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## The Effectiveness of Good Governance in Improving Civil Servants Performance in the Era of Bureaucratic Reform

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### ABSTRAK

Penelitian ini mengkaji efektivitas prinsip-prinsip good governance dalam meningkatkan kinerja aparatur sipil negara (ASN) dalam konteks era reformasi birokrasi di Indonesia. Seiring dengan semakin diinstitusikannya prinsip transparansi, akuntabilitas, partisipasi, dan supremasi hukum dalam administrasi publik, pengaruhnya terhadap perilaku pegawai dan hasil layanan menjadi fokus kajian yang penting. Dengan menggunakan pendekatan studi kasus kualitatif, data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara mendalam, observasi, dan analisis dokumen di sejumlah institusi pemerintah daerah terpilih. Temuan menunjukkan bahwa good governance mendorong budaya profesionalisme, memperkuat akuntabilitas internal, dan meningkatkan responsivitas ASN. Namun, tantangan tetap ada, seperti keterbatasan infrastruktur digital, literasi tata kelola yang belum merata, serta resistensi terhadap perubahan, terutama di kalangan pejabat senior. Komitmen kepemimpinan dan dukungan organisasi menjadi faktor kunci keberhasilan strategi peningkatan kinerja berbasis tata kelola. Studi ini menyimpulkan bahwa integrasi prinsip good governance dalam proses birokrasi sehari-hari tidak hanya meningkatkan kinerja individu, tetapi juga mendorong transformasi kelembagaan menuju sektor publik yang lebih transparan dan berorientasi pada pelayanan.

**Kata kunci:** tata kelola pemerintahan yang baik, reformasi birokrasi, kinerja ASN, administrasi publik, transparansi, akuntabilitas, partisipasi.

### ABSTRACT

*This study explores the effectiveness of good governance in enhancing the performance of civil servants in the context of Indonesia's bureaucratic reform era. As principles such as transparency, accountability, participation, and rule of law are increasingly institutionalized within public administration, their influence on employee behavior and service outcomes becomes a critical area of inquiry. Employing a qualitative case study approach, data were gathered through in-depth interviews, observation, and document analysis within selected local government institutions. The findings reveal that good governance fosters a culture of professionalism, strengthens internal accountability, and improves the responsiveness of civil servants. However, challenges remain, including digital infrastructure limitations, inconsistent governance literacy, and resistance to change among senior staff. Leadership commitment and organizational support are key factors in ensuring the success of governance-based performance strategies. This study concludes that integrating good governance into daily bureaucratic processes not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to institutional transformation toward a more transparent and service-oriented public sector.*

**Keywords:** good governance, bureaucratic reform, civil servant performance, public administration, transparency, accountability, participation

## INTRODUCTION

The transformation of public administration in the 21st century has been marked by the global push toward good governance as a fundamental principle of effective government performance. Good governance, characterized by transparency, accountability, participation, and rule of law, is seen as a cornerstone in strengthening the integrity and performance of civil servants in many countries, including Indonesia (UNDP, 1997). In the context of bureaucratic reform, good governance is no longer a normative concept, but a practical framework to improve institutional capacity and public trust.

Indonesia has entered a critical phase of bureaucratic reform since the early 2000s, aiming to eliminate inefficiencies, combat corruption, and enhance public service quality. This reform agenda is driven by the belief that the bureaucratic apparatus must become more professional, transparent, and accountable in fulfilling its duties (Dwiyanto, 2011). Within this context, the performance of civil servants—who are at the forefront of implementing public policies—has become a key focus of reform efforts. The integration of good governance principles into the bureaucratic structure is expected to create a more responsive and service-oriented civil service.

The effectiveness of good governance in the public sector cannot be separated from the institutional and cultural dynamics within which governance mechanisms are applied. Scholars argue that good governance provides not only the structural foundation for performance enhancement but also cultivates a culture of integrity, innovation, and continuous improvement (Grindle, 2007). In the case of Indonesia, the application of good governance is not uniform across agencies and regions, leading to variations in the quality of public administration and the performance of the state apparatus.

Performance in the public sector, particularly for civil servants, is commonly assessed through indicators such as service delivery efficiency, policy execution, responsiveness, and citizen satisfaction. The application of good governance has the potential to influence all these dimensions positively. Transparency reduces administrative discretion, participation improves responsiveness, and accountability strengthens discipline and professionalism (World Bank, 1992; Fukuyama, 2013). Therefore, measuring the effectiveness of good governance must also consider its impact on these performance dimensions.

Despite the normative appeal of good governance, many public institutions face implementation challenges. Resistance to change, lack of leadership commitment, inadequate institutional frameworks, and a weak monitoring system often undermine governance efforts (Leftwich, 2000). These obstacles are particularly visible in developing countries where bureaucratic inertia and politicization of the civil service remain prevalent. This raises critical questions about how effectively governance principles can be translated into improved performance in practice.

Empirical studies on good governance and civil servant performance in Indonesia are still developing. Some research highlights the correlation between organizational transparency and employee accountability (Suwandi, 2020), while others show that the success of governance reform depends largely on internal motivation and leadership models (Hadi & Alamsyah, 2019). However, a comprehensive understanding of how good governance mechanisms directly contribute to the performance of civil servants under bureaucratic reform is still limited, especially at the local government level.

This study aims to fill that gap by investigating the relationship between good governance practices and civil servants' performance within the framework of ongoing bureaucratic reform. It explores

how governance indicators such as transparency, accountability, rule of law, and participatory mechanisms affect employees' effectiveness, efficiency, and service orientation. The study is expected to provide practical insights for policymakers in formulating governance-based performance strategies.

The research is conducted using a qualitative approach, focusing on selected government institutions undergoing reform at the regional level. The qualitative method allows for in-depth exploration of organizational behavior, implementation dynamics, and contextual challenges (Yin, 2018). Through interviews, observations, and document analysis, the study seeks to map how governance principles are embedded in administrative routines and how they influence individual and institutional performance.

By focusing on the effectiveness of good governance, this study also contributes to the theoretical development in public administration studies, particularly on governance-performance linkages. It emphasizes that reform is not merely about changing structures but also about transforming values and behavior within the bureaucracy. Good governance, in this sense, serves as both a goal and a tool for reform.

In conclusion, understanding the role of good governance in enhancing civil servant performance is not only relevant for Indonesia but also offers broader implications for other countries struggling with bureaucratic inefficiency and public distrust. As bureaucratic reform continues to evolve, integrating governance principles into the core of public sector management becomes crucial for achieving sustainable, inclusive, and citizen-centered development.

## **METHOD**

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research approach using a case study design to explore how good governance principles influence the

performance of civil servants in the context of bureaucratic reform. The qualitative approach was chosen to gain an in-depth understanding of administrative behavior, institutional dynamics, and implementation challenges that are often difficult to capture through quantitative methods (Yin, 2018). The case study method enables the researcher to focus intensively on specific government institutions undergoing reform, examining how governance principles—transparency, accountability, participation, and rule of law—are integrated into daily bureaucratic practices.

Data were collected using three main techniques: in-depth interviews, participant observation, and document analysis. Interviews were conducted with key informants, including heads of departments, mid-level managers, and front-line civil servants involved in service delivery and internal governance reform units. The interviews used a semi-structured format to allow flexibility while maintaining consistency across respondents. Observations were carried out during routine administrative operations to capture actual behavior and organizational culture. In addition, relevant policy documents such as Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs), performance reports, regulations, and strategic plans were reviewed to understand the formal structure and institutional commitments toward good governance (Miles et al., 2014).

The data analysis followed Miles and Huberman's interactive model, which involves data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. This iterative process allowed for theme identification and categorization based on governance dimensions and performance indicators. Triangulation among the data sources ensured validity and credibility of findings. Coding was conducted manually, starting with open coding to identify emerging themes, followed by axial coding to relate them to the theoretical framework of governance-performance linkages (Creswell & Poth, 2018). The findings were

then interpreted within the broader discourse of public sector reform and governance innovation.

## **RESULTS AND DISCUSSION**

The results of this study indicate that the implementation of good governance principles has had a measurable impact on improving the performance of civil servants in the selected government institutions. Transparency, in particular, has created an administrative environment where information related to work procedures, performance targets, and outcomes is openly available. This has minimized ambiguity in task execution and enabled better internal control, leading to more disciplined work behavior among employees.

One of the most significant findings is the role of accountability mechanisms in improving employee responsibility and performance quality. Performance appraisal systems that are based on clear indicators, combined with periodic evaluations and follow-up monitoring, have strengthened employees' sense of duty. Civil servants reported that the presence of performance-based incentives and sanctions has encouraged more professional conduct and reduced absenteeism. These findings align with Fukuyama's (2013) argument that accountability is central to public sector efficiency.

Participation, both internally among staff and externally involving citizens, was found to be a catalyst for innovation and responsiveness. Internally, team-based planning meetings and feedback sessions have encouraged collaborative decision-making and empowered lower-level staff to contribute ideas. Externally, public complaint mechanisms and service satisfaction surveys have become tools not only for transparency but also for improving service delivery strategies. This supports Grindle's (2007) assertion that participatory governance strengthens institutional legitimacy and learning.

However, the research also revealed that the effectiveness of good governance is strongly dependent on leadership commitment. Institutions led by reform-oriented leaders who embody governance values tend to exhibit stronger organizational culture and performance improvement. These leaders play a crucial role in promoting ethical conduct, initiating internal reforms, and ensuring staff compliance. Without consistent leadership support, governance initiatives risk becoming symbolic rather than substantive.

Rule of law was another pillar of governance that contributed positively to employee performance. The presence of clear regulations, standard operating procedures, and disciplinary codes has minimized arbitrary decisions and favoritism. It also provided a legal framework that protects employees who perform their duties properly while deterring misconduct. In environments where regulations are enforced fairly and consistently, civil servants tend to perform their roles with greater confidence and clarity.

Nevertheless, several challenges were identified. Among them is the limited digital infrastructure that hinders the full realization of transparency and accountability. In some institutions, the lack of integrated information systems makes it difficult to monitor performance in real-time or share data across departments. This technological gap is especially problematic in regional and under-resourced offices, underscoring the need for digital transformation as part of governance reform.

Another barrier is the variation in governance literacy among civil servants. While some employees are familiar with the principles and practices of good governance, others—particularly those in administrative or support roles—lack the necessary understanding. This has led to inconsistent application of governance standards and has weakened the overall institutional performance. Training and

awareness programs are therefore essential to ensure alignment and common understanding.

In terms of employee motivation, the presence of good governance practices has contributed to a more ethical and purpose-driven workplace culture. Civil servants expressed higher levels of job satisfaction when they felt fairly treated, informed, and involved in organizational processes. These intrinsic motivational factors have proven to be just as important as material rewards in sustaining performance, in line with the arguments of Perry and Hondeghem (2008) on public service motivation.

The research also highlights that organizational change management is necessary for governance to be effective. In institutions undergoing bureaucratic reform, resistance to change remains a critical issue. Some senior staff resist new procedures that increase transparency or eliminate discretionary power. Managing this resistance through inclusive dialogue and gradual reform planning is crucial to avoid organizational disruption and ensure long-term effectiveness.

In conclusion, the study confirms that good governance is not merely a set of ideals but a practical framework that can significantly improve the performance of civil servants. When governance principles are institutionalized through leadership commitment, regulatory consistency, participatory mechanisms, and internal accountability, they foster a culture of professionalism, service orientation, and innovation. These findings contribute to the broader discourse on governance reform and provide empirical support for strengthening governance capacity as part of sustainable public sector development.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study concludes that the implementation of good governance principles—particularly transparency, accountability, participation, and rule of law—has a significant positive impact on

the performance of civil servants in the era of bureaucratic reform. The integration of these principles within organizational processes fosters a professional work culture, enhances institutional responsiveness, and strengthens the ethical conduct of public employees. When civil servants operate under clear rules, are monitored through fair performance appraisals, and are encouraged to participate in decision-making, their motivation and effectiveness tend to increase.

The research also highlights the importance of leadership commitment, organizational support, and governance literacy in ensuring the successful application of governance practices. Institutions with strong leadership and an embedded governance culture exhibit more consistent performance improvements than those with passive or symbolic reform efforts. Moreover, digital infrastructure and employee training remain critical supporting elements that must accompany governance implementation for it to be fully effective.

Going forward, the findings suggest that efforts to improve civil servant performance should not focus solely on technical reforms or performance targets, but must prioritize the strengthening of governance frameworks. Policymakers and public managers must view good governance as both a strategic instrument and a normative guide to realize sustainable, accountable, and citizen-oriented public administration. Future research may expand on this study by exploring quantitative impacts of governance indicators on service outcomes or by conducting comparative analyses across regions and institutions to deepen understanding of governance-performance linkages.

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