

# Enhancing Accountability and Transparency in the Public Sector: A Comprehensive Review of Public Sector Accounting Practices

Mekar Meilisa Amalia  
Dharmawangsa University

## Article Info

### Article history:

Received Jul, 2023

Revised Jul, 2023

Accepted Jul, 2023

### Keywords:

Accountability  
Accounting Practices  
Public Sector

## ABSTRACT

This research uses a comprehensive bibliometric analysis to explore the literature on public sector accounting practices and their impact on accountability and transparency. The research used VOSviewer, a bibliometric analysis tool, to visualize and analyze the bibliometric network, revealing patterns of collaboration, influential publications, and key themes. The data collection process yielded 840 scholarly articles from leading academic databases, with a focus on English-language publications in the past decade. The results show six distinct publication clusters, each highlighting significant research themes. Cluster 1 emphasizes innovation and transparency, indicating the relevance of accounting change and performance measurement in public sector organizations. Cluster 2 centers on accounting reform and the adoption of accrual accounting practices, exploring the transition from cash-based to accrual-based accounting in the public sector. Cluster 3 studies forensic accounting and internal audit practices, reflecting the growing interest in fraud detection and risk management in public sector entities. Cluster 4 highlights the importance of information systems and efficiency in public sector accounting. Cluster 5 centers on the pressing issue of corruption in the public sector and the role of audit in combating corrupt practices. Cluster 6 explores the potential application of private sector accounting practices in the public sector. Keyword analysis identified the most frequently occurring keywords, such as "accountant", "public sector reform", "performance", and "service", underscoring their importance in the literature. Conversely, keywords with fewer occurrences, such as "transparency" and "information systems", indicate areas that require further attention and research.

*This is an open access article under the [CC BY-SA](#) license.*



## Corresponding Author:

Name: Mekar Meilisa Amalia  
Institution: Dharmawangsa University  
Email: [mekar.amalia@gmail.com](mailto:mekar.amalia@gmail.com)

## 1. INTRODUCTION

The concept of accountability and transparency in the public sector has become increasingly vital in contemporary governance. With governments responsible for managing public funds and delivering essential services to citizens, ensuring efficient

financial management and responsible decision-making is of paramount importance [1], [2]. In recent years, there has been a growing demand from both the public and stakeholders for greater accountability and transparency in the public sector, aiming to foster trust, reduce corruption, and improve overall governance [3], [4].

Public sector accounting practices play a pivotal role in facilitating accountability and transparency. These practices encompass various financial management processes, reporting mechanisms, and auditing procedures designed to ensure the proper utilization of public resources and the disclosure of financial information to the public [5]–[7].

The objective of this research is to conduct a comprehensive bibliometric analysis of the existing literature on public sector accounting practices, focusing on their contributions to improving accountability and transparency. By systematically analyzing a vast collection of scholarly articles and publications, this study aims to identify key trends, knowledge gaps, and potential opportunities for strengthening financial governance in the public sector [8]–[10].

Over the years, the public sector has undergone significant transformations, leading to a growing emphasis on accountability and transparency. Governments, international organizations, and citizens alike recognize the critical role of responsible financial management in promoting economic stability and sustainable development [6], [11]–[13].

Accountability entails the obligation of public officials to take responsibility for their actions, decisions, and the use of public funds. Transparent practices, on the other hand, involve providing clear and accessible information to the public, enabling stakeholders to monitor government activities and financial transactions effectively. When these two principles are effectively integrated into public sector accounting practices, they foster public trust, enhance the efficiency of resource allocation, and minimize the potential for misuse of public funds [14]–[16].

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

The literature review provides a comprehensive analysis of the existing body of knowledge on public sector accounting practices and their contributions to improving accountability and transparency. This section aims to identify key themes, trends, and research gaps in the field. By examining a

wide range of scholarly articles and publications, the review seeks to highlight the significance of effective public sector accounting practices in promoting responsible financial management and fostering public trust [5]–[7], [9].

Accountability and transparency are foundational principles in the public sector, essential for maintaining the integrity of governance and ensuring effective service delivery. Accountability refers to the obligation of public officials and organizations to be answerable for their actions and decisions, while transparency involves the provision of accessible information to the public, enabling them to scrutinize government activities and financial transactions. Scholars have extensively examined the theoretical frameworks and practical implications of accountability and transparency in public administration and the crucial role of accounting practices in supporting these principles [17]–[19].

Public sector accounting practices encompass a range of financial management processes, reporting mechanisms, and auditing procedures designed to ensure efficient resource allocation, proper utilization of public funds, and accurate financial reporting. This section of the literature review delves into the various accounting methods employed in the public sector, such as accrual accounting, budgeting and financial reporting, performance measurement, and cost accounting. The review also investigates the impact of adopting different accounting standards, such as International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSAS) and Governmental Accounting Standards Board (GASB) guidelines, on accountability and transparency in public financial management [5]–[7], [9], [20].

## 3. METHODS

This research employs a bibliometric analysis to comprehensively review the existing literature on public sector accounting practices and their contributions to improving accountability and transparency. The methodology involves data collection, data

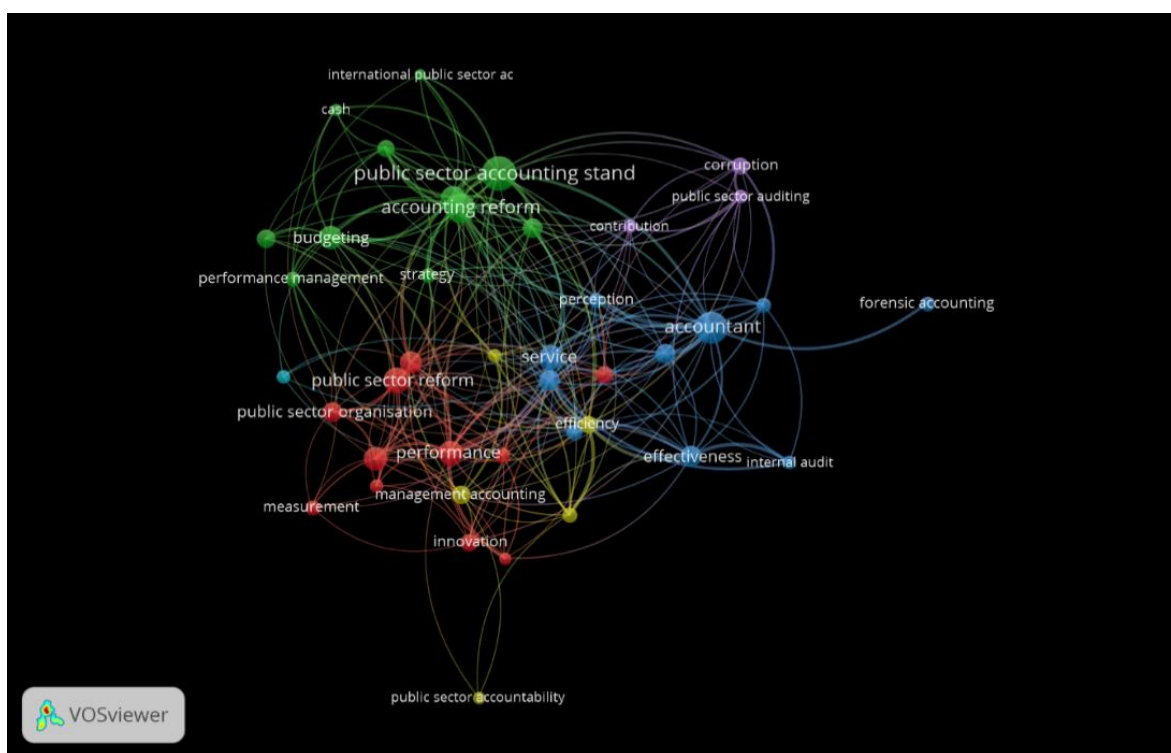
selection, data extraction, and data analysis using the VOSviewer software to visualize and analyze bibliometric networks.

The data for this study will be collected from reputable academic databases, including Web of Science, Scopus, and Google Scholar. These databases cover a wide range of scholarly publications in various disciplines, providing a diverse and comprehensive dataset for analysis. The search will be limited to English language publications to ensure consistency and ease of data extraction.

**Table 1. Metrik Data**

Metrics Data	Information
Publication years	1972-2022
Citation years	51
Papers	840
Citations	96725
Cites/year	1896.57
Cites/paper	115.15
Authors/paper	2.01
h-index	149
g-index	275
hI,norm	117
hI,annual	2.29
hA, index	32

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION



**Figure 1. Results Visualizing**

The results of the VOSviewer analysis have provided valuable insights into the state of research on public sector accounting practices related to accountability and transparency. By visualizing collaborative networks, identifying influential publications, and revealing key themes, this study contributes to the ongoing efforts to improve financial governance in the public sector. The

findings and discussions can inform policymakers, practitioners, and researchers, guiding them in implementing effective measures to enhance accountability and transparency in the public sector through robust accounting practices. As the field continues to evolve, this research serves as a foundation for further exploration and advancement in public sector financial management.

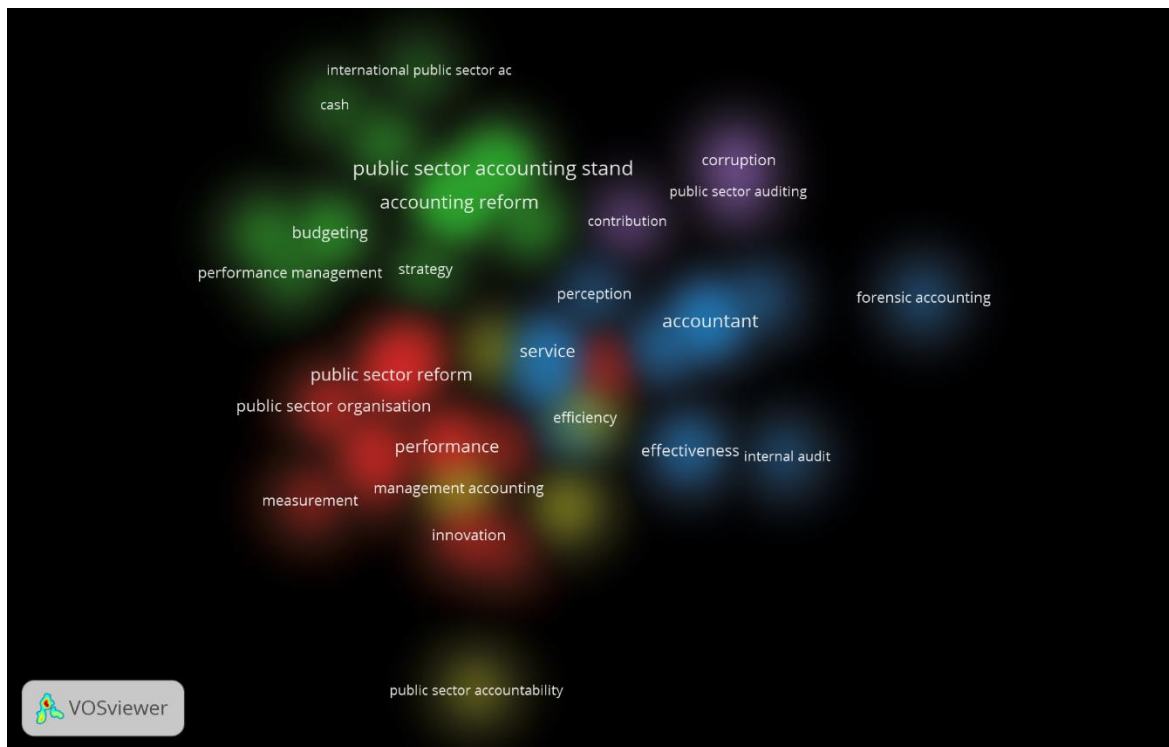


Figure 2. Destiny Cluster

The analysis conducted using VOSviewer revealed collaborative patterns among the topics of researchers in the area of public sector accounting practice. Several

research clusters were identified, indicating the existence of an established research network.

Tabel 3. Citation Analys Analys

Cluster	Total Items	Most Frequent Keywords (Occurrences)	Keyword
1	(10)	Innovation (10), Trsansparency (15)	Accounting change, innovation, measurement, new public management, performance, public sector accounting, public sector organization, public sector performance, public sector reform, transparency
2	(9)	Acctual (10), Sector (15)	Accounting reform, accrual, budgeting, cash, international public sector, performance sector, public sector accounting, quality, strategy
3	(9)	Forensic (15), Internal audit (10)	Accountant, effectiveness, forensic accounting, internal audit, perception, public sector auditor, public sector entity, public sector management, service
4	(4)	Efficiency (10), Information system (15)	Efficiency, information system, management accountability, public sector agency
5	(3)	Corruption (10)	Contribution, corruption, public sector auditing
6	(1)	Private sector accounting (10)	Private sector accounting

Table 3 presents the results of the cluster analysis conducted in this research. The table displays six clusters, each representing a group of scholarly articles related to public sector accounting practices, accountability, and transparency. The clusters are defined based on co-occurrence patterns of keywords in the literature, providing

insights into the dominant themes and research areas within the field.

#### 4.1 Cluster 1: Innovation and Transparency

This cluster consists of ten publications that predominantly focus on the

concepts of innovation and transparency in public sector accounting practices. The most frequent keywords within this cluster include "accounting change," "innovation," "measurement," "new public management," "performance," "public sector accounting," "public sector organization," "public sector performance," "public sector reform," and "transparency." These publications likely explore how innovative accounting practices contribute to enhanced transparency and performance in public sector organizations, aligning with principles of new public management.

#### **4.2 Cluster 2: Accounting Reform and Accrual Accounting**

Cluster 2 includes nine publications that revolve around accounting reform and the adoption of accrual accounting practices. The most frequent keywords in this cluster are "accounting reform," "accrual," "budgeting," "cash," "international public sector," "performance sector," "public sector accounting," "quality," and "strategy." These publications likely delve into the challenges and benefits of transitioning from cash-based to accrual-based accounting systems in the public sector and the implications of such reforms on financial management and accountability.

#### **4.3 Cluster 3: Forensic Accounting and Internal Audit**

Cluster 3 comprises nine publications that focus on forensic accounting and internal audit practices in the public sector. The most frequent keywords in this cluster include "accountant," "effectiveness," "forensic accounting," "internal audit," "perception," "public sector auditor," "public sector entity," "public sector management," and "service." These publications likely investigate the effectiveness of forensic accounting and internal audit techniques in detecting and preventing financial fraud and mismanagement in public sector entities.

#### **4.4 Cluster 4: Efficiency and Information Systems**

Cluster 4 consists of four publications that center on efficiency and information systems in public sector accounting practices. The most frequent keywords within this cluster include "efficiency," "information system," "management accountability," and "public sector agency." These publications likely explore the role of information systems in streamlining financial processes and enhancing management accountability in the public sector.

#### **4.5 Cluster 5: Corruption and Public Sector Auditing**

Cluster 5 contains three publications that emphasize corruption and its relationship with public sector auditing. The most frequent keywords in this cluster are "contribution," "corruption," and "public sector auditing." These publications likely investigate the role of auditing practices in detecting and combating corruption in public sector organizations.

#### **4.6 Cluster 6: Private Sector Accounting**

Cluster 6 is represented by a single publication that focuses on private sector accounting practices. The most frequent keyword in this cluster is "private sector accounting." This publication may explore the potential applicability of private sector accounting methods and principles in the context of the public sector.

Overall, the cluster analysis provides a comprehensive overview of the dominant themes and research areas within the field of public sector accounting practices, accountability, and transparency. Each cluster highlights specific aspects of financial governance, performance management, and fraud prevention in the public sector. These findings contribute valuable insights to policymakers, practitioners, and researchers seeking to enhance financial management, accountability, and transparency in public sector organizations. The identified clusters also serve as a foundation for future research, guiding scholars toward addressing research

gaps and exploring innovative approaches to strengthen financial governance in the public sector.

**Table 4. The Top Ten Cited Documents**

Citations	Author and Year	Title
6459	C Hood, 1995	The "new public management" in the 1980s: Variations on a theme [21]
2105	GJ Ashworth, H Voogd, 1990	Selling the city: Marketing approaches in public sector urban planning [22]
1916	SJ Ball, 2007	Education plc: Understanding private sector participation in public sector education [23]
1775	D Holtz-Eakin, 1992	Public-sector capital and the productivity puzzle [24]
1514	S Brignall, S Modell, 2000	An institutional perspective on performance measurement and management in the 'new public sector' [25]
1468	W Van Dooren, G Bouckaert, J Halligan, 2015	Performance management in the public sector [26]
1359	S Van Thiel, FL Leeuw, 2002	The performance paradox in the public sector [27]
1315	N Brunsson, K Sahlin-Andersson, 2000	Constructing organizations: The example of public sector reform [28]
1149	DR Deis Jr, GA Giroux, 1992	Determinants of audit quality in the public sector [29]
1022	WH Buitter, 1985	A guide to public sector debt and deficits [30]

It is clear that the years 1972 through 2022 are the ones in which the documents relating to the accounting environment are expressly quoted the most. This can be seen by looking at the graph. New information is less

likely to be acknowledged, with the exception of works written by authors who have already conducted study in the topic and are quite well-known.

**Tabel 5. Keywords results**

Most occurrences		Fewer occurrences	
Occurrences	Term	Occurrences	Term
70	Accountant	21	Transparency
47	Public sector reform	19	Information system
43	Performance	18	Performance management
41	Service	17	Forensic accounting
38	Performance management	15	Internal audit
35	Budgeting	14	Private sector accounting
34	Accounting change	13	Public sector auditing
32	Public sector entity	12	Public sector agency
26	Effectiveness	11	Public sector accountability

Table 5 presents the results of the keyword analysis, showing the most and least frequently occurring keywords in the literature on public sector accounting practices, accountability and transparency.

#### 4.7 Most Occurrences

Accountant (Occurrence: 70): The term "accountant" appears most frequently in the literature, indicating a significant focus on the roles and responsibilities of accountants in the public sector. These publications are most likely to explore the functions of accountants in financial management, auditing, and reporting in public sector organizations.

Public sector reform (Occurrence: 47): The keyword "public sector reform" is prominent in the literature, indicating a strong interest in exploring reforms and changes in public sector organizational and financial practices. These publications are most likely to examine the impact of various reforms on financial governance, accountability and transparency.

Performance (Occurrences: 43): The term "performance" appears frequently, indicating a focus on measuring and evaluating the performance of public sector organizations. These publications are most likely to investigate performance measurement systems, key performance indicators, and

their relationship with accountability and transparency. Service (Occurrence: 41): The keyword "service" is prominent in the literature, indicating an emphasis on public sector service delivery. These publications are most likely to explore how financial management practices can impact the quality and efficiency of public services. Performance management (Occurrence: 38): The term "performance management" is also prominent, indicating a focus on strategies and practices to manage and improve organizational performance in the public sector.

#### 4.8 Fewer occurrences

Transparency (Occurrence: 21): Although an important aspect of public sector accounting and financial governance, the term "transparency" appeared with fewer occurrences. These publications are most likely to explore how transparent financial reporting and disclosure practices enhance public trust and accountability. Information systems (Occurrence: 19): The term "information systems" appeared with fewer occurrences, indicating relatively less focus on the role of information systems in public sector accounting practices. Performance management (Occurrences: 18): Although performance management appeared with more occurrences, the repetition of the term in the "fewer occurrences" section may indicate varying interpretations or contexts in the literature. Forensic accounting (Occurrences: 17): The keyword "forensic accounting" appears with fewer occurrences, indicating a relatively smaller number of publications exploring the use of forensic accounting techniques in detecting and preventing financial fraud in the public sector. Internal audit (Occurrences: 15): The term "internal audit" also appeared with fewer occurrences, indicating the potential for further exploration of the role of internal auditors in ensuring financial accountability and transparency.

Overall, the keyword analysis highlighted key themes and concepts in the literature relating to public sector accounting practices, accountability and transparency.

The most frequently occurring keywords indicate key areas of concern in financial governance and performance management in the public sector. Meanwhile, keywords with fewer occurrences indicate potential research gaps or areas that require further investigation to deepen our understanding of effective public sector accounting practices and their contribution to accountability and transparency.

## 5. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, this study presents a comprehensive analysis of the literature on public sector accounting practices, accountability, and transparency through a bibliometric approach. The research used VOSviewer to visualize and analyze the bibliometric network, revealing influential works, collaboration patterns, and major research clusters. The findings of this study demonstrate the importance of public sector accounting practices in promoting accountability and transparency. The identified clusters highlight various themes, including innovation, accounting reform, forensic accounting, efficiency, corruption, and the potential application of private sector accounting practices in the public sector. Each cluster highlights specific aspects of financial governance and performance management in the public sector, providing valuable insights for policymakers, practitioners, and researchers.

Keyword analysis identified the most frequently occurring keywords, such as "accountant", "public sector reform", "performance", and "service", indicating their importance in the literature. These keywords underscore the important role of accountants in public sector financial management, the focus on organizational reform, and the emphasis on performance measurement and service delivery. In addition, the analysis also uncovered keywords with fewer occurrences, such as "transparency" and "information systems", which highlight potential research gaps and areas that require further investigation. Addressing these gaps could contribute to a more comprehensive understanding of how transparent financial

reporting and information systems can improve accountability and efficiency in the public sector.

The findings of this study have several implications for policymakers and practitioners. Understanding the key themes and influential works in public sector accounting practices can inform evidence-based policies and best practices in financial governance. Policymakers can use this knowledge to design reforms that promote greater transparency, efficiency, and accountability in public sector organizations. Public sector administrators can also benefit from identifying successful approaches and innovative practices to improve financial management and service delivery.

Overall, this research contributes to ongoing efforts to strengthen financial

governance in the public sector and encourage greater accountability and transparency. By addressing research gaps and providing valuable insights, this research aims to empower stakeholders in the public sector to make informed decisions and improve the overall performance and effectiveness of public sector organizations. As the public sector evolves, this research provides a foundation for future studies, guiding academics and practitioners towards effective strategies and policies in responsible financial management and transparent governance. Ultimately, by promoting accountability and transparency, this research aims to build public trust in the public sector and ensure the efficient and responsible use of public resources for the betterment of society.

## REFERENCES

- [1] M. W. Driskill, W. R. Knechel, and E. Thomas, "Financial Auditing as an Economic Service," *Curr. Issues Audit.*, vol. 16, no. 2, pp. P39–P50, 2022.
- [2] S.-M. Lai and C.-L. Liu, "The effect of auditor characteristics on the value of diversification," *Audit. a J. Pract. theory*, vol. 37, no. 1, pp. 115–137, 2018.
- [3] J. A. O'brien and G. M. Marakas, *Management information systems*. dias.ac.in, 2006.
- [4] A. E. F. R. II and A. I. Taxation, "ACCT3000 Financial Statement Analysis," *utoledo.edu*.
- [5] A. Barton, "Professional accounting standards and the public sector—a mismatch," *Abacus*, 2005, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6281.2005.00173.x.
- [6] A. Barton, "Why governments should use the government finance statistics accounting system," *Abacus*, 2011, doi: 10.1111/j.1467-6281.2011.00347.x.
- [7] L. Schmidhuber, D. Hilgers, and S. Hofmann, "International Public Sector Accounting Standards (IPSASs): A systematic literature review and future research agenda," *Financ. Account. Manag.*, vol. 38, no. 1, pp. 119–142, 2022.
- [8] I. J. Petterson and E. Solstad, "The role of accounting information in a reforming area: a study of higher education institutions," *Financ. Account. ...*, 2007, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0408.2007.00423.x.
- [9] M. Bukenya, "Quality of accounting information and financial performance of Uganda's public sector," *American Journal of Research Communication*. academia.edu, 2014.
- [10] M. A. J. de Jesus and J. S. B. Eirado, "Relevance of accounting information to public sector accountability: A study of Brazilian federal public universities," *Tékhné*, 2012.
- [11] A. D. Barton, "Accounting for public heritage facilities—assets or liabilities of the government?," *Accounting, Audit. & Accountability J.*, 2000, doi: 10.1108/09513570010323434.
- [12] S. Mulyati, R. Ibrahim, and M. A. Djalil, "The effect of government accounting standard, quality of human resource, effectiveness of internal control system and regional financial accounting system on the quality of regional government financial statement (Study on SKPK Aceh Singkil District. Aceh," *Int. J. Bus. Manag. Econ. Rev.*, vol. 4, no. 6, pp. 258–268, 2021.
- [13] J. Carvalho, P. S. Gomes, and ..., "The main determinants of the use of the cost accounting system in Portuguese local government," *Financ. ...*, 2012, doi: 10.1111/j.1468-0408.2012.00547.x.
- [14] D. L. Alim and D. Siswanto, "The Effect of the Accounting Information System (AIS) on Accounting and Financial Task Efficiency at the Depok City Local Government Finance Office," in *Asia Pacific Business and Economics Conference (APBEC 2018)*, 2019, pp. 408–413.
- [15] I. Lapsley and J. Pallot, "Accounting, management and organizational change: A comparative study of local government," *Manag. Account. Res.*, 2000.
- [16] H. Setiyawati and C. Doktoralina, "The importance of quality accounting information management in



- regional governments in Indonesia," *Manag. Sci. Lett.*, 2019.
- [17] A. Hopwood, "Accounting and the pursuit of efficiency," *Public Sect. Manag. theory, Crit. ...*, 1994.
- [18] L. B. Trofimova, N. A. Prodanova, L. N. Korshunova, and ..., "Public sector entities reporting and Accounting information system," ... *Control Syst.*, 2019.
- [19] S. Cohen and S. Karatzimas, "Accounting information quality and decision-usefulness of governmental financial reporting: Moving from cash to modified cash," *Meditari Account. Res.*, 2017, doi: 10.1108/MEDAR-10-2015-0070.
- [20] C. Connolly and N. Hyndman, "The actual implementation of accruals accounting: Caveats from a case within the UK public sector," *Accounting, Audit. & Accountability ...*, 2006, doi: 10.1108/09513570610656123.
- [21] C. Hood, "The 'new public management' in the 1980s: Variations on a theme," *Accounting, Organ. Soc.*, vol. 20, no. 2-3, pp. 93-109, 1995, doi: 10.1016/0361-3682(93)E0001-W.
- [22] G. Ashworth and H. Voogd, *Selling the city: Marketing approaches in public sector urban planning*. cabdirect.org, 1990.
- [23] S. Ball, *Education plc: Understanding private sector participation in public sector education*. 2007.
- [24] D. Holtz-Eakin, "Public-sector capital and the productivity puzzle." 1992. [Online]. Available: [https://www.nber.org/system/files/working\\_papers/w4122/w4122.pdf](https://www.nber.org/system/files/working_papers/w4122/w4122.pdf)
- [25] S. Brignall and S. Modell, "An institutional perspective on performance measurement and management in the 'new public sector,'" *Manag. Account. Res.*, vol. 11, no. 3, pp. 281-306, 2000, doi: 10.1006/mare.2000.0136.
- [26] J. A. Gonzalez, L. Perez-Floriano, and R. A. Rodriguez, *Performance management in the public sector*. 2023. doi: 10.4324/9781003306849-8.
- [27] S. Van Thiel and F. L. Leeuw, "The Performance Paradox In The Public Sector Performance Assessment in the Public Sector," *Public Perform. Manag. Rev.*, vol. 25, no. 3, pp. 267-281, 2002, [Online]. Available: <https://repub.eur.nl/pub/1577/BSK074.pdf>
- [28] N. Brunsson and K. Sahlin-Andersson, "Constructing organizations: The example of public sector reform," 2000, [Online]. Available: [journals.sagepub.com%0A](https://journals.sagepub.com/0A)
- [29] D. D. Jr and G. Giroux, "Determinants of audit quality in the public sector," *JSTOR*, 1992.
- [30] W. Buiters, "A guide to public sector debt and deficits," 1985, [Online]. Available: [academic.oup.com%0A](https://academic.oup.com/0A)