Public Ethics and HR Governance in Public Administration

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ABSTRACT – This research examines the role of public ethics and Human Resources (HR) governance in public administration as key elements in creating effective and accountable governance. Using a normative juridical approach based on a literature study, this research identifies the challenges of implementing public administration ethics in Indonesia, including corruption, abuse of authority, and bureaucratic pathology. It explores strategies for strengthening public ethics through HR governance policies that are integrated with the values of justice and transparency. The study found that the implementation of public ethics still faces structural, cultural, and lack of regulatory enforcement constraints. HR governance based on meritocracy has proven to be a potential solution to improve bureaucratic integrity. This research highlights the importance of synergy between the principles of public ethics and HR governance to promote good governance in Indonesia. The results of this research contribute to the legal and public administration literature and serve as a reference in the preparation of relevant policies.
Keywords: Public Ethics, HR Governance, Public Administration, Bureaucracy, Good Governance, Meritocracy, Administrative Law.

A. INTRODUCTION

Public ethics and Human Resources (HR) governance in public administration have a very crucial in ensuring the creation of good governance. The realization of good governance requires integrating the principles of public ethics in all aspects of public administration, especially in the complex challenges of the modern era. Sedarmayanti (2021) underlines that the application of ethics in public administration is an effort to create superior and professional services, especially in the constantly evolving digital era. In practice, the implementation of public ethics principles has frequently confronted various obstacles that reduce the effectiveness of HR governance in the public sector.

The main obstacle to the implementation of public ethics in Indonesia is the existence of long-entrenched bureaucratic pathologies, such as nepotism, corruption, and weak accountability. Widiaswari (2022) highlighted that deviant behavior of public officials often stems from an unhealthy bureaucratic culture and the lack of an effective internal control system. In this case, public ethics should serve as a deterrent against behavior that violates the norms of public administration.

Good governance is not only related to policy effectiveness, but also to how public administration ethics are applied in public administration. Nawawi (2018) revealed that public ethics has a direct correlation with the level of public trust in the government. However, there are still various ethical violations that have resulted in the degradation of the credibility of public institutions (Hardyansah et al., 2024). This is exacerbated by the lack of supervision of the implementation of HR governance in various public sectors.

The morality crisis among public officials is a significant challenge for public administration. Fafako and Kurniasih (2024) public that although various regulations have been implemented, the implementation of public ethics is only normative without real implementation. This reflects the urgent need to integrate public ethics within a more forceful and purposeful governance framework.

Corruption in the bureaucracy is also a main factor that impedes the implementation of public ethics comprehensively. Budiawan et al. (2021) explained that corruption involving bureaucratic officials not only disadvantages the public, but also decrease public trust in the government. This shows the importance of strengthening the internal control system in preventing deviant behavior among public officials.

Another problem that emerges is the weak supervision of the implementation of public ethics, especially at the local level. Raharjanto (2021) argues that non-optimal supervision frequently results in violations of public ethics

becoming commonplace. This reflects the need for reforms in the public administration supervision system to ensure effective implementation of public ethics.

The COVID-19 pandemic has posed additional challenges to HR governance in the public sector. Betresia et al. (2021) highlighted the case of social assistance corruption as a clear example of the weak implementation of public ethics during the crisis. This case shows that even in emergency situations, violations of public ethics still occur, causing huge losses to communities.

Another problem that is frequently tackled is the lack of human resource capacity in understanding and applying the principles of public ethics. Holilah (2013) publics that the lack of training on public administration ethics results in low awareness of the importance of ethics in public services. This suggests the need to develop a more comprehensive training program to improve the understanding and application of public ethics.

From an international perspective, many developed countries have successfully implemented public ethics as an integral part of public governance. However, in Indonesia, similar efforts are frequently hampered by cultural resistance and lack of commitment from stakeholders. Ishaka et al. (2024) emphasized that public ethics reform requires full support from all elements of the government and communities.

The lack of specific regulations related to public ethics is also one of the factors that hamper its implementation. Haliim and Dwiranda (2020) argued that existing regulations are frequently unclear and lack firm sanctions for violators. This causes legal uncertainty in the implementation of public ethics in various sectors.

Another challenge is the lack of public awareness of the importance of public ethics in public administration. Rizky et al. (2023) show that public participation in overseeing government performance is minimal, thus enabling public officials to practice deviance.

There are different interpretations of the principles of public ethics among government institutions. Sedarmayanti (2021) emphasized that these differences in interpretation frequently result in inconsistencies in the application of public ethics at various levels of government. Therefore, clear and uniform standards are needed to ensure consistent implementation (Darmawan et al., 2023).

Failure to integrate information technology into the governance system is also an obstacle to the implementation of public ethics. Lestari and Sinambela (2022) noted that although technology can help improve transparency and accountability, its application in Indonesia is limited. This suggests the need for the development of technology-based systems to support the implementation of public ethics.

Regulations related to public ethics, such as Law Number 5 Year 2014 on Public Civil Apparatus, provide a strong legal foundation for the implementation of public administration ethics. However, the implementation of these regulations is actually still far from expectations. Sedarmayanti (2021) highlights that although there are ethical guidelines in the law, their implementation is frequently ignored by officials.

Previous research has mostly focused on the normative aspects of public ethics without giving adequate attention to implementation constraints in the field. There are still few studies that comprehensively relate public ethics with HR governance in Indonesia. This research offers a new perspective by exploring the relationship between public ethics and HR governance in the context of public administration in Indonesia. The main focus is on identifying implementation obstacles and strategic recommendations to overcome these obstacles. This research aims to analyze the implementation of public ethics in HR governance in Indonesian state administration as well as identify the main obstacles faced. This research aims to provide strategic recommendations to improve the implementation of public ethics in state administration.

B. METHOD

This research uses a normative juridical approach that aims to analyze the application of public ethics in HR governance in state administration based on applicable laws and regulations in Indonesia. This approach is suitable for exploring the legal and normative aspects of the research subject and understanding implementation constraints in the field (Wulandari & Yulianis, 2023).

This type of research is descriptive-analytical, which aims to describe and analyze data obtained from various secondary sources. The main data sources used in this research are legal documents, such as laws, government regulations, and regulations related to HR governance and public ethics. Academic

literature in the form of journals, books, and scientific articles are also used as additional references.

The data collection technique was conducted through a literature study by reviewing relevant legal documents and academic literature. Data was carefully collected to ensure the relevance and accuracy of the information analyzed. The main focus was on Law Number 5 Year 2014 on the State Civil Apparatus as well as regulations related to public administration ethics.

Data validity was ensured through validation of verified legal documents and academic literature. Data triangulation was conducted to ensure consistency of information from various sources. This process aims to produce a comprehensive and scientifically accountable analysis (Darmawan, 2015).

The data analysis technique was carried out qualitatively with a descriptive-analytical approach. Data were analyzed based on theories of public administration law, principles of governance, and implementation of public ethics. The analysis focused on identifying the main obstacles in the implementation of public ethics and recommending strategies to overcome them. This process involved mapping the relationship between legal norms and implementation practices in the context of public administration in Indonesia.

Through this method, the research is expected to make academic and practical contributions in improving the implementation of public ethics and HR governance in public administration.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Application of Public Ethics in Public Administration

The implementation of public ethics in public administration is one of the important pillars in creating a clean and accountable government. Law Number 5 Year 2014 on Public Civil Apparatus has established a code of ethics and behavior as a guideline for public officials in carrying out their job. However, the implementation of public ethics in Indonesia is facing various challenges. One of the main obstacles is the lack of internalization of ethical values in a complex and frequently convoluted bureaucratic system (Sedarmayanti, 2021).

Widiaswari (2022) notes that although regulations related to public ethics already exist, their implementation is still constrained by the weak system of supervision and law enforcement against ethical violations. This is exacerbated by the phenomenon of a work culture that does not support the principles of accountability and transparency in the bureaucracy. Mahsyar (2011) emphasized that the lack of ethics education at the lower bureaucratic levels is a main obstacle in developing an ethical work culture.

In carrying out administrative tasks, cases of abuse of authority are frequently found, indicating low ethical awareness. Betresia et al. (2021) show that corrupt practices in the distribution of COVID-19 social assistance are clear evidence of the weak practice of public ethical values. This shows that the rule of law without strengthening ethics is not enough to prevent disgraceful actions in the state administration.

The bad governance of HR is one of the main factors contributing to violations of public ethics. According to Raharjanto (2021), HR management policies in many organizations are not yet merit-based, which results in unfairness in the promotion process. This unfairness creates a work environment where promotion decisions are based more on personal relationships or closeness to superiors, rather than individual performance and competence (Hariani et al., 2022). Such practices not only undermine employee morale but also foster a culture of nepotism, which is contrary to the principles of good governance.

Nepotism in public and private organizations hampers the implementation of the principles of transparency and accountability, which are key pillars of good governance. When individuals are promoted based on personal affinity rather than professional ability, this can reduce the quality of public services and decrease public trust in the institution. This practice also impedes innovation and efficiency as strategic positions are often occupied by less competent individuals. Therefore, the implementation of a merit-based system in HR management is crucial to ensure that only qualified individuals receive promotions and greater responsibilities.

Nawawi (2018) highlighted that inconsistencies in the application of ethical principles are often caused by weak commitment from organizational leaders. Leaders who do not demonstrate a strong commitment to ethics are likely to overlook ethical violations and may even be involved in unethical practices themselves. This lack of commitment can create an organizational culture that is permissive of

ethical violations, where employees feel that unethical actions are acceptable or even expected to achieve organizational goals.

To address these issues, reforms in HR governance are needed that emphasize the importance of meritocracy and integrity. Organizations need to implement policies that support professional development based on performance and competence. Ethics training for leaders and employees should be enhanced to ensure that all members of the organization understand and adhere to high ethical standards. External oversight can also help ensure that HR policies are applied fairly and consistently.

Improving merit-based HR governance is a crucial step to prevent public ethics violations and promote good governance. By increasing commitment to ethical principles at all levels of the organization, and ensuring that HR management policies support transparency and accountability, organizations can develop a more equitable and productive work culture.

The internalization of public ethics in Indonesia is still formalistic. Widiaswari (2022) mentioned that ethics training for public civil apparatus is often only carried out as a formality without in-depth evaluation of its effectiveness. As a result, public civil apparatus' understanding of the importance of public ethics is low.

In the legal domain, Negara and Nainggolan (2023) revealed that there are inconsistencies between ethics regulations and their implementation in practice. For example, many cases of ethical violations are only given light administrative sanctions, thus not providing a significant deterrent effect. Meanwhile, Haliim and Dwiranda (2020) emphasized that there is a need to strengthen the role of internal supervision institutions to ensure that ethical principles can be applied properly.

Overall, the implementation of public ethics in Indonesia requires comprehensive reform, both in terms of regulation and implementation. A combination of strengthening the capacity of the public civil apparatus, ethics education, and effective supervision are strategic steps that must be taken to ensure that ethical values can become the foundation of every public administration process.

HR Governance in Public Administration

HR governance plays an important role in shaping an efficient bureaucracy with integrity. In the context of public administration in Indonesia, HR governance still faces various challenges. One of the main issues is the lack of implementation of meritocracy principles in the management of the public civil apparatus. Widiaswari (2022) asserts that HR management policies are often influenced by political pressure, so that the recruitment and promotion process is not based on qualifications and competencies.

According to Sedarmayanti (2021), bad HR governance is often the cause of various ethical violations in the public administration. In many cases, decisions regarding appointments are more often based on personal relationships than objective performance. This not only creates injustice, but also demoralizes the work of the public civil apparatus.

Haliim and Dwiranda (2020) highlighted that Human Resource Management (HRM) policies are often inconsistent with the principles of good governance. One of the main problems is the gap between formal regulations on HRM and practices in the field. The current performance evaluation system is considered unable to objectively reflect the capabilities and contributions of the public civil apparatus. This inaccurate performance assessment can hinder the development of the potential of public servants and reduce their motivation to achieve better performance.

A study by Valerio (2024) shows that strategic HR management practices, such as transparent and merit-based performance management, can improve good governance principles, including accountability and efficiency. In the context of the public sector, the implementation of a clear and fair performance evaluation system is essential to ensure that the public civil apparatus is assessed based on their real contributions, not based on personal relationships or other subjective factors. This is in line with the findings of Giauque et al. (2019) who emphasized the importance of a performance management system that provides regular feedback and sets clear performance expectations.

Nawawi (2018) highlighted that inconsistencies in the application of ethical principles are frequently caused by weak commitment from organizational leader. Leaders who are not committed to ethics are likely to overlook ethical violations, which in turn develops an organizational culture that is permissive of unethical practices. Addressing this issue requires reforms in HR governance that

emphasize the importance of meritocracy and integrity, as well as ethics training for leaders and employees.

Legal regulations also play an important role in shaping effective HRM practices, as discussed by Aburumman et al. (2020). Regulations can encourage organizations to implement high standards in leadership and HRM, such as in recruitment, training, performance appraisal, and career development processes. Thus, regulations not only ensure legal compliance but also support the development of a fair and inclusive work environment.

Achieving good governance in HRM requires consistent application of the principles of transparency, accountability and meritocracy. By strengthening the performance evaluation system and ethical commitment of organizational leaders, as well as utilizing regulations as a tool to improve HRM practices, organizations can improve the quality of public services and increase public trust.

Rahmaniyah et al. (2024) noted that the lack of training programs oriented towards strengthening the capacity of the public civil apparatus is a serious obstacle in the struggle to create a professional bureaucracy. Many trainings organized only focus on technical aspects without touching on ethical values and public service.

In their analysis, Budiawan et al. (2021) state that the role of technology in supporting HR governance is still underutilized. In fact, digitalization can be a solution to increase efficiency and transparency in HRM. However, the application of technology must be accompanied by adequate training to ensure that the public civil apparatus can utilize the technology effectively.

Nawawi (2018) also points out that the internal control system in HR governance often does not run optimally. This can be seen from the weak supervision of the implementation of the work of public civil apparatus, which has an impact on the weak accountability. To overcome this problem, Raharjanto (2021) suggested a more rigorous and results-based performance audit.

In an international perspective, Nawawi (2018) compared HR governance in Indonesia with developed countries and found that countries with efficient bureaucracies generally have a merit-based HRM system with close supervision. This merit-based system ensures that recruitment, promotion, and performance appraisal are done transparently and objectively, thus minimizing the potential for nepotism and corruption. For example, research by Valerio (2024) shows that in Zamboanga City, Philippines, the implementation of a competency-based recruitment and transparent performance management system has improved the accountability and efficiency of public services.

In developed countries, as discussed by Giauque et al. (2019), effective performance management systems play an important role in improving employee motivation and productivity. These systems set clear performance expectations and provide regular feedback, which helps employees understand their role in achieving organizational goals. Alonso et al. (2020) emphasize the importance of continuous training and professional development as part of the HR strategy to improve the skills and competencies of the public civil apparatus. Indonesia can learn from these international best practices to improve its HR governance. The implementation of a merit-based system in the public sector can increase public trust in government institutions by ensuring that HR-related decisions are based on qualifications and performance, not personal relationships. The study by Rismayadi (2024) highlights that the implementation of good governance principles within HRM in Indonesia can result in more responsive and high-quality public services.

However, the main challenge in implementing a merit-based system in Indonesia is the political intervention in the recruitment and promotion process, as founded by Santos et al. (2022). To solve this, a strong commitment from organizational leaders is needed to implement transparent and accountable HR policies. Human resource capacity improvement through continuous training and development should also be prioritized.

Overall, by adopting international best practices in merit-based HRM, Indonesia can strengthen good governance. This will not only improve bureaucratic efficiency but also increase public trust in the government. As such, reforms in HRM are essential to achieving Indonesia's long-term development goals.

Effective HR governance requires a synergy between strong regulations, consistent implementation, and a stringent supervision. Reforms in HR governance are an urgent need to develop a professional, integrity and public service-oriented public administration.

D. CONCLUSIONS

Based on the results of the research described, it can be concluded that the implementation of public ethics and HR governance are essential elements in public administration to realize a clean, accountable and transparent government. In the context of public ethics implementation, the main obstacles lie in the weak internalization of ethical values, the lack of ethics education among public civil apparatus, and the lack of effective supervision of ethical violations. Reforms in strengthening ethics education, the supervision system, and the application of sanctions are key to solving these problems.

Meanwhile, in HR governance, it was found that recruitment and promotion systems that are not based on meritocracy, weak performance evaluation, and lack of utilization of digital technology are the main obstacles. Efficient HR governance requires fundamental reforms, including the implementation of meritocratic principles, capacity building of the state civil apparatus, and strengthening of internal control systems.

To improve the implementation of public ethics, continuous training programs are needed that focus on internalizing ethical values and accountability. The supervisory system must be strengthened through the establishment of an independent and effective internal supervisory unit. The government also needs to apply firm sanctions against ethical violations to provide a deterrent effect and increase awareness of the importance of ethics in carrying out duties.

In HR governance, the government must ensure that all recruitment and promotion processes are based on transparent and fair meritocratic principles. Digitalization in HRM must be maximized to improve efficiency, including in performance monitoring and evaluation. Results-based performance audits need to be implemented regularly to ensure the accountability of the state civil apparatus in carrying out public duties.

These strategic steps are expected to create a bureaucracy that is more professional and has integrity, so that it can support the achievement of good governance and quality public services.

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