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Designing a Model for Improving Good Governance in Public Management with a Systemic Approach (Grounded Theory)

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A B S T R A C T

Objective: The necessity for the public sector to possess the capacity and capability to implement good governance policies is a crucial aspect that must be considered, as without it, the enactment of good governance would not be possible. Therefore, this study aims to design an appropriate model for improving good governance in public management through a systemic approach.

Methodology: Conducted based on grounded theory, this qualitative research study is developmental-application-oriented in its purpose. The study population includes individuals knowledgeable in public management, governance, and systemic thinking. Some experts have been managers in governmental organizations and scholars with scientific works in governance and systemic thinking. The sample size, targeted based on achieving theoretical saturation, was approximately 13 individuals.

Findings: The research findings from open and axial coding include a categorization of causal, contextual, intervening, central, and strategic factors identified in the design and implementation of the good governance improvement model. Ultimately, management competencies, unity of direction, and common goals were identified as causal factors; human resources, weakening factors, and clarification as intervening factors; and supervision and control, organizational regulations, knowledge management, and sustainable development as contextual factors. Good governance strategies also outlined organizational justice, economic reforms, rule of law, political reforms, and outcomes of good governance implementation, including public trust, organizational health, reduced economic problems, increased efficiency, organizational transparency, and factors related to each indicator.

Conclusion: Considering the codes and indicators of identified strategies, it is suggested that training workshops be organized based on principles of legality, strengthening, and developing Islamic and Quranic laws for socializing employees with the organization and encouraging them to adhere to organizational regulations, and the government employee salary system should be reformed and aligned with the employees' expertise.

Keywords: *Good Governance, Public Management, Systemic Approach, Grounded Theory.*

1 Introduction

Every country and society needs powerful tools and levers for the survival of its sovereignty, one of the most important executive arms of this sovereignty being government organizations and institutions. These entities are established with the aim of serving the public, acting as executors of governmental mandates and intermediaries between the people and sovereign elements. Relying on these institutions allows for the expectation of the implementation of plans and strategic objectives of the governing system (Maleka, 2023). The occurrence of extensive changes and the expansion of science and knowledge in various fields have impacted all aspects of organizational and personal life, such that the modern world has undergone fundamental transformation and change (Sharifi-Renani et al., 2013). Organizations in this changing era, given the changes brought about by skills, capabilities, competitors, and technology, are not allowed to manage in a traditional manner (Rožman et al., 2023) and need new ideas and innovative theories to remain in the current turbulent and chaotic era. Technological changes and the expansion of the frontiers of science and knowledge have challenged all structures, institutions, and public administration functions of society (Rahnavard & Abbaspour, 2007) and organizations need to invent new structures and design new strategies for survival in such conditions (Shaked & Schechter, 2016).

Important tools that assist organizations in achieving their goals include paying attention to good governance and systemic thinking, which can play an effective role in improving and developing the affairs and assistance of organizations in achieving sustainable competitive advantage and a prerequisite for effective organizational performance. In this regard, Khosravi et al. (2023) have designed a suitable model for applying a systemic approach to various areas of human resource management in the civil service law. In the model obtained from this study, recognizing the central category is at the center of the model, is of high importance, and includes systems of attraction, retention, promotion, compensation, and retirement (Khosravi et al., 2023). Barbier and colleagues (2023) also examined the evolution of public management from 1890 to 2023 and its impact on performance, addressing the issue that modern public governance is the preferred method of public management for the modernization and reform of governments. This issue faces challenges in developing countries, as the concept of good governance is based on liberal principles, suited to developed societies, and represents a specific political or ideological orientation, whose implementation in developing societies faces obstacles (Barbier & Tengeh, 2023). Thus, any effort to establish and implement good governance in a society exogenously, when ideological, cultural, and necessary infrastructural conditions are not met, cannot bring about rapid growth of democratic culture in those societies (Massey, 2022).

The necessity of having the required capacity and capability in the government sector for implementing good governance policies is also an important point that without attention to it, the enactment of good governance would not be possible (Payste et al., 2020). Therefore, given the importance of this issue, the main problem of the current research is the design of a model to improve good governance in public management with a systemic approach.

2 Methods and Materials

The current study, conducted with a qualitative approach, is exploratory, developmental-application in nature, inductive in terms of implementation method, and cross-sectional in terms of time. The study population includes individuals who have scientific knowledge of public management, governance, and systemic thinking, have been in managerial positions of governmental organizations, and have been scholars in the fields of governance and systemic thinking. Accordingly, the sample size is based on achieving theoretical saturation, close to 13 people, selected through purposive sampling. According to demographic information, of the 13 people, about 85% are male, and more than 15% are female, with only 15% being single and 85% married. Among the respondents, about 70% are in the age group of 30 to 50 years, and the share of the age group under 30 and over 50 years is about 15% each. In terms of educational qualification, more than 30% have a master's degree, and about 70% have a doctoral degree. Regarding work experience, about 77% of the respondents have more than 8 years of experience, and only 23% have a work history of 5 to 8 years.

The method of data collection to achieve the objective and answer the questions was of the survey type, and the related tool was interviews. In the interviews, experts were asked to identify which components and dimensions are effective based on their studies and knowledge regarding governance, public management, and systemic thinking.

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3 Findings and Results

In the first phase, primary codes were collected, analyzed, and related concepts were extracted through open interviews during in-depth responses from participants, university professors, and managers of government agencies, using a grounded theory approach. As this research employs a grounded theory method, the researcher sought to answer five main questions regarding the identification of causal factors, intervening factors, contextual factors, outcomes of the design and implementation, as well as strategies of the model for improving good governance in public management with a systemic approach in government organizations. For axial coding, categories related to identified primary codes were determined through the study of articles and theoretical bases and grouped accordingly.

After completing axial coding and in the final step of analysis, selective coding and the creation of the final theory and model were performed. According to Creswell (2005), a grounded theory theorist can present their theory in three possible ways: 1) diagrammatically, 2) descriptively and narratively, 3) as a set of propositions. In this research, the third approach, presenting a set of propositions, was utilized. According to the presented results, after open interviews and the study and analysis of theoretical foundations, 250 primary codes were identified and categorized into 19 categories. Subsequently, primary codes that were similar or had overlapping content were eliminated (133 codes). Then, the second phase questionnaire, based on the remaining codes (117 codes), was prepared and sent to experts for the second phase of consultation. The second-phase questionnaire, designed based on the remaining codes and identified categories, is presented in Table 7.

Table 1

Identified Codes and Categories in the Second Phase

Dimensions	Category	Concept
Causal Factors	Management Competencies	Leadership style selection
		Managerial skills and knowledge
		Management commitment
		Appropriate management
		Behavioral competencies
	Unity of Direction and Common Goals	Shared values and goals
		Accountability
		Job commitment
		Employee participation
	Organizational Culture	Creativity and innovation
		Optimal use of resources
		Continuous improvement of organizational processes
		Job security
		Match between job and individual expertise
		Organizational efficiency
		Adherence to ethics
Intervening Factors	Human Resources	Employee health
		Hiring competent employees
		Appropriate compensation
		Provision of facilities to employees
		Worthy managers
		Growth opportunities for employees
	Weakening Factors	Organizational corruption
		Ineffectiveness of laws
		Lack of public trust
		Inappropriate culture
		Bribery
		Various discriminations in organizations
		Public expectations
		Inadequate compensation
		Financial needs
		Employee misconduct
	Transparency	Accountability of officials

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		Organizational health
		Effectiveness of laws
		Availability of necessary information
		Delegation of authority to employees
Contextual Factors	Supervision and Control	Implementation of supervision and control
		Public supervision
		Performance evaluation
		Monitoring the surrounding environment
	Organizational Regulations	Strengthening rule of law
		Equal law application for all
		Strengthening and developing Islamic and Quranic laws
		Preserving human dignity
		Observance of ethical principles
	Knowledge Management	Strengthening management and knowledge storage
		Effective and empowering consultancy
		Providing quality services
		Intelligent employees and active managers
		Smart decision-making
		Organization's knowledge-centricity
	Sustainable Development	Development of ethical programs in government organizations
		Development and strengthening of infrastructure
		Human resources training
		Acceptance and adaptation to changes
		Development of virtual networks
		Utilization of environmental opportunities
		Development of strategic insight
		Sustainable development
Outcomes	Public Trust	Preserving the dignity of people
		Increasing public trust in government
		Attention to the livelihood of people
		Addressing financial concerns
		Good relations between government and people
	Organizational Health	Willingness to learn
		Increasing empathy in the organization
		Optimal use of public treasury
		Justice orientation
		Empowerment of employees
		Appointment of competent managers
		Reduction of bribery
		Selection of competent individuals
		Monitoring against bribery
	Reduction of Economic Problems	Increased ability to respond to problems
		Reduction of economic problems
		Reduction of unemployment
		Job creation
	Increased Efficiency	Increased commitment
		Alignment of goals
		Acceptance of environmental changes
		Increased efficiency and effectiveness
		Increased responsibility of employees and managers
		Increased motivation
	Organizational Transparency	Increased transparency
		Increased accountability of managers
		Increased ability to respond to environmental changes
		Adherence to laws
Strategies	Organizational Justice	Work transformation
		Selection and appointment based on merit
		Delegation of authority
		Increase in research and development

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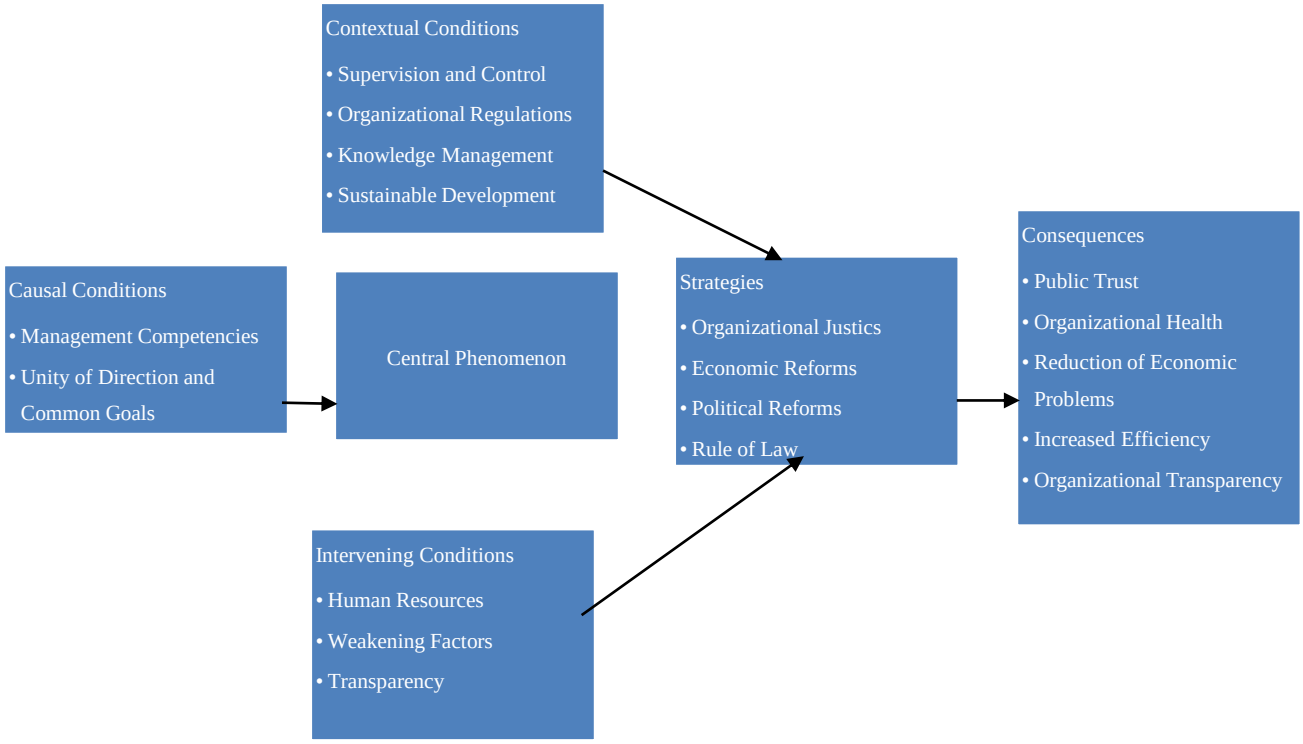
		Effective communication between managers and employees
		Valuing new ideas
		Cultural issues
	Economic Reforms	Solving economic problems
		Poverty alleviation
		Public support for the government
		Reforms in the country's economic issues
	Political Reforms	Increase in national security
		Increase in peace and tranquility
		Setting appropriate fiscal and monetary policies
		Avoidance of injustice
		Management of political communications
		Increasing public trust towards government
		Reforms in the country's political issues
	Rule of Law	Rule adherence
		Avoidance of favoritism and networking
		Non-interference of responsibilities
		Attention to national production
		Appropriate reward and punishment system
		Promotion based on merit
		Non-monetary incentives for employees
		Localization of laws
		Following and adhering to organizational laws
		Timely reprimand of erring employees

Figure 1

Final Model of The Study



After receiving the second-phase questionnaires, the responses from experts, public management professors, and managers of government agencies (statistical samples) were reviewed to design the third-phase questionnaire. The third-phase questionnaire was designed and sent back to the statistical samples, and after collecting the results, it showed

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that the second-phase codes (117 codes) were approved by the sample members, and according to the respondents, none of the remaining codes were eliminated. Therefore, as theoretical saturation was reached, there was no need for designing a fourth-phase questionnaire. With an examination of the codes extracted from expert opinions, a model for improving good governance in government organizations with a systemic approach can be outlined as follows:

4 Discussion and Conclusion

Today's organizations, including government organizations, operate in a complex and dynamic environment. The huge and continuous transformations characteristic of this environment and business space highlight the importance of alignment with the environment from a systemic perspective for organizations. Good governance is the mechanism for optimal use of public resources to create a sustainable economy and adapt to the complex surrounding environment. Good governance encompasses processes and institutions through which citizens, groups, and civil society organizations pursue their civic interests, enforce their legal rights, and fulfill their obligations. Therefore, experts assert that sustainable development and achieving the government's macro objectives are at the heart of good governance. On the other hand, from a systemic perspective, governance is related to the way governments and social organizations interact with each other, focusing not only on the interaction of governments and government organizations with their citizens but also on the relationship of the government with other governments and organizations and the decision-making processes in today's complex world. Designing and implementing a model for improving good governance in organizations increases accountability and job commitment among employees and enhances organizational transparency, reduces administrative corruption, and leads to the health of employees and the organization. It also positively impacts the nature and quality of government and government organizations' communications with other governments and organizations.

Based on the results obtained from this study on designing an appropriate model for improving good governance in public management with a systemic approach, a set of contextual, intervening, and causal factors were identified and categorized in the design and implementation of the model for improving good governance. Management competencies, unity of direction, and common goals as causal factors; human resources, weakening factors, and clarification as intervening factors; and supervision and control, organizational regulations, knowledge management, and sustainable development as contextual factors were identified. Strategies for good governance also outlined organizational justice, economic reforms, rule of law, political reforms, and outcomes of good governance implementation, including public trust, organizational health, reduction of economic problems, increased efficiency, organizational transparency, and factors related to each indicator. This research aligns with the prior studies (Amir et al., 2023; Gholipor et al., 2020; Khosravi et al., 2023; Nasirnatery et al., 2020) identified outcomes and results such as ensuring benefits, implementing justice-based laws, accountability, adherence to professional ethics, focused and effective supervision, increasing trust, capability and portfolio growth, technology use, cooperation and participation, improving penetration coefficient and execution strength. This study's results, derived from the compilation of corporate governance maturity indicators from a total of 721 open codes, 240 axial codes, and 69 selective codes, demonstrated that transparency, accountability, precise periodic reporting, expertise, professional competence, reputation, and managerial experience, and interaction with stakeholders play a crucial role in the maturity of corporate governance in insurance companies. Corporate empowerment indicators can also enhance stakeholders' trust and cultivate a culture of transparency and encouragement in the organization. Nasirnatary et al. (2020) stated that commitment to quality assurance, participation, decentralization, development of life skills, empowerment of human capital, ethical orientation, satisfaction development, commitment to public concord, interactive flexibility development, welfare facility development, educational justice development, public awareness development, responsibility, transparency, and adherence to law explain good governance in Iran's public education system (Nasirnatery et al., 2020). Mansoor et al. (2021) in their research concluded that good governance methods affect citizens' attitudes and behaviors (Mansoor, 2021). The study by Amir et al. (2023) also confirmed that security and competence are significant and impactful components of good governance (Amir et al., 2023). Based on the results, it is recommended to select and appoint managers based on competencies, capabilities, and expertise, and continuously plan and organize training programs for employees and managers in the organization.

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According to the identified intervening indicators, employing a performance management and reward system in government organizations and providing opportunities for public criticism of government employees' performance in collaboration with mass media are suggested. Introducing successful models of sustainable development and creating a suitable environment for activities in this field, forming knowledge groups in different sections of the organization, and presenting an ethical charter and adherence to local laws and regulations are among the contextual indicators recommended based on the results. Considering the codes and indicators of identified strategies, it is suggested that training workshops be organized based on principles of legality, strengthening, and developing Islamic and Quranic laws for socializing employees with the organization and encouraging them to adhere to organizational regulations, and the government employee salary system should be reformed and aligned with the employees' expertise.

Authors' Contributions

All authors have contributed significantly to the research process and the development of the manuscript.

Declaration

In order to correct and improve the academic writing of our paper, we have used the language model ChatGPT.

Transparency Statement

Data are available for research purposes upon reasonable request to the corresponding author.

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Declaration of Interest

The authors report no conflict of interest.

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Ethical Considerations

In this research, ethical standards including obtaining informed consent, ensuring privacy and confidentiality were observed.

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