



## The Implementation of a Merit System in Promotion and Job Rotation at the Kuningan District Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency

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### ABSTRACT

Kuningan District has been awarded the Meritocracy award with a good predicate. This award is given to assess the implementation of the merit system in the management of civil servants for local government agencies. The Kuningan District Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency are expected to continue innovating in enhancing the implementation of the merit system. The method used in this research is qualitative research. Researchers conducted research using interview techniques. The theory used is the merit system theory according to Grundman in the U.S. Merit System Protection Board (2016). There are 9 indicators in the implementation of the merit system, namely Recruitment, Selection, and Advancement, Equity, Compensation, Conduct, Utilization, Retention, Employee Training and Development, Neutrality, Public Interest. The implementation of promotions and job rotations in the Kuningan District Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency has applied the merit system. In its implementation, educational background, work record, and relevant skills also become specific requirements for a civil servant who will undergo promotions and job rotations. The research results show that the Kuningan District Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency have optimized promotions and job rotations in accordance with the merit system.

## **INTRODUCTION**

Promotions and job rotations within a government institution are often carried out with the aim of motivating civil servants to improve their performance in providing good services to the public. The implementation of promotions and job rotations at the Kuningan District Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency is based on educational qualifications, work experience, and competencies possessed by civil servants.

The management of civil servants in Indonesia has long been plagued by numerous issues and controversies regarding effective and efficient governance in managing civil service personnel (Haryanto, 2017). The emergence of the Civil Servant Law represents a shift from a comfortable zone to a more competitive one after the reform era began (Permana and Taufik, 2023). Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning Civil Servants stipulates that "the Merit System is the implementation of the Civil Service Management system in accordance with the principles of meritocracy". This system is designed to develop careers and recognize employee achievements in performing their duties. Therefore, the implementation of promotions and mutations within the civil service focuses on individual skills, where the process must be based on the principles of the merit system.

Kuningan Regency has been awarded the "good" predicate in the Meritocracy award. This award aims to evaluate the extent to which the merit system is applied in managing civil servants at the local government level. The assessment process covers eight sub-areas, including needs planning, procurement, career development, promotion and mutation, performance management, remuneration, awards and discipline, as well as protection and service and information systems. This award is expected to motivate the Kuningan Regency government to continuously improve civil service management. It is also hoped that the Kuningan Regency Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency will continue to innovate to improve the implementation of the merit system (Agus Sugiarto, 2022).

The Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency was established in response to the Regulation of the Government of the Republic of Indonesia Number 18 of 2016 concerning Regional Apparatus, recorded in the State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Number 114 of 2016 and Additional State Gazette of the Republic of Indonesia Number 5887. The establishment of this agency is also regulated in the Regional Regulation of Kuningan Regency Number 5 of 2016, which stipulates that this agency operates under and is responsible to the Regent through the Regional Secretary. Furthermore, the main tasks and functions of the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency are outlined in the Regent Regulation of Kuningan Regency Number 16 of 2019, which includes its position, organizational structure, as well as job descriptions and work procedures. This agency serves as a supporting entity in the management of governance affairs in Kuningan Regency, especially in the field of education and training (BKPSDM Kuningan Regency, 2017).

The previous research conducted by Kalesaran (2021), titled "Implementation of the Merit System Towards a Trustworthy Government," was a descriptive study with a qualitative approach. The research findings indicated that the implementation of the merit system had been carried out but was still not comprehensive or only partially implemented, resulting in obstructed processes. Factors such as mismatched competencies and potentials of Civil Service Personnel (ASN), lack of innovation, lack of integration of supporting systems, and inadequate facilities were identified as the causes. In response, the Regional Personnel Agency in North Sulawesi province adopted strategies to improve the implementation of the merit system, including 1) accelerating work patterns based on information technology, 2) conducting re-socialization on the importance of the merit system for all regional apparatus, 3) building and maintaining facilities supporting the merit system, and 4) ratifying all regulations related to the implementation of the merit system.

Based on that background, the author is interested in analyzing the implementation of the merit system in the promotion and mutation of civil servants. This research also aims to identify the obstacles faced during the implementation and to examine the efforts applied to overcome these issues at the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency.

## **THEORETICAL REVIEW**

Promotion is given as a form of recognition to Civil Servants (ASN) who demonstrate outstanding work performance, with rewards such as increased facilities, status, and income. Those who receive this promotion will also undertake heavier responsibilities compared to their previous positions (Sofyan, Haning, & Abdullah, 2022).

Every government institution has varying criteria in conducting the promotion process. Factors such as achievement, education, work discipline, innovation, creativity, honesty, and effective collaboration ability are some of the requirements needed for a promotion.

Mutation is the process of transferring an employee to another position that is at the same level or lower, with the main goal of maximizing job satisfaction within an organization. In the context of Civil Servants, mutation is included in the activities of appointment and termination. More broadly, mutation can be defined as changes in an employee's position, job, location, or duties, which can occur vertically or horizontally within the workplace (Hasibuan, 2013). Mutation is considered as part of the employee development function because it aims to improve job efficiency and effectiveness in the company (Sofyan, Haning, & Abdullah, 2022).

According to Hasibuan (2013) as cited in Sofyan, Haning, and Abdullah (2022), three fundamental principles are identified in the implementation of employee mutations, namely the merit system, seniority system, and spoiled system. In each mutation process, the company establishes and selects specific criteria to be used as guidelines in deciding which employees will be transferred. Typically, companies use different bases or foundations to

determine which employees will be mutated. Several indicators used in mutations include experience, knowledge, organizational needs, skills, and employee responsibilities (Sofyan, Haning, and Abdullah, 2022).

## **METHODOLOGY**

In this research, a qualitative method is employed as the primary approach. According to Sutopo and Arief (2010), qualitative research aims to describe and analyze various phenomena, events, or social activities, as well as attitudes and perceptions of both individuals and specific groups. This method is inductive, where data obtained directly from the research location are considered the main source for identifying phenomena and issues during the observation process (Susilo, 2010).

In this research, the interview technique is utilized by researchers at the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency with the main focus on the merit system. Informants in this study include Drs. Dudy Budiana, M.S.i, who serves as the Acting Head of the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency, Syaepul Bahri, S.E, who serves as the Head of the Mutation and Career Development Division, and Cucu Sunandar who holds the position as a Computer Technician. This research adopts the merit system theory according to Grundman published by the U.S. Merit System Protection Board in 2016. This theory identifies nine main indicators in the implementation of the merit system, namely Recruitment, Selection and Advancement, Equity, Compensation, Conduct, Utilization, Retention, Employee Training and Development, Neutrality, Public Interest (Grundman and Robbins, 2016). These indicators are used as a framework for analyzing the implementation of the merit system at the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency

## **RESULT**

The research findings encompass a re-evaluation of the validity of the collected data. The discussion of these results reflects the original insights of the researcher, aimed at providing explanations and interpretations of the analyzed data, thus addressing the research questions posed. Based on the conducted research, the following results were obtained.

The Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency has adopted a merit system in the process of promotion and job mutation. Meritocracy is a social system where an individual's success is directly determined by the achievements and abilities they demonstrate. Therefore, meritocracy can function effectively when there is a mechanism known as the merit system (Setyowati, 2016). This system is implemented as a policy and management of civil servants based on the principles of fair and objective qualifications, competencies, and performance, regardless of differences in religion, ethnicity, race, skin color, marital status, age, or disabilities. The main objective of the merit system is to develop the careers of employees and to recognize and appreciate the achievements they have attained in carrying out their duties and responsibilities.

In carrying out promotions and job transfers, there are several requirements that must be met by an ASN. For a State Civil Apparatus (ASN), it is very important to have good ethical and behavioral standards. In addition, in its implementation, educational background, work track record and appropriate expertise are also special requirements for an ASN who will carry out promotions and job transfers.

## **DISCUSSION**

The Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency has implemented a merit system in the promotion and job mutation processes. Meritocracy is a social system where an individual's success is directly determined by their demonstrated achievements and abilities. Hence, meritocracy can operate effectively when there is a mechanism known as the merit system (Setyowati, 2016). This system is integrated into the policy and management of civil servants, based on the principles of fair and objective qualifications, competencies, and performance, irrespective of differences in religion, ethnicity, race, skin color, marital status, age, or disabilities. The primary goal of the merit system is to foster the career development of employees and to acknowledge and value the accomplishments they have achieved in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities.

Position is a role that indicates the tasks, responsibilities, authorities, and rights of a civil servant within a state organization (Sarjiyati, Haryani, & Sutrisno, 2021). Officials in the government will not permanently occupy the same position. They can be transferred or mutated to other positions as needed by the government organization at any time (Rakhmawanto, 2021). In carrying out promotions and job mutations, the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency has implemented the principle of the merit system. Each civil servant has a specific method for selection and promotion (Ali, Prasojo, & Jannah, 2017). The promotion system is based on regulations or policies that are in effect at that time. The process of promotion and job mutation is based on indicators of the merit system, including work experience, educational background, competencies possessed, both formal and non-formal competencies such as training provision. Performance is one of the determining factors for civil servants who will be promoted. Of course, this performance must be balanced with good competencies.

### ***Recruitment, Selection, and Advancement***

Recruitment, Selection, and Advancement are processes of selecting employees based on their capabilities and qualifications through open competition. Based on information obtained through interviews with Drs. Dudy Budiana, M.S.i., the recruitment process of civil servants (ASN) has been well-organized and in accordance with applicable regulations. This recruitment process has adopted the CAT system. The CAT system, or computer-assisted test, is a selection method that uses computers to establish basic competency standards required in the selection of civil servants (CPNS), aiming to produce professional civil servants. The implementation of the CAT system is carried out

to avoid cheating during the recruitment process, such as political affiliations, family ties, and so forth. Furthermore, regarding implementation, information and results of ASN recruitment are announced through the official website ([bkpsdm.kuningankab.go.id](http://bkpsdm.kuningankab.go.id)), electronic media, or print media. In other words, the recruitment process and its implementation have been carried out openly and transparently.

Based on the presented data, it can be concluded that the Recruitment, Selection, and Advancement process has been carried out effectively. All information related to the implementation and results has been communicated through the official website ([bkpsdm.kuningankab.go.id](http://bkpsdm.kuningankab.go.id)).

### ***Equity***

One of the goals of the merit system is to prevent discrimination and unfair treatment towards civil servants, especially in the process of promotions and job mutations. To ensure that the promotion and mutation processes are fair and free from discrimination, a transparent system or application is needed that includes data at every stage of the process. This way, all civil servants and even the public can understand the criteria and how the promotion and mutation processes unfold.

Based on the information obtained through an interview with Drs. Dudy Budiana, M.S.i., the implementation of promotions and job mutations is already based on the principles of the merit system, although an application has not been utilized yet.

Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that promotions and job mutations are conducted fairly without discrimination.

### ***Compensation***

The merit system is a system that links compensation, which can be in the form of salary, bonuses, and allowances, with employee performance. Essentially, every individual working in an organization is responsible for their performance (Yusniawan and Permana, 2018). This system operates on the principle that employees who demonstrate higher performance should receive greater compensation compared to those with lower performance.

Based on the interview with Drs. Dudy Budiana, M.S.i., the salary system has been clearly structured. In addition to the basic salary, there are performance-based compensations, one of which is attendance. High-performing civil servants will also receive additional compensation when they receive awards. Naturally, this impacts the filling of strategic positions.

Based on the data presented, it can be concluded that the payroll system is clearly structured according to the position occupied.

### ***Conduct***

According to Grundman, in the merit system, 'Conduct' refers to the behavior or actions of employees that align with the fundamental values and standards of conduct established by the organization. Standards of conduct are the values and rules that govern how an individual behaves and serve as

guidelines for acting ethically and responsibly, thus forming a positive organizational culture.

Based on the interview results with Syaepul Bahri S.E., Kuningan Regency is known as a city whose people are friendly, polite, and respectful, including within the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Kuningan Regency. In addition to organizational culture, the attendance system is also used as one of the indicators to measure the level of ethics and responsibility exhibited by civil servants. The attendance system implemented utilizes an electronic system in the form of fingerprint machines. By using this system, the punctuality of civil servants' work can be determined. If there are civil servants who are absent without permission or late, they will receive points, and these points are calculated to impose sanctions based on the points obtained. Mild sanctions usually consist of warnings or even suspension of services, moderate sanctions may result in the civil servant not being promoted, and severe sanctions may include termination of employment. Promotions and mutations are conducted considering the ethics of civil servants during their work; only civil servants with good performance and good morality are deemed eligible for promotion.

Based on the data obtained, there were 13 civil servants who experienced a change in position at the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Kuningan Regency in December 2023. For example, Wiwin Winalia, who previously held a position in the field of personnel information, procurement, termination, and professional facilities for civil servants, then changed to become a treasurer in the finance department. In addition, Abdul Rohiman, who originally worked in the field of human resource development, then changed to work in the field of mutation and career development.

Based on the analysis conducted, promotions and job mutations are carried out based on the behavioral standards of civil servants (ASN) and the quality of their work as established.

### ***Utilization***

According to Grundman's perspective, the utilization of civil servants (ASN) should be optimal and productive. A crucial initial step is to place civil servants in positions that match their potential, thus creating a balance between efficient organizational operations and the effective capabilities of civil servants in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities (Sofyan, Haning, & Abdullah, 2022). Work effectiveness plays a crucial role in an organization's ability to achieve its established goals (Sunandar, Sutarjo, & Wulandari, 2020). In its implementation, the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency applies sanctions to any civil servant who displays indiscipline, whether they are light, moderate, or severe. This is done to ensure that civil servants work with full responsibility, thereby achieving the effectiveness and efficiency of their work.

Based on the interview results with Syaepul Bahri, S.E., several efforts have been made to ensure that civil servants work effectively and efficiently, including: (a) clear career paths, referring to structured steps in the development of civil servant careers that encompass interests, skills, and target setting. (b) absence of discrimination or unfair treatment, where each civil servant has equal opportunities and, if they make mistakes, they will receive appropriate sanctions according to regulations regardless of their position. (c) harmonious culture defined as a work environment that demonstrates synergy, mutual respect, reciprocal support, and cooperation in achieving common goals. A harmonious culture will create an efficient work environment that is oriented towards providing quality public services. (d) openness in human resources, by accommodating the aspirations of civil servants if they feel that their work does not match their potential.

Based on the data provided, the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency can work effectively and efficiently according to its duties, functions, and responsibilities.

### ***Retention***

Clear and measurable performance standards serve as guidelines for evaluating the performance and achievements of civil servants. Retention, in the principle of the merit system, refers to efforts to retain high-quality and high-performing civil servants within a government institution.

Based on the interview results with Syaepul Bahri, S.E., a civil servant must meet minimum performance standards and have relevant competencies to be eligible for promotion, with evaluations conducted beforehand.

Based on the data, the author concludes that in carrying out promotions and job mutations for civil servants (ASN), the qualifications are in line with their skills, work track record, and educational background.

### ***Employee Training and Development***

The merit system is an approach in civil service management that prioritizes qualifications, competencies, and performance as the main factors in planning, recruitment, compensation, development, promotion, retention, discipline, and retirement of employees. In its implementation, training and education also play a crucial role in improving the skills and performance of employees. Training is beneficial not only for the business world but also for civil servants to be more productive.

Based on the information obtained from the interview with Syaepul Bahri, S.E., training and education, also known as training programs (diklat), have been conducted. Firstly, there is structural training (diklat struktural). Participants from the leadership education and training program are directed towards individuals who have or will occupy structural positions at levels Eselon II, III, and IV. Secondly, there is technical training (diklat teknis), and thirdly, there is functional training (diklat fungsional) intended for functional officials or prospective functional officials. Additionally, there is a program called "ASN Kuningan Diajar," which aims to improve and develop the competencies of civil servants. The Civil Service and Human Resource

Development Agency of Kuningan Regency organizes various non-formal training activities, training programs, technical guidance, and mentoring. These activities aim to strengthen and advance the competencies of civil servants.

Based on the data, the author concludes that there are various training and education programs aimed at developing the potential of civil servants. This becomes one of the requirements for promotion and job mutation.

### ***Neutrality***

The principle of neutrality in the management of Civil Servants (ASN) is regulated in Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning Civil Servants, especially in Article 2 f, which states that the policy and management of civil servants must be based on the principle of neutrality. This means that every civil servant must be independent, not influenced by any power or interest, and not biased towards anyone. To ensure this neutrality, civil servants are prohibited from being members or officials of political parties, involved in election campaign activities, supporting election candidates, and must resign from public office positions if they run as political officials (Rakhmawanto, 2019).

Based on the interview results with Syaepul Bahri, S.E., to maintain neutrality in the process of promotion and job mutation, the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency (BKPSDM Kabupaten Kuningan) forms a supervisory team. This supervisory team is formed to prevent political intervention from various parties during the implementation of promotions and job mutations.

Based on the data, the author concludes that the principle of neutrality has been applied through the existence of a special supervisory team during the implementation of promotions and job mutations.

### ***Public Interest***

Transparency in the promotion and job mutation system is key to building a fair, accountable, and high-performing bureaucracy. Transparency helps improve public trust, prevent corruption, collusion, and nepotism (KKN), and enhances the motivation of civil servants to achieve optimal performance. Based on information obtained through an interview with Cucu Sunandar, information regarding promotions and job mutations has been disseminated through electronic media, print media, and the official website ([bkpsdm.kuningankab.go.id](http://bkpsdm.kuningankab.go.id)). The use of media in the process of conveying messages or information is a necessary step to ensure that the message or information can be effectively delivered (Nurfalah and Wihayati, 2016).

Based on the data presented, the author concludes that the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency of Kuningan Regency has been transparent.

### ***Challenges and Efforts in Implementing the Merit System at the BKPSDM Challenges in Implementing the Merit System***

Based on the interview results with Drs. Dudy Budiana, M.S.i., there are several obstacles in implementing the merit system, including:

### 1. System Understanding

One of the challenges in achieving the effectiveness of the merit system is the lack of understanding among Civil Servants (ASN) about how to implement the system. ASN who do not understand the values in the merit system such as performance assessment will not be motivated to improve their competence and performance, and their participation in the job selection process is low.

### 2. Leadership Commitment

The commitment of a leader is highly influential and is the key to the successful implementation of the merit system. Leadership commitment will drive the transparent and accountable implementation of the merit system in various aspects, such as recruitment, promotion, transfer, and performance evaluation. Leadership commitment will greatly affect the success of implementing the merit system.

### 3. Facilities and Infrastructure

Adequate facilities and infrastructure are crucial for the effectiveness of implementing the merit system. Budget constraints pose a significant challenge to its implementation, resulting in a lack of technological infrastructure supporting transparent recruitment processes and promotions. Limited training and development budgets for Civil Servants (ASN) to enhance their competencies hinder the identification and development of internal talents.

## *Efforts Made*

Despite the challenges faced, the Regional Personnel Agency of Kuningan District (BKPSDM Kabupaten Kuningan) has made several efforts to improve the implementation of the merit system, including:

### 1. Providing Understanding to Civil Servants

The Regional Personnel Agency and Human Resource Development of Kuningan District strive to educate Civil Servants about the merit system with the aim of creating a professional, high-performing, and competent bureaucracy in delivering quality public services. Providing understanding to Civil Servants can take the form of socialization, education, and training initiatives.

### 2. Formal and Informal Approaches to Leaders

Formal approach involves regular communication through meetings and periodic reports, as well as building cooperation and partnerships with leaders to ensure support and commitment to the merit system. Meanwhile, informal approach entails building good personal relationships with leaders through open communication and providing input or suggestions to enhance the effectiveness of the merit system.

### 3. Electronic Recruitment and Service Processes

The steps taken include the use of electronic recruitment systems through Computer Assisted Test (CAT), designed to prevent fraud and external intervention.

### 4. Utilization of Digital Platforms

The Regional Personnel Agency and Human Resource Development of Kuningan District utilize digital platforms to facilitate the distribution of information and enhance transparency regarding the merit system.

## CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The findings from the research indicate that the Regional Personnel Agency and Human Resource Development of Kuningan District have successfully maximized the promotion and job transfer procedures based on the merit system. The CAT system is utilized to prevent cheating during the implementation process. Information and recruitment results of Civil Servants are announced through official websites, electronic media, and print media. The salary system in the Regional Personnel Agency and Human Resource Development of Kuningan District is very transparent. High-performing Civil Servants receive awards in the form of additional compensation. There is a clear career path including interests, skills, and development goals to help Civil Servants work effectively and efficiently.

Every Civil Servant is given equal opportunities in the promotion and job transfer process without experiencing discrimination or unfair treatment. The harmonious work environment at the Regional Personnel Agency and Human Resource Development of Kuningan District is reflected through effective cooperation, mutual respect, and support in achieving goals. This harmonious work culture helps create operational efficiency and improve the quality of services to the public. Additionally, openness in personnel management allows for adjusting Civil Servants' tasks according to their potential. To support this development, the Personnel Agency also organizes various non-formal competency training, formal training, technical guidance, and mentoring, all aimed at developing and enhancing Civil Servants' competencies.

## FURTHER STUDY

In writing this article the researcher realizes that there are still many shortcomings in terms of language, writing, and form of presentation considering the limited knowledge and abilities of the researchers themselves. Therefore, for the perfection of the article, the researcher expects constructive criticism and suggestions from various parties.

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