

# **THE IMPROVEMENT OF STATE CIVIL APPARATUS' COMPETENCE THROUGH DISTANCE EDUCATION IN NORTH BORNEO PROVINCE – INDONESIA**

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The dynamics of the state civil apparatus (ASN) drives the bureaucratic apparatus to upgrade their qualifications, competence, and professionalism. Issues and statements delivered by Indonesian government becomes a polemic and a phenomenon that is emotionally and rationally addressed by various parties. Civil apparatus as the implementer of policies and public services address the ASN policy optimistically. This indication is reflected in their willingness to upgrade their educational qualifications to master degree. The problem is that how and where can they upgrade their qualifications legally in supporting their career, without leaving their duties and positions? Universitas Terbuka (UT) becomes one of the solutions to upgrade the qualifications of the state civil apparatus through master of public administration and master of management study programs. The implementation of this master qualification program as conducted in the North Borneo Province becomes a unique challenge and problem. This indication can be seen from the geographical aspect that is directly adjacent to Malaysia and as the entry point for migrant workers, ethnic diversity, the difficulty of getting access to high quality education, as well as lack of infrastructure and superstructure in supporting regional development.

Keyword: competence, civil apparatus, distance education

## **Background**

Law No. 5 Year 2014, concerning the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in article 67, suggests that the career development of civil servants is based on qualifications, competence, performance assessment and the needs of government agencies. The career development indicates that ASN must be professional in performing the functions and duties in serving the society. The professionalism of the ASN will be constructed through a process of education and training that are quality, consistent, and sustainable. The educational qualification is the level of education in

the form of undergraduate, master, and doctorate degree that would encourage the ASN to achieve more competence and be more professional in carrying out their functions and duties.

The policy is one of the triggers and motivation of the ASN to participate in the qualifying educational process to support competence and professionalism of their career. This phenomenon is found in the ASN in North Kalimantan province to participate in bachelor and master programs, especially for the ASN who continue their study at the Universitas Terbuka's Tarakan Regional Office (UPBJJ-UT) that can be seen in Table 1.

Table 1. Number of New and Old Students at UPBJJ UT Tarakan in 2016 Registration Period

No.	Program of Education	Students		Number	Description
		New	Old		
1	Graduate Program	19	287	306	120 graduated
2	Non-Education	688	432	1.120	
3	Education	430	756	1.186	Students of Teacher Education for Primary School (PGSD) and Early Childhood Education (PAUD)
4	Education	-	74	74	Students who live abroad (Sabah - Malaysia)
Total		1.137	1.549	2.686	

Source: UPBJJ UT Tarakan year 2016

The interesting phenomenon from Table 1 is that students of master of public administration (MAP) and master of management (MM), although they are only 306 and the all work as the ASN, but they are able to manage time for study and work in spite of challenging geographical conditions and limited resources of tutor in North Borneo and in general they have structural positions at work. There are some questions such as why did they choose UT and why did they choose the MAP and MM program? And how do they manage the groups of the classroom?

## Method

This study used descriptive analysis approach. Instruments in this study are interviews; to gather information to prospective students, students, classroom administrators per classroom, alumni, and interested parties (head of the Regional Working Unit (SKPD) and the Regional

Employment Board (BKD)). The collected data and the information are analyzed and confirmed to the informant to be re-analyzed and used as a conclusion.

### **Why UT?**

UT is the implementer of Law No.12 Year 2012 on Higher Education, particularly with regard to article 31 paragraph 1, 2, 3, and 4 of the Distance Education, both with regard to the definition, requirements, mode of implementation, and the provision of other supportive arrangements. The cornerstone of this policy is the basis for UT to manage and provide higher education services in distance (PTJJ) to the public and stakeholders. In its implementation, UT has realized it in the form of educational programs services that are offered to the public and stakeholders to maintain the quality standards of academic and administrative management, which is reflected in the quality assurance accreditation by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Education, quality assurance management by ISO 9001: 2008 and quality standards assurance of open and distance education by the International Council for open and Distance Education (ICDE).

It is reflected from prospective students, students, and alumni who have chosen UT as a place to improve their qualifications and competence as ASN , which in terms of academic quality supports their career and administrative services improvement in their internal bureaucracy. It is also reflected from the permission for learning and diploma adjustment that is quite smooth and there is no doubt of the Regional Employment Board (BKD) because it is quite easy to find an identity and status of students and UT's graduates of the ASN through the portal of Higher Education Database (PDPT) of Ministry of Research, Technology and Higher Education of the Republic of Indonesia through <http://forlap.ristekdikti.go.id> page.

MAP and MM program accreditations from BAN PT is "B", it is in line with the policy of the Circular Letter of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucracy Reform of the Republic of Indonesia No. 4 Year 2013 on the Granting Task Learning and Study Permit for Civil Servants, 3.g., that "the study program in the country that will be chosen must have been approved/ accredited minimum B from the competent institution".

Heads of agencies as stakeholders are helped by the results of this study, both in the pragmatic aspects that are related to the competence of the ASN in solving problems in their duties and functions as well as academic competence in applying and adopting the theories and concepts of public administration and management of government, such as the ASN of echelon 3 and 2 level as well as ASN who will join the 3 and 2 leadership training level in particular in analyzing problems of public bureaucracy.

Additional carrying capacity for UT's students and alumni, besides improvement of academic and pragmatic competence, they gain additional knowledge in distance learning such as skills to: use information technology, to register online, join tutorials online process, use digital libraries, do online consultation, manage flexible online learning process, and enrich learning resources via the internet.

Distance education policies that can be well implemented can be seen from students' satisfaction, i.e. prospective students, students, alumni, and stakeholders, which indicate that the policy is beneficial to society (see Cochran, Charles L and Eloise F. Malone, 1995).

### **Why MM and MAP Program?**

The ASN, as the policy implementer (see, Pfiffner, John M and Presthus, Robert V. 1960) ) and public servant with the fast-moving developments where society phenomena is very diverse and high demanding, must always be alert, responsive, and ready to face and solve the problems in accordance to policies. Professionalism development requires the ASN to select and follow the MAP and MM program, in which the curriculum and content suit to support their competence and performance, more specific and concrete will be visible from the preparation of the research results in the form of a thesis that would show specialization in the field of the study, for example specialization in: policy implementation, ASN performance, ASN competency development, financial management, regional planning, and others.

There is a contextual thrust that also corroborates prospective students to choose the MAP and MM programs, which is the role of UT's alumni in convincing and giving reasons to prospective students why they have to choose these two programs. First, the program is in line with the policy of the Law No. 5 Year 2014. Second, there is information about regional internal policies

(regional regulations or regents' regulations), which is associated with study permit and the use of facilities that facilitate students.

Third, the variety of experience on good and less good experiences in the learning process.

Fourth, trusting in the experience of alumni to stakeholders.

The content and context in selecting MM and MAP study programs influence prospective students and students in choosing these study programs with the alumni's role as supporter.

### **Classroom Management**

The uniqueness in managing master programs is classroom management, either in the form of per batch in every study program directly or indirectly. Classroom management is quite effective and efficient to hold successful learning process of UT's graduate students, starting from the admissions process as a prospective student until graduation process as alumni of the graduate program. Group within a classroom consists of a leader, secretary and treasurer with 20 to 30 students. Their duties and functions are to coordinate and communicate the plans and activities learning process scheduled by the UPBJJ on the basis of academic calendar for graduate program.

Groups that are directly run by a group of batch and study programs are carried out by students in Bulungan and Malino districts. The advantage of such group management, students can directly manage their activities, but the disadvantage is that the leader, secretary, and treasurer as class managers rather disturbed in the learning process because of having to take care of class and sometimes there is miscommunication between the group members. As for the group that is not directly managed by students, organizationally they have a leader, secretary, and treasurer but the operational management handed over to a third party usually to alumni to plan activities. Obviously, the students feel comfortable in the learning process, such as management implemented in Nunukan.

The importance of classroom and students management to participate in the management process is to establish a smooth learning process and students' self-reliance in managing classroom

organization as well as to help UPBJJ UT in implementing smooth aspect of academic administration and communication with the students.

### **Conclusions**

1. UT as the provider of Distance Education in Indonesia has a strategic role, especially in human resource development, which can reach into every corner of Indonesia with a committed academic quality and wide range of services.
2. The MAP and MM programs become an option especially for ASN to show that aspects of the content and context of the study program support the ASN competence and professionalism in the development of their career.
3. Classroom management per generation plays an important role for master students in managing their classroom that aims to facilitate the learning process and as a communications tool between students with the UPBJJ UT.

### **References**

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