

Reassessing the Foundations of Bureaucratic Accountability: A Critical Examination of Paradigmatic Limitations in Public Governance

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Abstract. This study critically evaluates the established concepts of bureaucratic accountability within the framework of public governance, highlighting the inherent paradigmatic limitations that have shaped current practices. Utilizing a mixed-methods approach, including qualitative interviews with public administrators and quantitative survey data, we analyze the disconnect between theoretical postulations and practical implementations. Through this analysis, we unveil the discrepancies that hinder effective accountability mechanisms and propose a reformed model that better aligns with contemporary governance challenges. Our findings indicate that the existing accountability frameworks are insufficient for addressing the complexities of modern public administration, necessitating a shift towards more adaptable and transparent processes. This critical re-evaluation serves as a call to action for scholars and practitioners alike to reconsider the foundational principles guiding bureaucratic accountability in public administration.

Keywords: bureaucratic accountability, public governance, transparency in administration, stakeholder engagement, governance frameworks, public administration, adaptability in bureaucracy

Introduction

In an era characterized by rapid socio-political changes and evolving public expectations, the relevance of bureaucratic accountability in public administration cannot be overstated. As governments worldwide grapple with increasing demands for transparency and responsiveness, the existing frameworks of accountability face significant scrutiny. This is particularly salient as we approach the mid-2020s, a period marked by heightened public scrutiny and the imperatives of digital governance. The traditional paradigms of bureaucratic accountability, often rooted in power hierarchies and rigid procedural

compliance, are increasingly challenged by the realities of agile governance and stakeholder engagement. Current literature reveals a growing dissonance between established accountability mechanisms and the complex, dynamic environments in which public administrators operate. This dissonance poses a critical global problem, emphasizing the need for innovative frameworks that can adapt to contemporary governance challenges. In this paper, we aim to dissect and critically analyze the limitations of existing bureaucratic accountability paradigms and propose a reformed model that aligns more closely with the needs of modern public administration. We begin with a comprehensive review of the current state of bureaucratic accountability, followed by an examination of case studies illustrating the practical implications of these limitations. Subsequently, we will present our mixed-methods research approach, detailing our data collection and analysis processes. Our findings will culminate in a proposed model for bureaucratic accountability that emphasizes adaptability, transparency, and stakeholder engagement, providing a roadmap for practitioners in the field. This paper ultimately contributes to the discourse on public governance by offering a fresh perspective on accountability, advocating for a paradigm shift towards more effective and responsive governance frameworks.

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