

**REFORMS, TRANSPARENCY, AND ACCOUNTABILITY AND THE
COMPLEXITIES OF CIVIL SERVICE RECRUITMENT IN INDONESIA****¹ Sajida**¹Department of Public Administration, Faculty of Social and Political Science, Universitas
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ABSTRACT

This study delves into the intricacies of civil service recruitment in Indonesia, focusing on the reforms, transparency, and accountability measures implemented to enhance the recruitment process. Utilizing a literature review methodology, the study systematically explores the complexities, challenges, and advancements in civil service recruitment practices in Indonesia. The findings reveal that the civil service recruitment system in Indonesia demanded considerable change and alterations to make the recruitment procedure more transparent. However, the ultimate goal of recruitment is accountability and effectiveness; this process is not always carried out fairly. Although several reforms took place, some loopholes like political interference, nepotism, mismatched skills, inadequate infrastructure for recruitment, and the slow process of the bureaucratic form still exist. The professionalism in recruitment must be increased; to do so, both applicants and employees need to be properly trained, and it also needed to improve the recruitment infrastructure.

Keywords; Civil Service Recruitment; Accountability; Reforms; Transparency

A. INTRODUCTION

The recruitment of civil servants in Indonesia historically has been characterized by a centralized and bureaucratic system, often criticized for its lack of transparency, susceptibility to political influence, and prevalence of nepotism (Turner et al., 2022). This traditional system, passed down from times and solidified during the New Order era has come under public scrutiny and criticism, for alleged unfair practices, bias and corruption (Noer, 2024; Rajiani and Jumbri, 2011). The perception of a transparent and unjust hiring process has diminished trust in government bodies and questioned the credibility of the civil service. To address these issues and meet the growing call, for change consecutive administrations have introduced reforms and policies to modernize and enhance the recruitment system for servants. These changes aim to

tackle problems improve transparency prioritize merit based selection and reinforce accountability measures. Despite these initiatives challenges persist in the recruitment procedure that demand attention and intervention.

This article explores the intricacies of recruiting servants, in Indonesia focusing on how reforms, transparency and accountability intersect. It aims to evaluate the progress achieved highlight the remaining challenges and discuss opportunities and strategies for enhancement. By examining backgrounds current practices, case studies, and future prospects this article aims to contribute to the ongoing discussions and initiatives aimed at reforming and strengthening Indonesias civil service recruitment processes. Ultimately it seeks to offer insights, suggestions and motivation, for policymakers, stakeholders and members of society dedicated to fostering a fair, transparent and accountable civil service recruitment system that prioritizes the well being of Indonesians while supporting the nations sustainable growth and prosperity.

B. METHOD

This research utilizes a literature review approach to delve into the intricacies, obstacles and improvements, in the recruitment process of servants in Indonesia. Drawing upon research within the social sciences domain (Galvan and Galvan, 2017; Pati and Lorusso, 2018; Putra and Sajida, 2023), relevant literature was systematically gathered from academic sources, government documents, international bodies reports from civil society organizations and respected online repositories. By employing keywords like "civil service recruitment " "Indonesia " "reforms," "transparency," "accountability," "challenges,". Complexities " this study aimed to extract insights on civil service recruitment practices, in Indonesia. The gathered literature underwent scrutiny, analysis and synthesis to reveal information regarding this subject matter. A meticulous quality assessment was carried out to evaluate the reliability, relevance and methodological soundness of the chosen studies and publications. This ensured that the conclusions drawn from the literature were credible, dependable and robust.

C. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Reforms, Transparency and Accountability in civil service recruitment in Indonesia

Since gaining independence in 1945 Indonesia has taken over. Adjusted the administrative system to fit its newly formed democratic structure. However the process of recruiting servants became increasingly intertwined with politics during President Suhartos New Order regime, from 1967 to 1998 (Blunt et al., 2012; Ufen, 2008). The selection and advancement of servants were often influenced by affiliations allegiance to the ruling government and personal connections rather than based on merit, qualifications or suitability for the position. During this time the central government exerted control over the service limiting opportunities for local involvement and autonomy at regional and local levels (Blunt et al., 2012). The lack of transparency, accountability and fairness in recruitment led to disillusionment eroded trust in government institutions and raised concerns, about corruption, favoritism and nepotism.

The downfall of the New Order government, in 1998 marked a moment in Indonesian landscape and the way civil servants are recruited (Turner et al., 2022). The shift, towards democracy and efforts to decentralize governance with a focus on enhancing transparency, accountability and local independence have significantly impacted how civil servants are recruited (Berenschot, 2018). Following the transition periods reforms multiple administrations have worked on updating and modernizing the recruitment process for servants. These changes, part of an objective to enhance transparency, accountability and fairness in recruitment processes have led to modifications in how civil service duties performed (Junus et al., 2016). Key initiatives have included the introduction of recruitment tests defining selection criteria and implementing performance-based evaluations to ensure that recruitment procedures are unbiased and based on merit (Turner et al., 2022). Despite these enhancements challenges persist in civil service recruitment due to issues like subjectivity (Nasution et al., 2024), political interference, favoritism nepotism, at local levels. Moreover, the speedy pace of democratization decentralization attempts and social development

require adaptability and advancement to the hiring process that satisfy developing needs and desires within that specific sector and society.

In the twenty years, Indonesia has seen administrations of various reforms and policy changes to address the existing ground problems and improve the recruitment process. The recent reform policies aim to make the recruitment process fair and just for the candidates to civil service positions. The procedures for nominating civil servants (CPNS) are outlined in Article 58 of Law Number 5 of 2014 on State Civil Apparatus. The CPNS procurement process involves recruiting civil servant candidates (CPNS) through stages such as planning, announcement, Application, screening, and appointment to become Civil Servants (PNS) (Ali Junjunan & Suwanda, 2020). These examinations assess candidates based on their knowledge, skills, competencies, and suitability for the job, rather than political connections or personal affiliations (Sundell, 2014).

The implementation of criteria, for selection and performance assessments has played a role in creating a fair recruitment process that promotes meritocracy. The recent recruitment system focuses on positions through diversification tests and certifications. It includes ability assessments, field ability tests. Utilizes Computer Assisted Testing (CAT) along with job orientation for each role in the new office (Dwiputrianti et al., 2024). To simplify and centralize the recruitment procedures a dedicated agency or commission has been established to supervise civil service recruitment at the level. This centralized approach aims to reduce complexities avoid efforts and ensure uniformity, transparency and efficiency across various government departments and agencies. The State Personnel Agency (Badan Kepegawaian Negara / BKN) oversees this process (Ali Junjunan & Suwanda, 2020; Simandjorang & Kurniawan, 2022). Furthermore, initiatives such, as capacity building programs and training have been introduced to address skill gaps within the service. These programs aim to equip servants with the knowledge, skills and competencies to perform their duties effectively (Tjiptoherijanto, 2007). These initiatives aim to improve skills, ethical behavior, leadership, and efficient performance of services better and more useful to deal with the complicated issues in the public sector management. Hopefully, the recent changes can be considered effective in a sectional improvement in the process

of recruitment. These changes have played a role, in making the recruitment process fairer ultimately boosting trust, confidence and contentment with bodies.

In terms of transparency efforts to promote it in civil service recruitment, in Indonesia have included steps and initiatives to ensure the integrity and reliability of sector hiring procedures to attract top candidates (Kurniawan et al., 2020). This dedication to transparency is a response to the challenges presented by corruption, political interference and inefficiencies in government operations. By examining the transparency measures obstacles faced in achieving transparency and the benefits of recruitment processes we can gain an understanding of civil service recruitment practices in Indonesia. Examples such as the Indonesian National Army (TNI AD) and the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) showcase organizations striving for recruitment practices (Purboyo et al., 2024; Schütte, 2015). Fair and impartial recruitment processes based on merit are crucial for institutions to build a workforce. Restoring trust can be achieved through CPNS acceptance procedures during recruitment. The transparency in CPNS recruitment plays a role, in providing the public with information that showcases government transparency in the civil service hiring process (Ali Junjuran & Suwanda, 2020).

When it comes to accountability in the civil service recruitment system of Indonesia it is closely linked to the values of fairness, transparency and selecting candidates based on their competence. These values play a role, in ensuring a fair process. The essence of accountability mechanisms must not be ignored while Indonesia is working to reform her bureaucracy to avoid corruption. With the establishment of organizations like, the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) and the State Civil Service Commission (KASN), Indonesia has taken steps to promote accountability in the recruitment process. The goal is to build a bureaucracy that not operates efficiently and effectively but upholds high standards of integrity and public trust. Emphasizing merit-based recruitment is essential in combating corruption and advancing performance driven remuneration within the civil service sector according to (Poocharoen & Brillantes, 2013; Schütte, 2015).

The establishment of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK) back, in 2002 has been instrumental in promoting transparency and responsibility during Indonesias service recruitment process (Schütte, 2015). The KPK gives great example to

emphasize on improved job roles which will be met with performance-based rewards. Accountability helps in the workforce buildup in the service section. As the recruitment strategies will be met with fairness and honesty, the efficiency and credibility of the process will be immensely increased. The reforms and the levels of accountability have a significant impact on how the civil service recruitment is conducted in Indonesia. It is only to find out that greater reform and accountability need to be taken introducing accountability in the recruitment allotted will resolve a plethora of problems and help in the fight against corruption. Furthermore, accountability ensures that recruitment processes are inclusive offering opportunities to all citizens. The hiring process has now been improved to welcome individuals, with disabilities to apply for roles, including positions that involve tasks roles that do not require specific qualifications and jobs, in low-risk environments (Simandjorang & Kurniawan, 2022).

Complexities Challenges in civil service recruitment in Indonesia

Despite these initiatives, achieving transparency in civil service recruitment in Indonesia faces complex challenges. The civil service has been marred by corrupt practices and the politicization of bureaucracy, challenges that are deeply ingrained and not easily eradicated (Azhari et al., 2019). The implementation of recruitment, for district and ward leaders in Jakarta has faced obstacles and limitations showcasing the complexities involved in modernizing traditional recruitment methods (Junianto, 2016). Nevertheless, this system also encounters hurdles related to factors political determination and the necessity for aligning policies underscoring the continuous requirement for vigilance, adaptability, and dedication to reform. The accountability in civil service recruitment not influences governance quality. Also molds public confidence in governmental organizations. As Indonesia progresses, maintaining a focus on accountability while addressing issues will be vital in establishing a civil service that is robust, effective, and fundamentally dedicated, to serving the public with honesty and justice.

Economic factors and the willingness of governments pose challenges, to the recruitment process for government employees at the level, that impacts its credibility

and efficiency. Furthermore, the cultural and skill requirements for officials, as seen in areas like Palopo City, add another layer of complexity, calling for a nuanced recruitment approach that considers needs and standards (Gani & Wijaya, 2022). The democratization process in Indonesia has also resulted in consequences, including heightened discrimination against minority religious bureaucrats, emphasizing the intricate obstacles to ensuring a just and inclusive civil service (Pierskalla et al., 2021). As Indonesia aims to improve transparency in civil service hiring, it must navigate the balance between transparency and safeguarding individual privacy.

The implementation of the recruitment system has certain challenges at a level. In this case, the rising concerns is about the alignment of systems with the execution of policies regarding data privacy and the risk of misuse of information. Therefore, it also needed emphasising on the necessity of a system that is transparent yet also, secures the privacy of data (Eryanto et al., 2022). Moreover, Despite changes brought about by the democratization process there has been a rise in discrimination against women and religious minorities in government roles within regions governed by Muslim parties or with significant Muslim populations as highlighted by (Pierskalla et al., 2021). This situation underscores issues related to interference and bias in civil service recruitment processes emphasizing the necessity for vigilance and reform to ensure that recruitment decisions are based on merit, than political or familial ties. In the technical challenge, Kurniawan et al. (2020) pointed out in the CPNS selection process related to planning, committee coordination and defining pass marks. The faulty system is tough on the perception and service. Shortcomings like lack of proper equipment available and breakdown of the server made the process of getting registration and giving the test tough. There is also case how the system lacks clarity in rule and efficiency and different eligibility criteria and terms of qualifications create a lot of problems.

Policy for Addressing Remaining Challenges

In the light of the above excerpt, the quest for constructing a neutral service in Indonesian state has yet to reach its end. Even though significant changes have enabled a platform for progression, ongoing challenges highlight the importance of

commitment and adaptation. Balancing transparency with data privacy tackling issues like interference and nepotism and ensuring that reforms effectively address discrimination and corruption are crucial for creating a service that truly serves the interest (Karim, 2017). There must be an approach that can overcome these hurdles and incorporate ethical qualities and fairness at multiple levels and in every phase of public service recruitment. The disparities in how recruitment processes influenced by factors and political interests at various levels underscore the pressing need to align strategic policies with practical implementation. Retrieving and suggesting a position depends on varieties maintaining ethical qualities and excellence. Additionally boosting governments capacity and resources to carry out recruitment processes is vital; this could be achieved through customized training programs and support, from authorities. To ensure a corruption free government administration from interference it is crucial to implement a civil service management system that prioritizes merit as suggested by (Kurniawan et al., 2020).

In light of the evolving landscape and societal changes it is essential for civil service recruitment policies to be flexible and responsive. Recruitment strategies need to be reviewed and adjusted not to address current needs but also to anticipate future trends such, as digital advancements, urban development and global interactions (Findlay & Pangestu, 2016). This proactive approach is crucial in ensuring that the civil service can attract and retain individuals of navigating the complexities of governance. The dynamic strategic environment marked by progress and urban growth presents both challenges and opportunities for civil service recruitment (Dwiputrianti et al., 2024). It is needed to create policies based on the requirements and identify the opportunities based on the technology, adaptability, and problem-solving skills and make the employees get used to the policies to improvise their behavior. The increasing importance to commitments has meant that the evaluations with the recruitment of civil servant also considers the proficiency in terms of cross-cultural communication along with the best practices.

D. CONCLUSION

Indonesia has made a lot of progress to reform its civil services recruitment process to improve it, but in many areas, more attention requires to improvise to make

recruitment transparent and accountable. The study highlights some issues which are as follows: contests, interference, favoritism and lack of infrastructure. It suggests that the reforms in the civil services are not as modern as they seem because of such practices which adds up to why improvement is required. Such reforms are appropriately limited across the country's practical practices on the job in every tier. The future studies could involves more review from Indonesia's practices with its service to understand the challenges and successes of their recruitment reforms and possibly the implementations and success of reforms in other countries. It is needed to stands an analysis of reforms in a range of similar contexts across countries or to compare such reforms in different Indonesian regions. Furthermore, exploring how digital technologies impact recruitment processes can show how tech advancements can enhance transparency and efficiency is needed on the future study.

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