



Parahyangan Catholic University
Faculty of Social Science and Political Science
Undergraduate Public Administration Study Program

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SK BAN-PT NO:3765/SK/BAN-PT/AK-ISK/S/VI/2022

**Discretion and its Effect: A Systematic Literature Review
of Street-Level Bureaucrats**

Undergraduate Thesis

Written by
Camila
6071901040

Bandung
2022



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Undergraduate Thesis Approval


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Title : Discretion and its Effect : A Systematic Literature Review
of Street- Level Bureaucrats

Has Been Examined In the Undergraduate Thesis Examination
On Wednesday, 11 January 2023

And hereby declared **PASSED**

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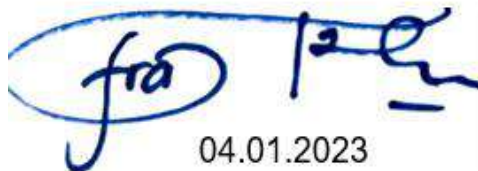
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Disclaimer

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of
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With this disclaimer, the author of this undergraduate thesis hereby states that this body of academic work is derived from her original idea and academic process. This undergraduate thesis is a result of her research process as elaborated within the body of work itself. It is written to fulfil the prerequisites needed to graduate from Parahyangan Catholic University's Public Administration Bachelor's Degree program. This body of work is original and cites sources as per the legal and academic standards of referencing other bodies of work expected of valid academic work.

With this statement, the author accepts, that if the above statement are proven invalid and dishonest, she will be ready to accept any academic and legal repercussions that will be justifiably dispensed as punishment for the proven offense(s).

Bandung, January 3, 2023



Camila

Abstrak

Nama : Camila

NPM : 6071901040

Judul : Efek Diskresi : Tinjauan Literatur Sistematis terhadap Birokrat

Dalam kondisi umum diskresi dapat menjadi hal yang berharga untuk menunjang aktivitas birokrasi dalam mengisi keraguan dalam kebijakan, namun diskresi dapat berpeluang untuk meningkatkan potensi terjadinya perilaku buruk. Penelitian tentang efek diskresi memiliki tingkat ekspos yang rendah dibandingkan penelitian topik lainnya di ilmu administrasi publik . Dengan metode tinjauan sistematis yang sebelumnya belum pernah digunakan, penelitian ini berusaha untuk mencari perspektif terbaru disamping metode yang sering digunakan penelitian lain yakni studi kasus. Penelitian ini dilakukan melalui proses seleksi yang memiliki syarat spesifik dan proses penilaian kualitas. Proses selanjutnya, hasil dari penelitian ini adalah pembuatan kerangka kerja yang berisi kategori efek yang telah ditemukan. Terdapat 5 kategori, layanan publik, etika, nilai demokratis, struktur organisasi, dan birokrat (peran dan pengembangan).

Kata Kunci : Efek Diskresi, Birokrat, Klient

Abstract

Name : Camila

SID : 6071901040

Title : Discretion and its Effect: A Systematic Literature Review of Street-Level Bureaucrats

Discretion in average conditions will be valuable in an extensive bureaucracy activity to fill the policy's void and doubt, but it is also likely to increase the potential of poor treatment. The research on the discretionary effect has a minimum exposure rather than other topics in the public administration field, hence this research aims to show the latest effect of discretion. With a systematic literature review that has never been used, this research seeks a new perspective besides the previous research that constantly uses a case study approach. This research undergoes a screening procedure with precise requirements and quality evaluation standards. Following that, the primary outcome of this research is the creation of a framework for classifying the impacts found. There are five categories, public services, ethics, democratic values, organizational structure, and bureaucrats (role and development).

Keywords: Discretion Effects, Bureaucrats, Clients

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all teach me to be patient for sure. Thank you for this wonderful year we've been through together. You always have my back and spot in my heart.

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and may you always be surrounded by those who care and love you the way love should be.

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Chapter I

Introduction

1.1. Research Background

Public administration is not always about administering rules for political choices that are implemented with the greatest possible precision and effect, and sometimes it is about a subjective process where people meet and behave with one another. According to an analysis of the demeanour of front-line staff in policy delivery agencies in the book *"Street Level Bureaucracy: Dilemma of The Individual in Public Services"*, these workers are mentioned as "SLBs" (after this: bureaucrats). Furthermore, "these are public employees who associate directly with clients or citizens and have major discretion in order of their work implementation" (Lipsky, 1981)

In many situations, bureaucrats may allow certain discretion in implementing such public policies. The concept of discretion is known to have wide recognition in the study of policy implementation. Regularly maintain a high level of discretion, directly interact with clients or citizens, and implement public policies. Nevertheless, bureaucrats are tasked with responding to society with a restricted quantity of details and a short amount of pattern-making decisions or, worse, last-minute decision. Very often, the policies bureaucrats have to follow are very doubtful for specific situations of the involved clients or citizens. And most of all, bureaucrats are not

simply representative of bureaucratic organizations, people with feelings and opinions about who is entitled to be helped and who should be sanctioned make clients' demeanor and characteristics central to street-level decision-making. Following this, bureaucrats developed a coping mechanism with a certain degree of discretion while working.

Discretion in average conditions will be valuable in an extensive bureaucracy activity to fill the void and doubt of the policy. For example, the first effect that has become much attention for scholars is that "A certain amount of discretion can make bureaucrats increase the effect of meaningfulness of policy for clients" (Tummers & Bekkers, 2014). Furthermore, "Client meaningfulness is thus considered likely to have the potential effect of discretion, as noted, that client meaningfulness is highly affiliated to concepts such as client utility or usefulness. The other discretion effect, providing bureaucrats discretion, increases their willingness to implement the policy. Bureaucrats apprehend that they have discretion, they feel much better and able to help clients or citizens (more perceived client meaningfulness), which in turn increases their willingness to implement the policy" (Meyers & Vorsangers, 2007).

The discretion study has not gone through the most profound research to find new effects. For example, publication research in Indonesia reaches an outdated topic. There is no specific research about the discretion effect; most of the research talks about how discretion affects policy implementation using the bottom-up approach (Alwi et al., 2021; Iskandar, 2021) similar to previous research in other countries that develop and results only two main effects; client meaningfulness and

willingness to implement. Meanwhile, the argument of using discretion is essential in Indonesia, a researcher in Indonesia said, "It's a necessity to build a discretion mechanism in local bureaucratic governance that has sufficient authority and space for them to interact and build collaborative programs and help public needs" (Alwi et al., 2021). This argument fits with the findings of another study, which is one of the academic reasons why this research needs to be done; "There is a need for more theory development and testing (in policy implementation research), and the development of partial theories seems more promising than continuing the search for the general implementation theory or model" (May & Winter, 2009). From this point forward, the author intends to construct the latest research about the underground effect of discretion using a new method to seek new perspectives and contribute to the knowledge.

1.2. Problem Discovering

1.2.1. Problem Description

Though it is the issue, researchers are not focusing much of their attention on the other consequences of these issues as bureaucrats continue to perform the activity of discretion. Furthermore, research claims that "There are other possibly other indicator could be linked to discretion, such as objective indicators, as the percentage of people getting a job when implementing reintegration policies, and linked to this, scholar only pay attention to those two main effects of discretion—client meaningfulness and willingness to implement the policy—" Also, we have largely ignored its negative side, such as discrimination of client or the way discretion can break public trust" (Sandfort, 2000).

1.2.2. Research Limitations

This research focuses on several crucial aspects to limit the scope of research to be qualified to answer the research question presented effectively through a public administration perspective. The research is limited based on specific time frames and data on issues. In terms of the time frame of the research, the author is trying to use the most up-to-date method, systematic literature reviews, to find the answers to all these research questions. This kind of research is new, meaning that the author seeks a new perspective besides the real thing that already happens in the live-action of bureaucrats or the evidence in the field.

The following restriction of this research is that the author applied a broad concept of research guidelines, causing the research to have varied interpretations from others. The method also qualified as a scientific novelty but constituted a barrier or limitation. Second, only research published in English was included, which may have led to the removal of potentially relevant studies published in all other languages. Third, numerous materials from other studies lacked information on the discretion effect on bureaucrats, making it challenging to synthesize the research and comprehend the frequency required to get the desired results.

1.2.3. Research Question

Administrative regulations and policies are frequently double-edged when seen through the prism of these issues. With discretion, clients can be helped, but it can also give two answers: getting meaningfulness or maybe the discrimination.

Determined by this rationale, the primary research questions are: *What is the other effect of discretion towards bureaucrats?*

1.3. Research Objectives and Research Contribution

1.3.1. Objective of Research

This study aims to contextualize and show the latest effect of discretion by using systematic literature reviews, especially the underground effect or the negative side of discretion effects. Furthermore, this study aims to build a framework from the discretion effects found in the research. All of the corresponding analyses will be elaborated further in Chapter III. In doing so, readers can gain multiple insights that can be assured to broaden their understanding of discretion when bureaucrats implement it through a systematic literature reviews approach.

1.3.2. Contribution of Research

This research may give readers insight for future research and studies regarding the topic that has never been the primary discussion in public administration science, including the latest effect and how it affects bureaucrats while implementing it as a coping mechanism. To a further extent, the author hoped that identifying and analyzing this specific topic might give insight into possible future discretion in other specific locus and approaches of the method.

In addition, the findings of this research have several significant implications for the study of discretion, both conceptually and empirically, along with practically. Conceptually the novelty or contribution of this research will

uncover critical gaps in existing research by showing how frequently such research has talked about discretion, mainly when using this kind of research method in a context that spans the globe. Second this research contributes to showing the latest effect that previous research never mentioned before; moreover, this research conducts a new framework that can be used by further research. Thus, this discovering and building a framework, can contribute to the practical level, which may be used in future for the new concept of research in the study of discretion.