

Administrative Requirements in ASN Placement: Between Formal Compliance and the Merit Principle in Gorontalo Regency

Joice Machmud¹ Ismet Sulila² Yuriko Abdussamad³ Raflin Hineho⁴

¹Gorontalo State University, Email: Joicemachmud74@gmail.com

²Gorontalo State University, Email: ismet.sulila@ung.ac.id

³Gorontalo State University, Email: jurikoabdussamad@ung.ac.id

⁴Gorontalo State University, Email: raflin@ung.ac.id

Abstract

The placement of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) personnel involves not only the availability of staff to fill a position but also the fulfillment of various requirements attached to that role. In practice, meeting administrative requirements often serves as the initial stage determining whether an ASN member can be assigned to a specific position. However, fulfilling administrative requirements does not necessarily guarantee that the placement process fully reflects the merit principle. This study examines administrative requirements in ASN placement within the Gorontalo Regency Government, utilizing administrative requirement indicators proposed by Siswanto. A qualitative approach was employed to understand how administrative requirements are applied and utilized during the ASN placement process. Data were gathered through interviews, observation, and document analysis, and subsequently processed through stages of data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings indicate that administrative requirements have become an integral part of the ASN placement mechanism, particularly regarding the verification of document completeness, employment status, qualifications, rank, and position-specific requirements. Nevertheless, their application remains primarily a matter of complying with formal regulations. The use of administrative data to assess the alignment between ASN personnel and the characteristics and needs of a position requires further strengthening. These conditions demonstrate that applying the merit principle to ASN placement requires more than merely ensuring administrative completeness; it necessitates a more objective and substantive application of these requirements as the basis for placement decisions.

Keywords: Administrative Requirements, ASN Placement, Merit System, ASN Management, Gorontalo Regency.

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Introduction

Civil Servants (ASN) are a strategic element in government administration because they function as implementers of public policies, providers of public services, and the bond that unites the nation. Therefore, ASN management is not only related to fulfilling staffing quantity requirements but also concerns how employees are placed in positions that meet the requirements and needs of the organization. Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning Civil Servants emphasizes the importance of strengthening the merit system in ASN management and

transforming ASN management through more professional practices based on organizational needs.

Employee placement is an important part of ASN management. Appropriate placement enables organizations to benefit from employees' abilities in accordance with job requirements. Conversely, inappropriate placement can affect the effectiveness of task implementation and the achievement of organizational goals. In this context, administrative requirements serve as an initial instrument to ensure that an ASN meets formal provisions before being placed in a particular position.

Siswanto (2013) identifies administrative requirements as an important indicator of employee placement. These requirements may include various documents and formal provisions demonstrating that an employee meets the criteria established by the organization. In the context of ASN, administrative requirements cannot be separated from position qualifications, rank, education, experience, competence, and other requirements according to the characteristics of the position.

Normatively, position requirements in civil servant management have also been regulated through Government Regulation Number 11 of 2017, as amended by Government Regulation Number 17 of 2020. These provisions indicate that appointment to a position requires, among other things, qualifications and educational levels, competence, integrity and morality, as well as health conditions appropriate to the type of position.

The issue that subsequently arises is whether these administrative requirements function merely as document-completion requirements or have been used as a substantive basis for determining the suitability of ASN for a position. From the perspective of the merit system, fulfilling formal requirements is an important stage, but it does not stand alone. The merit system places qualifications, competence, and performance as important elements in ASN management. Law Number 20 of 2023 itself identifies strengthening merit system supervision as one of the main aspects of ASN management regulation.

Research by Amalia and Putri (2025) on the merit system in ASN recruitment in Manokwari Regency indicates that the implementation of personnel policies can present challenges when affirmative policies and competency requirements must be implemented simultaneously. The study demonstrates the importance of maintaining quality, transparency, and accountability in ASN management processes to preserve merit principles.

Studies on employee placement have also been conducted within the Gorontalo government. Yusran Bone, under the supervision of Yanti Aneta, examined the effect of job placement on employee performance at the Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappeda) of Gorontalo Province. The UNG Repository records that the study used a quantitative approach to examine the effect of job placement on employee performance. The study is relevant because it demonstrates that employee placement has become part of personnel management research in the Gorontalo region.

Nevertheless, this study has a different focus. It does not examine ASN placement as a whole but specifically analyzes administrative requirements as one indicator of placement. This focus is important because administrative compliance can serve as an initial entry point for implementing merit principles, but compliance with formal requirements does not automatically indicate that placement is entirely merit-based.

Based on this description, this study aims to analyze how administrative requirements are used in the ASN placement process within the Gorontalo Regency Government and to identify the extent to which these requirements function as formal compliance and as part of the implementation of merit principles.

Methods

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive design. This approach was selected because the study is not intended to statistically measure relationships between variables but to gain an in-depth understanding of how administrative requirements are implemented in the ASN placement process within the Gorontalo Regency Government. Creswell and Poth (2018) explain that qualitative research is used to understand the meanings that individuals or groups assign to a social issue. This approach enables researchers to obtain an overview of the processes, experiences, considerations, and practices occurring within the research setting. Moleong (2021) also explains that qualitative research seeks to understand phenomena comprehensively within their natural context.

In this study, the qualitative approach is used to examine administrative requirements not only from the perspective of written regulations but also in terms of how these requirements are implemented in actual ASN placement practices. Accordingly, the study seeks to gain an understanding of the process of examining requirements, their suitability for positions, and their use as a basis for placement decisions.

Research Location and Period

The study was conducted within the Gorontalo Regency Government, Gorontalo Province. This location was selected based on the consideration that the Gorontalo Regency Government is a local government organization with a number of ASNs and an organizational structure encompassing various types of positions, meaning that the placement process requires clear administrative mechanisms and position requirements.

The research location primarily focused on local government agencies or work units related to personnel management and the ASN placement process. These units are important because they possess information concerning personnel administration, position requirements, and the processes of proposing and determining ASN placements.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through three techniques: (1) direct observation of situations and the behavior of citizen participation; (2) in-depth interviews with voters, non-voters, and key informants, following the principle that informants' words and actions constitute the primary data sources in qualitative research (Lofland, in Moleong, 2014); and (3) documentary studies of public records and official electoral data.

Data collection in this study was conducted through interviews, observation, and documentation. These three techniques were used together to obtain more comprehensive information while also verifying the accuracy of the data collected.

In-depth interviews were conducted with informants considered knowledgeable about and involved in ASN management and placement processes. The research informants were drawn

from several groups, namely: (a) officials or employees responsible for personnel management; (b) officials involved in the ASN placement process; (c) ASNs who had experienced placement or position transfers; and (d) other parties within relevant local government agencies associated with the ASN placement process. Observations were conducted by examining processes and conditions related to personnel administration management and ASN placement. Observation was used to obtain an overview of ongoing administrative practices and compare them with information obtained through interviews.

Documentation was used to supplement and verify information obtained from interviews and observations. The documents examined included personnel records, position requirements, organizational structures, job descriptions, ASN placement decisions or documents, employee qualification data, and other documents relevant to the research focus. To ensure data validity, the study employed source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information from various informants, while method triangulation was conducted by comparing data obtained from interviews, observations, and documentation.

Results and Discussion

The research results indicate that administrative requirements are among the aspects considered in the ASN placement process within the Gorontalo Regency Government. Compliance with these requirements is assessed by examining various personnel documents and information related to ASN status, educational qualifications, rank and grade, position history, and other requirements established for the position to be occupied. These requirements serve as an initial basis for ensuring that ASNs to be placed meet the applicable formal provisions. Regarding administrative completeness, the placement process has been supported by personnel documents as a basis for consideration. Complete documentation is necessary to ensure that the placement process has a clear administrative basis. However, the existence of documents does not always mean that all the information they contain is used in depth to determine the suitability of an ASN for a position. In other words, administrative completeness has become part of the procedure, but its substantive use still needs to be strengthened. Regarding the suitability of requirements for positions, ASN placement has, in principle, considered the requirements attached to each position. However, implementing such suitability continues to face challenges because the characteristics of each position differ and require specific qualifications and abilities. Therefore, administrative checks need to be followed by a more in-depth assessment of the suitability between an ASN's profile and the requirements of the position. Meanwhile, in terms of using administrative requirements as a basis for placement decisions, administrative data has not yet fully functioned as a substantive instrument. Personnel data is more readily used to demonstrate compliance with formal requirements, whereas its use to compare ASN profiles with position requirements still needs to be strengthened. This condition indicates that administrative requirements have functioned as a compliance procedure but have not yet fully developed into an instrument for merit-based decision-making.

Research Findings

Based on the research results, several important findings emerged concerning administrative requirements in ASN placement within the Gorontalo Regency Government.

First, administrative requirements have become part of the ASN placement mechanism. Personnel documents and formal requirements are used as an initial basis in the placement process. This indicates that ASN placement is not conducted without considering the applicable administrative provisions.

Second, administrative completeness is more evident as a form of formal compliance. Document examination is an important stage, but the use of the information contained in those documents to conduct a substantive assessment of ASN suitability for positions has not yet been fully optimized.

Third, the suitability between ASN requirements and position needs still needs to be strengthened. Each position has different characteristics and job requirements, meaning that administrative document compliance alone is insufficient to demonstrate an employee's suitability for a position.

Fourth, a gap exists between fulfilling administrative requirements and implementing merit principles. Administrative requirements are an important part of the placement system, but merit principles require a broader process, namely ensuring that placement decisions are based objectively on qualifications, competence, and position requirements.

These findings indicate that the main issue does not lie in whether administrative requirements exist, but in how these requirements are used in the ASN placement decision-making process.

Discussion

Administrative Requirements as a Formal Basis for ASN Placement

Administrative requirements constitute an important initial stage in the employee placement process. Siswanto (2013) identifies administrative requirements as one indicator of placement because these requirements are necessary to ensure that a person meets the provisions before being assigned to a particular job or position.

The research results indicate that the Gorontalo Regency Government has used personnel documents and information as part of the ASN placement process. This demonstrates that administrative aspects have been incorporated into the placement mechanism. Complete documentation provides assurance that the placement process has a formal basis and can be accounted for administratively.

However, administration should not be understood merely as the process of checking document completeness. Personnel documents actually contain information that can be used to examine ASN profiles more comprehensively. Information regarding education, rank, experience, position history, and various other qualifications can serve as a basis for determining an individual's suitability for an available position.

Thus, administrative requirements serve two functions. First, they function as a formal compliance mechanism, ensuring that all documents and requirements have been fulfilled. Second, they function as a decision-making instrument, using administrative information to assess ASN suitability for positions.

The research results show that the first function has been implemented more effectively than the second.

Administrative Requirements and Suitability for Positions

ASN placement fundamentally requires a match between employees and positions. Positions have specific duties, responsibilities, and requirements that must be fulfilled by the ASNs occupying them. Therefore, examining administrative requirements should not stop at asking whether documents are available but should continue by determining whether the information contained in those documents corresponds to the requirements of the position.

This perspective is consistent with the study on employee placement conducted by Bone, Aneta, and Bokingo at the Regional Development Planning Agency of Gorontalo Province. That study identifies job placement as an aspect related to employee performance. Therefore, placement cannot be viewed merely as an administrative activity but is also related to how employees perform their work and contribute to the organization.

In the context of this study, the suitability of administrative requirements for positions is important because complete documentation does not automatically demonstrate an employee's suitability for a job. An ASN may meet formal requirements, but the organization still needs a process to ensure that the qualifications possessed are genuinely relevant to the characteristics of the position.

Therefore, administrative requirements need to be linked to job analysis and position competency standards. This relationship enables organizations not only to check document completeness but also to map ASN profiles against position requirements.

Administrative Requirements from the Perspective of Merit

The merit system places qualifications, competence, and performance as important foundations of ASN management. From this perspective, administrative requirements are part of a broader process to ensure objectivity in placement.

Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning ASN strengthens ASN management based on the merit system. Therefore, the placement process should not be based solely on administrative considerations but should also consider the suitability between ASN capacity and position requirements.

From the perspective of legal philosophy, decision-making in government governance cannot be based solely on compliance with formal provisions; it must also consider substantive justice as a normative foundation for government administration (Aneta et al., 2025).

The research findings indicate that administrative requirements have fulfilled this formal function, but their use as an instrument of merit still needs to be strengthened. This condition demonstrates that implementing merit principles in ASN placement requires the integration of administrative data with information on competence, experience, performance, and organizational needs.

This view can also be linked to the research conducted by Djibran, Ilato, and Aneta (2021), which examined ASN performance at the Regional Personnel Agency of Gorontalo Province. The study demonstrates the importance of internal personnel factors, such as motivation and discipline, in supporting performance. In relation to this study, this indicates that ASN management needs to consider personnel more comprehensively rather than relying solely on administrative completeness.

Thus, merit principles in ASN placement require a process capable of transforming personnel data into information that is useful for decision-making. Administration no longer functions merely as evidence of compliance but also serves as an information source for determining who is most suitable for a position based on objective criteria.

Strengthening Administration to Support ASN Placement

The research results indicate the need to strengthen the use of ASN administrative data. Personnel data needs to be updated regularly and linked to information about available positions. This integration is important to ensure that decision-makers have adequate information when determining ASN placements.

In this context, personnel administration needs to be supported by job analysis and workload analysis. Position requirements must be clearly formulated so that they can be compared with the profiles of the ASNs to be placed. Through this mechanism, the placement process becomes more measurable and does not depend solely on document completeness.

Studies on civil servants involving Aneta also demonstrate the importance of personnel competence and capacity in supporting public service delivery. This perspective reinforces the argument that ASN management should be directed toward ensuring suitability between personnel capacity and job requirements.

Thus, strengthening administrative requirements does not mean increasing the number of documents that must be submitted but improving the quality of personnel information utilization. The more effectively this information is used, the greater the opportunity for organizations to produce objective placement decisions that meet organizational needs.

Discussion

The findings demonstrate that Public Sector Management has a substantial positive relationship with Government Performance in Senegal, with this relationship representing the strongest direct path in the structural model ($\beta = 0.612$). This result suggests that improvements in strategic management, human resource management, accountability, resource utilization, institutional coordination, and administrative effectiveness are closely associated with stronger institutional performance. From a public management perspective, managerial practices create the organizational conditions through which public institutions can translate policy objectives and available resources into operational outcomes. Clear organizational priorities, appropriate allocation of human and financial resources, effective coordination, and mechanisms of accountability can reduce administrative fragmentation and facilitate the achievement of institutional objectives. This interpretation corresponds with the broader public-management literature showing that management can influence public-service performance both directly and indirectly through leadership, employee motivation, organizational commitment, and the ability of public employees to perform their responsibilities effectively (Leisink & Boxall, 2021).

Government Performance also demonstrated a strong positive relationship with Public Service Delivery ($\beta = 0.497$), indicating that institutional performance represents an important organizational foundation for delivering accessible, reliable, timely, responsive, and citizen-oriented services. This relationship is particularly important because improvements in internal administrative performance are valuable to citizens only when they are translated into observable improvements in public services. Institutions that operate efficiently, achieve

organizational objectives, respond effectively to emerging needs, and maintain adequate administrative capacity are better positioned to manage service processes consistently. The finding is comparable with recent international evidence showing that managerial arrangements, organizational capabilities, innovation, and performance-oriented practices can influence public service quality, although the mechanisms through which these effects occur may vary according to institutional and administrative contexts (Alkaabi et al., 2024).

The direct relationship between Public Sector Management and Public Service Delivery was also statistically significant ($\beta = 0.284$), although its magnitude was smaller than the relationship between management and Government Performance. This difference provides an important interpretation of how management practices operate within public institutions. Strategic planning, accountability, human resource management, resource allocation, and administrative coordination may directly facilitate better service provision, but management practices alone may not automatically produce corresponding improvements at the point of service delivery. Management establishes structures, procedures, resources, and responsibilities, whereas actual service outcomes depend on whether these managerial arrangements produce improvements in institutional effectiveness and operational performance. The weaker direct effect therefore indicates that the pathway from management to service delivery is not exclusively immediate; part of the influence appears to operate through organizational processes that improve government performance before becoming visible in the delivery of services.

This interpretation is strengthened by the mediation analysis. Government Performance significantly mediated the relationship between Public Sector Management and Public Service Delivery, with an indirect effect of $\beta = 0.304$. The indirect effect was slightly larger than the remaining direct effect of $\beta = 0.284$ and represented approximately 51.7% of the total relationship between Public Sector Management and Public Service Delivery. Because both the direct and indirect effects remained positive and statistically significant, the findings indicate complementary partial mediation. Substantively, this means that effective public-sector management can affect service delivery through two interconnected mechanisms. The first operates directly, for example through better allocation of resources, clearer procedures, improved staff management, and stronger coordination of service activities. The second operates indirectly by improving institutional efficiency, effectiveness, responsiveness, transparency, and goal achievement, which subsequently strengthen the organization's capacity to provide services. Government Performance therefore functions as an organizational transmission mechanism rather than merely an additional independent determinant of service delivery.

The findings are particularly relevant to Senegal's ongoing efforts to strengthen public administration and decentralized institutional performance. Recent public-sector initiatives in Senegal have placed attention on performance-based financing, accountability, transparency, investment management, capacity development, and citizen engagement at the local-government level. The World Bank reported that Senegal's PACASEN initiative strengthened decentralization systems, doubled state transfers to the country's 601 local governments between 2018 and 2024, and supported improvements in investment planning, fiduciary management, safeguards, and citizen engagement among participating local governments. Such developments illustrate why managerial capacity and institutional performance need to be considered together: providing resources or introducing administrative reforms does not by

itself determine service outcomes unless institutions possess the capacity to manage those resources, coordinate implementation, monitor performance, and translate organizational improvements into services experienced by citizens (Ruppel & Murray, 2024).

The combined pattern of relationships also extends the interpretation of public service delivery beyond the assumption that better management practices automatically result in better services. The results instead indicate a sequential institutional process in which managerial arrangements strengthen government performance, which subsequently contributes to service-delivery outcomes. For Senegalese public institutions, this means that managerial reforms focused on strategic planning, professional human resource management, effective allocation of resources, accountability, and institutional coordination should be examined alongside measurable changes in efficiency, responsiveness, transparency, institutional capacity, and achievement of organizational objectives. At the same time, because the analysis captures employees' perceptions of service delivery rather than objective service indicators or citizens' direct evaluations, the identified relationships should be interpreted as organizational-level perceptions of how management and performance are connected to service provision. This distinction provides an important basis for future empirical work that combines administrative performance data with citizen-level assessments of accessibility, timeliness, reliability, and service quality.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion, it can be concluded that administrative requirements have become an important part of the ASN placement process within the Gorontalo Regency Government. The fulfillment of documents, qualifications, rank, employment status, and position requirements has been used as a formal basis for placement. However, implementation has not yet been fully optimized because administrative requirements still function more strongly as a formal compliance mechanism than as a substantive instrument for assessing ASN suitability for position requirements. These findings indicate that implementing merit principles in ASN placement requires stronger utilization of administrative data through integration with job analysis, position competency standards, experience, and organizational needs. Therefore, personnel administration needs to be directed not only toward ensuring document completeness but also toward serving as an objective information base for producing ASN placement decisions consistent with merit principles.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the study focuses only on the indicator of administrative requirements in ASN placement, and therefore does not examine other indicators in depth, such as academic achievement, experience, and physical and mental health, which constitute broader aspects of placement. Second, the study uses a qualitative approach within the context of the Gorontalo Regency Government, meaning that the results primarily describe conditions at the research location and are not intended to be generalized to all government institutions. Third, the study places greater emphasis on the process and utilization of administrative requirements in ASN placement and therefore does not quantitatively measure the relationship between the suitability of administrative requirements and ASN performance after placement in a position. Fourth, the study has not examined in greater depth the use of personnel information systems to support the integration of administrative data, competence, performance, and position requirements.

Recommendations

Based on the research results, several recommendations can be made. First, the Gorontalo Regency Government needs to strengthen the mechanisms for examining and utilizing administrative requirements so that they do not stop at document completeness but serve as an objective basis for determining ASN suitability for positions. Second, ASN administrative data needs to be integrated with information on educational qualifications, competence, experience, performance, and position competency standards so that the placement process can be conducted in a more measurable and merit-based manner. Third, the placement process needs to be supported by regular updates to job analysis and workload analysis so that position requirements accurately reflect organizational needs. Fourth, transparency and accountability in the placement process need to be strengthened so that every decision can be traced to clear position requirements and organizational needs.

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