeper basic underlying assumptions. If tardiness or minor rule violations are perceived as normal and do not generate

meaningful consequences, this suggests that, at the level of basic assumptions, the organization has not fundamentally positioned discipline and integrity as core values.

In other words, although formal regulations regarding working hours and behavioral standards may exist, these norms have not been fully internalized as shared beliefs. Discipline tends to be understood as administrative compliance rather than as an ethical obligation in delivering public service.

A permissive work culture toward minor violations carries significant long-term implications. Tolerance of small infractions can gradually evolve into acceptance of more serious deviations. When minor misconduct is left uncorrected, it creates collective justification and lowers professional standards. Over time, such normalization reshapes the organization's moral boundaries.

Within the context of public bureaucracy, this condition may result in:

1. Declining performance standards due to the absence of consistent behavioral expectations.
2. Weakening accountability, as rule violations are perceived as tolerable.
3. Erosion of institutional integrity, ultimately reducing public trust.

Integrity is not solely about avoiding major corruption or misconduct; it also involves consistency in small, everyday actions that reflect professional commitment. Time discipline, in particular, is a fundamental indicator of respect for public responsibility. When working hours are not valued as part of a public mandate, commitment to serving citizens becomes secondary.

Therefore, strengthening the internalization of integrity and discipline values requires:

1. Leadership role modeling to demonstrate professional behavior

2. Consistent implementation of reward and punishment mechanisms
3. Cultivating awareness that minor violations have cumulative cultural impacts

Performance evaluations that assess not only administrative outputs but also adherence to ethical and professional standards

Ultimately, behavioral change cannot rely solely on formal regulations; it must involve transformation at the level of values and underlying assumptions that shape organizational culture.

### **Impact on Public Service Quality**

The interaction between weak discipline, suboptimal professionalism, ineffective communication, and limited accountability creates a systemic effect on public service performance. These factors do not operate independently; rather, they reinforce one another and collectively shape the quality-of-service delivery.

### **Declining Public Satisfaction**

Public satisfaction is closely linked to citizens' experiences when interacting with government institutions. Weak discipline such as inconsistent working hours or delays in service delivery directly affects waiting times and service reliability. When professionalism is not fully demonstrated through competence, courtesy, and problem-solving ability, citizens may feel that their concerns are not taken seriously.

Ineffective communication further amplifies dissatisfaction. If information regarding procedures, requirements, or processing times is unclear, citizens are forced to repeatedly seek clarification or return with additional documents. This increases both emotional frustration and practical inconvenience.

Moreover, limited accountability mechanisms mean that complaints or feedback may not be properly recorded, evaluated, or addressed. As a result,

service deficiencies tend to persist, reinforcing negative perceptions. Over time, repeated unsatisfactory experiences accumulate and significantly reduce overall public satisfaction.

### **Delays in Administrative Processes**

Weak discipline disrupts workflow continuity. Late arrivals, extended breaks, or inconsistent attendance reduce operational efficiency and slow down document processing.

Suboptimal professionalism may also manifest in limited initiative or inadequate technical competence. When officers focus solely on procedural compliance without proactive problem-solving, even simple administrative issues can become prolonged.

Ineffective communication contributes to administrative delays when citizens submit incomplete documents due to unclear instructions. Each correction cycle extends processing time. In addition, limited accountability mechanisms make it difficult to identify bottlenecks and implement systematic improvements.

Consequently, administrative delays are not merely technical inefficiencies but reflections of deeper cultural weaknesses within the organization.

### **Reduced Public Trust**

Public trust is built on perceptions of fairness, competence, transparency, and reliability. When discipline is inconsistent, citizens may perceive the institution as unprofessional. When communication lacks clarity or empathy, they may feel undervalued. When accountability mechanisms are weak, suspicions of favoritism, negligence, or inefficiency may arise.

Trust is cumulative and relational. A single negative interaction may not immediately erode confidence, but recurring patterns of weak service performance can gradually diminish legitimacy. Once trust declines, citizens may become reluctant to engage with

public institutions, comply with regulations, or participate in governance processes.

### **Broader Cultural Implication**

A work culture that is not service-oriented tends to prioritize internal routines over community needs. Services become rule-driven rather than value-driven, reactive rather than proactive. In rapidly changing social contexts where citizens expect speed, transparency, and accessibility such rigidity limits the institution's capacity to respond effectively.

Responsiveness requires adaptability, empathy, and continuous evaluation. Without a culture that places public interest at the center, administrative systems may function formally but fail substantively. Therefore, strengthening service orientation is not merely about improving procedures; it involves transforming values, behaviors, and institutional priorities to align with dynamic community expectations.

### **Limited Micro-Level Reform**

These findings indicate that bureaucratic reform at the regulatory level has not yet been fully translated into cultural transformation at the district level. Regulatory adjustments, organizational restructuring, and the issuance of new standard operating procedures are important formal steps. However, structural change alone does not automatically reshape the attitudes, values, and daily behavior of public officials.

Behavioral change requires internalization. When reforms are limited to documents and formal compliance, civil servants may adjust administratively without fundamentally altering their work mindset. As a result, old bureaucratic habits such as rigid proceduralism, low initiative, and weak service orientation may persist despite the presence of modern regulatory frameworks.

Therefore, transforming work culture requires a comprehensive and sustained strategy, including the following elements:

### **Leadership Role Modeling**

Leadership plays a decisive role in shaping organizational culture. Leaders function as symbolic and practical references for acceptable behavior within the organization. When leaders demonstrate punctuality, professionalism, integrity, and responsiveness in service delivery, these behaviors become normative standards for subordinates.

Conversely, if leaders tolerate indiscipline or fail to embody service-oriented values, reform efforts lose credibility. Cultural transformation cannot rely solely on formal instructions; it must be reinforced through consistent example. Leadership behavior signals what the organization truly values beyond written regulations.

### **Consistent Reward and Punishment Systems**

Organizational culture is strengthened through clear and consistent consequences. A structured reward system that recognizes discipline, innovation, and service excellence reinforces positive behavior and motivates employees to align with organizational values.

Equally important is the fair and firm application of sanctions for violations. When misconduct—such as repeated tardiness or neglect of duties goes unaddressed, it normalizes deviation and weakens professional standards. Consistency in applying both rewards and sanctions ensures that organizational norms are not merely symbolic but operationally enforced.

### **Training to Enhance Public Communication Competencies**

Effective public service requires more than administrative capability; it demands strong interpersonal and communication skills. Training programs

focusing on ethical service conduct, empathy, clarity in information delivery, and participatory engagement equip civil servants with practical competencies aligned with service-oriented governance.

Such training supports cultural change by bridging the gap between normative expectations and actual service practices. Without capacity-building initiatives, calls for improved service orientation may remain rhetorical rather than actionable.

### **Performance Evaluation Based on Service Indicators**

Cultural transformation must be institutionalized through performance management systems. Evaluations should move beyond attendance records and administrative output to incorporate service-based indicators such as timeliness, citizen satisfaction, transparency, problem-solving effectiveness, and accountability.

When performance measurement reflects public service values, employees are more likely to internalize those priorities. Aligning evaluation systems with service quality reinforces the message that citizen-centered outcomes not merely procedural compliance-define organizational success.

In summary, bureaucratic reform will remain incomplete if it focuses solely on structural adjustments. Sustainable transformation requires aligning leadership behavior, incentive systems, competency development, and performance evaluation with the principles of service-oriented governance. Only through this integrated approach can regulatory reform evolve into meaningful cultural change at the district level.

### **Theoretical and Practical Implications**

Theoretically, this study reinforces the argument that work culture is a key variable in determining public service quality. From the perspective of organizational culture theory, employee

behavior is not independent; rather, it reflects the values, norms, and basic underlying assumptions embedded within the organization. When dominant values emphasize discipline, integrity, responsibility, and service orientation, work behavior tends to be professional, responsive, and accountable. Conversely, if the prevailing culture tolerates tardiness, rigid proceduralism, and low initiative, improvements in service quality will be difficult to achieve.

Thus, public service quality is shaped not only by systems, regulations, or technology, but also by the cultural framework that guides daily interactions between civil servants and citizens. Work culture functions as an informal social control mechanism that sets behavioral standards within public institutions.

Practically, the findings suggest that improving public service quality cannot rely solely on procedural reforms. Simplifying service procedures, updating standard operating procedures, or introducing digital systems are important steps; however, these measures will have limited impact if civil servants continue to operate within a conventional administrative mindset. What is required is transformation at the level of values and mindset a shift from authority- and procedure-oriented behavior toward service- and public interest-oriented governance.

The work culture of Civil Servants in Pauh District is currently in a transitional phase. Normatively, there is recognition of modern public service principles such as accountability, transparency, and participation. However, in practice, everyday behavior still reflects elements of traditional bureaucratic culture characterized by hierarchy, procedural rigidity, and defensive attitudes. This condition reveals a gap between espoused values and enacted values.

Without systematic reinforcement of discipline, integrity, and service orientation, bureaucratic reform risks stagnating at the level of formal policy. Reform may appear successful in regulatory documents, yet fail to produce meaningful change in citizens' service experiences.

Therefore, the success of bureaucratic reform ultimately depends on the institution's ability to transform work culture at a deeper level moving beyond administrative compliance toward ethical commitment and professional responsibility in serving citizens. Without change at the level of organizational values and underlying assumptions, reform efforts will remain symbolic rather than substantively impactful.

## CONCLUSION

The work culture of Civil Servants in the administration of Pauh District, Padang City, requires further improvement, particularly in the aspects of discipline, professionalism, communication, and accountability. The implementation of New Public Service principles has not been fully optimized across all service indicators.

Work culture plays a significant role in enhancing public service quality and strengthening public trust in government institutions. Therefore, systematic efforts are required through human resource development, reinforcement of integrity values, and increased community participation in the public service process.

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