

Turbulence in the Bureaucratic Environment, a Consequence of Regional Budget Efficiency in South Buton Regency

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ABSTRACT

Turbulence of the bureaucratic environment as a result of the efficiency of the public sector budget in the Regional Secretariat of South Buton Regency. The importance of this research lies in the fact that budget efficiency is not just a fiscal instrument, but also a source of environmental turbulence that has direct implications for the stability and performance of regional bureaucracies. To answer these problems, this study uses a qualitative approach based on the theory of bureaucratic environmental turbulence. Data was collected through in-depth interviews, observations, and documentation, then analyzed qualitatively through the process of reduction, presentation, and a conclusion drawn. The results of the study show that the turbulence of the bureaucratic environment is driven by budget efficiency, which is characterized by increasing economic policy uncertainty, political pressure, public and media demands, and regional fiscal limitations. This turbulence forces the bureaucracy to make rapid adaptations that are not always followed by structural readiness and organizational capacity

INTRODUCTION

One of the causes of turbulence in the bureaucratic environment is budget efficiency, especially during times of economic uncertainty and regional fiscal constraints. In the context of local government in Indonesia, budget efficiency is often positioned as a normative solution to maintain fiscal sustainability while improving the accountability of public financial management. However, behind this goal, budget efficiency policies often create complex consequences for the bureaucracy as the main actor in implementing public policies. Turbulence in the bureaucratic environment is not only at the level of political and social pressures but also in bureaucratic performance.

Environmental turbulence refers to unpredictable and dynamic changes in an organization's external environment, which can significantly impact its strategy, operations, and overall performance (Mbabu & Abong'o, 2025). Therefore, organizations experiencing environmental turbulence must continuously adapt, innovate, and restructure their strategies to cope with the rapid pace of change (Junni et al., 2013). Bureaucratic turbulence (Micacchi et al., 2025) makes traditional bureaucratic structures difficult to adapt because they are overly focused on stability and control. Related to environmental turbulence (Migchelbrink & Walle, 2019), turbulence has passed, and robust governance is needed to balance the need for bureaucratic stability with the ability to innovate and adapt to rapidly changing environments.

The context of public administration indicates that public organizations do not operate under stable and linear conditions but rather exist in a dynamic and often turbulent environment. (Boyne et al., 2009) assert that environmental turbulence arises when organizations face policy changes, political pressures, and significant resource uncertainties. In such situations, bureaucracy is required to adapt quickly, even though its structures and procedures are fundamentally designed for stability and certainty, as depicted in the Weberian bureaucracy model (Beetham, 1996; Almhairat, 2025).

Budget efficiency policies reinforce these turbulent conditions, especially in local governments that have limited fiscal capacity and high dependence on transfers from the central government. Changes in budget instructions from the central and provincial authorities, political pressure from local leaders, as well as demands from the public and media create a bureaucratic environment full of uncertainty (Agus et al., 2025) (Christopher Ansell & Torfing, 2022). This situation places the bureaucracy in a dilemma between maintaining compliance with efficiency policies and sustaining the quality of public services.

Budget efficiency policies reinforce these turbulent conditions, especially in local governments that have limited fiscal capacity and high dependence on transfers from the central government. Changes in budget instructions from central and provincial authorities, political pressure from local leaders, as well as demands from the public and media, create a bureaucratic environment full of uncertainty (Agus et al., 2025) (Christopher Ansell & Torfing, 2022). This situation places the bureaucracy in a dilemma between maintaining compliance with efficiency policies and sustaining the quality of public services.

In addition, environmental turbulence is an important factor that affects the stability and performance of public organizations. (Kurnia et al., 2022) emphasized that increasing environmental turbulence demands a bureaucratic transformation of local governments towards a more agile and adaptive model. However, the study is still conceptual and emphasizes turbulence due to crises and disasters, so it has not empirically examined turbulence stemming from routine fiscal policies, such as regional budget efficiency. Meanwhile, Fan & Pan (2023) empirically demonstrated that environmental turbulence moderates the relationship between organizational resources and e-government performance, but turbulence is positioned as a technical variable and has not been analyzed as a bureaucratic organizational phenomenon that affects structural stability and the behavior of regional government officials. According to (Muhammad & Nasution, 2022), turbulence occurs during transitional periods as a process of shifting work culture, behavior, and mindset changes among civil servants.

On the other hand, research (Lazimatul et al., 2022) shows that environmental turbulence, self-esteem, and budget pressure simultaneously have a significant effect on budget slack. (Nashiruddin, 2019); (Samson, 2015) consistently indicates that environmental turbulence drives organizations to adapt. However, these studies focus on the industrial and business sectors. This suggests that although the concepts and findings concerning environmental turbulence have developed, their application in the context of local government bureaucracy, particularly those driven by regional budget efficiency, is still very limited.

Based on this gap, it can be concluded that there has not yet been research that specifically and empirically examines the environmental turbulence of bureaucracy due to regional budget efficiency and its impact on the stability of local government bureaucracy. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by analyzing the dynamics of bureaucratic environmental turbulence caused by budget efficiency in South Buton Regency, with the expectation that it can provide empirical contributions to the development of public administration literature and local government governance in Indonesia (Kurnia et al., 2022).

The urgency of this research is increasingly growing given the Indonesian bureaucratic landscape, which continues to face various changes and multidimensional challenges, ranging from technological disruptions, shifts in public expectations, to global economic and environmental crises. In this uncertain and dynamic context, the bureaucracy's ability to adapt and remain efficient in budget management becomes crucial for the sustainability of public services and the achievement of national development goals. Budget efficiency policies, which are often designed to optimize the use of public resources, can create complex ripple effects on organizational structure, work culture, decision-making patterns, and the bureaucracy's interactions with external stakeholders. (Quinn, 2011) explains that turbulence is an external environment that is highly dynamic, complex, and uncertain, which can trigger internal changes in an organization's structure, processes, and culture. Therefore, in-depth research on bureaucratic turbulence due to budget efficiency becomes

highly relevant to address. This understanding is not only theoretically important for enriching the body of public administration knowledge but also practically crucial for policymakers in designing budget efficiency strategies that are more robust and adaptive to the realities of contemporary bureaucracy.

The novelty of this research lies in its analytical focus, which positions bureaucratic environmental turbulence as a primary consequence of budget efficiency. This study does not merely view efficiency as a fiscal technical issue but as a phenomenon that triggers instability in the bureaucratic work environment.

Therefore, by conducting a study at the Regional Secretariat of South Buton Regency, this research aims to fill a gap in empirical studies on how local bureaucracy copes with environmental turbulence caused by budget efficiency. Based on this background, this study aims to analyze the activities, characteristics of turbulence before and after, as well as the implications of bureaucratic environmental turbulence arising as a result of budget efficiency policies at the Regional Secretariat of South Buton Regency.

LITERATURE RIVIEW

1. Organizational Turbulence

Organizational turbulence refers to conditions of instability, rapid change, and uncertainty faced by an organization. In this context, turbulence is not always negative, but it often requires adaptation and strategic responses from management to maintain the continuity and effectiveness of the organization. (Quinn, 2011) defines turbulence as an external environment that is highly dynamic, complex, and uncertain, which can trigger internal changes in the structure, processes, and culture of the organization. This often arises due to technological changes, intense market competition, regulatory shifts, or economic uncertainty.

Furthermore, Romanelli, 1994) stated that organizational turbulence can occur when an organization's strategy, structure, and processes are no longer aligned with the demands of the external environment. This condition forces the organization to carry out an "organizational revolution" or fundamental changes to return to equilibrium and maintain its competitiveness. Environmental turbulence, as noted by Milliken, 1987), can create perceptual uncertainty among managers, which in turn affects decision-making and operational stability. Organizations experiencing high turbulence often face challenges in long-term planning, resource allocation, and maintaining employee morale.

Furthermore, the study of organizational identity provides an additional dimension in understanding organizational behavior when facing turbulence. A strong and well-defined organizational identity serves as an anchor in the adaptation process, as it provides direction and meaning to the changes that occur. However, the strength of identity must be demonstrated; organizations that are too rigid in maintaining their identity risk being unable to adapt effectively (Gioia et al., 2013). In the context of public bureaucracy, (Staroňová & Rybář, 2025) emphasize that overly hierarchical bureaucratic structures and

identities that are unresponsive to external demands can exacerbate the impact of turbulence, including failures in policy reform and budgeting systems.

The structural and cultural aspects of an organization also make a significant contribution in responding to environmental turbulence. (Rahimpour & Fattahi, 2025) indicate that in the context of developing countries, their quality tends to become a source of institutional rigidity that hinders a quick response to external changes.

2. Bureaucracy

Bureaucracy, as conceptualized by Weber (Almhairat, 2025), is a form of organization characterized by a clear hierarchy, a defined division of labor, formal rules, impersonality, and promotion based on technical competence. Its purpose is to ensure efficiency, predictability, and fairness in the execution of administrative and public tasks. Bureaucracy is designed to minimize uncertainty and personal bias, so that actions taken can be reliable and accountable.

However, criticism of bureaucracy often highlights the potential for rigidity, slow response to change, and a tendency to prioritize compliance with rules over effectiveness. (Scott & Davis, 2007) argue that although bureaucracy offers stability, it can be slow to adapt to rapidly changing environments, which can pose a significant challenge when faced with turbulence. In a dynamic environment, rigid bureaucratic structures can hinder innovation and the organization's ability to respond effectively to new demands.

3. Budget Efficiency Policy

The budget efficiency policy refers to a series of actions and decisions taken by the government or organizational management to optimize the use of financial resources in order to achieve maximum results at minimal cost. In the public sector, this policy often aims to reduce waste, increase productivity, and ensure that public funds are allocated strategically to key priorities (Hood, 1991). The goal is to enhance the effectiveness of programs and public services while maintaining fiscal accountability.

The implementation of budget efficiency policies in the public sector is a strategic response to fiscal pressures and increasing demands for transparency and accountability in the use of public resources. However, this policy often creates new challenges within organizations, particularly concerning internal stability and employee well-being. Budget efficiency applied without careful managerial consideration can lead to decreased motivation, the emergence of resistance to change, and a deterioration in the quality of services provided to the public (Nkone et al., 2025).

In an empirical study on government institutions in the health sector, it was found that employee morale plays an important role in the successful implementation of strategic plans. Employees who feel pressured due to budget cuts show decreased engagement, resistance to new initiatives, and lower job satisfaction, which directly affects organizational effectiveness (Nkone et al., 2025). These findings are in line with the perspective of (Ashill et al., 2008), which states that a decline in organizational support for employee well-being

due to efficiency policies can increase turnover intensity, disrupt service recovery processes, and hinder frontline employee performance.

A number of contemporary studies indicate that the implementation of budget efficiency can generate resistance within organizations, especially when the budget-cutting process is carried out top-down without involving operational-level actors. This can create perceptions of unfairness, threaten jobs, and reduce the sense of ownership over the policies made by organizational leaders.

The relationship between environmental turbulence, bureaucracy, and budget efficiency policies is very close in the context of the Regional Secretariat of South Buton Regency. Environmental turbulence caused by changes in central government policies or societal demands can prompt local governments to adopt budget efficiency policies to ensure fiscal sustainability. However, bureaucracy as an organizational structure, with its inherently stable characteristics, may struggle to respond adaptively to environmental changes and sudden demands for budget efficiency policies. This interconnectedness creates the potential for conflict between the need for efficiency, the structural rigidity of bureaucracy, and the dynamics of the external environment, which collectively can create conditions of organizational turbulence within the Regional Secretariat.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative approach; this design was chosen because it is capable of deeply exploring social and organizational phenomena in a natural context (Moleong, 2016). The research location is the Regional Secretariat of South Buton Regency, which serves as the center for coordinating regional government administration and controlling cross-departmental budget policies. The research subjects include regional leaders, structural officials, and staff directly involved in the planning, management, and implementation of the budget. The informants in this study represent all departmental units within the South Buton regional secretariat office. Data collection techniques were conducted through in-depth interviews to gain an understanding of informants' experiences and perceptions regarding the impact of budget efficiency policies. Non-participatory observation was used to capture the dynamics of bureaucratic work, while documentation included performance reports, budget documents, and related regulations.

Data analysis was conducted qualitatively through the stages of data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions. The validity of the data was maintained through source and method triangulation, so that the research findings have a high level of reliability and reflect empirical conditions in the field (Creswell, 2007).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Research results show that budget efficiency policies have created bureaucratic turbulence in the Regional Secretariat of South Buton Regency. This turbulence is initially seen from the increasing policy uncertainty due to frequent changes in budget instructions from the central and provincial

governments. This situation forces local bureaucracy to continuously adjust planning and program implementation, often within a limited timeframe. In addition, the budget planning and implementation process becomes less stable and requires the organization to work adaptively within a limited period. Furthermore, political pressure from local leaders and increased public demands as well as media scrutiny strengthen the need for transparency and accountability in budget management. The environmental turbulence is further reinforced by the region's fiscal limitations, marked by low Local Own-Source Revenue and high dependence on transfers from the central government.

Political pressure from regional leaders also intensifies the turbulence within the bureaucratic environment. Budget priority decisions are often influenced by short-term political agendas, causing the bureaucracy to shift previously planned programs. This finding aligns with Staroňová & Rybář (2025) that in high-level bureaucracies, the autonomy of senior civil officials often becomes a tug-of-war arena between the bureaucracy and political actors, potentially triggering conflicts of interest in budgetary reform. Furthermore, Rahimpour & Fattahi (2025) note that bureaucracies in developing countries are highly vulnerable to political instability, which hampers the effective implementation of public financial reform.

On the other hand, public demands and media attention push the bureaucracy to work more transparently and accountably. Although these demands are positive, under conditions of limited budgets, the bureaucracy faces dual pressures between meeting public expectations and complying with efficiency policies. This situation creates a high-pressure work environment and increases the risk of organizational burnout.

Regional fiscal limitations and dependence on central transfers further narrow the bureaucracy's room for maneuver. When regional revenues are unstable and central transfers are delayed, the bureaucracy must postpone or adjust program implementation. These findings reinforce the argument (Christopher Ansell & Torfing, 2022) that modern bureaucracy operates in an increasingly complex and turbulent environment, thus requiring adaptive and robust governance.

Furthermore, the turbulence in the bureaucratic environment caused by budget efficiency policies cannot be separated from the nature of regional governance, which is still heavily reliant on external directives. Fiscal dependence on transfers from the central and provincial governments places local bureaucracy in a position vulnerable to sudden policy changes. When efficiency policies are implemented without adequate room for adaptation, the bureaucracy is forced to adjust both planning and program implementation simultaneously, thereby increasing the level of uncertainty in the organizational work environment.

Table 1. Bureaucratic Environment Turbulence Due to Budget Efficiency Policies

Program/ Activity	Conditions Before Budget Efficiency	Condition After Budget Efficiency	Impact on Workload
Cross-departmental coordination meeting	Conducted regularly in person with full budget support	Frequency reduced and shifted to online or informal coordination	The workload increases as coordination is carried out in parallel with other tasks
Business trips and monitoring	Field monitoring is carried out periodically by several teams	Monitoring is limited to priority activities and carried out by a limited number of personnel	The workload is concentrated on a few employees with dual responsibilities
Protocol and ceremonial activities	Supported by a dedicated team with specific task assignments	The team was downsized and one employee handled several functions at once	There is a work overload and an increase in physical and mental stress
Planning and reporting administration	The administrative process is divided among subsections	The process is consolidated and centralized in a specific unit	Administrative burden has increased and working hours have become longer
Maintenance of infrastructure	Done regularly and preventively	Only done in case of emergency	Reactive workload increases and reduces long-term efficiency

In such conditions, bureaucracy tends to develop reactive rather than proactive work patterns. This aligns with the view of Christopher Ansell (2025), who stated that in turbulent environments, public organizations often focus more on survival efforts rather than long-term planning. In the Regional Secretariat of South Buton Regency, responses to budget efficiency are mostly manifested in the form of quick adjustments to budget and activity priorities, rather than in the formulation of structured organizational adaptation strategies. As a result, the bureaucracy operates under time and resource constraints, which in turn increases the risk of non-fiscal inefficiencies, such as organizational fatigue and decreased coordination quality.

Environmental turbulence also reflects the tension between administrative rationality and political rationality. On one hand, the bureaucracy is required to implement efficiency policies in a disciplined and accountable manner. On the other hand, political pressure from regional leaders to accommodate certain priority agendas often forces the bureaucracy to make ad hoc adjustments. This situation supports the findings of (Rahimpour & Fattahi, 2025) that bureaucracy

in developing countries is often caught in a tug-of-war between administrative interests and political interests, especially in the budgeting process.

In addition to political pressure, public and media demands also reinforce the turbulence in the bureaucratic environment. Increasing transparency and accountability encourage the bureaucracy to be more cautious in budget usage, but in a situation of tight efficiency, these demands also limit the discretion of officials. This situation creates a bureaucracy paradox, where officials are expected to work more accountably with increasingly limited resources. This phenomenon strengthens the argument (Vigoda-Gadot & Mizrahi, 2014) regarding the bureaucracy-democracy paradox in turbulent situations, where democratic pressures can actually increase the burden on public organizations. In the context of public administration, bureaucratic environmental turbulence arises not only from political pressure, but also from increasingly strong public and media demands for government transparency and accountability (Kusnadi, 2011). These pressures reflect the character of good governance, where the public and media act as watchdogs that push the bureaucracy to be more open and responsible in budget management and service delivery (Kusnadi, 2025). With increased access to information and public oversight, the bureaucracy is forced to meet higher accountability standards, although on the other hand, this can potentially narrow the discretion space for officials in situations of tight resource efficiency. This aligns with findings that bureaucratic transparency plays an important role in enhancing public trust while also creating new challenges for administrative decision-making amid fiscal constraints (Kusnadi, 2025).

Furthermore, the pressure arising from public and media demands can indeed strengthen accountability mechanisms, but at the same time, it creates a bureaucratic paradox. Researchers Vigoda-Gadot & Mizrahi (2014) suggest that in turbulent democratic situations, democratic pressures often generate new complexities in bureaucratic performance: the pressure to be more accountable and responsive increases, yet the bureaucracy also faces heavier administrative burdens when resources are limited or efficiency policies are imposed without the support of adaptive governance. This phenomenon illustrates how the dynamics of democracy not only strengthen control mechanisms but can also increase the risks to public organizations if not accompanied by adequate risk management and adaptive mechanisms.

Policy uncertainty, political pressure, and fiscal constraints reflect the multidimensional nature of bureaucratic turbulence into a condition where internal and external pressures interact within the context of public administration. Theoretically, the public governance framework emphasizes the need for adaptive managerial mechanisms capable of managing this complexity, for example through participatory planning, effective performance measurement systems, and communication networks between the bureaucracy and stakeholders. Without such a framework, budget efficiency policies that focus solely on reducing fiscal costs have the potential to create more complex organizational problems, including low public responsiveness and declining policy legitimacy in the eyes of society. ...

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Furthermore, public and media pressure reinforces the external dimension of bureaucratic turbulence through intensive and continuous oversight mechanisms. (C Ansell & Torfing, 2022) emphasize that increased public participation and oversight in democratic governance create governance turbulence, which is a condition in which the bureaucracy must respond to demands that are often contradictory at the same time. In the context of this study, high public accountability demands run parallel with budget efficiency policies that constrain organizational capacity, thereby increasing internal bureaucratic tension. This pressure not only raises the administrative workload but also increases the risk of decision paralysis, where officials tend to act defensively and avoid innovation. This situation strengthens the argument that bureaucratic turbulence is systemic and produced by the interaction between democratic dynamics and the structural limitations of public organizations. Therefore, transparency and accountability in a turbulent environment require institutional buffering mechanisms so as not to transform into sources of organizational dysfunction.

These findings are consistent with and at the same time expand the concept of the bureaucracy–democracy paradox proposed by (Vigoda-Gadot & Mizrahi, 2014), where increasing democratic pressures can actually exacerbate the burden on bureaucracy in unstable environmental conditions. In turbulent situations, bureaucracy faces not only demands for performance and accountability but also has to manage public expectations that often do not align with the available fiscal and administrative capacity. Budget efficiency measures designed to address fiscal issues, in practice, have the potential to shift these pressures to the organizational and individual levels of personnel.

This indicates that bureaucratic turbulence has a ripple effect, from macro-level policy to micro-level administrative practices. Thus, efficiency policies that are insensitive to the dynamics of environmental turbulence risk creating long-term organizational instability.

From the perspective of public organization theory, environmental turbulence demands higher adaptive capacity from the bureaucracy compared to a stable environment. (Osborne, 2010) emphasizes that bureaucracy in the context of new public governance must be able to operate in complex, plural, and dynamic environments, where hierarchical control is no longer sufficient. Another important aspect to understand is that bureaucratic environmental turbulence will continue to increase the tension between accountability demands and resource limitations. Under such conditions, bureaucracy tends to resort to rigid procedural compliance as a self-protection mechanism, which can actually reduce the quality of public services. Therefore, bureaucratic turbulence should be understood as a signal of the need for governance reform, rather than merely a temporary consequence of efficiency policies. It is further emphasized that the turbulence in the bureaucratic environment resulting from budget efficiency policies is multidimensional, systemic, and ongoing. Policy uncertainty, political pressure, the intensity of public oversight, and fiscal limitations interact to create a bureaucratic work environment that is high-risk and full of tension. Without an integrated turbulence management strategy, efficiency policies have the potential to create organizational instability that is more serious than the fiscal problems they aim to address. Therefore, understanding and managing turbulence in the bureaucratic environment becomes an important prerequisite in designing budget efficiency policies that are not only economically rational but also institutionally sustainable and democratic.

Overall, the results of this study indicate that budget efficiency policies not only impact fiscal aspects but also shape a turbulent bureaucratic environment. Such turbulence has direct implications for organizational stability, bureaucratic adaptive capacity, and the sustainability of public services.

CONCLUSION

This study emphasizes that budget efficiency is not merely a fiscal control instrument, but a major trigger of bureaucratic turbulence that is systemic and ongoing, where political pressure, public and media demands, policy uncertainties, and resource limitations interact simultaneously and magnify the instability of public organizations. It is asserted that bureaucratic turbulence does not merely emerge as a side effect of policy, but as a new structural condition that shapes how bureaucracy operates, makes decisions, and accounts for its performance. In this context, the bureaucracy faces a performance paradox, namely being required to be increasingly transparent and accountable amid shrinking discretion and operational capacity, which ultimately drives defensive administrative behavior and hinders public service innovation. This finding broadens the perspective of public administration by

showing that failing to manage turbulence can shift issues of fiscal efficiency into more complex and long-term institutional crises. Therefore, the success of budget efficiency policies is largely determined by the government's ability to build adaptive governance that is not only focused on budget savings but also on strategically managing bureaucratic environmental turbulence to maintain organizational performance and the quality of democracy.

FURTHER STUDY

This research still has limitations so that further research is needed related to the topic of Turbulence in the Bureaucratic Environment, a Consequence of Regional Budget Efficiency in order to perfect this research and increase insight for readers.

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