



**THE EFFECT OF INTERGOVERNMENTAL TRANSFERS AND REGIONAL  
EXPENDITURE ON THE FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE OF LOCAL  
GOVERNMENTS IN THE REGENCIES AND MUNICIPALITIES OF  
NORTH SUMATRA PROVINCE**

**Ulfa Utari<sup>1</sup>**

**Universitas Samudra, Kota Langsa, Indonesia**

[ulfautari@unsam.ac.id](mailto:ulfautari@unsam.ac.id)

**Zulhilmi<sup>2</sup>**

**Universitas Samudra, Kota Langsa, Indonesia**

[zulhilmi@unsam.ac.id](mailto:zulhilmi@unsam.ac.id)

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**Abstract**

This study aims to examine the effect of Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure on the financial performance of local governments in the regencies and municipalities of North Sumatra Province. The research was conducted to provide empirical evidence regarding the role of transfer funds and regional spending in improving local government financial performance. A quantitative approach was employed using a population of 33 regencies and municipalities in North Sumatra Province 2021–2024 period. A saturated sampling technique was applied, in which all members of the population were selected as the research sample. The data were analyzed using panel data regression with the assistance of SPSS software. The findings indicate that Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure simultaneously have a significant effect on the financial performance of local governments in the regencies and municipalities of North Sumatra Province. Furthermore, partial testing reveals that both Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure have a positive and statistically significant effect on local government financial performance. These findings suggest that effective management of intergovernmental transfer funds and efficient allocation of regional expenditure play a crucial role in enhancing local government financial performance. Therefore, local governments are expected to optimize the utilization of transfer funds and improve the effectiveness and efficiency of regional expenditure to support better financial governance and strengthen public service delivery.

**Keywords:** Intergovernmental Transfers; Regional Expenditure; Local Government Financial Performance; Fiscal Decentralization



## INTRODUCTION

Fiscal decentralization has provided local governments in Indonesia with greater authority to manage regional resources according to their priorities and development needs. This policy is expected to improve regional financial independence and accelerate public service delivery through more effective and accountable financial management (Taras & Artini, 2017). Consequently, evaluating local government financial performance has become increasingly important because it reflects the ability of local governments to manage public resources efficiently while supporting sustainable regional development (Antari & Sedana, 2018).

Local government financial performance is closely associated with the management of regional revenues and expenditures. From the revenue perspective, Intergovernmental Transfers represent a major source of funding provided by the central government to reduce fiscal disparities among regions. From the expenditure perspective, Regional Expenditure reflects the allocation of financial resources to deliver public services and stimulate regional economic development. Efficient utilization of these resources is expected to improve the financial performance of local governments.

Previous empirical studies have reported inconsistent findings regarding the relationship between Intergovernmental Transfers, Regional Expenditure, and local government financial performance. Simanullang (2016) found that Intergovernmental Transfers have a positive and significant effect on local government financial performance because transfer funds strengthen regional fiscal capacity and improve public service delivery. Similar findings were reported by Muda (2017). In contrast, Wahyuni (2019) argued that high dependence on transfer funds indicates that local governments have not fully optimized their own revenue potential. Likewise, Budianto and Alexander (2016), as well as Putri and Darmayanti (2019), found that Intergovernmental Transfers do not significantly affect local government financial performance.

In terms of Regional Expenditure, Armaja et al. (2015) reported a positive effect on the financial performance of local governments in Aceh, suggesting that higher public expenditure improves the quality of public services. Similar evidence was presented by Fatimah and Hasbullah (2020), whereas Saputri and Kurnia (2020) found a negative relationship between Regional Expenditure and local government financial performance. These inconsistent findings indicate the existence of a research gap that requires further empirical investigation.



Based on these issues, this study aims to examine the effect of Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure on the financial performance of local governments in the regencies and municipalities of North Sumatra Province. The study employs a quantitative approach using secondary data obtained from the Budget Realization Reports of 33 regencies and municipalities in North Sumatra Province 2021–2024 period. A saturated sampling technique was applied because the entire population was included as the research sample. The data were analyzed using panel data regression with the assistance of SPSS software. The findings are expected to enrich the literature on regional public financial management and provide practical recommendations for improving regional financial governance and strengthening local government financial performance

## LITERATURE REVIEW

Local government financial performance refers to the ability of local governments to manage financial resources efficiently, effectively, economically, transparently, and accountably in achieving development objectives and improving public services. Financial performance serves as an important indicator for evaluating whether local governments have successfully implemented sound financial management practices and fulfilled the principles of good governance (Mardiasmo, 2018). Better financial performance reflects greater fiscal capacity and stronger accountability in managing public funds.

Intergovernmental Transfers constitute financial assistance provided by the central government to local governments to reduce fiscal disparities and support the implementation of fiscal decentralization. These transfers enable local governments to finance public services and regional development programs while improving their fiscal capacity. Previous studies have reported mixed findings regarding the effect of Intergovernmental Transfers on local government financial performance. Simanullang (2016) and Muda (2017) found that Intergovernmental Transfers positively influence financial performance by strengthening regional fiscal capacity. However, Wahyuni (2019) as well as Budianto and Alexander (2016) reported that excessive dependence on transfer funds may weaken fiscal independence, resulting in an insignificant effect on financial performance.

Regional Expenditure represents the allocation of financial resources by local governments to finance governmental operations, public services, infrastructure development, and community welfare programs. Appropriate expenditure allocation is expected to improve service quality and support



sustainable regional development. Empirical evidence regarding the relationship between Regional Expenditure and local government financial performance remains inconclusive. Armaja et al. (2015) and Fatimah and Hasbullah (2020) concluded that Regional Expenditure has a positive effect on financial performance because productive spending enhances public services and development outcomes. In contrast, Saputri and Kurnia (2020) found that ineffective expenditure management may reduce financial efficiency and weaken local government financial performance.

Based on Stewardship Theory and previous empirical findings, this study proposes that effective management of Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure contributes to improving local government financial performance by strengthening fiscal capacity, enhancing accountability, and promoting better public financial governance.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

This study employed a quantitative research approach with an associative design to examine the effect of Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure on the financial performance of local governments in the regencies and municipalities of North Sumatra Province. The research was conducted using secondary data covering the 2021–2024 period, obtained from the Budget Realization Reports and Regional Government Financial Reports published by the Directorate General of Fiscal Balance, the Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia, and other official government sources. The population consisted of all 33 regencies and municipalities in North Sumatra Province. A saturated sampling technique (census) was applied, in which the entire population was selected as the research sample. The dependent variable was Local Government Financial Performance, while the independent variables included Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure.

Data were collected through documentation by reviewing official financial reports and relevant supporting documents. The collected data were processed using SPSS software. Data analysis consisted of descriptive statistical analysis, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ), the F-test to examine the simultaneous effect of the independent variables, and the t-test to evaluate the partial effect of each independent variable on local government financial performance. The research findings are expected to provide empirical evidence regarding the role of Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure in improving local



government financial performance and to serve as a reference for policymakers in strengthening regional financial management and promoting good governance.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Statistical Test

Descriptive statistical analysis was employed to describe the characteristics of the data by examining the maximum value, minimum value, mean, and standard deviation. In this study, the variables included in the descriptive statistical analysis were Intergovernmental Transfers, Regional Expenditure, and Local Government Financial Performance. can be seen in the following table:

Table 1. Statistik Deskriptif

Table with 6 columns: Variables, N, Minimum, Maximum, Mean, Std. Deviation. Rows include Dana Perimbangan and Belanja Daerah.

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Classical Assumption Test

Normality Test

The results of the normality test in this study can be seen in the following image:

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test table showing Unstandardized Residual, Mean, Std. Deviation, and Test Statistic.

Figure 1. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Sminor Test Source: Data Processed (2025)



Based on the graph above, it can be seen that the test value obtained is an Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) of 0.278, which means that the data used in this study is normally distributed so that it can meet the requirements for analysis.

**Heteroscedasticity Test**

The results of the multicollinearity test can be seen in the following table:

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
1 (Constant)	-1.332E-15	.103		.000	1.000
Sqrt X1	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000
Sqrt X2	.000	.000	.000	.000	1.000

**Figure 2. Heteroscedasticity Test Results**

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the image above that in this study there is no heteroscedasticity.

**Autocorrelation Test**

The results of the autocorrelation test using Durbin-Watson (DW) can be seen as follows:

**Figure 3. Durbin-Watson Statistics**

Model	Durbin-Watson
1	1.832

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the data the DW (Durbin-Watson) value is 1.832. Based on the calculation above, it is known that the Durbin-Watson value of 1.832 is between the du value of 1.7466 and the 4 - dU value of 2,2534, so it can be concluded that in this study, there is no autocorrelation.

**Multicollinearity Test**

The results of the multicollinearity test in this study can be seen in the following table:

**Table 2. Multicollinearity Test**

Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
(Constant)		



Sqrt_X1	.188	5.330
Sqrt_X2	.139	7.220

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the results of the multicollinearity test in the table above, It is known that all variables have a tolerance value greater than 0.10 and a VIF (Variance Inflation Factor) value less than 10, so it can be concluded that multicollinearity does not occur in this study.

Multiple Linear Regression

Table 3. Coefficient Table

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients
	B	Std. Error	Beta
(Constant)	10.468	.103	
Sqrt_X1	2.109	.000	.605
Sqrt_X2	1.296	.000	.526

Source: Data Processed (2025)

Based on the data in the table above, the regression equation is as follows:  $Y = 10,468 + 2.109 X_1 + 1,296 X_2 + e$

Based on the regression equation, the coefficient of Intergovernmental Transfers is positive, indicating a positive relationship between Intergovernmental Transfers and local government financial performance. This implies that an increase in Intergovernmental Transfers is associated with an improvement in local government financial performance. Similarly, the coefficient of Regional Expenditure is positive, indicating that higher Regional Expenditure is associated with better local government financial performance.

Hypothesis Testing

t-test

The results of the t-test by comparing the t-table with the calculated t-table can be seen in the following table:

Table 4.

Model	t	Sig.	Conclusion
(Constant)	101.270	.000	Influential



Sqrt_X1	3.084	.003	Influential
Sqrt_X2	2.302	.023	Influential

Source: Processed Data (2025)

Based on the results of the t-test in the table above can be concluded:

1. The table above shows that the significance value of 0.003 is lower than the significance level of 0.05, and the calculated t-value is 3.084, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.978 ( $3.084 > 1.978$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that Intergovernmental Transfers, as an independent variable, have a positive and statistically significant partial effect on local government financial performance.
2. The table above also shows that the significance value of 0.023 is lower than the significance level of 0.05, and the calculated t-value is 2.302, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.978 ( $2.302 > 1.978$ ). Therefore, it can be concluded that Regional Expenditure, as an independent variable, has a positive and statistically significant partial effect on local government financial performance.

**F test**

The results of the F test by comparing the calculated F with the F table and P value can be seen in the following table:

**Table 5.**  
**ANOVA (Analysis of Variance)**  
**F test table**

Model	F	Sig.
Regression	3.426	.019

Based on the results presented in Table 5.8, the calculated F-value is 3.426 with a significance value of 0.019, while the F-table value at a 95% confidence level and a 5% significance level ( $\alpha = 0.05$ ) is 2.67. Since the calculated F-value (3.426) is greater than the F-table value (2.67) and the significance value (0.019) is lower than 0.05, it can be concluded that Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure simultaneously have a significant effect on local government financial performance.

**The Effect of Intergovernmental Transfers on Local Government Financial Performance**

Intergovernmental Transfers are intended to reduce fiscal disparities among regions and strengthen local governments' capacity to deliver public



services. The findings of this study indicate that Intergovernmental Transfers have a positive and significant effect on local government financial performance. This result suggests that greater fiscal transfers from the central government contribute to improving regional financial management and support the achievement of better financial performance. The findings are consistent with Stewardship Theory, which emphasizes that public officials are responsible for managing public resources effectively, transparently, and accountably to achieve organizational objectives and enhance public welfare. These results are in line with previous studies conducted by Malau (2019) and Wulandari (2019), who reported a positive and significant relationship between Intergovernmental Transfers and local government financial performance. However, the findings differ from those of Khairunisa (2019) and Sitorus (2016), who found a negative relationship, arguing that higher Intergovernmental Transfers may reflect lower fiscal independence due to limited locally generated revenue.

### **The Effect of Regional Expenditure on Local Government Financial Performance**

Regional Expenditure is allocated to finance mandatory and discretionary government functions in accordance with regional development priorities and public service responsibilities. The results of this study reveal that Regional Expenditure has a positive and significant effect on local government financial performance, indicating that effective and efficient expenditure allocation contributes to better financial management and improved public service delivery. These findings support the view that appropriate budget allocation enhances community welfare and strengthens regional financial governance. The results are consistent with the studies of Armaja et al. (2015) and Fatimah and Hasbullah (2020), which also reported a positive and significant effect of Regional Expenditure on local government financial performance. Nevertheless, the findings differ from those of Saputri and Kurnia (2020), who concluded that Regional Expenditure has a negative effect on local government financial performance.

### **CONCLUSION**

The findings of this study demonstrate that the research objectives have been successfully achieved. Intergovernmental Transfers have a positive and significant effect on the financial performance of local governments in the regencies and municipalities of North Sumatra Province, indicating that fiscal transfers from the central government play an important role in strengthening



regional fiscal capacity and supporting effective financial management. Likewise, Regional Expenditure has a positive and significant effect on local government financial performance, suggesting that efficient and well-targeted public spending contributes to improved financial governance and better public service delivery. Furthermore, the simultaneous test confirms that Intergovernmental Transfers and Regional Expenditure jointly explain 47.3% of the variation in local government financial performance, while the remaining 52.7% is influenced by other factors not included in this research model. These findings reinforce the importance of optimizing both fiscal transfers and regional expenditure to improve the quality of regional financial management.

The policy implications of this study emphasize that local governments should strengthen the management of Intergovernmental Transfers by allocating transfer funds to priority development programs that provide sustainable economic and social benefits. In addition, Regional Expenditure should be planned and implemented more efficiently, transparently, and accountably to maximize the effectiveness of public spending and improve the quality of public services. Policymakers are also encouraged to strengthen financial planning, budget monitoring, and performance evaluation systems to ensure that public resources are utilized effectively in accordance with the principles of good governance. Future studies are recommended to expand the research scope by including local governments from other provinces, extending the observation period, and incorporating additional variables that may influence local government financial performance, thereby providing more comprehensive evidence to support regional fiscal policy formulation.

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