

Public Sector Governance in Local Governments: Challenges and Opportunities in West Pasaman Regency

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Article Info



Article History;

Received:

2025-02-21

Revised:

2025-03-24

Accepted:

2025-03-26

Published:

2025-03-26

Abstract: Effective public sector governance is important in improving the quality of local government services and realizing the principles of good governance. This research analyses public sector governance practices within the West Pasaman District Local Government, focusing on transparency, accountability, effectiveness, efficiency, and public participation. The research method used was a qualitative approach with a case study, where data was collected through semi-structured interviews with local government officials, academics, and civil society representatives, direct observation, and review of official documents. Thematic analysis was then used to identify key governance implementation patterns. The results show that, despite efforts to improve transparency and accountability, challenges relating to effectiveness and community participation remain, necessitating adopting more adaptive and community needs-based policy strategies. The findings are expected to contribute to developing more responsive public sector governance policies. They can serve as a reference for local governments to sustainably improve the quality of public services.

Keywords: *Public Sector Governance, Local Government, Public Accountability, Good Governance.*

INTRODUCTION

The implementation of bureaucratic reform in various countries can be broadly categorized into two different dimensions: the organizational dimension and the human resource dimension of the apparatus (Arpini et al., 2023). The organizational dimension deals with structure, organizational culture, organizational technology, and the legal and regulatory framework. The New Public Management (NPM) approach to public sector management emerged in the 1980s as a way to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of public administration by integrating private sector management principles. The New Public Management (NPM) approach underscores the importance of efficiency in public service delivery (Bel & Fageda, 2017). The concept often emerges alongside initiatives to address shortcomings inherent in traditional bureaucracies, including delayed decision-making, resource allocation inefficiencies, and accountability deficiencies.

The New Public Management (NPM) approach is the government's dominant management philosophy to modernize the public sector. In Indonesia, the New Public Management (NPM) approach is being implemented to improve public services' efficiency, accountability and responsiveness. Bureaucratic reform has a firm legal basis in Indonesia. Law No. 5/2014 on the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) emphasizes professionalism, accountability, and effective public service. The Presidential Regulation

on the National Medium-Term Development Plan identifies improved governance as a development priority. Increased accountability within public organizations is essential to guarantee their functioning and commitment to the public interest, and performance indicators can facilitate increased accountability (Chen & Jiao, 2022).

The enactment of Law No. 22/1999 on Regional Government marked Indonesia's transition to a decentralized system of governance. This legislative reform granted greater authority to local governments, empowering them to oversee local resource management and policy implementation. By practicing innovative leadership and fostering a strong ethical environment, government agencies can increase employee motivation, which in turn will have a favourable impact on the quality of services provided to the public (Bergh et al., 2019). Delegation of authority can be considered one of the hallmarks of the New Public Management paradigm, favouring a more direct and participatory approach to governance. The Indonesian bureaucracy has consistently been the subject of public scrutiny and debate due to its perceived shortcomings and challenges. One of the significant challenges in Indonesia is the existence of an imperfect bureaucratic system. The problem of low performance and lack of quality of public services and apparatus resources seems an ongoing challenge in Indonesia. Despite efforts to address these issues, practical solutions remain elusive.

The problems range from unscrupulous practices such as collusion, corruption and nepotism to bureaucratic systems that hinder the realization of a pro-people bureaucracy. These problems have persisted from generation to generation, creating a legacy of bureaucratic pathology. The implementation of bureaucratic reform is carried out to realize good governance (Chu, 2018). Bureaucratic reform is a strategic step to realize a more efficient and effective state apparatus capable of carrying out general government tasks and promoting national development. The Principles of New Public Management state that the most effective management practices can be implemented following the principles of "free markets, competition, value for money, and optimal efficiency," as well as the enabling functions of the state (Cools & Oosterlynck, 2020). The process of change in the Indonesian state bureaucracy, which embraces corporate techniques, should ideally be carried out under the guidance and direction of the state.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Implementation of Human Resource Management

Human resource management (HRM) practices in Indonesia are evolving significantly, driven by globalization, technological advancements, and a growing awareness of HRM professionals' critical role in organizational success. In Indonesia, public and private sector companies emphasise selective hiring, continuous training, and objective performance appraisals based on key performance indicators (KPIs) to ensure target achievement. An organisation's culture plays an important role in shaping the behaviour and performance of its employees (Cools & Oosterlynck, 2020). The utilization of technology, such as the Human Resource Information System (HRIS), has also been initiated to facilitate efficient management, administration and recruitment of employee

data. In addition, the company offers competitive remuneration and benefits packages and employee welfare programs to improve employee satisfaction and retention.

According to Desmidt & Meyfroidt (2024) Training is a key HR activity in organizations, which facilitates the achievement of organizational goals. Training is an organized process to convey information, develop skills, and instil attitudes that collectively improve performance in a specific context. This process should include both newly recruited employees and existing employees. Careful selection of employees does not necessarily guarantee that new staff will perform tasks effectively. Companies must design and implement appropriate training programs for these employees to achieve their assigned tasks. According to Desmidt & Meyfroidt (2024), Job design does not significantly influence the variable "human resource performance." In other words, the degree of influence of job design is not significant. In other words, the level of influence of job design on human resource performance does not depend on the design's intensity level.

Furthermore, the work commitment variable mediates the influence of job design and organizational culture on human resource performance. in Indonesia, it can be seen that the implementation of the Human Resources Information System facilitates increased transparency in the performance management process and competency development, thereby encouraging greater accountability from civil servants for performance results (Guillamón & Cuadrado-Ballesteros, 2021). Effective management not only increases engagement but can also help retain employees (Gudelis, 2014). Employees who feel valued through career and development opportunities are more likely to stay with the company despite job offers from other companies. Effective management is associated with increased employee engagement by offering clear career development opportunities, and multinational companies can increase the commitment and motivation of their workforce to achieve job goals.

Coordination between local governments and Implementation of agencies is often inadequate, resulting in delays in aid disbursement or lack of monitoring of program impact on the ground (Guillamón & Cuadrado-Ballesteros, 2021). Challenges include cultural differences between headquarters and local offices, resistance to change from local staff, and adaptation to global corporate policies. Multinational companies face barriers in retaining talent amidst intense competition in the Indonesian labour market (Hartley & Knell, 2022). Effective management not only increases engagement but can also help retain employees (Kumar et al., 2022). Employees who feel valued through career and development opportunities are more likely to stay with the company despite job offers from other companies. Effective management is associated with increased employee engagement by offering clear career development opportunities, and multinational companies can increase the commitment and motivation of their workforce to achieve job goals. Coordination between local governments and Implementation of agencies is often inadequate, resulting in delays in aid disbursement or lack of monitoring of program impact on the ground (Warr et al., 2015). Challenges include cultural differences between headquarters and local offices, resistance to change from local staff,

and adaptation to global corporate policies. Multinational companies face barriers in retaining talent amidst intense competition in the Indonesian labour market (Munaf et al., 2023).

Implementation of Budget Management

In Indonesia's human resource management context, effective budget management is imperative for efficient allocation of resources. It ensures optimal utilization of funds for skills development, welfare, and operations while maintaining transparency and accountability as stipulated by Law No. 17 Year 2003 on State Finance. Achieving a balance between employee benefits and operational needs is crucial, yet regulatory and bureaucratic challenges frequently impede financial flexibility. Effective public financial management ensures that allocated funds enhance employee welfare, competence, and productivity, supporting organizational goals. Traditional power structures by building a more open and responsive local government system (Arpini et al., 2023). Structural barriers from the central government, budget constraints and resistance from traditional political players. Complicated bureaucracy, limited budgets and regulatory restrictions often prevent optimal implementation. Reforms in public finance and management systems are needed, including more flexible policies for sustainable human resource development (Kamaludin & Mutiarin, 2023).

Good governance has several indicators, such as effective, participatory, transparent, accountable, productive, equal, and able to encourage law enforcement (Chen & Jiao, 2022). Most important is how power and authority are used to solve various public problems. The application of public accountability principles is essential to build public trust in government (Chen & Jiao, 2022). This can be achieved through open financial reporting and periodic evaluation to ensure that established program needs and priorities use public funds. Resistance to change in some agencies. This requires improving financial reporting and monitoring and strengthening the capacity of public finance management staff. These improvements are expected to promote greater transparency and increase government agencies' accountability in the public's eyes.

Implementation of Infrastructure Management

The implementation of infrastructure management in Indonesia plays an important role in Indonesia's economic and social development. Effective infrastructure development, including roads, bridges, ports, airports, and transportation systems, is critical to improving regional connectivity, accelerating the distribution of goods and services, and driving growth in the industrial and tourism sectors. The Indonesian government seeks to address challenges such as uneven access, high construction costs, and financing through various policies, including national strategic projects and infrastructure development programs (Cuadrado-Roura, 2021). Infrastructure management in Indonesia continues to face several challenges, including those related to licensing, regulations, and budget constraints, posing a significant barrier to the realization of effective and efficient infrastructure (Guillory et al., 2024).

The evidence indicates that infrastructure development in Indonesia is conducive to development growth if appropriately executed. Infrastructure projects in Indonesia

have resulted in social conflicts when the interests of local communities were not adequately considered in project planning (Guillamón & Cuadrado-Ballesteros, 2021). Infrastructure can drive economic growth, but it is critical to carefully plan and involve local communities in the decision-making process to mitigate adverse social consequences. Local community involvement and transparency in decision-making are important elements in reducing conflict and building trust. Sustainable and effective infrastructure development requires a collaborative approach between the government, private sector and communities, and policies responsive to local social and environmental conditions (Kumar et al., 2018).

Implementation of Organizational Management

The application of organizational management in Indonesia has experienced quite rapid development, both in the public and private sectors. In the public sector, organizational management is intended to improve efficiency, transparency, and accountability in providing services to the public. The Indonesian government is pursuing bureaucratic reform and the application of concepts such as New Public Management (NPM) to streamline the bureaucracy and improve the performance of the state apparatus. For example, a large number of local governments have started Implementation of performance-based management systems to evaluate the achievements and success of each department.

In the private sector, organizational management is mainly concerned with operational efficiency, innovation, and improving competitiveness. More and more companies in Indonesia are starting to apply contemporary management principles, including data-driven management, Agile management, and Total Quality Management (TQM), to improve organizational structure and responsiveness to market changes. In addition, the application of digital technologies is becoming increasingly prevalent in the management domain of organizations. This has resulted in increased integration between organizational divisions and improvements in performance monitoring and evaluation. Agile leadership within organizations has been instrumental in reducing inertia and facilitating the digital transformation process, which ultimately results in sustainable financial and non-financial performance (Muir & Mullins, 2015).

The implementation of organizational management in Indonesia still faces several challenges, including resistance to change, a less adaptive organizational culture, and a lack of adequate management training. A strong hierarchical culture hinders the efficiency of decision-making processes, while human resource development (HRD) constraints hinder the implementation of effective management. To overcome these constraints, many organizations in Indonesia have begun efforts to develop a collaborative work culture, improve managerial competencies, and leverage technology to facilitate faster, data-driven decision-making. (Bel & Fageda, 2017) A fundamental transformation of the organization's culture, processes, strategies, and beliefs. This quality orientation is critical to achieving customer satisfaction and Implementation of good business practices. Quality culture is an integral aspect of organizational culture,

which includes habits, beliefs, values, morals, and behaviors that collectively aim to improve product quality.

Theory Agile Governance

Agile Governance is a governance concept that adopts the principles of flexibility, adaptability, and responsiveness to dynamic changes in the modern era. In this approach, governance is carried out iteratively with a focus on the value generated for stakeholders and the needs of society. The key elements are data-driven decision-making processes and collaboration between parties, such as the government, the community, and the private sector. The implementation of Agile Governance, as exemplified by e-government and digital public services concepts, has been proven to facilitate rapid response to crises, increased innovation, and community empowerment. Despite these advantages, the implementation of this concept is often faced with challenges, including resistance to change, limited human resources, and the complexity of existing systems. Key principles in adaptive governance applied to reduce disaster risk in developing countries. The first principle emphasized is integration across scales or multi-level governance, where the governance framework involves coordination between central government, local government and local communities (Walch, 2019).

The second principle is inclusive participation, which ensures the involvement of all stakeholders, including vulnerable groups such as women, indigenous peoples, and smallholders, in decision-making processes. The application of agile governance principles seeks to produce responsive, adaptive and innovative governance in the face of dynamic challenges in the digital era, focusing on the value generated for communities and stakeholders. By focusing on the value generated for the community and stakeholders, agile governance seeks to improve the efficiency and effectiveness of decision-making and public services. In the implementation of improved resource management, building adaptive capacity, fostering cooperation, managing uncertainty, and promoting sustainability (Plummer et al., 2012). These objectives are critical to addressing the complex challenges faced by Arctic communities in the face of environmental change.

Agile public sector governance at the local level focuses on applying the principles of flexibility, adaptability and collaboration to improve local government responsiveness to community needs. Local governments act as facilitators integrating various resources and stakeholders, including communities, the private sector and non-governmental organizations. Agile governance at the local level enables faster, data-driven decision-making through digital technologies such as e-government applications, geographic information systems (GIS), or big data analytics (Gudelis, 2004). This ensures that policies or programs are designed according to the area's specific needs. (Kamaludin & Mutiarin, 2023) explains that in creating good governance, the government needs to pay attention to four main governance dimensions: responsiveness, strategic adaptation, focus on results, and management that anticipates future problems.

METHOD

This research uses a qualitative approach with a case study design to deeply understand public sector governance practices in West Pasaman Regency. Case studies were chosen for their ability to explore certain phenomena in the context under study deeply (Nienhuser, 2018). The primary data sources used in this research are semi-structured interviews with local government officials, academics, and civil society representatives. Secondary data was obtained from official local government documents, such as Local Government Financial Reports (LKPD), Regional Budget (APBD), and regulations related to governance. The research methods should elaborate on the method utilized to address the issues, including the analysis method. Research methods consist of data topology, data collection methods, data analysis, and data visualization. Methods already published should be summarized, and indicated by a reference. If quoting directly from a previously published method, use quotation marks and cite the source. If the authors want to represent a table or picture in a considerable size, the table or picture can be presented in a single column. It should contain enough details, allowing the reader to evaluate the appropriateness of methods and the reliability and validity of findings.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Transparency in Governance

The concept of public sector governance is an important element in the contemporary landscape of public administration based on the basic principles of transparency, accountability, participation, and effectiveness in achieving the goal of ensuring that the management of public resources is carried out optimally, so that it can contribute to the welfare of society. In the digital era, public sector governance is becoming increasingly complex due to the dynamics of evolving community needs, technological advances, and demands for improving the quality of public services. It involves coordinating various stakeholders, including government agencies, private sector entities, and the public, to achieve collective goals. Innovation in the public sector involves the development and implementation of new ideas, services, technologies, and organizational structures to address societal challenges and improve public services (Izzaturrahmah & Saputro, 2024). In the Indonesian context, public sector governance is important in facilitating bureaucratic reform, improving the quality of public policies, and advancing sustainable development goals (SDGs).

This section contains the data characteristic of the object/subject/sample/research respondents, data analysis result, testing instrument, and hypothesis (if any). an author should explain the research results (what was discovered) in detail. Results should be clear and concise. Local governments include various agencies and institutions, which are collectively responsible for the provision of public services to local communities, including those related to education, health, infrastructure, and population administration (Amalia et al., 2021). As one of the districts in West Sumatra Province, the West Pasaman District Government is responsible for managing resources efficiently to improve people's welfare. In the context of regional autonomy, good governance not only includes aspects of regional financial management but also ensures community participation, the provision of quality public services, and the application of the principles of transparency and accountability.

West Pasaman is faced with several challenges related to public sector governance, including the optimization of local revenue, the implementation of equitable development programs, and the use of information technology for the provision of public services. By Implementation of strategic policies such as performance-based budget

management and strengthening Nagari governance, West Pasaman aims to build a more responsive government that aligns with community needs. This study evaluates the implementation of public sector governance in West Pasaman District by focusing on transparency, accountability, participation and efficiency.

Agile Governance as a solution

The findings indicate that the governance challenges faced by local governments in West Pasaman Regency primarily stem from bureaucratic rigidity, slow decision-making processes, and limited adaptability to dynamic socio-economic changes. These challenges hinder the effective implementation of public policies and service delivery. Agile Governance emerges as a viable solution by promoting flexibility, responsiveness, and collaborative decision-making within the public sector. The implementation of Agile Governance in West Pasaman necessitates structural and cultural shifts, including the decentralization of decision-making authority, the integration of digital technology, and the cultivation of cross-sector collaboration. The study underscores that local government officials acknowledge the necessity for adaptive governance models but encounter constraints such as regulatory barriers, resource limitations, and resistance to change.

Nevertheless, case studies from other regions demonstrate that adopting Agile principles—including iterative planning, stakeholder engagement, and continuous evaluation—can augment policy responsiveness and service innovation. Furthermore, Agile Governance is congruent with Indonesia's overarching public sector reform agenda, prioritizing efficiency and a citizen-centric governance approach. Local governments in West Pasaman can optimize service quality and governance effectiveness by integrating digital platforms for data-driven decision-making and enhancing interdepartmental coordination. The study posits that Implementation of Agile Governance requires a robust leadership commitment, capacity-building initiatives, and policy adjustments to foster a more flexible and participatory governance framework.

Accountability and Public Participation

The West Pasaman District Government has developed a government transparency portal that public can access through the official local government website at <https://pasamanbaratkab.go.id/>. The portal aims to improve information disclosure to the public and promote accountability in managing local finances and resources. One of its key features is the publication of key documents, including the Local Government Financial Report (LKPD), the Regional Budget (APBD), and the Local Government Performance Report. The 2023 APBD is published in detail on the website <https://pasamanbaratkab.go.id/>. This document provides the public with a comprehensive overview of budget allocations for various sectors, including education, health, infrastructure, and other priority programs. It also provides a transparent picture of regional expenditure and revenue and a clear picture of budget allocations that prioritize improving the quality of public services, especially in education and health.

This finding indicates that the public understanding of the published documents is still inadequate. The majority of the public considers the information presented too technical and difficult to understand, thus limiting the utilization of information disclosure by the public to engage in actively monitoring and planning local development. Additional measures are needed to simplify the information provided and improve digital literacy in the community. While transparency portals facilitate access to public information, empirical evidence suggests barriers to public engagement with the data

provided. While data disclosed through the <https://pasamanbaratkab.go.id/tersedia> website is public, utilization remains limited.

Table 1. Factors that hinder the utilization of information in West Pasaman Regency

Inhibiting Factors	Description
Low Digital Literacy	Most people do not have sufficient technical skills to access and utilize information online. Technical skills to access and utilize information online.
Lack of Socialization and Education	The public has not gained a sufficient understanding of the importance of transparency and how to utilize information provided by the government.
Limitations in Data Presentation	The data presented is too technical and complex, making it difficult for ordinary people to understand. Less user-friendly presentation makes the information not optimally used.
Limited Internet Access	In some areas of West Pasaman Regency, internet access is still limited, making it difficult for people to access the transparency portal provided online.

Source: Processed by Author (2025)

A review of Table 1 shows the factors that inhibit the use of information in the West Pasaman District. The limited technical ability of the community to utilize online information is exacerbated by the lack of socialization and education about the importance of information transparency. In addition, the presentation of complex and technical data is often a challenge for people who do not have the technical skills to understand it. Conversely, limited internet access in certain areas and a lack of technological devices, such as computers or smartphones, are also considerable barriers. In addition, the lack of trust in the veracity of information disseminated by the government also exacerbates this problem. These issues illustrate that information dissemination in West Pasaman Regency requires initiatives to improve digital literacy, ensure equitable distribution of technological resources, and adopt a more transparency-

centered approach to facilitate optimal access and utilization of information by the entire community.

Governance Constraints in West Pasaman

Governance practices in West Pasaman Regency are faced with various obstacles that hinder government effectiveness and transparency; the main obstacle is the unequal distribution of technology and information. Individuals living in rural areas continue to face challenges in accessing digital public services due to the scarcity of internet infrastructure. The lack of human resources in some government institutions results in a lack of appreciation for the importance of transparency and accountability and suboptimal implementation of public policies. In addition, the potential for oversight has not been fully realized, especially in large-scale projects that use public funds. Some development projects, such as road construction and other infrastructure, often experience delays or deviate from the agreed plan. Oversight of these projects is not always conducted rigorously and transparently, which results in public participation still being limited to particular groups, while more vulnerable and marginalized groups often do not have equal access to the decision-making process.

Table 2. Constraints to public sector governance in West Pasaman District

Aspects	Case Example	Obstacles faced	Description
Development Project Management	Late road construction projects completed in 2022	Lack of supervision and unclear budget allocation	Road projects were completed late due to inadequate supervision and changes in budget allocations that were not clearly explained to the public.
Public Service Management	Online system for processing ID cards and birth certificates that cannot be accessed easily by the community	Limited internet infrastructure in rural areas and limited digital skills	Communities in remote areas struggle to access digital services due to limited infrastructure and low digital literacy among officers and residents. officers and residents.
Community Participation	Musrenbang 2023 with low participation from	Participation is limited to the	More vulnerable groups of society are not involved in

	vulnerable groups (small farmers, informal workers)	informed and reachable groups	decision-making due to limited access to information and public forums.
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Source: Processed by Author 2025

A more in-depth analysis of public sector governance challenges can be obtained by looking at the case studies in table 2 with the year in question. Concerning the management of development projects, the case study of a road construction project that was not completed until 2022 points to obstacles, namely a lack of oversight and unclear budget allocations. This indicates a lack of transparency and accountability in the domain of public project management, which ultimately results in delays in the completion of vital infrastructure. In the context of public service management, the case of ID cards and birth certificates being difficult to obtain by the general public underscores a significant challenge that has not been explicitly addressed, especially in rural areas with limited internet infrastructure and low digital literacy.

This underscores the need to improve digital infrastructure and technology literacy initiatives in remote areas to facilitate improved access to public services. The digital divide has profound implications for social development, limiting social mobility, creating barriers to employment, and exacerbating social exclusion for disadvantaged groups such as low-income individuals, older adults, and people with disabilities (Mutiarin et al., 2024). Regarding community participation, the case study of Development planning meeting in 2023 shows the absence of involvement of vulnerable groups, including smallholders and informal workers. This lack of participation is due to two main factors: limited access to information and their lack of involvement in public decision-making forums. These findings underscore the urgent need to improve inclusive mechanisms and ensure equitable information dissemination to significantly increase the participation of marginalized groups. To this end, the implementation of concrete solutions, such as improved oversight, technological infrastructure development, and social inclusion, is crucial in improving public sector governance.

There is a high level of dependency on resources from the central government, which limits the financial autonomy of local governments and affects their ability to manage local funding independently. Local governments in West Pasaman face significant challenges in mobilizing financial resources. These include inadequate own-source revenues and unreliable transfers from the central government that hinder effective financial management and sustainable development. Local governments often struggle to mobilize financial resources, leading to inadequate revenues and unreliable transfers from the central government (Teremetskyi et al., 2021). Economic uncertainty and balancing local budgets with reduced revenues are significant challenges. Limited financial independence and the critical financial position of local governments hinder effective governance.

CONCLUSION

It can be concluded that several key issues need to be addressed to improve government effectiveness and transparency. These include the lack of oversight of

development projects, limited access and digital infrastructure in remote areas that hamper public service delivery, and low public participation in decision-making processes, especially from vulnerable groups. In addition, the limited capacity of human resources in some government institutions is also a constraining factor. Therefore, it is recommended that the West Pasaman District government implement measures to strengthen the project supervision system, including independent agencies' involvement and technology uses to monitor projects in real-time. In addition, improvements in internet infrastructure and digital literacy training for communities and government officials are needed. To increase community participation, organizing more inclusive public consultation forums is important to facilitate greater involvement of vulnerable groups. In addition, the capacity of government human resources should also be improved to achieve superior and transparent public services. It is hoped that Implementation of these recommendations will facilitate a more transparent, accountable, and beneficial governance structure in West Pasaman District, which will benefit the entire community. The capacity of government human resources must be improved to achieve excellent and transparent public services. It is hoped that Implementation of these recommendations will facilitate the establishment of a more transparent, accountable and beneficial government structure in West Pasaman District, which will benefit the entire community.

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