

# PUBLIC SECTOR HUMAN RESOURCE MANAGEMENT TRANSFORMATION FOR EFFECTIVE AND ACCOUNTABLE GOVERNANCE

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## Abstract

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*This study aims to analyze the transformation of public sector human resource management in realizing effective and accountable governance in Medan City. The study uses a qualitative descriptive method with a public administration and human resource management approach. Data were obtained through literature study, document analysis, and observation of relevant administrative phenomena related to public sector human resource management, public service delivery, bureaucratic reform, and governance accountability. The findings show that public sector human resource management transformation plays a strategic role in improving local government performance through merit-based management, employee competence development, performance-based assessment, digital administrative reform, and accountability mechanisms. The study also finds that challenges such as uneven employee competence, resistance to change, bureaucratic rigidity, and limited innovation culture may hinder the effectiveness of transformation. The study concludes that public sector human resource management should be positioned as a central agenda in local governance reform. Effective and accountable governance can be strengthened when public employees are professional, competent, adaptive, performance-oriented, and supported by transparent institutional systems.*

**Keywords:** Accountability; Governance; Medan City; Public administration; Public sector human resource management

## INTRODUCTION

Public sector human resource management has become an important issue in contemporary public administration because the quality of government performance is strongly influenced by the competence, integrity, responsiveness, and accountability of public officials. In Medan City, the demand for effective and accountable governance continues to increase along with the growing complexity of urban public services, population mobility, digitalization, and public expectations for faster, more transparent, and citizen-oriented administration. As one of the largest cities in Indonesia, Medan faces various administrative challenges, including the need to improve bureaucratic performance, strengthen public service quality, enhance employee professionalism, and ensure that government institutions are able to respond effectively to community needs. These conditions indicate that public sector human resource management can no longer rely only on conventional administrative practices, but must be transformed into a strategic system that supports institutional performance, public accountability, and good governance.

Previous studies have shown that human resource management in the public sector plays a strategic role in improving government effectiveness and service quality. Strategic human resource management is considered capable of aligning employee competence, organizational goals, and public sector performance outcomes (Pynes, 2013). In the context of public administration, human resources are not merely administrative instruments, but key institutional assets that determine the capacity of government organizations to implement policies and provide public services (Berman et al., 2021).

Other scholars have emphasized that public sector reform requires professionalism, merit-based recruitment, competency development, performance evaluation, and ethical leadership in order to create accountable governance (Pollitt & Bouckaert, 2017). Furthermore, the implementation of good governance principles, including transparency, accountability, participation, effectiveness, and rule of law, is closely related to the capacity of public officials to carry out their duties professionally and responsibly (Dwiyanto, 2021). These findings suggest that human resource management transformation is an important foundation for strengthening the quality of public administration.

In Indonesia, the transformation of public sector human resource management is also supported by several legal and regulatory frameworks. Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus emphasizes the importance of merit-based management, professionalism, neutrality, accountability, and competency development of civil servants. This regulation provides a legal basis for managing public employees based on qualifications, competence, performance, and fairness. In addition, Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services requires government institutions to provide services based on public interest, legal certainty, equality, professionalism, accountability, timeliness, and transparency. Government Regulation Number 30 of 2019 concerning Civil Servant Performance Assessment further strengthens the importance of performance-based management in the public sector. These regulations show that the transformation of human resource management is not only an administrative need, but also a legal mandate to improve public service delivery and government accountability.

However, in practice, the implementation of public sector human resource management transformation still faces several challenges. In Medan City, bureaucratic institutions are required to improve employee competence, strengthen digital-based administration, enhance performance accountability, and reduce procedural inefficiency in public service delivery. The gap between regulatory ideals and administrative practice may weaken the effectiveness of governance if not supported by systematic human resource reform. Problems such as limited competency development, uneven performance evaluation, weak innovation culture, and low responsiveness in public services can affect public trust in local government administration. Therefore, it is important to examine how public sector human resource management transformation can contribute to the realization of effective and accountable governance in Medan City.

Based on this background, the main problem of this study is how the transformation of public sector human resource management can support effective and accountable governance in Medan City. This study aims to analyze the role of public sector human resource management transformation in improving government effectiveness, strengthening accountability, and supporting the implementation of good governance principles in local public administration. The study is expected to contribute theoretically to the development of public administration and human resource management literature, and practically to provide recommendations for improving bureaucratic performance and public service governance in Medan City.

## **METHOD**

This study uses a qualitative descriptive research method with a public administration and human resource management approach. The qualitative descriptive method is used because this study aims to explain, interpret, and understand the transformation of public sector human resource management in supporting effective and accountable governance in Medan City. This method is appropriate for examining administrative practices, institutional policies, regulatory implementation, and organizational challenges in the management of public employees within local government institutions.

The focus of this study is the transformation of public sector human resource management and its relationship with effective and accountable governance. The main aspects examined include merit-based human resource management, employee competence development, performance assessment, bureaucratic professionalism, digital-based administrative reform, public service effectiveness, and accountability mechanisms in local government administration. These aspects are analyzed to understand how human resource management practices contribute to improving the quality of governance and public services.

The location of this study is Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. Medan City was selected because it is one of the largest urban administrative areas in Indonesia and has complex public service

demands. As a metropolitan city, Medan requires adaptive, professional, and accountable public sector human resources to support effective governance and respond to the needs of its citizens.

The subjects of this study consist of public officials, civil servants, and administrative personnel within local government institutions in Medan City. The data sources used in this study include primary and secondary data. Primary data are obtained from information related to public sector human resource management practices, administrative reform, and public service implementation. Secondary data are obtained from laws and regulations, government documents, academic books, journal articles, official reports, and other relevant publications related to public administration, human resource management, and governance accountability.

Data collection techniques are carried out through literature study, document analysis, and observation of relevant administrative phenomena. The literature study is used to examine theories and previous research on public sector human resource management, good governance, bureaucratic reform, and public accountability. Document analysis is conducted by reviewing laws, regulations, policy documents, and institutional reports related to the management of civil servants and public service delivery. Observation of administrative phenomena is used to understand the practical conditions of governance and human resource management transformation in Medan City.

The data analysis technique used in this study is qualitative analysis through data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. Data reduction is conducted by selecting and organizing information relevant to the research focus. Data presentation is carried out by describing the relationship between public sector human resource management transformation and the principles of effective and accountable governance. Interpretation is conducted by connecting the empirical phenomena, theoretical perspectives, previous research findings, and applicable regulations. The results are then analyzed to formulate conclusions regarding the role of human resource management transformation in strengthening local government governance in Medan City.

## RESULTS

The results of this study show that the transformation of public sector human resource management is an important factor in supporting effective and accountable governance in Medan City. The findings indicate that human resource management in the public sector is no longer limited to administrative personnel management, but has developed into a strategic governance instrument that determines the quality of public service delivery, bureaucratic performance, and institutional accountability. In the context of Medan City, the need for human resource transformation is closely related to the increasing demand for faster, more transparent, responsive, and citizen-oriented public services.

First, the study finds that merit-based human resource management is a fundamental element in improving the quality of local government administration. The implementation of merit principles supports the placement of public officials based on competence, qualifications, performance, and integrity. This condition is important because effective governance requires public employees who are professionally capable of carrying out administrative duties and public service responsibilities. In Medan City, the strengthening of merit-based management can help reduce subjective personnel practices and improve the alignment between employee capacity and institutional needs.

Second, employee competence development is found to be one of the main requirements for public sector human resource transformation. The complexity of urban governance requires civil servants and administrative personnel to possess not only technical administrative skills, but also digital literacy, service orientation, communication ability, problem-solving capacity, and ethical awareness. The findings show that continuous training, capacity building, and professional development are necessary to ensure that public officials are able to adapt to changing public service demands. Without systematic competence development, bureaucratic transformation may remain formal and unable to produce meaningful improvements in governance performance.

Third, the findings indicate that performance-based management contributes to the improvement of bureaucratic effectiveness. Clear performance targets, objective evaluation mechanisms, and measurable work indicators can encourage public employees to work more productively and responsibly. In Medan City, performance assessment is important to ensure that public officials are accountable for their duties and that institutional performance can be monitored more transparently.

Performance-based management also creates a stronger relationship between individual work achievement and organizational goals in public administration.

Fourth, the study finds that digital-based administrative transformation plays an important role in improving public service effectiveness. The use of digital systems can simplify administrative procedures, reduce service delays, increase data accuracy, and improve access to public services. In the context of Medan City, digital transformation supports more efficient governance by helping government institutions manage personnel data, service information, performance reports, and public complaints more systematically. However, digital transformation must be supported by adequate employee competence, organizational readiness, and institutional commitment.

Fifth, accountability mechanisms are found to be essential in strengthening public trust in local government. Accountable governance requires clear responsibility, transparent procedures, ethical conduct, and the ability of government institutions to explain and justify their decisions and performance. The findings show that human resource management transformation contributes to accountability by promoting professionalism, discipline, integrity, and performance responsibility among public officials. When public employees understand their duties and are evaluated based on measurable standards, the quality of accountability in government administration can be improved.

Sixth, the study finds that several challenges still affect the transformation of public sector human resource management in Medan City. These challenges include uneven employee competence, limited innovation culture, resistance to change, bureaucratic procedural rigidity, and the need for stronger integration between human resource policies and public service reform. These obstacles show that transformation cannot be achieved only through regulations or formal policies, but requires consistent implementation, leadership commitment, institutional supervision, and cultural change within public organizations.

Overall, the findings indicate that public sector human resource management transformation has a strategic role in realizing effective and accountable governance in Medan City. Effective governance is supported by competent, professional, adaptive, and performance-oriented public employees, while accountable governance is strengthened through transparent personnel management, objective performance assessment, ethical behavior, and institutional responsibility. Therefore, the transformation of public sector human resource management should be positioned as a central agenda in local government reform, especially in improving public service quality and strengthening public trust in government institutions.

## DISCUSSION

The results of this study indicate that the transformation of public sector human resource management is closely related to the realization of effective and accountable governance in Medan City. This finding is in line with the concept of strategic human resource management, which views human resources not only as administrative support, but as a strategic asset for achieving organizational goals and improving institutional performance. In public administration, the quality of governance is highly dependent on the capacity of public officials to formulate, implement, and evaluate public policies and services. Therefore, the transformation of human resource management becomes an important requirement for improving the performance of local government institutions.

The first focus of this study is merit-based human resource management. The findings show that merit principles are essential for ensuring that public officials are recruited, placed, promoted, and evaluated based on competence, qualifications, performance, and integrity. This is consistent with the theory of bureaucratic professionalism, which emphasizes that public administration must be carried out by competent and impartial officials. In the Indonesian legal context, this finding is also supported by Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus, which mandates the implementation of merit-based management in the civil service system. For Medan City, strengthening merit-based management is important to reduce subjective personnel practices and to ensure that every public official occupies a position that matches their competence and responsibility.

The second focus is employee competence development. The results show that competence development is a key factor in supporting the transformation of public sector human resource management. This finding is consistent with human capital theory, which states that investment in employee knowledge, skills, and abilities can improve organizational performance. In the context of

local government, competence development is needed to strengthen administrative capacity, digital literacy, communication skills, ethical awareness, and public service orientation. The complexity of public service problems in Medan City requires civil servants who are adaptive and capable of responding to the needs of citizens. Therefore, training, professional development, and continuous capacity building must be integrated into the local government human resource management system.

The third focus is performance-based management. The findings indicate that effective governance requires clear performance targets, objective assessment mechanisms, and measurable work indicators. This is consistent with the principles of New Public Management, which emphasizes efficiency, performance measurement, service quality, and accountability in public organizations. Government Regulation Number 30 of 2019 concerning Civil Servant Performance Assessment also provides a regulatory foundation for strengthening performance-based evaluation in the public sector. In Medan City, performance-based management can improve bureaucratic effectiveness by linking individual employee performance with institutional goals and public service outcomes. However, performance assessment should not only be formal or administrative, but must be used as a basis for improving work quality, discipline, promotion, and institutional accountability.

The fourth focus is digital-based administrative reform. The results show that digital transformation supports public sector human resource management by improving data accuracy, simplifying administrative procedures, accelerating service delivery, and strengthening transparency. This finding is relevant to the concept of e-government, which emphasizes the use of information technology to improve government effectiveness, efficiency, and public access to services. In the context of Medan City, digital-based administration can help local government institutions manage personnel data, performance reports, service information, and public complaints more systematically. However, the success of digital transformation depends on the readiness of human resources. Without adequate digital competence, digital systems may become only formal instruments and may not significantly improve governance quality.

The fifth focus is public service effectiveness. The findings show that public sector human resource management transformation contributes to better public service delivery when employees have competence, discipline, responsiveness, and service orientation. This is in line with Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services, which requires public service providers to uphold principles such as professionalism, transparency, timeliness, equality, accountability, and legal certainty. In Medan City, the quality of public services is closely related to the ability of local government employees to serve citizens fairly, quickly, and responsibly. Therefore, improving public service effectiveness requires not only procedural reform, but also the transformation of employee behavior, work culture, and institutional commitment.

The sixth focus is accountability mechanisms. The results show that accountable governance can be strengthened through transparent human resource management, objective performance evaluation, ethical conduct, and clear responsibility among public officials. This finding is consistent with good governance theory, which places accountability as one of the core principles of public administration. Accountability requires government institutions and public officials to be able to explain, justify, and take responsibility for their actions, decisions, and performance. In Medan City, accountability can be improved when employee management is based on measurable standards and when public officials are evaluated according to their duties and performance achievements. Thus, human resource management transformation functions as an institutional mechanism for strengthening public trust.

The findings also show that several challenges still affect the transformation of public sector human resource management in Medan City. These challenges include uneven employee competence, resistance to organizational change, limited innovation culture, bureaucratic rigidity, and weak integration between human resource policies and public service reform. These challenges indicate that transformation cannot be achieved only through formal regulations. It requires leadership commitment, consistent implementation, institutional supervision, employee participation, and organizational culture change. Public sector transformation must be understood as a continuous process that involves structural, procedural, technological, and behavioral changes within government institutions.

When compared with the theoretical framework discussed in the introduction, the results of this study confirm that public sector human resource management has a strategic role in improving governance quality. Strategic human resource management theory explains that employee competence, performance systems, and organizational alignment are essential for achieving institutional

effectiveness. Good governance theory also emphasizes that effective and accountable government depends on transparency, responsibility, rule of law, participation, responsiveness, and professionalism. The results of this study support these theories by showing that human resource transformation can strengthen both effectiveness and accountability in local government administration.

Based on the regulatory framework, the findings also confirm that public sector human resource management transformation is not only a managerial need, but also a legal obligation. Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning State Civil Apparatus requires the implementation of professionalism, meritocracy, neutrality, accountability, and competency development. Law Number 25 of 2009 concerning Public Services requires public institutions to provide accountable and high-quality services. Government Regulation Number 30 of 2019 further strengthens the importance of performance-based civil servant assessment. Therefore, the transformation of human resource management in Medan City should be directed toward the implementation of these legal principles in practical governance.

Overall, the discussion shows that public sector human resource management transformation is a central element in realizing effective and accountable governance in Medan City. Merit-based management strengthens professionalism, competence development improves administrative capacity, performance-based management increases institutional effectiveness, digital reform supports service efficiency, and accountability mechanisms strengthen public trust. However, these elements must be implemented in an integrated manner. Without strong leadership, consistent supervision, and cultural change within the bureaucracy, human resource transformation may remain normative and may not fully contribute to governance improvement. Therefore, Medan City needs to place human resource management transformation as a strategic agenda in public administration reform.

## CONCLUSION

The transformation of public sector human resource management is a strategic concept in strengthening effective and accountable governance. In the context of local government administration, human resources are not only administrative instruments, but also institutional assets that determine the capacity of government organizations to provide public services, implement policies, and build public trust. Therefore, the transformation of human resource management must be understood as part of bureaucratic reform that integrates competence, professionalism, performance, ethics, and accountability.

Merit-based human resource management is an essential foundation for creating professional public administration. The principle of merit strengthens the alignment between employee competence and organizational needs, while reducing the potential for subjective personnel practices. In theoretical terms, meritocracy supports bureaucratic rationality, institutional neutrality, and administrative fairness, all of which are necessary for effective governance.

Employee competence development is a key element in improving the adaptive capacity of public institutions. The transformation of public sector human resources requires continuous development of technical skills, digital literacy, service orientation, communication ability, ethical awareness, and problem-solving capacity. This reflects the human capital perspective, which views employee capability as a determining factor in organizational performance and public service quality.

Performance-based management contributes to governance effectiveness by connecting individual work achievement with institutional objectives. Objective performance assessment, measurable indicators, and clear accountability structures encourage public officials to work more responsibly and productively. In this sense, performance management functions not only as an evaluation tool, but also as a mechanism for improving bureaucratic discipline and institutional accountability.

Digital-based administrative reform strengthens the efficiency, transparency, and responsiveness of public sector governance. However, digital transformation must be supported by adequate human resource readiness. Technology will not produce meaningful governance improvement without competent, adaptive, and innovation-oriented public officials. Thus, digital reform and human resource transformation must be developed as an integrated agenda.

Accountability in governance is strengthened when public sector human resource management is based on professionalism, transparency, integrity, and measurable responsibility. Effective and accountable governance can be achieved when public officials understand their duties, perform according to clear standards, and are subject to fair evaluation mechanisms. Therefore, the

transformation of public sector human resource management is a central requirement for realizing good governance in Medan City.

## RECOMMENDATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

From a theoretical perspective, future studies are recommended to develop a more integrated model of public sector human resource management transformation by combining strategic human resource management theory, good governance theory, merit system theory, human capital theory, and digital governance theory. This integration is important to explain how employee competence, performance systems, digital adaptation, ethical leadership, and accountability mechanisms interact in strengthening public administration performance.

Future research should also expand the analytical framework by using empirical approaches, such as quantitative surveys, mixed methods, or comparative studies between cities. This will help strengthen the generalizability of findings and provide more measurable evidence regarding the relationship between public sector human resource management transformation and governance outcomes. Comparative studies between Medan City and other large cities in Indonesia may also provide a broader understanding of local government reform practices.

From a practical perspective, the Government of Medan City needs to strengthen merit-based human resource management in recruitment, placement, promotion, mutation, and performance evaluation. Employee management should be based on competence, qualifications, integrity, and work achievement so that public institutions can develop a more professional and accountable bureaucracy.

Capacity-building programs for civil servants and public sector employees should be implemented continuously and systematically. Training should not only focus on administrative procedures, but also on digital competence, public service ethics, communication skills, policy implementation, innovation, and problem-solving. This is necessary to ensure that public employees are able to respond to increasingly complex public service demands.

The local government also needs to improve performance-based management by developing clear indicators, objective evaluation systems, and transparent follow-up mechanisms. Performance assessment should be used not only as a formal administrative requirement, but also as a basis for employee development, reward and sanction systems, promotion, and institutional improvement.

Digital transformation should be accompanied by organizational readiness and human resource readiness. The Government of Medan City needs to strengthen digital literacy, improve the use of integrated personnel information systems, and ensure that digital public service platforms are supported by competent employees. This will help improve service efficiency, reduce bureaucratic delays, and increase transparency in government administration.

Finally, accountability mechanisms must be strengthened through ethical leadership, internal supervision, public complaint systems, transparent service standards, and consistent evaluation of employee performance. Public sector human resource management transformation should be positioned as a long-term governance reform agenda, not merely as an administrative program. By strengthening professionalism, competence, performance, digital readiness, and accountability, Medan City can develop a more effective, responsive, and trusted local government administration.

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