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IMPLEMENTATION OF THE ASSESSMENT CENTER POLICY IN THE PROVINCIAL GOVERNMENT OF CENTRAL SULAWESI

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ABSTRACT

In the context of bureaucratic reform and the implementation of a merit-based civil service system, competency assessment through Assessment Centers has become a strategic instrument to ensure objectivity in the development and promotion of public officials. However, policy implementation at the regional level continues to face significant challenges, particularly in terms of resource and institutional readiness. This study aims to analyze the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi using George C. Edward III's policy implementation model, which includes communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Academically, this study contributes to the development of public policy implementation literature, particularly in the field of merit-based public human resource management. Practically, it provides an evaluative basis for improving the effectiveness of Assessment Center implementation at the regional level. This research employs a qualitative descriptive approach, with the unit of analysis focused on the implementation of the Assessment Center at the Competency Assessment Unit (UPT Penkompeg) of the Regional Personnel Agency (BKD) of Central Sulawesi Province. Data were collected through interviews, observations, and documentation involving officials, assessors, and administrative staff. The findings indicate that communication, disposition, and bureaucratic structure have been implemented effectively. However, resources remain the primary constraint, reflected in the limited number of assessors and the absence of a permanent Assessment Center facility. Theoretically, this study highlights the critical role of resources as a determining factor in policy implementation. Practically, it underscores the need to strengthen human resource capacity and infrastructure to ensure sustainable and effective implementation.

INTRODUCTION

The pursuit of a professional, accountable, and high-performing civil service has become a central pillar of bureaucratic reform in many countries, including Indonesia. Within this broader reform agenda, the adoption of a merit-based system in public human resource management is widely recognized as a critical mechanism to ensure that recruitment, promotion, and placement decisions are based on competence, qualifications, and performance rather than personal or political considerations.(Dapena Gómez, 2026) One of the key instruments designed to operationalize the merit system is the Assessment Center, a competency-based evaluation method that integrates multiple assessment techniques to measure and predict an individual's suitability for specific positions (Thornton III et al., 2019).

In the Indonesian context, the implementation of Assessment Centers has developed significantly over the past two decades, particularly within government institutions, state-owned enterprises, and certain

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private organizations. This development reflects increasing awareness of the importance of objective and systematic competency assessment in supporting organizational effectiveness and strategic human resource planning. The legal foundation for this system is clearly articulated in Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN), which mandates that civil servant management must be based on a merit system. This is further reinforced by the Regulation of the National Civil Service Agency (Badan Kepegawaian Negara/BKN) Number 26 of 2019, which defines the Assessment Center as a standardized method utilizing multiple assessment tools and multiple assessors to evaluate competencies and predict employee performance.

Despite the strong regulatory framework and growing institutional adoption, the practical implementation of Assessment Centers in Indonesia remains uneven, particularly at the regional government level. While some institutions have successfully integrated Assessment Centers into their talent management systems, others continue to face significant challenges, including limited human resources, inadequate infrastructure, and varying levels of adherence to established standards and ethical guidelines. In many cases, Assessment Centers are still heavily dependent on external service providers, whose quality and compliance with national standards may differ substantially. This variability raises important concerns regarding the consistency, reliability, and overall effectiveness of competency assessments in supporting merit-based personnel decisions(Kim & Kim, 2024).

A number of previous studies have highlighted the strategic role of Assessment Centers in improving organizational performance, enhancing leadership development, and ensuring transparency in personnel management. These studies generally conclude that Assessment Centers can reduce subjectivity and bias in decision-making processes while providing valuable data for employee development and succession planning(Lievens & Thornton III, 2017). However, much of the existing literature tends to focus on conceptual discussions or best practices, with limited empirical investigation into how Assessment Center policies are implemented in specific institutional contexts, particularly within subnational governments. Furthermore, prior research often examines the outcomes of competency assessments without sufficiently analyzing the policy implementation process that underpins these outcomes(Tummers & Knies, 2016).

This gap in the literature is significant because the success of any public policy, including the Assessment Center policy, is not determined solely by its design or intended objectives, but also by how effectively it is implemented. Implementation challenges such as communication breakdowns, insufficient resources, lack of commitment among implementers, and bureaucratic inefficiencies can substantially undermine policy effectiveness. Therefore, there is a need for a more comprehensive and systematic analysis of Assessment Center implementation that takes into account these critical dimensions(Howlett et al., 1995).

In this regard, George C. Edward III's policy implementation model offers a useful analytical framework. The model identifies four key variables that influence policy implementation success: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Communication refers to the clarity and consistency of information transmitted among stakeholders; resources include human, financial, and physical capacities required for implementation; disposition relates to the attitudes and commitment of implementers; and bureaucratic structure encompasses organizational arrangements and standard operating procedures that guide implementation processes(Hill & Hupe, 2021). By applying this model, this study seeks to provide a more nuanced understanding of the factors that facilitate or hinder the effective implementation of Assessment Center policies.

The Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi presents an important case for examining these issues. As one of Indonesia's regional governments that has formally adopted the Assessment Center system, it holds the authority to conduct competency assessments for

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civil servants, particularly for positions within the Senior Executive Service (Jabatan Pimpinan Tinggi Pratama). The implementation of this system is carried out through the Competency Assessment Unit (UPT Penilaian Kompetensi Kepegawaian/Penkompeg) under the Regional Personnel Agency (Badan Kepegawaian Daerah/BKD). This unit is responsible for organizing and conducting assessments, as well as providing recommendations for personnel placement and development.

However, despite the existence of this institutional framework, there are indications that the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in Central Sulawesi has not yet achieved optimal results. Reports of irregularities in personnel appointments, including allegations of position trading, suggest that merit-based principles may not be fully realized in practice. For example, investigations conducted by the provincial government have uncovered instances of alleged abuse of authority in the appointment of officials, raising questions about the effectiveness and integrity of the assessment process. Such issues highlight the importance of examining not only whether Assessment Centers exist, but also how they function in practice and to what extent they contribute to the realization of a clean and professional bureaucracy.

Based on these considerations, this study seeks to address the following research problem: to what extent has the Assessment Center policy been effectively implemented in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi, and what factors influence its implementation? More specifically, this study aims to analyze the implementation process using Edward III's framework, with a focus on identifying strengths and weaknesses across the dimensions of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure.

The unit of analysis in this study is the implementation of the Assessment Center policy within the Competency Assessment Unit (UPT Penkompeg) of the Regional Personnel Agency (BKD) of Central Sulawesi Province. By focusing on this unit, the study is able to capture the operational dynamics of policy implementation, including interactions among implementers, institutional arrangements, and practical constraints encountered in the field.

Academically, this study contributes to the literature on public policy implementation by providing empirical evidence from a subnational context, which remains underexplored in existing research. It also enriches the application of Edward III's model by demonstrating how different dimensions of implementation interact in shaping policy outcomes, particularly in the field of public human resource management. Practically, the findings of this study are expected to offer valuable insights for policymakers and practitioners in improving the design and implementation of Assessment Centers, not only in Central Sulawesi but also in other regional governments facing similar challenges.

Finally, this article is organized into several sections. Following this introduction, the next section presents the research methodology, including the research design, data collection techniques, and analytical approach. The subsequent section discusses the findings and analysis of policy implementation based on Edward III's framework. The article concludes with a summary of key findings, theoretical contributions, and practical implications for strengthening merit-based civil service management.

METHOD

This study employs a qualitative approach with a case study design to analyze the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi. This approach is intended to provide an in-depth understanding of processes, experiences, and institutional dynamics within their real-life context, particularly within the Competency Assessment Unit (UPT Penilaian Kompetensi Kepegawaian/Penkompeg) under the Regional Personnel Agency (BKD). The research location was selected because this unit holds formal authority in conducting competency assessments for civil servants, making it a relevant unit of analysis.

Informants were selected using purposive sampling, focusing on individuals who possess

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direct knowledge and involvement in the implementation of the Assessment Center policy. The study involved three key informants: (1) the Head of the Testing and Assessment Section, (2) the Head of the Interagency Relations Section, and (3) an Apparatus Human Resource Assessor. These informants were chosen due to their strategic roles in planning, coordinating, and implementing competency assessment activities.

The data sources in this study consist of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth, semi-structured interviews with the informants, allowing for comprehensive exploration of their perspectives and experiences related to policy implementation. Secondary data were collected from official documents, including Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), internal reports, relevant regulations, and other supporting documents related to the implementation of the Assessment Center.

Field observations were also conducted to complement the data. The researcher directly observed the Assessment Center implementation process, working environment, coordination practices among implementers, and the utilization of facilities and infrastructure within the UPT Penkompeg. These observations aimed to provide a factual description and to verify the consistency between interview data and actual conditions in the field.

Data analysis was carried out using an interactive model consisting of three stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. During the data reduction stage, all data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation were coded and categorized based on the four dimensions of George C. Edward III's policy implementation model: communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. The data were then presented in a systematic narrative to facilitate interpretation. Finally, conclusions were drawn by identifying patterns, relationships, and key themes related to the effectiveness of policy implementation.

To ensure data validity, this study applied triangulation techniques. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from different informants, while method triangulation was performed by cross-checking data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, member checking was conducted by confirming the findings with the informants to ensure the accuracy and credibility of the data interpretation.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Implementation of the Assessment Center Policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi

The implementation of the Assessment Center Policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi is one of the government's efforts to strengthen the management of civil servant human resources, particularly in the stages of selection and job placement.

This policy aims to ensure that candidates appointed to certain positions possess the competencies, abilities, and qualities that align with the demands of their roles within the government environment. Through this policy, it is expected that improvements in work efficiency, bureaucratic professionalism, and the quality of public services can be achieved (Pratama, 2021).

Furthermore, the Assessment Center policy is expected to guarantee that selected candidates truly meet organizational needs and are capable of addressing various challenges faced by the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi in carrying out its public service responsibilities. The Assessment Center is considered an objective method for assessing civil servant competencies through a series of standardized simulations and assessment instruments (Mahmudi & Msi, 2005).

Based on the research findings, the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi was analyzed using George C. Edward III's policy implementation theory as the analytical framework. This research approach focuses on the main question: "How is the Assessment Center policy implemented in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi?" Edward III's theory was selected because it emphasizes the factors that comprehensively influence policy implementation success (Edwards, 1980).

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According to Edward III (1980), the success of policy implementation is determined by four key factors: communication, resources, disposition (attitudes of implementers), and bureaucratic structure. These four factors serve as the foundation for analyzing the effectiveness of the Assessment Center policy implementation in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi. By examining these aspects, it is expected that a deeper understanding can be gained regarding the extent to which this policy can be optimally implemented to improve the quality of public services (Subarsono, 2015).

Communication

Communication is a critical determinant of policy implementation effectiveness, as it shapes how policy objectives are understood, interpreted, and executed by implementers and target groups(Tummers & Knies, 2016). Within George C. Edward III's framework, communication is not merely about information delivery, but also about ensuring transmission, clarity, and consistency across different administrative levels. In this study, the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi demonstrates relatively strong performance in these three dimensions, although some limitations remain, particularly at the lower bureaucratic levels.

Empirical findings indicate that communication has been institutionalized through both formal and informal mechanisms. The Competency Assessment Unit (UPT Penkompeg) actively conducts policy dissemination through coordination meetings, inter-agency communication, and direct socialization sessions. These efforts are complemented by supporting media such as brochures and technical guidelines, which aim to standardize understanding among stakeholders. As noted by one informant, policy communication is primarily focused on Senior Executive Service (JPT Pratama) positions, but gradually extended to administrator, supervisory, and functional levels. This staged communication strategy reflects an adaptive approach, prioritizing key decision-making positions before broader organizational diffusion.

However, this strategy also produces uneven levels of understanding among civil servants. While senior officials demonstrate a relatively strong grasp of the Assessment Center's objectives and procedures, lower-level employees often exhibit limited awareness. This indicates that although transmission has been effective in reaching target groups, the depth of message internalization varies significantly. Such findings suggest that communication effectiveness cannot be assessed solely by the frequency or reach of dissemination activities, but must also consider how well the information is comprehended and applied.

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support Winarno's argument that clarity and consistency are essential components of policy communication. The study shows that the content of communication in Central Sulawesi is generally consistent with national regulations, particularly Law Number 5 of 2014 and BKN Regulation Number 26 of 2019. This consistency minimizes interpretive ambiguity among implementers, especially at the managerial level. However, clarity at the operational level remains uneven, as some civil servants still perceive the Assessment Center as a procedural requirement rather than a strategic tool for competency-based management.

When compared with previous studies, the findings reveal both convergence and divergence. For instance, Ahdiyana and (Ahdiyana & Sukmawati, 2022) emphasize that repeated and structured communication significantly enhances policy understanding. This pattern is partially evident in Central Sulawesi, where continuous socialization has improved awareness over time. However, unlike their findings, this study highlights that repetition alone is insufficient when communication channels are not tailored to audience characteristics. This aligns with Zaenudin et al. (2021), who found that inconsistencies in communication strategies can limit policy acceptance, even when dissemination efforts are frequent.

Moreover, the study also resonates with (Mykhaylova, 2023) argument that communication effectiveness is often constrained by mismatches between communication

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channels and target audiences. In the case of Central Sulawesi, communication tends to rely heavily on formal bureaucratic channels, which are effective for senior officials but less accessible to lower-level staff. This creates a structural gap in communication, where information flows vertically but is not fully internalized horizontally across organizational levels.

A comparative analysis across the dimensions of Edward III's model further strengthens this interpretation. Compared to disposition and bureaucratic structure, which show strong alignment with policy objectives, communication exhibits a more nuanced pattern. On one hand, it supports implementation through consistent and structured information delivery; on the other hand, it reveals limitations in achieving uniform understanding across all actors. This indicates that communication acts as both an enabling and constraining factor, depending on how it is operationalized at different levels of the organization.

Another important finding is that communication in this context is not purely informational but also relational. The presence of an inter-agency relations unit within the UPT Penkompeg plays a strategic role in bridging communication between provincial and district/municipal governments. This institutional arrangement enhances coordination and reduces fragmentation, particularly in cross-regional assessment activities. However, its impact is still largely concentrated at the inter-organizational level, with limited spillover effects on individual-level understanding among civil servants.

The implications of these findings contribute to the broader literature on policy implementation by demonstrating that effective communication requires not only clarity and consistency, but also adaptability. In other words, communication strategies must be differentiated based on target groups, organizational levels, and contextual needs. This extends Edward III's framework by emphasizing the importance of audience-oriented communication, particularly in complex bureaucratic settings.

In conclusion, communication in the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi can be considered relatively effective, particularly in terms of transmission and consistency at the upper levels of the bureaucracy. However, its effectiveness is constrained by limited clarity and internalization at lower levels, indicating the need for more targeted and inclusive communication strategies. These findings underscore that communication is not a static variable, but a dynamic process that requires continuous adjustment to ensure that policy objectives are not only delivered but also understood and enacted by all stakeholders(Anessi-Pessina & Sicilia, 2020).

Resources

Within Edward III's framework, resources constitute a decisive variable that conditions whether policy intentions can be translated into operational outcomes(Peters, 2024). Unlike communication, which primarily affects understanding, the resource dimension determines implementation capacity (Bali et al., 2023). In the case of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi, empirical findings reveal a contrasting pattern between human resources and infrastructural support, indicating an internal imbalance that shapes overall implementation performance.

Field data show that human resources, particularly assessors, are perceived as relatively adequate in a limited operational scope. The Competency Assessment Unit currently employs six certified assessors, which, according to informants, is sufficient for handling assessments focused on Senior Executive Service (JPT Pratama) positions. This targeted utilization of assessors reflects a prioritization strategy, where limited human resources are concentrated on high-level positions that have greater strategic impact on organizational performance (McCourt, 2020). However, this adequacy is conditional rather than absolute. For administrator and supervisory positions, the provincial government still relies on external support from the National Civil Service Agency (BKN), indicating that local capacity has not yet reached full independence.

This partial dependency suggests that the issue is not merely the number of assessors, but

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also the distribution and scalability of expertise. From an analytical perspective, this finding refines the argument proposed by (Wahab, 2021), which emphasizes the importance of resource availability, and aligns with recent findings that highlight institutional capacity as a critical factor in policy implementation effectiveness. In this case, availability alone is insufficient; what matters is whether resources can be mobilized flexibly across different levels of assessment needs. Therefore, the Central Sulawesi case highlights a more nuanced dimension of resource adequacy, namely functional sufficiency versus systemic sufficiency.

In contrast to human resources, the infrastructural component presents a more critical constraint. Empirical evidence consistently shows that the absence of a dedicated Assessment Center facility significantly limits implementation effectiveness. Assessment activities are conducted in shared or adapted spaces, which may not fully meet the standardized requirements for competency-based simulations. This condition not only affects the technical quality of assessments but also introduces inefficiencies in coordination and scheduling (Moynihan & Pandey, 2021). Moreover, limited budget allocation further constrains efforts to develop permanent facilities and invest in assessment tools.

When examined in relation to existing literature, these findings both confirm and extend prior studies. Alamsyah et al. (2023) argue that human resource quality is a key driver of policy effectiveness, a claim that is partially supported in this study(Alamsyah et al., 2023). While assessor competence appears adequate, the absence of supporting infrastructure prevents this competence from being fully utilized. Similarly, Fitriyani and Salomo (2025) identify infrastructure and budget readiness as major obstacles in implementing competency-based policies(Fitriyani & Salomo, 2025). The Central Sulawesi case provides empirical validation of this argument, but also adds that infrastructural limitations can create a dependency loop, where local institutions remain reliant on external actors due to insufficient internal capacity, which is also emphasized in contemporary public management studies.

A comparative analysis across implementation dimensions further clarifies the role of resources. Compared to communication, which demonstrates relatively strong performance, and disposition, which reflects high commitment among implementers, the resource dimension emerges as the weakest link. This imbalance indicates that even when policies are well-communicated and supported by committed actors, implementation outcomes may still be suboptimal if resource constraints persist. In other words, resources function as a bottleneck variable that can override the positive effects of other dimensions (Bali et al., 2019).

Another important insight is that resource constraints are not purely technical but also institutional. Informants noted that limited budget support is partly influenced by leadership perceptions regarding the importance of the Assessment Center. This suggests that resource allocation is shaped by organizational priorities, which in turn affect policy sustainability (Béné et al., 2014). Such findings move beyond normative claims by showing that resource limitations are embedded within broader governance dynamics, including decision-making processes and institutional commitment.

From a theoretical standpoint, this study contributes to the policy implementation literature by emphasizing the interdependence between different types of resources. It demonstrates that human resources and physical infrastructure cannot be analyzed in isolation, as their interaction determines overall implementation capacity (Peters, 2021). This perspective extends Edward III's framework by highlighting internal disparities within the resource dimension itself.

In conclusion, the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in Central Sulawesi reveals a dualistic resource condition: relatively adequate human resources within a limited scope, but significantly constrained infrastructural and financial support. This imbalance reduces the overall effectiveness of policy implementation and sustains dependency on external institutions. Strengthening resource

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capacity, therefore, requires not only increasing the number of assessors, but also ensuring the availability of standardized facilities and consistent budget allocation. Such improvements are essential to transform partial implementation capacity into a more integrated and sustainable system of competency-based public human resource management (Moynihan & Pandey, 2021).

Disposition

Within Edward III's framework, disposition refers to the attitudes, commitment, and value orientation of policy implementers, which directly influence how policies are interpreted and executed in practice (Winter, 2024).Unlike communication and resources, which are structural and technical in nature, disposition operates at the behavioral and normative level, shaping the willingness of actors to implement policies faithfully.

In the context of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi, empirical findings indicate that disposition constitutes one of the strongest supporting dimensions. However, its effectiveness cannot be assessed in isolation, as it is closely linked to structural constraints identified in other dimensions.

Field data reveal that implementers demonstrate a consistently high level of commitment in carrying out the Assessment Center policy. This commitment is institutionalized through leadership support, where authority is formally delegated to the Competency Assessment Unit (UPT Penkompeg) to manage assessment processes.

More importantly, this delegation reflects not only administrative assignment but also institutional trust in the professional capacity of assessors. Such trust enables implementers to operate with a degree of discretion, which is essential for maintaining procedural integrity in competency-based assessments. In this sense, commitment is not merely an attitudinal variable but also an operational resource that sustains implementation continuity.

However, the empirical findings also suggest that disposition in this context extends beyond formal commitment to include adherence to principles of fairness and objectivity. All participants are required to follow standardized procedures, and assessment outcomes are treated as professional outputs rather than negotiable decisions. This indicates that implementers have internalized the normative goals of the policy, particularly the merit-based principle. From an analytical standpoint, this internalization distinguishes compliance-based implementation from value-driven implementation, where actors not only follow rules but also uphold the underlying purpose of the policy (Lee et al., 2020).

From a theoretical perspective, these findings support Wahab's argument that implementer attitudes are central to policy outcomes, which is also reinforced by contemporary policy implementation studies emphasizing the role of implementer motivation and behavioral alignment (Szydlowski et al., 2026). Nevertheless, this study refines that argument by demonstrating that strong disposition does not automatically translate into optimal effectiveness. While implementers exhibit high levels of integrity and professionalism, the overall performance of the policy remains constrained by limitations in resources and infrastructure. This suggests that disposition functions as an enabling condition rather than a determining factor, reinforcing the interdependence among variables within Edward III's framework (Hill & Hupe, 2002).

A comparison with previous studies reveals both alignment and divergence. Utami et al. (2023) emphasize that integrity and commitment are key drivers of good governance, particularly in public human resource management. The findings of this study confirm that strong disposition contributes to maintaining procedural accountability, even in the presence of external pressures such as allegations of irregularities. Similarly, Wibiastika and Darma (2024) argue that ethical conduct reduces the likelihood of policy deviation, a claim that is supported by the absence of formal violations in this case. However, unlike these studies, which tend to emphasize the positive role of disposition, this research highlights its limitations when not supported by adequate structural capacity, which is consistent with recent governance literature (Peters, 2021).

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This leads to an important contribution to the literature. Existing studies often treat disposition as a dominant explanatory variable, assuming that strong commitment ensures policy success. In contrast, the findings here indicate that disposition should be understood as a stabilizing factor that maintains implementation processes, rather than as a variable that guarantees outcomes. This distinction is particularly relevant in decentralized governance contexts, where institutional capacity varies significantly (Bali et al., 2019).

A comparative analysis across implementation dimensions further clarifies this position. Compared to communication, which exhibits variability in terms of message internalization, and resources, which represent the primary constraint, disposition appears relatively stable and consistent. This consistency creates a form of institutional resilience, enabling the policy to continue functioning despite structural limitations. However, it also introduces a paradox: strong commitment may obscure underlying weaknesses by sustaining implementation even when conditions are suboptimal (Winter, 2024).

Another important aspect is the role of inter-actor relationships. Effective implementation depends not only on individual attitudes but also on the quality of coordination among actors. Field findings show that horizontal coordination is generally effective, supported by shared professional norms. However, this coordination tends to be operational rather than strategic, focusing on task execution rather than long-term institutional development. This suggests that while disposition supports short-term effectiveness, it may not be sufficient to drive structural improvement, as also emphasized in public administration studies.

In conclusion, disposition in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi serves as a strong supporting dimension in the implementation of the Assessment Center policy. High levels of commitment, integrity, and adherence to professional standards ensure procedural consistency and policy continuity. However, its effectiveness is contingent upon its interaction with other dimensions, particularly resources. Therefore, disposition should be understood not as an independent determinant of success, but as part of a broader system in which behavioral, structural, and institutional factors interact to shape policy outcomes.

Bureaucratic Structure

Within Edward III's framework, bureaucratic structure refers to the formal arrangements, standard procedures, and patterns of coordination that guide policy implementation (Peters & Pierre, 2017). It determines how tasks are distributed, how authority is exercised, and how consistency is maintained across implementation processes. In the context of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi, this dimension is primarily reflected through the development of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), institutional arrangements, and patterns of inter-organizational collaboration.

Empirical findings indicate that the bureaucratic structure has evolved gradually rather than being fully established from the outset. Initially, the implementation of the Assessment Center relied on general regulatory guidelines, particularly those outlined in BKN Regulation No. 26 of 2019, without being supported by a locally formalized SOP. It was only at the end of 2022 that a standardized SOP was formally developed, with technical assistance from the Regional Personnel Agency of Central Java Province. This delayed institutionalization suggests that, in the early phase, implementation was more adaptive and practice-based rather than procedurally standardized (Dunlop & Radaelli, 2017).

From an analytical perspective, this condition reveals both flexibility and vulnerability. On one hand, the absence of rigid procedures allowed implementers to continue assessment activities through collaboration with external institutions such as BKN and HIMPSI. On the other hand, the lack of formal SOPs potentially increased the risk of procedural inconsistency and reliance on external actors. This finding extends Dimock and Dimock's perspective by showing that bureaucratic structures in developing institutional contexts often emerge through iterative processes rather than being fully designed in advance, as also

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highlighted in recent institutional governance studies (Capano et al., 2015).

The current bureaucratic arrangement demonstrates a more structured pattern. SOPs now provide a standardized reference for assessment implementation, while cooperation with external actors is institutionalized to complement internal capacity. This includes collaboration in psychological testing, competency assessment, and the development of assessment instruments. Additionally, the formation of ad hoc teams for district and municipal assessments reflects an adaptive organizational mechanism that allows the provincial government to respond to varying demands across regions, which aligns with recent findings on adaptive governance in public organizations (Ansell et al., 2021).

When compared with other implementation dimensions, bureaucratic structure appears relatively stronger than resources but more dependent on external support than disposition. While SOPs and coordination mechanisms are in place, their effectiveness is partly contingent on collaboration with external institutions, particularly for higher-level assessments. This indicates that the structure is functionally adequate but not yet fully autonomous. In contrast to the communication dimension, which faces challenges in message internalization, the bureaucratic structure shows higher consistency in procedural application, suggesting that formal rules are more stable than informal understanding (Peters & Pierre, 2017).

The findings also contribute to the broader literature by highlighting the role of hybrid institutional arrangements in policy implementation. Existing studies often assume that strong bureaucratic structures are characterized by internal completeness and self-sufficiency. However, the Central Sulawesi case demonstrates that effectiveness can also be achieved through strategic collaboration, even when internal capacity is still developing. This perspective adds nuance to the understanding of bureaucratic structure, particularly in subnational government contexts where resource constraints are common (Torfing et al., 2019).

Nevertheless, the study also identifies limitations. The reliance on external institutions, while functional, may hinder long-term institutional independence and sustainability. Furthermore, the dynamic nature of SOPs, although beneficial for adaptability, may create uncertainty if not accompanied by consistent evaluation and standardization processes. These issues indicate that bureaucratic structure, like other dimensions, is not static but requires continuous refinement (Dunlop & Radaelli, 2017).

In conclusion, the bureaucratic structure supporting the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in Central Sulawesi can be considered moderately strong, characterized by the presence of SOPs and adaptive coordination mechanisms. However, its effectiveness remains linked to external collaboration and evolving institutional capacity. This finding underscores that bureaucratic structure plays a stabilizing role in policy implementation, but its long-term effectiveness depends on the ability to balance standardization with institutional self-reliance.

Effectiveness of the Implementation of the Assessment Center Policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi

The effectiveness of policy implementation is not determined by a single variable, but by the interaction among multiple dimensions, as emphasized in Edward III's model (Bulqis & Bulqis, 2026). In the case of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi, effectiveness must be understood as the outcome of the combined performance of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Rather than assessing each dimension in isolation, this section synthesizes the findings to evaluate how these variables collectively shape implementation outcomes.

Empirical evidence indicates that the implementation of the Assessment Center policy demonstrates a condition of partial effectiveness. On one hand, communication has been relatively well established at the leadership level, supported by structured dissemination and inter-agency coordination. Disposition also emerges as a strong supporting factor, as implementers show high levels of commitment, adherence to professional standards, and

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alignment with merit-based principles (Dwiputrianti et al., 2024). In addition, the bureaucratic structure has become more stable following the formalization of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) in 2022, which has improved procedural consistency and accountability.

However, the resource dimension introduces a significant constraint that limits overall effectiveness. As discussed in the previous section, the availability of assessors is functionally adequate but not sufficient to ensure independence across all levels of assessment. More critically, the lack of dedicated infrastructure and limited budget support reduce the operational capacity of the Assessment Center. This imbalance creates a situation where strong commitment and clear procedures cannot be fully translated into optimal performance outcomes (Nalapraya et al., 2025).

From a comparative perspective, the findings reveal a clear hierarchy among the four dimensions. Disposition and bureaucratic structure function as stabilizing factors, ensuring that implementation processes continue in a consistent and rule-based manner. Communication plays an enabling role, facilitating coordination and policy understanding, although its effectiveness varies across organizational levels. In contrast, resources act as a limiting factor, constraining the extent to which the other dimensions can produce substantive results. This pattern suggests that policy effectiveness is not evenly distributed across dimensions, but rather shaped by the weakest link in the implementation chain (Fauzin & Kiapi, 2025).

These findings both align with and extend existing literature. Argue that the presence of clear procedures enhances policy effectiveness by improving coordination and reducing ambiguity. This is evident in the Central Sulawesi case, where the introduction of SOPs has strengthened procedural clarity. Similarly, Syafarddin (2025) highlights the importance of institutional capacity and coordination in regional policy implementation. While this study confirms the relevance of these factors, it also demonstrates that institutional arrangements alone are insufficient without adequate resource support, as also emphasized in recent Indonesian public administration studies (Kadir et al., 2025).

The study contributes to the policy implementation literature by emphasizing the need to analyze effectiveness as a multidimensional construct. Unlike normative approaches that equate procedural compliance with success, the findings show that effectiveness must also consider operational capacity and outcome consistency. In this context, the Central Sulawesi case illustrates that a policy can be procedurally sound yet operationally constrained, resulting in limited overall impact.

Another important insight is that effectiveness in this case is dynamic rather than static. The implementation of the Assessment Center has shown gradual improvement, particularly with the development of SOPs and the strengthening of inter-agency collaboration. However, these improvements have not yet resolved structural constraints related to resources. This indicates that effectiveness should be viewed as an evolving condition, shaped by ongoing institutional adjustments and policy learning processes (Hardiyanto, Djohanis, et al., 2025).

In conclusion, the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi can be categorized as moderately effective. Strong disposition and an increasingly structured bureaucracy provide a solid foundation for implementation, while communication supports coordination across actors. Nevertheless, resource limitations continue to restrict the full realization of policy objectives. This finding underscores that achieving effective policy implementation requires not only alignment across dimensions but also the elimination of critical constraints that hinder overall system performance (Hardiyanto, Sarifuddin, et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi reflects a condition of **partial and uneven effectiveness**, shaped by the interaction

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of communication, resources, disposition, and bureaucratic structure. Empirical findings show that communication, disposition, and bureaucratic structure function relatively well and support policy implementation. Communication has been effectively institutionalized at the leadership level, although it remains uneven at lower bureaucratic levels. Disposition emerges as a strong stabilizing factor, reflected in the high commitment, integrity, and adherence of implementers to merit-based principles. Meanwhile, the bureaucratic structure has improved significantly with the formalization of Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), enhancing procedural consistency and coordination.

However, the study identifies **resources as the most critical constraint**, limiting the overall effectiveness of policy implementation. The limited number of assessors and the absence of a permanent Assessment Center facility reduce institutional capacity and create dependence on external actors. This imbalance confirms that policy effectiveness is not determined by the presence of strong individual dimensions, but rather by the weakest element within the implementation system.

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes to the literature on policy implementation by emphasizing that effectiveness should be understood as a **multidimensional and relational construct**, rather than a purely procedural outcome. The findings extend Edward III's framework by demonstrating that disposition acts as a stabilizing factor, while resources function as a bottleneck variable that can constrain otherwise well-functioning dimensions. This highlights the importance of analyzing internal imbalances within implementation variables, particularly in subnational governance contexts.

In terms of practical implications, this study suggests several policy priorities. First, the Provincial Government of Central Sulawesi needs to strengthen **resource capacity**, particularly by increasing the number of certified assessors and developing a dedicated Assessment Center facility that meets national standards. Second, communication strategies should be redesigned to be more **segmented and inclusive**, ensuring that policy understanding is evenly distributed across all levels of civil servants. Third, institutional strengthening should focus on reducing dependency on external actors by enhancing internal technical capacity and ensuring sustainable budget allocation. These steps are essential to transform procedural compliance into substantive policy outcomes.

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. The analysis is based on a limited number of informants within a single institutional unit, which may not fully capture the diversity of perspectives across different levels of government. In addition, the qualitative approach, while providing in-depth insights, limits the ability to generalize findings to other regional contexts. The study also focuses primarily on implementation processes, without measuring the long-term impact of the Assessment Center on organizational performance or service quality.

Future research should address these limitations by expanding the scope of analysis to include multiple regions and a larger number of informants, as well as by integrating quantitative approaches to assess policy outcomes. Further studies could also explore the relationship between Assessment Center implementation and broader governance indicators, such as transparency, accountability, and bureaucratic performance. Additionally, comparative studies across provinces would be valuable in identifying best practices and institutional models that can strengthen merit-based human resource management in Indonesia.

In conclusion, while the implementation of the Assessment Center policy in Central Sulawesi has made important progress, its effectiveness remains contingent upon addressing structural resource constraints. Strengthening the integration between institutional capacity, organizational commitment, and policy design is essential to ensure that the Assessment Center can function as a reliable instrument for advancing merit-based governance and public sector professionalism.

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