DANADYAKSA
POST MODERN ECONOMY JOURNAL

Vol. 4 No. 1, (2026), 1429–1440 e-ISSN: 3025-8545

ANALYSIS OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF INTERNAL CONTROL BASED ON COSO 2013 IN THE SERVICE PAYMENT REQUIREMENT DOCUMENT VERIFICATION PROCESS AT PT PLN (PERSERO) UP3 YOGYAKARTA

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the implementation of internal control based on the COSO 2013 framework in the verification process of service payment documents at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Yogyakarta and its role in preventing irregularities in cash disbursements. This research employed a qualitative descriptive approach using in-depth interviews with relevant informants. The findings indicate that the five COSO components have been implemented effectively. The verification process is supported by hierarchical authorization and the Vendor Invoicing Portal (VIP) system, which strengthens accountability, minimizes errors and fraud risks, and supports transparent and accountable financial management.

Keywords: Cash Disbursement, COSO 2013, Document Verification, Internal Control, Risk Management

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INTRODUCTION

Public sector financial management requires the implementation of an effective internal control system to ensure accuracy, transparency, and accountability in every financial process. One of the most critical stages in the cash disbursement cycle is vendor payment verification, which plays a significant role in ensuring that payments are executed accurately, appropriately, and in accordance with applicable regulations. In the context of public financial oversight, a paradigm shift has occurred from reliance on external supervision toward the predominance of internal control. According to Hepworth (2024), public financial oversight has evolved from external control to the dominance of internal control, whereby supervision is no longer dependent solely on external parties but has become an internal organizational responsibility. Therefore, the implementation of a robust internal control system has become an essential requirement for organizations such as PT PLN (Persero).

One of the most widely recognized frameworks used as a standard for internal control is COSO 2013. According to the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of The Treadway Commission, internal control is defined as a process carried out by the board of directors, management, and other personnel to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of organizational objectives (COSO, 2013). The COSO 2013 framework consists of five key components: control environment, risk assessment, control activities, information and communication, and monitoring activities. The adoption of this framework across various organizations has been shown to enhance financial accountability and integrity (Ilmiha & Shah Suboh, 2024)

The verification process represents a critical stage in ensuring that payments to vendors are executed accurately and in accordance with established procedures. However, in practice, this process often faces various challenges, including the risk of documentation errors, potential fraud, and operational inefficiencies that may disrupt organizational performance and undermine corporate accountability. This study is closely related to the discipline of management, particularly within the areas of financial management and risk management. Risk is an inherent element of organizational activities, especially in fund disbursement processes involving external parties such as vendors. According to Brigham & Ehrhardt (2020), risk management can be simply defined as the process of identifying events that may result in losses, followed by the implementation of preventive measures. In this context, the application of a tiered payment verification procedure constitutes a practical form of risk management in financial operations implemented by PT PLN (Persero).

PT PLN (Persero), as a state-owned enterprise operating in the electricity sector, bears substantial responsibility for managing corporate resources and finances in an accountable manner. As a company with extensive operational activities involving numerous service vendors, payments to third parties constitute a critical function that must be subject to strict control. One important stage in this process is the verification of supporting documents required for service payments, namely the examination of document completeness and compliance prior to payment execution. Through this process, the company can ensure that payments are made only for legitimate transactions, in accordance with contractual agreements, and supported by all required administrative documentation.

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Nevertheless, previous studies have primarily focused on the implementation of COSO-based internal control systems in the banking sector, educational institutions, hospitals, and government agencies in general. Research specifically examining the application of internal control in the verification of service payment documents remains relatively limited, particularly within the context of utility companies and state-owned enterprises such as PT PLN (Persero). In addition, only a limited number of studies have explored how document verification processes practically contribute to preventing potential irregularities in cash disbursement activities. This gap provides the primary rationale for conducting the present study.

This research is important because service payment processes are directly related to corporate cash outflows and the accountability of company funds. An ineffective verification system may increase the risk of administrative errors, delays in vendor payments, and potential misuse of funds. Conversely, an effective verification process can serve as a form of internal control that supports efficiency, payment accuracy, and fraud prevention. Therefore, an analysis of the implementation of internal control within the service payment document verification process is relevant from both academic and practical perspectives.

Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aims to analyze the implementation of internal control based on the COSO 2013 framework in the verification process of service payment documents at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Yogyakarta, as well as to identify the role of this verification process in preventing potential irregularities in cash disbursement activities.

The findings of this study are expected to provide theoretical contributions by enriching the literature on COSO-based internal control within the utility sector and state-owned enterprises. Practically, the results are expected to provide valuable input for PT PLN (Persero) in improving the effectiveness of its service payment document verification procedures.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Definition of Control

Control may be defined as a regulatory mechanism intended to direct and ensure that a process operates in accordance with established standards. Novandalina et al. (2024), through empirical testing, demonstrated that weak control systems, particularly in financial management, can have a negative impact on a company's financial performance. In general, control is classified into two categories: internal control and external control (Hepworth, 2024). Rosyanna et al. (2023) further explain that internal control refers to oversight conducted by parties within the organization, whereas external control is carried out by independent parties outside the organization.

More broadly, control systems are commonly distinguished as internal and external control mechanisms. According to Hepworth (2024), organizational governance has shifted from the dominance of external control toward internal control, where supervisory responsibility increasingly resides within the organization's internal mechanisms. This development indicates that contemporary organizations are required to establish effective internal control systems rather than relying solely on oversight from external parties.

COSO 2013 Perspective on Internal Control

One of the most widely recognized frameworks for explaining the concept of internal control is COSO 2013, developed by the Committee of Sponsoring Organizations of the Treadway Commission. According to (COSO, 2013), internal control is a process effected by the board of

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directors, management, and other personnel to provide reasonable assurance regarding the achievement of organizational objectives in the areas of operations, reporting, and compliance.

The COSO 2013 framework consists of five interrelated components. In the context of this study, these components collectively support the effectiveness of the vendor payment verification process. The effectiveness of a COSO-based internal control system has been demonstrated in the study conducted by Astuti et al. (2022), which found that the implementation of a COSO-based internal control system in Muhammadiyah/Aisyiyah hospitals in Central Java was able to prevent fraud and promote good organizational governance.

The first component of the COSO framework is the control environment, which reflects the values, ethics, and attitudes of management toward the importance of control within the organization (COSO, 2013). Consistent with this view, Putri & Saud (2021) found that a sound internal control system, together with individual ethical attitudes, significantly reduces the tendency toward fraudulent financial reporting. Once a strong control environment has been established, the next component is risk assessment, which involves identifying and analyzing potential threats originating both internally and externally. Judijanto (2024) emphasized that effective risk management has a positive influence on a company's financial sustainability, reinforcing the importance of risk assessment in maintaining long-term financial stability.

Based on the results of risk assessment, organizations are required to establish control activities. In practice, control activities may include the implementation of strict procurement procedures, routine audits of business partners, and formal oversight mechanisms such as audit committees. These measures have been shown to improve efficiency and transparency in business processes while reducing the risk of errors and fraud (Athabarani & Febriyanti, 2025). To ensure the effectiveness of such activities, adequate information and communication systems are essential. However, Anggraini & Faradillah (2022) found that suboptimal communication systems in financial management may create risks of error or fraud. Ineffective communication may take the form of manual reporting processes and inadequate information systems. Similar findings were reported by Sumarna & Novitasari (2022), who noted that delays in financial report submission were caused by weak interdepartmental coordination and limited understanding of reporting information flows. These studies underscore the importance of strengthening information and communication systems to support effective internal control.

The final component of internal control is monitoring activities, which play an equally important role in assessing whether the designed control system is functioning as intended. Based on research conducted by Sitorus & Fitriany (2025) at PT XYZ, the frequency of audits was improved from annually to twice a year. This increase in audit frequency was accompanied by greater effectiveness and a more systematic review process.

The Role of Risk Management

Risk management is a systematic process undertaken by organizations to identify, assess, and control risks that may hinder the achievement of organizational objectives. According to Brigham & Ehrhardt (2020), risk management refers to efforts to identify events that may cause losses and to implement preventive measures in order to minimize their impact. Consistent with this perspective, Suarmanayasa et al. (2024) emphasized that risk management is not only intended to prevent losses but also to ensure that companies can consistently achieve their financial targets.

In the context of corporate finance, risk management is closely related to cash disbursement

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activities because every payment transaction carries the potential for errors and irregularities. Therefore, organizations need to implement mechanisms capable of reducing such risks, one of which is the verification of payment documents. Natasha & Rokhim (2024) found that the implementation of enterprise risk management has a positive effect on corporate financial performance.

Payment document verification is the process of reviewing the completeness, validity, and conformity of documents before payment is executed. This process generally includes the examination of invoices, work contracts, proof of work completion, tax invoices, and approvals from authorized officials. Through document verification, companies are able to prevent various forms of errors, such as duplicate payments, incorrect payment amounts, incomplete documentation, and payments for unauthorized transactions.

Nevertheless, most previous studies have focused on internal control systems in general, while research specifically examining payment document verification as a control mechanism remains relatively limited. Numerous studies have shown that internal control is positively associated with organizational effectiveness and fraud prevention. Lathifah (2020) found that the effectiveness of internal control systems significantly influences fraud prevention in the public sector. Sari (2023) also demonstrated that segregation of duties, the use of digital systems, and effective communication strengthen financial control in educational institutions. A similar study conducted by Saputra & Novita (2023) concluded that PT Brantas Abipraya (Persero) possesses internal control components consistent with the COSO framework.

Based on the literature review, the majority of studies on COSO-based internal control have concentrated on the banking sector, education, hospitals, and government institutions. Research examining the implementation of internal control in the verification process of service payment documents remains relatively scarce. Therefore, this study seeks to address this gap by analyzing the implementation of internal control based on the COSO 2013 framework in the verification process of service payment documents, as well as its role in maintaining payment accountability.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative approach using a descriptive method, as it aimed to obtain an in-depth understanding of the implementation of internal control in the verification process of service payment documents and its role in preventing potential irregularities in cash disbursements. In qualitative research, the data collection process is developed based on findings directly obtained from the field (Abdussamad, 2021). According to Crowe et al. (2011), qualitative research is used to explore social or organizational phenomena comprehensively and contextually. This study adopted a case study method, which is intended to provide an in-depth understanding of complex issues within real-life settings. In this context, the verification process and internal control system represent a complex and interconnected organizational mechanism involving multiple units.

In qualitative research, data collection techniques may include observation, interviews, focus group discussions, open-ended surveys, and secondary research (Ugwu & Val, 2023). The data sources in this study consisted of primary data obtained through interviews with informants directly involved in the service payment verification process. Informants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby participants were chosen based on the consideration that they possessed relevant knowledge and experience regarding the research object (Sugiyono, 2013).

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Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, observation, and documentation. The primary research instrument was the researcher as a human instrument, supported by an interview guide developed based on the COSO 2013 components. Observation served as an important method in the qualitative approach because it enabled the researcher to capture actual behaviors and workplace interactions directly without manipulating variables (Chauhan et al., n.d.).

The data analysis technique used in this study was thematic analysis, a method of processing qualitative data by identifying, analyzing, and reporting themes or patterns emerging from the data (Sitasari, 2022). This technique was considered appropriate for interpreting the findings related to internal control practices and the verification of payment documents.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

General Overview of the Implementation of Internal Control in the Verification of Service Payment Documents

As one of Indonesia's state-owned enterprises, PT PLN (Persero) is required to ensure accountability in managing the public funds entrusted to the organization. In practice, the service payment process involves various parties, both internal and external to the company, and follows a systematic as well as tiered mechanism. This process is intended to ensure that every payment is executed accurately and in accordance with the provisions stipulated in the contract.

At the Unit Pelaksana Pelayanan Pelanggan (UP3), the payment process begins with the vendor as the service provider and proceeds through several stages of verification and approval before payment is ultimately executed by the head office. The initial stage consists of the submission of billing documents by the vendor through the Vendor Invoicing Portal (VIP), which serves as the primary platform for administering service payments within the company. After the documents are submitted by the vendor, the next stage involves examination by the service user unit.

Subsequently, documents that have been verified by the user unit are forwarded to the finance and general affairs division for further review. This division is responsible for ensuring document completeness, compliance with the budget, and the accuracy of the information contained in the documents. This stage is crucial in ensuring that the intended payment has fulfilled all required conditions. As explained by an informant, *"Specifically at PLN UP3, the service payment flow begins with the submission of billing documents. Once the billing documents are complete, they are verified by the finance division, including budget availability and compliance with contractual requirements. After the verification is completed, the documents can be submitted through the VIP application, and payment will then be processed by PLN Head Office"*.

After completing the verification process within the finance and general affairs division, the documents proceed to the approval stage by the Manager of the Unit Pelaksana Pelayanan Pelanggan (MUP3). At this stage, the manager acts as the party providing final authorization at the UP3 level before the documents are forwarded to the head office. The final stage of the payment process is the execution of payment by PT PLN (Persero) Head Office. This indicates that payment authority does not reside at the UP3 level but is centralized. This mechanism demonstrates the existence of a tiered verification system implemented by PT PLN (Persero).

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Findings Based on the COSO 2013 Frameworks

a) Control Environment

The first component of internal control according to the COSO 2013 framework is the control environment. Based on the interview results, the implementation of the control environment component in the verification process of service payment documents at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Yogyakarta is reflected in the existence of a clear work structure and the division of duties according to the respective functions of each unit. This finding is consistent with the statement provided by the informant: *"The division of duties is clear according to the hierarchy, working hours, and job descriptions of each division"*. That statement indicates that the company has established work responsibilities based on organizational hierarchy and functional roles.

The division of duties in the verification process can also be observed through the specific responsibilities of each party involved. As explained by the informant during the interview: *"The planning division monitors the details of the work and the material breakdown that will be billed, while the finance division monitors the invoice and its allocation according to the funding source"*. This statement demonstrates that an effective segregation of duties has been implemented, where each individual performs different responsibilities at different organizational levels. Fajar & Rusmana (2018) also stated that organizational structure clarity has a positive effect on the effectiveness of internal control.

b) Risk Assessment

According to theory, risk assessment involves not only identifying and analyzing potential threats from external sources but also from within the organization (COSO, 2013). In the context of service payment document verification, risk assessment is highly important because the process is directly related to cash disbursements and therefore carries the potential for losses if errors or irregularities occur. Consequently, the company must understand the sources and types of risks, as well as the measures required to minimize their impact.

Based on the interview findings, risks in the verification process originate not from a single source but from two primary sources: internal verifiers and external vendors. As explained by the informant: *"The possible risks in the verification process may involve errors by the verifier… The mistakes are not related to the contract but to inputs made by the vendor, including supporting documents, written amounts on receipts, payment requests, or tax invoices that do not match the billed amount"*.

To mitigate these risks, the company applies a tiered verification mechanism conducted by more than one party. As stated by the informant: *"First, one invoice is processed hierarchically, where each division has a different job description in the verification process. Therefore, the process is conducted in stages, and there is more than one verifier"*. It can therefore be concluded that risk assessment has been implemented through an understanding of potential errors and their sources, followed by layered verification procedures. This finding supports the view of Brigham & Ehrhardt (2020), who argued that risk management aims to identify potential losses and reduce their impact through preventive actions. In this context, document verification serves as an instrument of financial risk mitigation.

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c) Control Activities

Control activities are policies designed to ensure that every action taken by the company minimizes risks in accordance with established plans. In the context of service payment document verification, control activities represent concrete actions undertaken at each stage to ensure the accuracy, completeness, and validity of documents before payment is executed.

These activities are reflected in the hierarchical verification and authorization mechanisms. This indicates that payments cannot be processed directly but must go through multiple control stages to ensure that all requirements have been fulfilled. As explained by the informant: *"Authorization is carried out after the maker and user have conducted verification, so only after the verification stage is completed can approval be granted by management"*.

In addition, the use of the Vendor Invoicing Portal (VIP) system forms an important part of control activities in the document verification process. This system functions as an integrated platform covering the submission of documents by vendors, verification, and approval processes. It can therefore be concluded that control activities in the verification of service payment documents have been effectively implemented. This finding supports the study of Athabarani & Febriyanti (2025), which stated that strict procedures improve business efficiency while reducing the risk of errors and fraud.

d) Information and Communication

Information and communication constitute an internal control component related to how information is obtained, processed, and delivered to relevant parties in a timely manner to support task execution and decision-making. Based on the interview findings, communication regarding document completeness is conducted through the Vendor Invoicing Portal (VIP) system. This system functions not only as a document submission platform but also as a communication medium between the company and vendors.

If discrepancies or incomplete documents are identified, the submitted documents are not processed further but are instead returned to the vendor through the system for correction. As stated by the informant: *"…then the VIP submission or invoice will first be rejected and returned to the vendor for correction"*. It can therefore be concluded that the information and communication component in the document verification process has functioned effectively. The system facilitates information flow while ensuring that communication between vendors and the company is effective, documented, and easily traceable.

e) Monitoring Activities

Monitoring activities include review, evaluation, and follow-up regarding the implementation of controls, enabling the company to identify weaknesses and undertake corrective actions. Based on the interview results, monitoring in the verification process is not carried out specifically for each invoice but rather comprehensively through reports covering all invoices submitted. This is because each invoice has already passed through a hierarchical verification process. As explained by the informant: *"It is not conducted periodically for each invoice… We have monitoring reports for all invoices submitted to PLN according to their funding sources"*.

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These monitoring activities indicate that the company places greater emphasis on comprehensive evaluation rather than detailed supervision of each individual transaction. It can therefore be concluded that monitoring in the verification process of service payment documents has been properly implemented.

The Role of Document Verification in Preventing Potential Irregularities in Cash Disbursements

The verification process of service payment documents constitutes a crucial component of the internal control system, particularly in preventing potential irregularities in cash disbursement activities. Verification refers to the process of reviewing and evaluating documents to ensure that the information presented is accurate, complete, and accountable. In practice at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Yogyakarta, the verification of service payment documents serves as the initial step in maintaining corporate accountability. Every invoice submitted by a vendor is not immediately processed for payment but must first pass through a strict examination process to ensure that the transaction is consistent with the agreed contractual terms.

This indicates that verification also functions as a control mechanism to ensure that every cash disbursement can be properly justified. As explained by the informant: *"It is certainly very important, because it is related to accountability, or how justifiable the invoice is"*. This statement confirms that verification is an essential component in maintaining the integrity of financial reporting and sustaining trust in the management of company funds. Through the verification process, every transaction undergoes prior examination, thereby reducing the likelihood of irregularities, whether intentional or unintentional.

CONCLUSION

Main Conclusions of the Study

Based on the findings regarding the implementation of internal control under the COSO 2013 framework in the verification process of service payment documents at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Yogyakarta, it can be concluded that the company has implemented an internal control system that functions adequately and supports accountable financial management. In accordance with the COSO 2013 framework, the internal control system has been effectively applied in the verification process of service payment documents. The control environment is reflected in a clear organizational structure and well-defined segregation of duties. Risk assessment is conducted through the identification of both internal and external errors, supported by layered verification procedures. Control activities are implemented through hierarchical authorization and the use of the Vendor Invoicing Portal (VIP) system. Information and communication operate effectively through a system that facilitates document corrections. Monitoring is carried out through comprehensive reports of submitted invoices for evaluation and follow-up purposes. Collectively, these five components support accountability in corporate cash disbursements.

Furthermore, this study concludes that the verification of service payment documents plays a significant role in preventing potential irregularities in cash disbursement activities at PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Yogyakarta. This process involves reviewing documents to ensure that all information is accurate, complete, and accountable. Vendor invoices are not immediately paid but must first undergo strict verification procedures to ensure consistency with contractual agreements. Verification functions as a control mechanism to maintain accountability, preserve the integrity of

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financial reporting, and strengthen trust in the management of company funds. Through this review process, the risks of errors, fraud, and transaction irregularities can be effectively minimized before payment execution.

Theoretical and Practical Contributions

From a theoretical perspective, this study contributes by reinforcing the relevance of the COSO 2013 framework within organizational operational contexts, particularly in service payment verification activities. The study expands the understanding that internal control is not limited to strategic decision-making or financial reporting but is also applicable to routine administrative processes that significantly affect corporate cash management. In addition, this study positions document verification as a practical manifestation of control activities that serves as an instrument for risk mitigation and fraud prevention.

From a practical perspective, the findings may provide useful insights for PT PLN (Persero) and other organizations seeking to strengthen service payment procedures through improved verification quality, stronger interdepartmental coordination, and the use of more integrated digital systems. With an effective verification system, companies can improve payment efficiency while safeguarding assets and maintaining accountability in the use of funds.

Limitations of the Study

Nevertheless, this study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in only one organizational unit, namely PT PLN (Persero) UP3 Yogyakarta; therefore, the findings may not fully represent conditions in other units with different operational characteristics. Second, the study employed a qualitative approach, meaning that the findings emphasize in-depth understanding of processes and informants' experiences rather than measuring statistical relationships among variables. Third, limited access to certain internal documents and company policies may have restricted the breadth of the analysis. In addition, the results were highly influenced by the openness of informants during the interview process. If certain information was not disclosed comprehensively, this may have affected the depth of interpretation in the study.

Suggestions for Future Research

Based on these limitations, future studies are recommended to broaden the research scope by examining several organizational units or other companies in order to obtain a more comprehensive comparison of internal control implementation. Future research may also employ quantitative or mixed-method approaches to measure the influence of internal control on payment efficiency, fraud prevention, or the quality of financial governance. Moreover, topics such as the digitalization of document verification processes, integration of technology-based payment systems, the effectiveness of internal audits in supporting cash disbursements, and vendor payment risk analysis are promising areas for further investigation. Future studies are expected to provide broader contributions to both the development of internal control theory and the practice of organizational financial governance.

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