

MERITOCRACY IMPLEMENTATION OF THE STATE CIVIL SERVANTS AS AN EMBODIMENT OF THE VALUES OF INTEGRITY AND NATIONAL DEFENSE THROUGH A PUBLIC ETHICS PERSPECTIVE

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the implementation of the meritocracy principle in the Civil Servant Apparatus (ASN) employment system as an effort to strengthen the values of integrity and national spirit through the perspective of public ethics. Meritocracy is a concept that prioritizes assessment based on qualifications, performance, and individual achievements, rather than on political connections or nepotism. In the context of the ASN, the meritocratic system seeks to ensure that promotions, appointments, and rewards are given to individuals based on the achievements and competencies they have demonstrated. The implementation of the meritocracy system is expected to encourage ASN members to continuously improve the quality of the public services they provide. By considering performance and competency factors, it is hoped that ASN members will be more motivated to enhance their abilities and knowledge. This is also expected to reduce the practices of corruption and nepotism that often occur in non-meritocratic-based employment systems. This research will also analyze the challenges and obstacles that may arise in implementing a meritocratic system in ASN employment. Factors such as cultural resistance and policy sustainability will be the main focus of this analysis. Additionally, this research will discuss strategies and recommendations to overcome these challenges and strengthen the implementation of the meritocracy system.

Keywords: Meritocracy, Civil Servant Apparatus (ASN), Integrity, and National Defense

Introduction

The concept of meritocracy, first introduced by British philosopher Michael Young in his book "The Rise of the Meritocracy" (1958), has a long historical lineage. Meritocracy stems from the Latin word "meritum," meaning "service," and "crazo," meaning "government," forming the concept of governance based on service or achievement (Aji & Indrawan, 2019). Meritocracy is a system that positions individuals based on their competence, qualifications, and performance, with the aim of creating a more efficient and effective organizational structure. The basic principles of meritocracy include equality of opportunity, where every individual has equal access to education, training, and employment based on their abilities. Selection based on merit is another principle that emphasizes that placement, promotion, and career development should be based on competence and performance, not on nepotism or political connections (Suwito, 2014). The concept of meritocracy has several significant advantages in the context of organizations and governance. First, meritocracy can enhance organizational efficiency

and effectiveness by placing the most competent and high-performing individuals in the right positions (Doramia Lumbanraja, 2020). Thus, organizations can operate smoother and more productively. Second, meritocracy can also improve the quality and performance of individuals by rewarding and recognizing those who excel. This can serve as motivation for individuals to continually improve their abilities. Third, meritocracy can increase public trust in organizations by demonstrating that decisions and placements are based on qualifications and achievements, not on favoritism or discrimination (Asy-Syakir et al., 2023).

Moreover, the concept of meritocracy also promotes accountability and transparency in decision-making and placement of individuals. By placing individuals based on competence and performance, organizations can more easily justify their decisions to the public. Additionally, meritocracy also fosters innovation and sustainable self-development (Sasongko & Sulhin, 2022). By placing individuals based on competence and performance, the meritocratic system can motivate individuals to continually improve their abilities and achieve higher performance. This can create a competitive yet healthy work environment where individuals are encouraged to excel without discrimination or favoritism (Indonesia et al., 2017).

The Indonesian government itself does not turn a blind eye to the concept of meritocracy. Neighbor countries like Singapore have been successful examples of implementing this system. The principle of merit-based selection has been one of the key factors in Singapore's success and that of the United States as developed countries (Seno, 2023). Through its implementation in Singapore, this principle has successfully transformed the country from a small port city without natural resources into one of the countries with the highest quality of life, health, education, and income in the world. Lee Kuan Yew, one of the main architects behind Singapore's transformation, has emphasized the principle of meritocracy in leading his country. He viewed that individual success should be based on their own achievements, hard work, and high performance, not on kinship or other irrelevant factors. Lee Kuan Yew's speeches since 1971 have asserted that Singapore is a meritocratic society where people can reach the highest positions based on their achievements and abilities (Seno, 2023). This spirit of meritocracy has been a driving force for talented individuals from various backgrounds to succeed in Singapore. This indicates that non-discriminatory meritocratic principles can create an environment where individuals are motivated to excel and contribute maximally to the country's progress.

The implementation of meritocracy in the Civil Servant Apparatus (ASN) is crucial in building a professional, efficient, and integrity-based bureaucracy. Meritocracy, which rewards individuals based on competence and performance, provides a strong foundation for selecting and promoting quality ASN members. This is also in line with the values of national defense, where the acceptance and promotion of ASN are based on their achievements and competencies. Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning ASN emphasizes the importance of the meritocracy system in creating integrity-based, highly competitive, and discrimination-free ASN (Ilham Maulana, 2021). With a meritocratic system, ASN will be selected and promoted based on their achieved performance, not on nepotism or political patronage. This is important to ensure that ASN can function optimally in providing quality public services, without political interventions that harm society (Siti Rohmah et al., 2023).

The implementation of meritocracy also creates a healthy and competitive working environment, where every ASN will be motivated to continuously improve their quality and performance (Siti Rohmah et al., 2023). Thus, ASNs selected based on merit are likely to have more integrity and professionalism in carrying out their duties. This will have a positive impact on the efficiency and effectiveness of the bureaucracy, as well as increasing public trust in the government (Ilham Maulana, 2021). However, the implementation of meritocracy also poses its own challenges. One of them is resistance from ASN members who lack sufficient competence or achievement, and who may feel threatened by this system (Hermiati et al., 2021). Therefore, strong commitment from the government and relevant institutions is needed to consistently and transparently implement the meritocracy system to realize the concept of national defense and integrity through the perspective of ASN.

Research Method

This research employs a qualitative approach with a case study method to explore the implementation of meritocracy among state civil servants, focusing on its embodiment of integrity and national defense values through a public ethics perspective. Data collection involves semi-structured interviews with key stakeholders, including senior civil servants and policymakers, along with focus group discussions and document analysis of relevant policies and reports. By using purposive and snowball sampling, the study ensures participants have direct experience with meritocracy implementation. Thematic and content analyses will be conducted to identify key themes and references, ensuring comprehensive data interpretation. Validity and reliability are maintained through triangulation, member checking, and peer review, while ethical considerations include informed consent, confidentiality, and transparency.

The research aims to provide a detailed understanding of meritocracy's current state, its relationship with integrity and national defense, and the role of public ethics in its implementation. The study will analyze diverse perspectives and experiences, aiming to cross-verify findings and enhance reliability through multiple data sources. The timeline spans eight months, from literature review and data collection to analysis, validation, and final reporting. Expected outcomes include insights into meritocracy's implementation and recommendations for enhancing it through public ethics, contributing to a more effective and ethical state civil service.

Result And Discussion

Meritocracy and Civil Service Management

Meritocracy is a system that emphasizes qualifications, competence, and performance as the basis for decision-making related to the Civil Service Apparatus (ASN). The aim is to create a professional, effective, and accountable bureaucracy by eliminating nepotism and favoritism practices. On the other hand, Civil Service Management is a series of activities carried out to manage human resources within the civil service, from recruitment, development, and placement, to termination. Good civil service management should be based on meritocracy so that competent and high-

performing ASNs have wider opportunities for development and contribution (Ilham Maulana, 2021).

The principles of meritocracy in civil service management include objectivity, fairness, accountability, and professionalism. Objectivity requires that all processes of selection, placement, and promotion of ASN are based on objective and measurable criteria. Fairness demands that all ASNs are treated fairly and non-discriminatively, regardless of political background, race, religion, ethnicity, gender, or physical condition (Murti et al., 2023). Accountability emphasizes the importance of transparency in all civil service management processes so that they can be accountable to the public. Meanwhile, professionalism requires that all ASNs must have integrity, morality, and high competence in performing their duties.

The implementation of meritocracy in civil service management has significant benefits (Nugraha, 2020). First, it improves the quality of public services, as competent and high-performing ASNs will deliver better and higher-quality services. Second, it enhances the efficiency and effectiveness of bureaucracy, as professional and motivated ASNs will work more efficiently and effectively. Third, it boosts public trust in the government, as the implementation of meritocracy demonstrates the government's commitment to building a clean and professional bureaucracy.

Meritocracy in the context of civil service management refers to the principle that the promotion, appointment, and placement of ASNs are based on their achievements, competencies, and performances, not on political considerations, personal relationships, or nepotism factors. The implementation of meritocracy in civil service management involves a series of policies, procedures, and practices designed to ensure that the selection and promotion of ASN are carried out objectively, transparently, and fairly, including:

1. **Clear Criteria and Standards**, first and foremost, the implementation of meritocracy requires the establishment of clear criteria and standards for the selection and promotion of ASN.
2. **Transparent Selection Process**, the selection process of ASN must be conducted transparently, where every step of the selection and promotion process can be accessed by all parties.
3. **Objective Performance Measurement**, the performance measurement of ASN must be based on objective and measurable parameters. This may include annual performance evaluations, work output assessments, and achievement of set goals.
4. **Human Resource Development**

Moreover, the implementation of meritocracy also involves efforts to develop the human resources of ASN through training, coaching, and further education. This aims to improve the qualifications and skills of ASNs so that they can compete effectively.

The implementation of meritocracy in civil service management is a complex challenge and is often faced with various obstacles. One of the main challenges is the resistance to change among ASNs who may feel threatened by a system that is more oriented toward achievement and competence (Nopriandi, 2022). Additionally, the

entrenched practices of nepotism and patronage in bureaucratic culture also hinder the effective implementation of meritocracy.

To overcome these challenges, the government needs to conduct intensive and effective socialization about the importance of meritocracy in creating a more professional and efficient bureaucracy.

In practice, the implementation of the principles of meritocracy in civil service management requires a transparent and accountable system (Siti Rohmah et al., 2023). The selection process, performance evaluation, and promotion must be conducted openly and well-documented. This will help prevent discriminatory or favoritism practices that can undermine the integrity of the meritocracy system. Moreover, the need for clear incentives for high-performing ASNs is also an important factor in maintaining their motivation and work spirit.

Despite facing various challenges, the implementation of meritocracy in civil service management has long-term positive impacts. By consistently and sustainably applying the principles of meritocracy, the government can ensure that appointed ASNs are individuals of quality and committed to good public service. This will help create a more efficient, effective, and accountable bureaucracy, which in turn will increase public trust in the government and strengthen the foundation of national development as a whole (Pratama et al., 2023).

Integrity And Meritocracy In The Perspective Of Civil Servants

Integrity and meritocracy are two important aspects of civil service management that significantly influence the quality and professionalism of civil servants as well as the overall bureaucracy's performance. Integrity in the context of civil servants encompasses steadfastness to principles, morality, and ethics in carrying out their duties, while meritocracy is a system of reward and promotion based on achievement and competence, rather than personal relationships or political considerations. The importance of integrity for civil servants lies in their ability to build public trust. Civil servants with integrity will be trusted by the public to perform their duties transparently, accountably, and fairly (Suwito, 2014). This not only enhances bureaucratic effectiveness but also prevents practices of corruption and abuse of authority. Integrity also plays a crucial role in building a professional work culture that is oriented towards good public service.

Meanwhile, the implementation of meritocracy in the civil service personnel system brings many benefits (Ilham Maulana, 2021). First, meritocracy ensures that selected and promoted civil servants are those who have competence, dedication, and high responsibility in their work. This will enhance the quality of public services provided by civil servants. Second, meritocracy encourages civil servants to continuously improve their performance because they know that their achievements will be recognized and rewarded.

Third, meritocracy helps prevent practices of nepotism and favoritism in the appointment and promotion of civil servants, thus ensuring that these processes are

conducted objectively and fairly. However, in realizing integrity and meritocracy in civil service management, there are several challenges that need to be addressed (Asy-Syakir et al., 2023). One of them is the culture of nepotism and favoritism that still prevails in society. This can result in incompetent or unethical civil servants occupying strategic positions. Moreover, the weak enforcement of laws against integrity violations and meritocracy is also a constraint in efforts to improve the quality of civil servants.

To overcome these challenges, concrete steps are needed. First, there is a need to increase awareness of the importance of integrity and meritocracy among civil servants through training and socialization. Second, efforts should be made to strengthen law enforcement against integrity violations and meritocracy by imposing strict and fair sanctions on perpetrators. Third, there is a need for reform of personnel policies to ensure that the selection, promotion, and performance evaluation processes of civil servants are carried out objectively and transparently.

To realize integrity and meritocracy in the civil service personnel system, the first step to be taken is to strengthen the commitment of government agency leaders. Leaders must set a good example in carrying out their duties and functions by adhering firmly to moral and ethical values (Murti et al., 2023). They must also consistently uphold integrity and meritocracy in every decision and action taken so that civil servants under their supervision feel compelled to follow the same path (Budianto et al., 2023). Furthermore, strict supervision is also necessary to ensure the implementation of integrity and meritocracy in the civil service personnel system. This oversight can be carried out by internal government agencies, involving independent internal monitoring units. Additionally, active participation from civil society and mass media in monitoring the implementation of integrity and meritocracy is also crucial to prevent any room for practices that harm the public interest.

Education and socialization about the importance of integrity and meritocracy should also be conducted continuously for all civil servants (Sasongko & Sulhin, 2022). Through this education, it is hoped that civil servants can understand how crucial integrity is in performing their duties and functions as public servants. Moreover, socialization can also help raise awareness of the importance of meritocracy in the career development of civil servants, thereby increasing motivation for achievement (Seno, 2023). Finally, improving the personnel system is also a crucial step in realizing integrity and meritocracy. The personnel system must be improved to be more objective, transparent, and accountable. Selection, recruitment, performance assessment, and rewards should be based on merit and ability, not on other factors such as nepotism or favoritism. By making these improvements, it is hoped that a healthy and professional work environment will be created, ultimately enhancing the quality of public services and the progress of the nation and state.

Relational Meritocracy and National Defense

Meritocracy plays a crucial role in fostering the spirit and commitment of Civil Servants (ASN) in national defense. National defense and the meritocracy system have a close and mutually supportive relationship in realizing high-quality and professional Civil Servants (ASN) (Aji & Indrawan, 2019). National defense, which is the attitude and

behavior to defend the sovereignty, territorial integrity, and security of the nation, can be realized through a meritocracy system that rewards and provides opportunities based on performance and ability. First, the meritocracy system builds ASN with integrity and nationalism. ASNs selected based on meritocracy tend to have high integrity and prioritize the interests of the nation in carrying out their duties (Suwito, 2014). This is in line with the values of national defense which demand dedication and sacrifice for the nation's interest.

Second, the meritocracy system promotes the improvement of the performance and professionalism of ASNs. By emphasizing achievement and ability in performance assessment, ASNs are encouraged to continuously improve the quality of their work. Professional ASNs with high performance will contribute to the advancement and effectiveness of bureaucracy, in line with the goals of national defense to achieve the nation's aspirations (Gunawan & Suniasih, 2022). Third, the meritocracy system enhances public trust in ASN. Transparency and accountability in the meritocracy system will increase public trust in ASN. High public trust will encourage public participation in national development, which is an essential aspect of national defense to achieve national unity and solidarity.

Examples of the application of the relationship between national defense and the meritocracy system can be seen in the selection and recruitment of ASNs, career development of ASNs, and performance assessment of ASNs. ASN candidates must demonstrate nationalism and commitment to national defense in the selection and recruitment process. ASN who demonstrate achievement and performance in carrying out their duties in line with the values of national defense will have the opportunity to develop their careers (Murti et al., 2023). Performance assessments of ASN should also consider aspects of national defense, such as discipline, loyalty, and dedication to the nation.

One of the main aspects of meritocracy is selection and placement based on competence, performance, and dedication to the nation (Ananto & Rofii, 2022). Thus, ASNs selected through meritocracy tend to have the quality and capabilities necessary to perform their state duties effectively. Moreover, meritocracy also promotes the development of professionalism and responsibility among ASNs. ASNs selected based on meritocracy are highly motivated to improve their skills and knowledge to make a greater contribution to public service (Gunawan & Suniasih, 2022).

Meritocracy also encourages commitment to quality public service. By placing integrity and performance as the primary factors in the selection and promotion process, meritocracy ensures that ASNs have a high awareness of their responsibility to provide the best service to the public (Nopriandi, 2022). Furthermore, meritocracy can also be a tool to strengthen the spirit of patriotism and nationalism among ASN (Insani Kamil et al., 2023). ASNs selected through meritocracy tend to have a high sense of pride and loyalty to the nation, which is reflected in their good performance in carrying out state duties.

In the security and defense sector, meritocracy can help improve the quality of these services. By ensuring that personnel on duty are selected based on their qualifications and performance, meritocracy helps ensure that security and defense services can be relied upon to maintain the sovereignty and security of the nation. Moreover, the application of meritocracy in the selection and placement of ASNs can also strengthen the credibility of state institutions (Gunawan & Suniasih, 2022). By minimizing political involvement and nepotism in the selection and promotion process, meritocracy helps ensure that ASNs in positions are selected based on their qualifications and performance, thus increasing public trust in government institutions (Suryatni, 2019).

The Impact of Meritocracy on National Defense and Integrity

The influence of meritocracy on integrity and national defense encompasses several important aspects in building a professional, honest, and committed work culture towards the nation (Seno, 2023). Here is an explanation of how meritocracy can affect both values :

a. Integrity

a) Adherence to Ethical Principles

Meritocracy emphasizes selection and promotion based on qualifications and performance, not external factors like personal or political connections. Thus, meritocracy strengthens an organizational culture that encourages integrity, honesty, and fairness in every aspect of civil service management.

b) Reinforcement of Professionalism Culture

By prioritizing meritocracy, government organizations reinforce a culture of professionalism among civil servants. Civil servants who see that promotions and recognition are based on performance and competence tend to feel compelled to maintain integrity in their work, as they realize that the quality of their work will be reflected in their evaluations.

c) Encouraging Individual Accountability

With meritocracy, individual civil servants feel personally accountable for improving the quality of their work and meeting the expectations set for promotion or recognition. This can encourage them to uphold integrity in their actions, as they understand that their success depends on their actual performance.

b. National Defense

a) Commitment to Quality Public Service

Meritocracy ensures that civil servants involved in public service are selected and promoted based on their achievements and competencies. Civil servants selected through meritocracy tend to have a higher commitment to quality public service, as they realize that their responsibility as servants of the state depends on their ability to provide quality services to the public.

b) Spirit of Patriotism and Nationalism

Feeling that they are chosen based on their abilities and dedication to the nation, civil servants selected through meritocracy tend to have a strong spirit of

patriotism and nationalism. They take pride in their role in serving the nation and are willing to contribute maximally to carrying out state duties.

c) Positive Contribution to National Development

Through outstanding performance and a high commitment to the nation, civil servants selected through meritocracy can make significant positive contributions to national development. By providing quality and responsible public services, they help advance the national development agenda and improve the overall welfare of society.

Thus, meritocracy has a significant influence on integrity and national defense in civil service management. Through this approach, the government can build a professional, competent, and committed work culture toward providing quality public services, as well as strengthen the spirit of national defense among civil servants.

Challenges in Implementing Meritocracy in Civil Service Management

Meritocracy, as a system that rewards and provides opportunities based on merit and ability, is the foundation for creating quality and professional Civil Servants (Ilham Maulana, 2021). The primary goal of implementing meritocracy in civil service management is to enhance bureaucratic performance and public service. However, in practice, there are several challenges that need to be addressed. Firstly, the culture of nepotism and favoritism remains a problem in society. This can hinder the implementation of meritocracy as positions tend to be awarded based on personal relationships rather than competence (Nopriandi, 2022). Secondly, weak law enforcement against violations of meritocracy poses another challenge. A lack of law enforcement can provide opportunities for incompetent civil servants to obtain positions that should be held by more qualified individuals.

Thirdly, awareness of the importance of meritocracy remains low among civil servants. A lack of understanding of the values of meritocracy can hinder the effective implementation of this system. Fourthly, the performance appraisal system that is not yet objective and transparent is also a constraint (Nasrullah, 2018). Competent civil servants may receive unfair assessments, while incompetent ones may receive better assessments than they deserve. Fifthly, inadequate facilities and infrastructure are also challenges in implementing meritocracy. Inadequate facilities and infrastructure, such as outdated information systems, limited training and human resource development, and insufficient infrastructure, can hinder the effective implementation of meritocracy.

To overcome these challenges, concrete steps are needed, such as strengthening the commitment of government agency leaders to uphold meritocracy, enhancing oversight of the implementation of meritocracy, educating and raising awareness about the importance of meritocracy among all civil servants, improving the performance appraisal system of civil servants to be more objective, transparent, and accountable, as well as providing adequate facilities and infrastructure to support the implementation of meritocracy (Siti Rohmah et al., 2023).

With sustained efforts, it is expected that the implementation of meritocracy in civil service management can have a significant positive impact on improving

bureaucratic quality and public service. To address the challenges in implementing meritocracy in civil service management, comprehensive steps are needed. Firstly, strengthening the institutions responsible for civil service management must be done, including enhancing oversight of the selection, promotion, and performance evaluation processes of civil servants. Furthermore, it is important to provide training to public officials and civil servants on the importance of meritocracy, public ethics, and principles of good public service to enhance awareness and commitment to performing duties. Transparency in the selection and promotion processes of civil servants must also be increased by involving civil society and stakeholders in monitoring and evaluating these processes. Moreover, law enforcement against ethics violations and corruption must be strengthened by implementing strict and consistent sanctions. Finally, consistent and sustainable policy reforms supporting the meritocracy system need to be adopted, and weaknesses in existing regulations and procedures must be identified and rectified to ensure the system operates smoothly. With these steps, the government can enhance the effectiveness of implementing meritocracy in civil service management and strengthen integrity and the overall quality of public services.

Conclusion

In the context of implementing meritocracy in the management of the Civil Service (ASN) as a means of realizing the values of integrity and patriotism through the perspective of public ethics, several conclusions can be drawn. Firstly, meritocracy is an important principle in selecting and promoting civil servants based on merit, competence, and performance, rather than political factors or personal relationships. The implementation of meritocracy in civil service management can strengthen the value of integrity among civil servants by promoting a culture of professionalism, honesty, and commitment to providing quality public services.

Moreover, meritocracy can also serve as a means to strengthen the spirit of patriotism among civil servants by fostering commitment to the nation, nationalism, and quality service in carrying out state duties. However, the process of implementing meritocracy is not easy and is faced with various challenges, such as politicization, internal resistance, and lack of transparency in the selection and promotion processes.

To overcome these challenges, steps such as strengthening institutions, training and awareness, increasing transparency, enforcing strict laws, and policy reforms are needed. Thus, the implementation of meritocracy in civil service management not only contributes to the creation of quality and professional civil servants but also strengthens the values of integrity and the spirit of patriotism among civil servants.

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