

ORIGINAL ARTICLE

Job performance and legal framework in the administrative processes of the GAD of Quinindé, Esmeraldas

Desempeño laboral y marco legal en los procesos administrativos del GAD de Quinindé, Esmeraldas

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Abstract Within the current legal framework, this study analyzed the relationship between job performance and administrative processes in the Decentralized Autonomous Government of Quinindé, Esmeraldas Province, Ecuador. Factors limiting institutional efficiency were identified, and improvement strategies were proposed. A mixed-method approach was used, including surveys, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. The study population consisted of 312 administrative employees, from which a sample of 164 participants was selected. The results indicated that a lack of clarity in organizational objectives and the absence of feedback negatively affected job performance. Although progress was observed in strategic and organizational planning, internal communication and leadership deficiencies persisted—the scarcity of training programs and the limited adoption of technologies negatively impacted management. The internal control system was found to be insufficient to ensure transparency and operational efficiency. Strengthening leadership, implementing training programs, incorporating technologies, and improving internal control are recommended to optimize administrative processes. Finally, citizen participation was highlighted as a key factor in legitimizing institutional management and strengthening the government and community relationship.


Keywords job performance, administrative processes, Decentralized Autonomous Governments, Ecuadorian legal framework, citizen participation.

Resumen Este estudio analizó la relación entre el desempeño laboral y los procesos administrativos en el Gobierno Autónomo Descentralizado de Quinindé, provincia de Esmeraldas, Ecuador, dentro del marco legal vigente. Se identificaron factores que limitan la eficiencia institucional y se propusieron estrategias de mejora. A través de un enfoque metodológico mixto, que incluyó encuestas, entrevistas semiestructuradas y análisis documental. La población de estudio fueron 312 empleados administrativos, seleccionando una muestra de 164 participantes. Los resultados indicaron que la falta de claridad en los objetivos organizacionales y la ausencia de retroalimentación afectaban el desempeño laboral. Aunque se evidenciaron avances en la planificación estratégica y organizacional, persistían deficiencias en la comunicación interna y liderazgo. La escasez de programas de capacitación y la limitada adopción de tecnologías impactaban negativamente la gestión. El sistema de control interno resultó insuficiente para garantizar transparencia y eficiencia operativa. Para optimizar los procesos administrativos, se recomienda fortalecer el liderazgo, implementar programas de capacitación, incorporar tecnologías y mejorar el control interno. Finalmente, se destacó la importancia de la participación ciudadana para legitimar la gestión institucional y fortalecer la relación entre el gobierno y la comunidad.

Palabras clave desempeño laboral, procesos administrativos, Gobiernos Autónomos Descentralizados (GAD), marco legal ecuatoriano, participación ciudadana.

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Introduction

Work performance and administrative processes are essential to ensure adequate public institution management. Their correct implementation directly impacts the quality of services offered to citizens and the achievement of organizational objectives. In the case of the Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD) of Quinindé, Esmeraldas province, Ecuador, the analysis of these components is vital to identify critical areas that limit local development and propose practical solutions. Based on the Ecuadorian legal framework, including the 2008 Constitution and the Organic Law of Public Service (LOSEP), GADs are mandated to implement management systems based on efficiency, effectiveness, quality, and citizen participation principles.

Job performance understood as the behaviors and results derived from employees' activities, is directly linked to strategic planning and evaluation systems implemented in institutions. According to Grijalva (2019), this performance depends on individual skills in the organizational environment and the tools provided for their development. In this sense, Iturralde (2016) emphasizes that evaluating job performance in the public sector must be transparent and objective, using parameters that align with the profiles and responsibilities of the position.

From an administrative point of view, the processes that include planning, organization, direction, and control form the basis for achieving institutional objectives. According to Mendoza (2019), an adequate administrative structure allows for the optimization of resources and the improvement of employee productivity. However, Guerrero et al. (2019) highlight that deficiencies in the definition of roles and responsibilities within the GAD generate internal conflicts and limit the capacity of institutions to meet their strategic goals.

The Ecuadorian legal framework reinforces the importance of these processes. Article 77 of the LOSEP establishes that public institutions must implement an impartial and transparent job performance evaluation system. In addition, the Organic Administrative Code (COA) of the National Assembly of Ecuador (2017) promotes quality in public management. It requires compliance with specific standards to ensure transparency in the administration of public resources. Plata (2017) argues that well-structured administrative processes are essential to creating a work environment that fosters employee motivation and commitment.

Another fundamental aspect is leadership within public institutions. According to Anchundia & Cervantes (2022), effective leadership improves employee morale and ensures that organizational goals are effectively met. Furthermore, Angulo (2022) argues that the lack of leadership and effective communication within Ecuador's GADs has been one of the leading causes of low productivity in recent years.

Finally, it is crucial to highlight the importance of citizen

participation in administrative processes. Montecinos & Contreras (2019) underline that this participation legitimizes institutional management and improves the relationship between GADs and the community by allowing a better alignment of public policies with local needs. Institutions must implement mechanisms that promote more active interaction with citizens, which could significantly improve trust and user satisfaction.

This study aims to analyze the relationship between job performance and administrative processes in the GAD of the Quinindé, evaluating how these variables interact within the current regulatory framework. In addition, it seeks to identify critical areas that limit institutional efficiency and propose strategies to optimize public management, promoting a positive impact on the quality of services offered to citizens and the region's sustainable development.

Analyzing administrative processes within the GADs must also address the relevance of internal control as a tool to ensure transparency and compliance with institutional objectives. According to Moreno et al. (2021), a robust internal control system ensures compliance with regulations and contributes to operational efficiency. In the GAD of the Quinindé, the lack of adequate control has been identified as a limiting factor affecting job performance and citizen perception of public management.

Linking administrative processes with training strategies is another crucial element to improve job performance. Plata (2017) highlights that investment in continuous training programs strengthens individual skills and promotes an organizational learning environment. In the context of GADs, developing specific planning and administrative management skills can directly impact productivity and service quality.

In the regulatory field, the Organic Administrative Code (COA) establishes specific guidelines to guarantee quality in public management. According to Grijalva (2019), the COA National Assembly of Ecuador (2017) promotes the standardization of processes and applying principles of legality and efficiency. However, its practical implementation depends on institutions' capacity to adapt these regulations to their specific operational needs. In the case of the Quinindé GAD, the absence of standardized processes has generated inconsistencies in administration and difficulties in measuring organizational performance objectively.

Another relevant aspect is the relationship between job performance and the organizational climate. Guerrero et al. (2019) argue that a positive work environment is essential to improve employee motivation and commitment. In this sense, Angulo (2022) points out that implementing strategies that promote participation and effective communication within the GAD can significantly improve the work environment and employee performance.

Citizen perception also plays an important role in evaluating public management. According to Montecinos & Contreras (2019), the legitimacy of the GAD depends mainly on these institutions' capacity to respond to the community's needs. In the case of Quinindé, the lack of effective mechanisms for accountability and citizen participation has limited the population's trust in local administration, which represents an additional challenge for institutional strengthening.

Finally, implementing information technologies in administrative processes offers significant opportunities to improve efficiency and transparency. Mendoza (2019) highlights that the digitalization of processes optimizes resource management and facilitates job performance evaluation. In the case of the Quinindé GAD, adopting technological tools could contribute to overcoming some of the current limitations and aligning public management with the demands of the contemporary environment.

Methodology

The research adopted a mixed methodological approach, integrating qualitative and quantitative techniques to comprehensively analyze the relationship between job performance and administrative processes in the Decentralized Autonomous Government (GAD) of Quinindé. This approach allowed the depth of qualitative analysis to be combined with the objectivity of quantitative analysis, enabling a more comprehensive understanding of internal organizational dynamics and the perceptions of administrative staff. The primary purpose was to identify critical areas and formulate evidence-based strategies to optimize institutional management.

The study's target population comprised 312 administrative employees of the GAD who perform critical functions in various organizational areas. To ensure the representativeness and statistical validity of the results, the sampling formula for finite populations was used, which provides an adequate sample size based on the total population size. The formula applied was as follows:

$$n = (N * Z^2 * p * q) / (E^2 * (N - 1) + Z^2 * p * q)$$

Where:

- N represents the total population size (312 employees).
- Z corresponds to a 95% confidence level (1.96).
- p is the expected proportion of success, assumed to be 0.5 to maximize sample size.
- q is the complement of p (1 - p), equal to 0.5.
- E is the allowed margin of error, set at 0.05 (5%).

By substituting these values, a sample size of 164 employees was obtained, which guarantees the possibility of per-

forming robust statistical analyses and obtaining representative inferences for the entire population.

Various techniques were used to collect data to obtain accurate and relevant information based on scientific requirements and the practical needs of the legal and human talent fields. First, structured surveys were applied with Likert-type scales designed to measure dimensions such as motivation and job satisfaction, perception of the clarity and effectiveness of administrative processes, and job performance evaluations. These surveys were conducted confidentially, ensuring the anonymity of the participants. In addition, semi-structured interviews were conducted with managers and administrative leaders, focused on identifying challenges in human talent management, evaluating the effectiveness of evaluation and leadership systems, and analyzing the impact of administrative processes on organizational performance.

Another critical technique was documentary analysis, which involved a detailed review of relevant regulations, such as the Organic Law of Public Service (LOSEP), the Organic Administrative Code (COA) of the National Assembly of Ecuador (2017), and the Organic Code of Territorial Organization, Autonomy and Decentralization (COOTAD, 2010). Internal documents of the GAD were also analyzed, including process manuals, internal policies, and evaluation reports, to obtain a comprehensive view of administrative practices. Finally, the DACUM (Curriculum Development) technique was used, which allowed mapping of the work competencies required for each position, identifying gaps between the current skills of the staff and the organizational demands.

Data analysis was carried out using a systematic and rigorous approach. Quantitative data from surveys were processed using statistical tools in Microsoft Excel, performing descriptive and correlational analyses to identify significant relationships between job performance and administrative processes. On the other hand, qualitative data derived from interviews and documentary analysis were analyzed using thematic coding and content analysis. This approach allowed for identifying patterns, discrepancies, and critical areas for improvement based on categories derived from scientific literature and current regulations.

Ethically, data confidentiality and participant anonymity were guaranteed. Before participating in surveys and interviews, employees signed an informed consent form explaining the purpose of the study, its potential benefits, and their right to withdraw without repercussions. This ethical commitment ensured transparency and trust throughout the research process.

The adopted methodology provided a solid basis for rigorously analyzing the interrelations between job performance and administrative processes in the GAD of the Quinindé. This allowed the development of strategic proposals to stren-

then public management and optimize the services offered to citizens.

Results and discussion

The analysis showed that clarity in organizational objectives is perceived as a fundamental element for job performance in the GAD of the Quinindé. The findings suggest that, although there are well-defined strategic guidelines, their implementation faces challenges in internal communication and employee feedback. This result coincides with that indicated by Grijalva (2019), who highlights that the organizational environment and tools provided determine performance factors.

The administrative planning and organization processes were identified as areas with significant progress. However, the lack of a clear definition of roles and responsibilities generates duplication of efforts and internal conflicts, which aligns with Guerrero et al. (2019) approaches. These weaknesses directly impact the GAD's ability to meet its strategic goals and optimize the use of resources.

Leadership within the GAD was identified as having significant limitations. According to the interviews, the lack of team cohesion and the absence of transformational leadership have been barriers to the effective implementation of policies and strategies. Anchundia and Cervantes (2022) argue that leadership is a crucial factor in improving the work environment and ensuring the fulfillment of institutional objectives.

The documentary review and interviews reflected a need for more training programs geared toward the specific needs of GAD staff. As Pedraza et al. (2010) also noted, this lack of training limits employees' ability to adapt to the changing demands of the organizational environment. Establishing professional development programs that strengthen technical and leadership skills is crucial.

The limited use of technological tools in administrative processes represents a critical challenge. Mendoza (2019) emphasizes that digitalization is crucial for transparency and operational efficiency. The lack of technological integration hinders resource management and job performance evaluation, thus limiting the GAD's ability to meet quality standards.

The analysis highlighted the need to strengthen the internal control system as a critical tool to ensure transparency and accountability. According to Moreno et al. (2021), internal solid control ensures regulatory compliance and contributes to citizen confidence in public management. The absence of effective oversight mechanisms has been identified as an obstacle to administrative efficiency in the GAD.

A positive organizational climate was identified as a crit-

ical factor for staff motivation and engagement. However, effective engagement and communication strategies have not yet been consistently implemented, limiting employee performance. Guerrero et al. (2019) highlight that a healthy work environment is essential to achieving high-performance levels.

Finally, interaction with citizens was identified as an area for significant improvement. Montecinos and Contreras (2019) underline that active community participation legitimizes institutional management and improves the alignment of public policies with local needs. In the case of the GAD of the Quinindé, the lack of effective accountability mechanisms has weakened citizens' trust in the administration.

The findings of this research reinforce the importance of administrative processes and job performance as fundamental axes for the efficient management of GADs. The critical areas identified—leadership, internal communication, training, and use of technologies—coincide with the structural problems pointed out by authors such as Plata (2017) and Mendoza (2019). Despite the challenges, these areas represent significant opportunities to implement strategies that strengthen public management.

In practical terms, the study highlights the need to design specific training policies, foster transformational leadership, and adopt technologies that optimize administrative processes. Strengthening internal control and promoting citizen participation is also essential to improving the trust and legitimacy of the Quinindé GAD.

Conclusions

Under the current legal framework, the study has identified and analyzed critical factors influencing job performance and administrative processes within the GAD of Quinindé, Esmeraldas province, Ecuador. Clarity in organizational objectives is vital for enhancing job performance. However, internal communication and feedback mechanisms must be improved to implement strategic guidelines effectively. Leadership, a critical component for institutional success, must be more robust. A lack of transformational leadership and team cohesion limits the achievement of institutional objectives. The absence of targeted training programs emerged as a significant challenge, restricting staff's capacity to adapt to organizational demands. Similarly, the limited adoption of modern technological tools undermines transparency and operational efficiency, making it harder to optimize administrative processes and evaluate performance effectively.

A robust internal control system was also essential for transparency, accountability, and public trust. However, the current lack of effective oversight mechanisms impedes administrative efficiency. Furthermore, promoting active ci-

tizen participation remains critical for legitimizing institutional management and aligning public policies with local needs. Nonetheless, existing mechanisms for participation and accountability require considerable enhancement. Despite these challenges, significant opportunities for improvement were identified. Implementing process digitalization, specific training policies, and fostering a positive organizational climate can strengthen public management. These actions are essential for optimizing job performance and administrative processes, enhancing the quality of public services, and promoting sustainable development within the region.

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Conflicts of interest

The authors declare that they have no conflicts of interest.

Author contributions

Renier Esquivel and Allison M. Zambrano: Conceptualization, data curation, formal analysis, investigation, methodology, supervision, validation, visualization, drafting the original manuscript and writing, review, and editing.

Data availability statement

The datasets used and/or analyzed during the current study are available from the corresponding author on reasonable request.

Statement on the use of AI

The authors acknowledge the use of generative AI and AI-assisted technologies to improve the readability and clarity of the article.

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