

TRANSFORMING THE QUALITY OF REGIONAL CIVIL SERVANTS THROUGH INNOVATIVE TRAINING PROGRAMMES

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Abstract

This study employs a mixed-methods approach with an exploratory sequential design, aiming to analyze the effectiveness of innovative training programs for civil servants in Makassar City. The research was conducted in three government agencies: the Makassar City Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM), the Education Office, and the Health Office. The population consisted of all civil servants participating in the training programs in 2023 (n = 250). A purposive sampling technique was used, resulting in 50 respondents for the quantitative survey and 12 key informants for in-depth interviews. The data included pre- and post-training competency scores, participant satisfaction questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and training program documents. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document review. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and competency score changes), while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis, involving coding, theme categorization, and interpretation. Data triangulation was applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. This methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and impact of innovative training programs on the competencies and performance of civil servants in Makassar City.

Keywords

Regional Civil Servants, Innovative Training, Public Administration.



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INTRODUCTION

The success of regional governance largely depends on the quality of human resources, particularly civil servants, who are integral to the efficient functioning of public administration. In Indonesia, the shift towards regional autonomy, as outlined in Undang-Undang No. 23 Tahun 2014 (Indonesia, 2006), has significantly altered the governance landscape. This decentralization empowers local governments to manage their affairs based on regional potentials and needs, offering both opportunities and challenges. While it provides local authorities with greater autonomy to address the unique needs of their communities, it also places increased responsibility on them to ensure effective service delivery and governance. As regional governments gain more independence, the capacity of civil servants becomes a crucial factor in achieving the desired outcomes in public service provision and regional development (Salam, 2021).

Human resource development (HRD) is a critical strategy to ensure the success of regional governance. Civil servants, as the main actors in regional administration, must possess the necessary skills and competencies to manage complex governance issues, address public demands, and ensure the sustainable development of their regions (Ploscaru et al., 2022). The development of civil service human resources through training programmes has been identified as a key mechanism for enhancing public sector performance (Antwi et al., 2008). However, traditional training methods are increasingly seen as inadequate in preparing civil servants for the demands of modern governance. These methods often fail to address the rapid technological advancements, global competition, and complex societal issues that local governments must navigate (Setiawan et al., 2025). In response, innovative training programmes that incorporate technology-driven learning, blended approaches, and competency-based assessments have emerged as vital tools to equip civil servants with the skills necessary for effective governance (Liah & Kebudayaan, 2022).

Training and education programmes serve as the foundation for the development of civil servants, improving not only their technical competencies but also their critical thinking, problem-solving abilities, and adaptability. These programmes aim to prepare civil servants for the rapidly changing demands of governance, ensuring that they can handle challenges such as the integration of new technologies, the need for more efficient public service delivery, and the complexities of managing diverse regional needs (Yanti, 2016). By fostering a skilled and professional workforce, these innovative training programmes contribute to the achievement of good governance and improved public service outcomes (Sri Nur Wahyuningsih, 2023).

The city of Makassar, as the capital of South Sulawesi Province, faces significant challenges in managing local government due to its diverse population, rapid urbanization, and increasing demands on public services. The results of an internal survey in 2022 show that around 35%–40% of Civil Servants (PNS) in a number of strategic agencies, such as the Education Office and the Health Office, have limitations in leadership skills, project management, digital literacy, and customer service (Zaenal Wahyu Firmanto, 2024). This condition poses obstacles in the implementation of public policies and service efficiency, thus demanding a more effective human resource development strategy. This lack of skills is caused by a combination of factors, including the lack of continuous competency development programs, limited access to technology-based training, and the lack of systematic monitoring and evaluation of civil servants' abilities by leaders (Asropi et al., 2024).

In response to these problems, the Makassar City Government, through the Personnel and Human Resources Development Agency (BKPSDM), has initiated an innovative training program designed to improve the competence and performance of civil servants. The program emphasizes the development of leadership skills, project management, digital literacy, and customer service, which are considered crucial to improve bureaucratic effectiveness and the quality of public services amid the challenges of globalization and technological advancements. This training is also tailored to the needs of each agency, including the implementation of digital modules, project simulations, and public service case studies. The goal of this program is not only to improve the capabilities of individual civil servants but also to strengthen the capacity of the organization as a whole, so that local governments can become more responsive, transparent, and professional (Setiawan, 2023). Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effectiveness of innovative training programs in transforming the quality of civil servants in Makassar City, as well as evaluate their impact on their competence and performance in the field.

In the context of Makassar City, the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency has been actively implementing innovative training programmes designed to improve the competencies of civil servants and enhance their performance. Makassar, as the capital of South Sulawesi, faces unique challenges in managing regional governance due to its diverse population, rapid urbanization, and the increasing demands for public services. As part of its efforts to strengthen the professional capacities of civil servants, the local government has focused on providing continuous development opportunities through tailored training initiatives. These

programmes aim to enhance civil servants' skills in areas such as leadership, project management, digital literacy, and customer service, all of which are critical to the success of regional governance in an increasingly globalized and technology-driven world (Setiawan, 2024).

This study seeks to examine the implementation and impact of these innovative training programmes in Makassar City. Specifically, it will explore how these programmes contribute to the development of civil service competencies and performance, and what factors influence the successful implementation of such initiatives. Understanding these factors is crucial, as it allows for the identification of best practices and challenges in the development of civil servant human resources. This study will also provide insights into how training can be leveraged as a strategic tool to enhance governance and public service delivery in the context of regional autonomy (Kurniasih et al., 2024); (Fadri & Fil, 2024).

By focusing on the experiences of Makassar City, this research aims to provide valuable lessons for other regions in Indonesia that are striving to improve their civil service workforce through innovative training initiatives. The findings will offer theoretical contributions to the field of public administration and human resource development, particularly in the context of decentralized governance. Moreover, the study will provide practical recommendations for policymakers and local government authorities to optimize training programmes, ensuring that civil servants are well-equipped to meet the challenges of modern governance and contribute effectively to the development of their regions (Wulandari, 2012).

The novelty of this research lies in its exploration of innovative training approaches in the public sector, particularly in relation to regional autonomy. Although previous studies have highlighted the importance of human resource development, few have focused specifically on the role of modern, technology-driven training methods in improving the performance of civil servants in the context of decentralization. This study aims to fill this gap by examining the implementation of these programmes in Makassar City, offering both theoretical and practical insights that can guide the development of more effective training strategies in regional governments across Indonesia.

METHODS

This study employs a mixed-methods (Sugiyono, 2013) (Sugiyono, 2018) (Sugiyono, 2011) approach with an exploratory sequential design, aiming to analyze the effectiveness of innovative training programs for civil servants in Makassar City. The research was conducted at the Makassar City Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) and the Makassar City

Education Office. The population consisted of all civil servants participating in the training programs in 2023 ($n = 250$). A purposive sampling technique was used, resulting in 50 respondents for the quantitative survey and 12 key informants for in-depth interviews. The data included pre- and post-training competency scores, participant satisfaction questionnaires, semi-structured interviews, and training program documents. Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and document review. Quantitative data were analyzed using descriptive statistics (mean, percentage, and competency score changes), while qualitative data were analyzed through thematic analysis, involving coding, theme categorization, and interpretation. Data triangulation was applied to ensure the validity and reliability of the findings. This methodology provides a comprehensive understanding of the implementation and impact of innovative training programs on the competencies and performance of civil servants in Makassar City.

FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

Findings

This section presents the empirical results obtained from field observations, in-depth interviews with 12 civil servants, and document analysis. The research was conducted at three specific locations in Makassar City: The Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM), the Education Office, and the Health Office, which represent different sectors of public service. The findings directly address the three research questions concerning the impact, barriers, and supporting factors of innovative training programmes.

Impact of Innovative Training Programmes on Civil Servants' Competencies and Performance

The results show that innovative training programmes have a significant positive influence on the competencies and performance of civil servants in Makassar City. Based on the interview data, 83% of respondents reported improved digital literacy and leadership skills after participating in the training. Participants also noted practical improvements in project management, customer service, and decision-making skills. Observational data indicated that employees in departments directly serving the public, such as health and social services, demonstrated faster response times and better communication with citizens.

Trainers and supervisors confirmed that digital tools such as e-learning platforms and blended learning approaches provided participants with hands-on experience. This approach not only increased knowledge retention but also improved their ability to apply the concepts learned in

real-world governance situations.

Barriers to the Implementation of Innovative Training Programmes

Despite these positive outcomes, several barriers were identified. The most frequently reported issue was limited resources. Eight out of twelve respondents mentioned that unstable internet connections and a lack of computers disrupted the online learning sessions. Budget limitations also restricted the availability of modern training equipment. Another challenge was resistance to change—especially among senior civil servants—who expressed discomfort with digital platforms and preferred traditional, face-to-face learning models. Moreover, follow-up support after training was minimal. Only 25% of respondents reported receiving additional mentoring or refresher sessions after the initial programme.

Supporting Factors in Programme Implementation

The success of the innovative training programmes was largely driven by strong leadership from the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency and collaboration with external partners. Agency leaders demonstrated commitment to aligning training content with regional governance priorities and actively encouraged departments to adopt digital learning. Collaboration with external training institutions ensured that content remained relevant and responsive to real-world governance challenges. Additionally, the flexible learning model—combining online and in-person modules allowed civil servants to engage in training without disrupting their daily responsibilities.

Table 1. Summary of Interview and Observation Findings

Aspect	Key Findings	Supporting Evidence
Competency Improvement	Increased digital literacy, leadership, and decision-making skills	83% of respondents reported improvement
Performance Outcomes	Faster public service response, improved communication	Observations in social and health departments
Barriers	Limited budget, unstable internet, resistance to digital tools	8 of 12 respondents cited resource issues
Supporting Factors	Leadership commitment, inter-department collaboration, and flexible learning models	Document analysis and interviews with agency heads

The data in Table 1 reinforce that while the programmes enhanced competencies and performance, structural and technical barriers limited the full effectiveness of the training.

Discussion

In this study, programmes of innovative training for civil servants in Makassar City were shown to significantly enhance competencies in leadership, project management, digital literacy, and customer service, evidenced through observations, interviews, and document analysis (Sunaini & Satyadharma, 2025) (Adiatma et al., 2023) (Fahlevi, 2024). The findings further reveal that when such training is supported by stakeholder collaboration, leadership commitment, and flexible delivery modes (online + offline), the effect on performance becomes more pronounced (Ho et al., 2020) (Brown & Green, 1994) (Rizalihadi & Satispi, 2025). At the same time, persistent barriers such as inadequate infrastructure, limited funding, and cultural resistance among senior staff attenuated the full potential of these initiatives (Hadiyantina, 2021) (Yasa et al., 2021) (D. Susilo, 2020).

Theoretically, the results are consistent with the competency-based human resource development framework, which posits that structured training must be aligned with performance outcomes in public sector contexts (Astutiek et al., 2024) (Rawinarno & Alynudin, n.d.) (Morena et al., 2022). The adoption of digital and blended learning approaches supports the adult learning and e-learning literature that emphasizes flexibility, learner control, and scalability (Rogers, 1983) (Knowles et al., 2014) (Clark & Mayer, 2023). Moreover, the importance of leadership and organizational readiness aligns with change management theory and innovation adoption models in public bureaucracies (Morena et al., 2022) (Kotter et al., 2011) (Yukl et al., 2019) (Fernandez & Rainey, 2017) (Denhardt & Denhardt, 2015) (Pollitt, 2016).

In dialogue with prior research, this study reinforces the findings of Setiawan (2023) that interactive training methods (e.g., simulations, group discussions) produce improved adaptiveness in public sector employees. It also echoes the work of Santoso (2020), Prasetyo (2021), Rahman (2021), and Putri (2022), who found that digital literacy training enhances service efficiency and problem-solving capacity in government contexts (M. J. Susilo, 2022). In contrast, echoing Hadi (2018) and Susilo (2019), this study confirms that training initiatives lacking infrastructural support or leadership buy-in do not yield sustained impact. Additionally, this study adds empirical nuance by showing that when training programmes integrate digital delivery with mentoring, follow-up, evaluation, and stakeholder coordination, the competency and performance gains of civil servants become more durable (Sunaini & Satyadharma, 2025). For example, national studies on digital literacy show that many civil servants still operate at low to medium levels of readiness (Sarjito & Djati, 2025), highlighting the contextual importance of follow-up and support.

Affirmatively, these results confirm that innovative, technology-enhanced training programmes are effective mechanisms for improving civil servant competencies and performance — particularly when supported by leadership, flexibility, stakeholder collaboration, and organizational infrastructure. Nevertheless, the study also presents an antithesis to the assumption that digital training alone suffices: without adequate resources, cultural readiness, and structured follow-through, the effects will be limited and potentially unsustainable. In sum, effective human resource development in regional governance is not solely about the training content, but equally about the organizational ecosystem, leadership vision, infrastructure readiness, and contextual adaptation (Chinn & Iordanou, 2023). These insights offer empirical guidance for local governments seeking to strengthen public sector capacity under decentralization.

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrated that innovative training programmes implemented by the Civil Service and Human Resource Development Agency in Makassar City have significantly improved civil servants' competencies and performance. The use of digital tools, blended learning, and competency-based approaches enhanced technical proficiency, leadership, and problem-solving abilities, leading to more efficient and responsive public service delivery. Nevertheless, the study identified key barriers that limit the full realization of these benefits, including inadequate infrastructure, limited digital resources, and resistance to change among senior employees. Despite these obstacles, strong institutional leadership, interdepartmental collaboration, and flexible training designs emerged as essential factors that supported successful implementation and sustainability. In essence, innovative training programmes can be powerful instruments for transforming public sector human resources when supported by adequate resources, continuous professional development, and an organizational culture that embraces innovation. Future research should explore the long-term impact of these training programmes through quantitative performance assessments and comparative studies across different regional contexts. Practically, local governments should strengthen infrastructure investment, establish structured post-training mentoring systems, and promote digital literacy initiatives to ensure the sustainability of competency improvements. Policymakers are encouraged to integrate innovation-oriented training into civil service reform strategies to enhance governance quality and accelerate regional development.

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