

Review Article

# Good Governance in the Management of Early Childhood Education Grants by Regional Government

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**Abstract:** This study aims to analyze the application of good governance principles in the management of ECE grants by regional governments, focusing on aspects of transparency, accountability, public participation, and legal certainty. The study employs a qualitative approach using Qualitative Secondary Analysis (QSA), analyzing various secondary data sources such as policy documents, government reports, previous research findings, and relevant academic literature on education grant management. Data analysis was conducted systematically through data reduction, categorization, interpretation, and conclusion drawing. The results indicate that the implementation of transparency in ECE grant management is reflected in the openness of information regarding grant application procedures, recipient selection mechanisms, and fund usage reporting. Accountability is realized through administrative and financial accountability mechanisms that must be fulfilled by both regional governments and ECE institutions receiving the grants. Public participation is evident from the involvement of communities, ECE institution managers, and parents in the planning, implementation, and supervision of the grant program. Meanwhile, legal certainty in grant management is demonstrated by the existence of regulations that clearly govern grant provision mechanisms, fund disbursement procedures, and obligations for reporting and accountability in fund utilization. The study concludes that the application of good governance principles in the management of ECE grants by regional governments plays a crucial role in enhancing transparency, accountability, and effectiveness in educational fund management. Furthermore, community involvement and regulatory certainty serve as key supporting factors in achieving better governance of education grants.

**Keywords:** Early Childhood Education; Good Governance; Grant Management; Regional Government; Transparency.

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## 1. Introduction

Education is one of the main instruments in national development because it plays a crucial role in improving the quality of human resources. In the context of national development, education not only functions as a means of knowledge transfer but also as a process for shaping character, moral values, and skills necessary to face the dynamics of social, economic, and political life. Therefore, the success of a country's development is highly influenced by the quality of its education system (Tilaar & Nugroho, 2016).

One stage of education that plays a vital role in shaping human resource quality is early childhood education (ECE). ECE refers to the educational level designed for children from birth to six years of age, providing educational stimulation to support physical and cognitive

development and prepare children for further education. Early childhood is known as the golden age, a period of rapid brain development where various educational stimuli significantly influence intellectual, emotional, and social development (Suyadi & Ulfah, 2015).

The importance of ECE has been widely recognized by many countries, including Indonesia. The Indonesian government positions ECE as an integral part of the national education system that requires adequate attention and support. This is reflected in various government policies aimed at improving access, quality, and governance of ECE across the country (Ministry of Education and Culture, 2020). However, the implementation of ECE in Indonesia still faces challenges, particularly related to limited resources, including infrastructure, qualified educators, and funding support.

In Indonesia's decentralized governance system, regional governments play a strategic role in delivering public services, including education. Regional autonomy policies grant local governments broader authority to manage local governance affairs, including planning, budgeting, and implementing education programs. Consequently, regional governments bear significant responsibility for ensuring the availability of quality education services, including ECE (Rondinelli, 2007).

One form of support provided by regional governments for ECE is financial assistance in the form of grants to community-managed or civil society-run ECE institutions. Regional government grants involve providing money, goods, or services to specific entities such as central or other local governments, state-owned enterprises, regional-owned enterprises, agencies, institutions, or civil society organizations, which are non-mandatory and non-binding in nature (Halim, 2012).

The provision of grants to ECE institutions aims to support operational management, improve the quality of educational facilities and infrastructure, and expand access to early childhood education services. Through these grants, ECE institutions are expected to enhance the quality of educational services, providing optimal developmental stimulation for young children (Suhardi et al., 2024). Regional government grants are a form of financial support given to organizations or institutions to support activities aligned with public interests and regional development goals (Sianturi, 2017). The management of grant funds by regional governments is part of public financial management, which must be conducted transparently, accountably, and in accordance with the principles of good governance. Good governance principles are essential because public financial management must be accountable to society as stakeholders. In the context of grant and social assistance management, applying principles of transparency and accountability is a crucial instrument for achieving good governance (Sianturi, 2017).

The concept of good governance has become a key paradigm in modern governance. Good governance refers to a governance system emphasizing transparency, accountability, participation, effectiveness, efficiency, rule of law, and responsiveness to public needs. Implementing these principles aims to improve public service quality, strengthen public trust in government, and ensure that policies and development programs are implemented appropriately (Dwiyanto, 2008). In the context of regional financial management, applying good governance principles is especially important because regional budgets come from public funds that must be accountable to society. Therefore, every stage of budget management—from planning and implementation to supervision—must be conducted transparently and accountably to ensure optimal benefits for the community (Mardiasmo, 2018).

Good governance emphasizes key principles such as transparency, accountability, public participation, effectiveness, and legal certainty in government administration. The application of these principles aims to improve public service quality and strengthen public trust in government. Without good governance principles, public budget management may lead to various problems, such as misuse of funds, lack of transparency, and low program effectiveness (Mirnawati et al., 2023). In practice, the management of grants for ECE institutions still faces challenges. Common problems include delays in fund disbursement, misalignment of fund usage with technical guidelines, and weak monitoring and reporting systems. Although educational assistance can support the operational capacity of educational institutions, there are still obstacles in terms of timeliness and proper allocation of funds according to regulations.

Other challenges in managing ECE financing include limited capacity of education managers in financial administration, lack of training in financial management, and suboptimal coordination between local governments, educational institutions, and communities. These conditions may affect the effectiveness of fund utilization and the quality

of education services provided to young children (Suhardi et al., 2024). Consequently, the performance of ECE grant programs depends not only on adequate funding but also on the administrative, managerial, and institutional capacity of regional governments to coordinate actors, enforce financial control, and ensure accountability for public resources (Pangestu et al., 2026).

From a public administration perspective, these issues indicate that the management of education grants is not only related to financial aspects but also involves institutional capacity, quality of governance, and effectiveness of coordination among actors involved in public service delivery. Therefore, applying good governance principles in managing early childhood education grants is essential to ensure that government assistance programs are implemented transparently, accountably, and appropriately.

Furthermore, improving ECE quality requires support from various stakeholders, including regional governments, educational institutions, and communities. Collaboration among these parties is vital to create a high-quality education system and ensure that available resources are optimally utilized for early childhood education (Bafita, 2024). Thus, the management of ECE grants by regional governments is not only a matter of financial administration but also a matter of good governance. Implementing good governance principles in ECE grant management is a key factor in ensuring that public funds are used effectively, efficiently, and appropriately.

Based on this description, research on Good Governance in the Management of Early Childhood Education Grants by Regional Governments is essential. This study is expected to provide insight into how good governance principles are applied in ECE grant management and identify factors influencing the effectiveness of grant management. The results are anticipated to contribute to improving regional financial governance and strengthening the quality of early childhood education services in Indonesia

## 2. Literature Review

### Good Governance

Good governance literally means “good government.” According to UNDP (1997), good governance encompasses mechanisms, processes, and institutions that can guide, control, and manage citizens’ interests effectively, transparently, and responsibly. The main principles of good governance include transparency, accountability, participation, rule of law, responsiveness, effectiveness and efficiency, visibility, and professionalism (Wibawa, 2016). Good governance refers to the principles of sound governance, which include transparency, accountability, participation, and the supremacy of law. According to Nadeak et al. (2024), good governance is a form of government that ensures transparency, participatory processes, and accountability, focusing on the needs and welfare of the public. This definition indicates that good governance is not only related to state administration but also involves fulfilling public rights, managing resources efficiently, and improving the quality of life for society.

Good governance can be understood as a system of governance that is effective, efficient, transparent, and accountable. This shows that good governance is not just about managing a country well but also emphasizes openness and responsibility in every decision taken by the government (Noviyanti et al., 2021). Good governance involves principles of democracy, human rights, social justice, and clean government. It also highlights the importance of public participation in decision-making to achieve sustainable development goals (Lubis et al., 2020). Good governance is a broad concept encompassing multiple aspects, such as effectiveness, efficiency, transparency, accountability, public participation, social justice, human rights, and anti-corruption. Therefore, good governance is not only about how the government manages the country but also about how citizens participate in decision-making and help maintain the integrity of governance (Widanti, 2022).

In the context of developing countries, good governance is also often associated with efforts to achieve sustainable development goals, such as reducing poverty, improving health and education, and enhancing quality of life. In this regard, good governance can be considered a condition that promotes progress and public welfare. Applying good governance principles can also help strengthen public trust in the government and public institutions, which is crucial in addressing challenges such as social conflict, economic crises, and natural disasters (Hidayat, 2022). The principle of transparency in good governance refers to openness in decision-making and policy implementation. Its function is to prevent abuse of

power and ensure that the public receives adequate information regarding government policies (Maulidina et al., 2023). In public service, transparency enhances public trust in the government because citizens can directly monitor how policies and public resources are managed.

Accountability, meaning the government's responsibility for its actions, is another critical principle. It requires the government to provide clear and detailed reports on its activities and respond to public complaints or issues. In the context of public service, accountability leads to improved service quality that aligns with public expectations. Public participation refers to the involvement of citizens in decision-making processes that affect them. In good governance theory, participation is seen as a way to link government policies with the needs of the community (Handayani & Nur, 2019). Citizens involved in planning and policy implementation are more likely to benefit from the services provided and contribute to improving service quality.

Rule of law, another core principle of good governance, emphasizes the fair and equitable enforcement of laws. Consistently and fairly applied laws ensure that all individuals have equal rights to receive proper public services free from discrimination (Ariesmansyah et al., 2024). Good governance involves negotiation with all stakeholders over the outcomes of public policies and adherence to agreed governance principles, which are implemented and regularly evaluated by all stakeholders. In the public sector, governance is referred to as public governance. Public governance describes how stakeholders interact with each other to influence public policy outcomes (Bovaird & Löffler, 2003)..

### **Public Administration**

Public Administration is a branch of social science that studies the processes of government administration in order to implement public policies and provide services to society. Public administration is not only concerned with governmental bureaucratic activities but also encompasses decision-making processes, management of public resources, and the implementation of state policies. In general, public administration can be understood as the process of managing government organizations, involving activities such as planning, organizing, executing, and supervising to achieve state objectives and meet public interests. Public administration is also closely related to efforts to enhance the efficiency and effectiveness of public services provided by the government.

According to Pfiffner (1960), public administration is the execution of state policies established by political institutions. This definition emphasizes that public administration functions as a mechanism for implementing policies created by political bodies such as the government and parliament. Therefore, public administration serves as a bridge between the political process and the execution of policies at the bureaucratic level. Waldo (1984) stated that public administration is a management process carried out within government organizations involving human resources and other resources to achieve government objectives. Waldo stressed that public administration is not only technical or managerial but also has political and social dimensions, as it relates to public interests.

According to Henry (2010), public administration is a complex combination of theory and practice aimed at improving understanding of the relationship between government and society and promoting public policies that are responsive to social needs. This definition shows that public administration is not merely practical but also has a strong theoretical foundation for understanding the dynamics of governance and society. According to Pasolong (2007), public administration is a form of collaboration among individuals or institutions in carrying out government tasks to meet societal needs effectively and efficiently. This view emphasizes that public administration is not only about government organizational structures but also about fulfilling public needs through service delivery.

Based on these expert definitions, public administration can be summarized as having several key characteristics:

a. Related to government administration

Public administration is an activity conducted by government organizations in carrying out state functions.

b. Connected to public policy

Public administration plays a role in formulating, implementing, and evaluating public policies.

- c. Involves public organizational management processes  
Public administration includes planning, organizing, executing, and supervising activities.
- d. Oriented toward public interests  
The primary goal of public administration is to provide public services and enhance the welfare of society.

Thus, public administration can be understood as the process of managing government organizations aimed at implementing public policies and providing services to the public effectively, efficiently, and accountably

### **Public Financial Management**

Public financial management is a crucial aspect of governance because it is directly related to the management of state or regional financial resources used to fund various development programs and public services. Public finance reflects how the government plans, utilizes, and accounts for funds collected from the public through taxes and other revenue sources.

Public financial management encompasses all activities related to planning, implementation, administration, reporting, and oversight of state or regional finances carried out in a transparent and accountable manner to achieve development goals. Public financial management must be oriented toward the public interest since the funds used are public funds sourced from the community (Mardiasmo, 2018). Public finance is the study of government activities in the economic sphere, particularly those related to the collection of state revenue, government expenditures, and their impact on income distribution and economic stability (Musgrave & Musgrave, 1989). Therefore, public financial management can be understood as the process of managing government financial resources through various stages of financial management to support governance and development.

Public financial management must be conducted based on good governance principles so that the use of public funds can be held accountable to society. According to Mardiasmo (2018), there are several key principles in public financial management:

- a. Transparency  
Transparency is the government's openness in providing information about public financial management to the community. This information includes the budget planning process, budget utilization, and the outcomes of government programs.
- b. Accountability  
Accountability is the government's obligation to justify the use of public funds to the public and oversight institutions. Every budget expenditure must be clearly explained and comply with applicable regulations.
- c. Effectiveness  
Effectiveness indicates the degree to which a government program successfully achieves its intended objectives.
- d. Efficiency  
Efficiency relates to the optimal use of resources to achieve maximum benefits with minimal costs.
- e. Compliance with Regulations  
Public financial management must comply with existing laws and regulations to prevent the misuse of funds.

These principles form the foundation for realizing good governance in the management of state and regional finances. In Indonesia's governance system, public financial management is carried out not only by the central government but also by local governments. Local governments have the authority to manage regional finances to support the implementation of regional autonomy and the provision of public services in their areas. Regional finance includes all rights and obligations of the region that can be measured in monetary terms, as well as all assets that can be owned by the region in relation to these rights and obligations (Halim, 2012). Regional financial management encompasses various activities such as: planning and preparation of the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD), implementation of the regional budget, administration of regional finances, reporting and accountability of regional finances, and oversight of budget utilization. In the context of this study, grants provided by local governments to early childhood education institutions are part

of regional expenditures that must be managed transparently and accountably in accordance with the principles of public financial management.

### **Early Childhood Education Management**

Early childhood education management is the process of systematically and strategically managing all educational resources within an early childhood education institution to achieve educational objectives effectively and efficiently. Early childhood education management encompasses various aspects, including curriculum management, educators, students, facilities and infrastructure, as well as educational financing.

Early childhood education management involves managing an educational institution, including planning educational programs, organizing learning activities, delivering educational services, and continuously evaluating child development. Effective management is crucial to the success of early childhood education because early childhood education institutions must be able to create a learning environment conducive to child development (Morrison, 2012). Early childhood education management consists of systematic activities for planning, organizing, implementing, and evaluating early childhood education programs to achieve educational goals optimally (Suyadi & Ulfah, 2015). Thus, early childhood education management can be understood as the process of managing all educational components in a early childhood education institution to create quality educational services for young children.

The goal of early childhood education management is to ensure that the educational process is carried out effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with the developmental needs of children. According to Terry (2014), the main purpose of educational management is to optimize the use of organizational resources so that established objectives can be achieved effectively and efficiently.

In the context of early childhood education, the objectives of educational management include:

- a. Improving the quality of early childhood educational services
- b. Developing children's potential optimally
- c. Enhancing the professionalism of early childhood education educators
- d. Managing educational resources effectively and efficiently
- e. Improving the quality of early childhood education institutions

Good management helps early childhood education institutions create a safe, comfortable learning environment that supports optimal child development. In delivering early childhood education, management has several key functions that must be performed by educational administrators.

According to Terry (2014), there are four main management functions, known as the POAC concept:

- a. Planning  
Planning is the process of determining educational objectives and the steps required to achieve them. In early childhood education institutions, planning includes curriculum development, learning programs, and educational activity plans.
- b. Organizing  
Organizing involves arranging the various resources of the educational institution, including educators, facilities and infrastructure, and organizational work systems.
- c. Actuating (Implementation)  
Actuating refers to executing the planned educational programs. At this stage, teachers and early childhood education administrators conduct learning activities in accordance with the curriculum and the developmental needs of children.
- d. Controlling (Supervision)  
Controlling is the process of evaluating the implementation of educational programs to ensure that activities align with the established objectives.

Early childhood education management involves several interrelated components that support the success of educational delivery. According to Suyanto (2005), the key components of early childhood education management include:

- a. Curriculum Management  
The curriculum serves as a guide for implementing learning activities in early childhood education institutions. Curriculum management must align with children's developmental stages and educational goals.
- b. Educator Management  
Educators play a crucial role in early childhood education. Therefore, managing educators should be conducted professionally through recruitment, training, and competency development.
- c. Student Management  
Managing students includes the enrollment process, class grouping, and monitoring child development throughout the educational program.
- d. Facilities and Infrastructure Management  
Educational facilities and infrastructure are essential for creating a safe and comfortable learning environment for children.
- e. Financial Management  
Educational financing is a key factor in sustaining educational programs. The financial management of early childhood education institutions must be transparent and accountable to support the improvement of educational service quality.

Proper grant management helps early childhood education institutions enhance facilities, learning activities, and educator welfare. Therefore, effective management within early childhood education institutions is crucial to ensure that grant funds are used optimally to improve the quality of early childhood education services.

### 3. Materials and Method

This study uses a qualitative method with a Qualitative Secondary Analysis (QSA) approach, which involves analyzing qualitative data through the use and re-analysis of existing secondary data (Greenwood, 2020). Data were collected from various sources, including previous research findings, working papers, conference proceedings, mass media, and other documents relevant to the research topic. The data collection process was conducted systematically, using clear selection criteria such as relevance to the research questions, source credibility, and completeness of the information provided.

The data analysis process was carried out through three main stages according to a descriptive approach: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing conclusions (Miles & Huberman, 2009). In the data reduction stage, information from various documents was filtered and selected according to the research focus, eliminating data that were irrelevant or of low quality. The reduced data were then presented in the form of thematic narratives or visualizations, such as tables or diagrams, to support the analysis. The final stage was drawing conclusions, where the synthesized findings were used to answer the research questions in an integrated manner.

To ensure the validity of the data in this study, source triangulation was conducted. Triangulation involved comparing information from various documents originating from different sources to identify consistencies, gaps, or differences in the data. This step aimed to reduce bias, enhance the reliability of the findings, and strengthen the basis of the analysis. By applying the Qualitative Secondary Analysis approach, the study focuses on an in-depth evaluation of secondary data.

### 4. Results and Discussion

- a. Transparency in the Management of Early Childhood Education Grants by Local Governments

Transparency is one of the core principles of good governance and can greatly contribute to improving the quality of public services. Through transparency, the public can understand how policies are formulated, how public funds are utilized, and how decision-making processes are conducted. When these processes are open to the public, misuse of authority or corrupt practices that could undermine service quality can be prevented. Additionally, transparency allows the public to provide constructive feedback and criticism.

Transparency, as a key principle of good governance, emphasizes the openness of government in providing information regarding policies, processes, and budget utilization to the public. It enables citizens and stakeholders to access accurate,

timely, and easily understandable information about the management of public resources. This principle is crucial to prevent misuse of funds and to enhance public trust in local governments (Sari & Aisyah, 2025).

In the context of managing early childhood education grants, transparency is realized through the openness of information about the planning, distribution, utilization, and reporting of grant funds sourced from the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget. Such openness acts as a mechanism of social oversight, allowing the public, early childhood education institutions, and other stakeholders to effectively monitor the use of funds.

Research findings indicate that transparency during the planning stage of early childhood education grants is reflected in the local government's openness in formulating policies, setting grant recipient criteria, and defining the proposal submission mechanism. The local government, through the education office, typically communicates information about the grant program through socialization efforts, circulars, or regional education information systems. Transparency at this stage is crucial to ensure that all early childhood education institutions have equal opportunities to access the grant program. When information regarding requirements, procedures, and submission schedules is openly communicated, the potential for discrimination or nepotism is minimized.

From a public administration perspective, information openness during budget planning is an important indicator of transparency, which functions to increase public participation and strengthen the legitimacy of local government policies.

During the distribution stage, transparency is reflected in the presence of clear mechanisms regarding the selection of grant recipients, the amount of funds allocated, and the disbursement procedures. Local governments usually designate grant recipients through a decision by the regional head after administrative verification and proposal evaluation by the relevant office. Transparency in grant distribution can be further enhanced by publishing the list of recipients and the amounts received, which can be shared via local government websites, information boards, or regional financial reports.

This practice of transparency is important because grant funds are part of regional expenditures that must be accountable to the public. Without adequate transparency, grant management may lead to issues such as misallocation, conflicts of interest, and fund misuse. The stages of fund utilization and reporting are also critical for ensuring transparency in early childhood education grant management. Grant-receiving institutions are required to prepare accountability reports that include budget realization, transaction evidence, and activity reports.

Previous studies have shown that transparency in the management of education funds can enhance budget utilization effectiveness and strengthen institutional accountability. Open management of funds allows teachers, parents, and the community to monitor expenditures, creating social oversight over education funding (Elia et al., 2024). These findings align with the principle of transparency in the Good Corporate Governance theory proposed by Shleifer et al. (1997), which asserts that transparency is a key mechanism to ensure organizational management operates openly and is monitored by stakeholders. In the public sector context, Mardiasmo (2018) emphasizes that transparency is the openness of government in conveying relevant information honestly and accessibly as a form of public accountability. Furthermore, the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1997) identifies transparency as one of the main pillars of good governance, ensuring that adequate and easily accessible information is available to the public regarding decision-making and policy implementation processes.

Thus, transparency not only functions as a normative principle in governance but also serves as a practical mechanism to ensure that early childhood education grant funds are used efficiently, appropriately, and accountably for the public..

b. **Accountability in the Management of Early Childhood Education Grants by Local Governments**

Accountability is also a key element of good governance. An accountable government must be able to justify all its actions to the public. In the context of public service, accountability means that the government must provide clear explanations regarding the decisions made and the results achieved. This creates a

sense of responsibility and trust among the community, which in turn enhances the effectiveness and efficiency of public services.

Accountability is one of the core principles of good governance. It refers to the obligation of the government, as the manager of public resources, to be answerable for the use of budgets and the implementation of policies to society. In the context of public administration, accountability requires clarity of responsibility, reporting mechanisms, and evaluation of the use of public funds (Mardiasmo, 2018).

In the management of early childhood education (ECE) grants, accountability is crucial because the grant funds come from the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD), which must be used effectively and appropriately. Therefore, local governments are obliged to ensure that all grant management processes from planning, disbursement, to reporting are conducted transparently and can be accounted for.

Accountability in the planning stage of ECE grants is reflected in the formulation of grant policies based on the educational needs of the community and regional development priorities. Local governments, through the education office, develop grant programs by considering budget availability, the number of ECE institutions needing assistance, and the goal of improving the quality of early childhood education services. Accountability at this stage is realized through systematic planning mechanisms, preparation of proposals by ECE institutions, and verification and evaluation processes by the local government. These mechanisms ensure that grants are awarded based on objective considerations and in accordance with applicable laws and regulations. From a public financial management perspective, accountable planning processes ensure that budgets are used in alignment with policy objectives and community needs (Halim & Kusufi, 2016).

At the disbursement stage, accountability is demonstrated through clear procedures for determining grant recipients and the amount of funds allocated. Local governments typically designate grant recipients through a decision by the regional head after administrative and technical evaluations by the relevant department. This process represents the government's responsibility in ensuring that grant funds are distributed to ECE institutions that meet the requirements. Furthermore, grant disbursement is conducted through regional financial mechanisms regulated by law, so that every transaction is administratively recorded and auditable.

Accountability in educational fund management is strongly influenced by adherence to administrative procedures and regional financial regulations (Nordian & Hertianti, 2019). Therefore, implementing clear and systematic procedures in grant disbursement is a key indicator of accountable financial management.

The usage and reporting stage of grant funds is a primary aspect of implementing accountability. ECE institutions receiving grants are required to use the funds in accordance with the approved activity proposals and to prepare accountability reports on fund usage. These reports generally include budget realization, documentation of activities, and financial transaction evidence. Local governments, through the education office, monitor and evaluate these reports to ensure that grant funds are used in line with program objectives.

According to Ulfa (2020), accountability in managing educational funds can improve the effectiveness of budget utilization and promote more professional management of educational institutions. When educational institutions prepare financial reports systematically and transparently, public trust in the management of educational funds increases. Additionally, internal oversight by local governments and audits by supervisory agencies such as the regional inspectorate are also essential for ensuring accountability in the use of grant funds.

These research findings align with the principles of Good Governance/Good Corporate Governance (GCG), particularly the principle of accountability. According to Mardiasmo (2009), public accountability is the obligation of the agent (trustee) to provide justification, present, report, and disclose all activities to the principal (trustor) who has the right and authority to request such accountability. Sedarmayanti (2012) explains that accountability is the obligation of public institutions to account for the success or failure of executing the organization's mission in achieving the goals set, through a periodic accountability system.

c. Public Participation in the Management of Early Childhood Education Grants by Local Governments.

Public participation is another key principle of good governance that significantly influences the quality of public services. Public participation is not limited to the right to vote in elections but also encompasses the involvement of the community in the planning, implementation, and evaluation of public service policies. When the public is given the opportunity to participate, government decisions better reflect their needs and expectations. Consequently, the public services provided become more relevant and appropriately targeted.

Public participation is one of the main principles of good governance. It refers to the involvement of the community in decision-making processes, policy implementation, and oversight of government administration. According to Arnstein (1969), citizen participation can be viewed as a process that allows citizens to influence public policy through various forms of engagement, ranging from consultation to partnerships in decision-making.

In the context of managing early childhood education (ECE) grants, public participation plays a vital role because the community including ECE administrators, parents, and civil society organizations directly experiences the impact of these grant policies. Community involvement in grant management can enhance transparency, accountability, and the effectiveness of educational programs implemented by local governments.

Public participation in the planning phase of ECE grants is reflected in community involvement in identifying early childhood education needs in the region. Local governments, through the education office, usually conduct public consultation forums, development planning meetings (*musrenbang*), or discussions with ECE administrators to gather input on program needs and required support. Through these mechanisms, the community can convey aspirations regarding the conditions of educational facilities, the need to enhance educator capacity, and funding support for learning activities. Community involvement at the planning stage helps local governments formulate grant policies that are better targeted and aligned with real needs on the ground.

According to Dahl (1998), public participation in decision-making is a crucial indicator of a democratic governance system because it provides citizens with the opportunity to influence public policies that affect their lives. Public participation is also evident in the implementation phase of ECE grant programs. ECE institutions receiving grants actively manage these funds to support early childhood educational activities, such as acquiring learning materials, improving educator quality, and running innovative educational programs. Additionally, parental and community involvement is a vital component of grant program implementation. Community support may include participating in school activities, contributing to the maintenance of educational facilities, and engaging in various educational activities organized by ECE institutions.

Community participation in managing educational institutions can enhance the quality of educational services and strengthen the relationship between schools and the community (Suryosubroto, 2016). Beyond planning and implementation, public participation is also essential in monitoring the use of ECE grant funds. Community oversight serves as a form of social control that can prevent the misuse of funds and ensure that grant money is used in accordance with program objectives. In practice, public monitoring can occur through various mechanisms, such as school or ECE committees, community forums, or submitting feedback or complaints to local governments if problems are found in grant fund management.

According to Bovens (2007), public participation in monitoring public policy is an important part of a democratic accountability system aimed at ensuring that the government is responsible for its actions and policies. Thus, public participation becomes a crucial element in creating more democratic, transparent, and accountable governance of educational grants. Community involvement not only strengthens the effectiveness of grant policies but also encourages improvements in the quality of early childhood education services in the region.

Research findings align with the principles of Good Governance/Good Corporate Governance (GCG), which recognize participation as a key pillar of good governance. According to the UNDP (1997), participation involves the engagement

of all citizens in decision-making processes, either directly or through legitimate representative institutions. Sedarmayanti (2012) states that good governance requires community involvement in government administration to ensure that policies and public services are responsive to real community needs. Furthermore, Mardiasmo (2009) emphasizes that public participation is a critical element of public accountability because it enables oversight of the performance of public sector organizations..

d. Legal Certainty in the Management of Early Childhood Education Grants by Local Governments.

Legal certainty is a fundamental principle of good governance that ensures laws are applied fairly and consistently. In public service, legal certainty provides the public with assurance that their rights will be protected and that they will receive services in accordance with existing regulations. Legal certainty also prevents abuse of authority, which often hinders public access to proper services. Legal certainty is an essential principle in governance, guaranteeing that every government policy and action is carried out based on clear, consistent, and predictable regulations. From the perspective of a rule-of-law state, legal certainty aims to protect the public from arbitrary government actions and ensures that all public policies are implemented in accordance with applicable legal norms.

According to Radbruch (2006), legal certainty is one of the fundamental values of law, alongside justice and utility. Legal certainty requires clear, consistent rules that can be effectively applied in government practice. In the context of managing early childhood education grants, the principle of legal certainty is crucial to ensure that the grant distribution process is lawful, transparent, and accountable.

In Indonesia, the management of regional grants is regulated under several laws and regulations, such as Government Regulation No. 12 of 2019 on Regional Financial Management and Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 77 of 2020 on Technical Guidelines for Regional Financial Management. These regulations govern the mechanisms for local governments to provide grants, including requirements, disbursement procedures, and accountability for the use of grant funds.

Legal certainty in the planning stage of early childhood education grants is reflected in the existence of regulations that clearly govern the mechanisms for granting funds by local governments. Local governments must plan grant allocations based on regional development planning documents, such as local government work plans and regional budgets. In practice, early childhood education institutions seeking grants must meet administrative requirements established by regional regulations, such as submitting activity proposals, providing legal documentation of the institution, and obtaining recommendations from the education office. This process demonstrates that grant allocation is not arbitrary but follows established legal procedures. Legal certainty at the planning stage is crucial to ensure that grant policies have a clear legal basis and comply with the principles of good regional financial governance.

At the disbursement stage, legal certainty is realized through clear administrative procedures for determining grant recipients, releasing funds, and monitoring their use. Local governments determine grant recipients through a regional head's decision based on evaluations of proposals submitted by early childhood education institutions. The disbursement process is accompanied by a regional grant agreement between the local government and the grant recipient. This document serves as a legal basis outlining the rights and obligations of both parties, including provisions for fund use, reporting, and accountability. According to Rahardjo (2006), legal certainty is not only determined by the existence of regulations but also by the consistent application of these rules in government practice. Therefore, implementing grant procedures in accordance with regulations is a key indicator of legal certainty in the management of early childhood education grants.

Legal certainty is also reflected in the mechanisms for the use and accountability of grant funds by recipient institutions. Each grant recipient is required to use the funds according to the approved activity proposal and regional grant agreement. Additionally, recipients must prepare accountability reports that include budget realization, financial transaction evidence, and activity reports. These reports are then verified by the local government as part of the monitoring mechanism for grant

usage. The presence of reporting and oversight mechanisms demonstrates that the management of early childhood education grants is conducted within a clear and accountable legal framework.

Research findings align with the principles of Good Corporate Governance (GCG), which identify legal certainty (rule of law) as a fundamental principle. According to UNDP (1997), the rule of law requires a fair legal framework consistently enforced, including the protection of human rights. Sedarmayanti (2012) emphasizes that legal certainty in governance means all government policies and actions must be based on applicable laws to create stability and public trust. Meanwhile, Mardiasmo (2009) states that accountability and legal certainty are essential prerequisites for good public sector governance, as law serves as an instrument of control over the exercise of authority.

## 5. Conclusion

Based on the results of the research and discussion on the management of Early Childhood Education (ECE) grants by local governments, it can be concluded that the implementation of good governance principles is a crucial factor in ensuring that grant management is conducted effectively, transparently, and accountably. These principles include transparency, accountability, public participation, and legal certainty. First, transparency in the management of ECE grants is reflected through the openness of information regarding application procedures, the selection mechanism for grant recipients, and reporting on fund utilization. This transparency provides the public with the opportunity to understand the process of managing grant funds and encourages public oversight over the use of educational budgets. Second, accountability in grant management is manifested through administrative and financial accountability mechanisms by both local governments and ECE institutions receiving the grants. Every use of grant funds must be accompanied by accountability reports that can be verified by the local government and internal oversight bodies. Third, public participation is an essential element in supporting the effectiveness of ECE grant management. The involvement of the community, ECE institution managers, and parents in the planning, implementation, and monitoring of grant programs can improve policy quality and ensure that the grants truly meet the needs of the community. Fourth, legal certainty in the management of ECE grants is realized through the existence of regulations that clearly govern the grant provision mechanisms, disbursement procedures, and reporting and accountability obligations. Legal certainty provides a strong foundation for local governments and ECE institutions to implement grant programs in an orderly manner and in compliance with prevailing laws and regulations.

This research contributes to the development of studies in public administration and governance, particularly concerning the implementation of good governance principles in local financial management. The study reinforces the concept that transparency, accountability, public participation, and legal certainty are key components in achieving good governance. The application of good governance principles in educational grant management can serve as a relevant analytical model in public administration studies, especially in the context of managing government assistance programs in the education sector.

Practically, the findings offer several recommendations for local governments and early childhood education institutions to improve the quality of educational grant management. Local governments need to enhance the transparency of information regarding grant programs, for example, by publishing information on official local government websites or regional educational information systems. Increasing the administrative capacity of ECE institutions is also important so that managers can systematically prepare financial and activity reports in accordance with applicable regulations.

This study has several limitations that should be considered when interpreting its findings. The research used a secondary data analysis approach, meaning the findings heavily depend on the availability and quality of data obtained from documents, reports, and relevant literature. The study focuses more on conceptual and normative aspects of applying good governance principles in ECE grant management and does not fully capture the dynamics of policy implementation in the field in depth. Therefore, future research is recommended to conduct empirical field studies, such as interviews with ECE managers, local government officials, and the community, to gain a more comprehensive understanding of the implementation of early childhood education grant policies.

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