

DEVELOPMENT OF STATE CIVIL APPARATUS (ASN) COMPETENCE OF BAPPEDALITBANG OF KUTAI BARAT REGENCY

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the competency development of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in the Regional Development Planning, Research, and Development Agency (BappedaLitbang) of West Kutai Regency. The focus of the study is directed at three main indicators, namely competency development planning, implementation of competency development, and competency development evaluation. This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach with data collection techniques through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation analysis. Research informants consist of structural officials, functional officials, and implementing staff within the BappedaLitbang environment selected by purposive sampling technique. Data analysis was conducted using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña, while data validity testing used triangulation of sources, methods, and member checks. The results of the study indicate that ASN competency development planning in BappedaLitbang West Kutai is not fully based on job analysis and is still constrained by budget constraints. At the implementation stage, the implementation of the training program is not optimal, with only 27% of ASN participating in training according to job requirements, far below the target of 68%. Furthermore, the available training is more general in nature and less relevant to the demands of post-equivalency functional positions. At the evaluation stage, competency development program assessments are still administrative in nature and do not measure the training's impact on performance. This research emphasizes the need for a more contextual, systematic, and sustainable ASN competency development strategy to improve the effectiveness of regional development planning.

Keywords: *ASN, competency, development planning, human resource development, West Kutai*

INTRODUCTION

Improving the quality of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is a crucial agenda item in Indonesian bureaucratic reform. In the era of globalization and digital transformation, the bureaucracy is required to be more adaptive, professional, and results-oriented. ASN competency is measured not only by administrative skills but also by technical, managerial, and socio-cultural capabilities that enable them to respond to dynamic public needs and changes in the strategic environment. Countries with professional bureaucracies have been proven capable of implementing more innovative and effective public policies, thus contributing directly to sustainable development. Nationally, efforts to develop ASN competencies are regulated through Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus and Government Regulation Number 11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management. These regulations are reinforced by Minister of PANRB Regulation Number 2 of 2023, which stipulates that every ASN is required to develop competencies through various methods, both classical and non-classical training, for a minimum of 20 hours of lessons per year. However, despite the clear regulatory framework, implementation in the regions still faces challenges. Research shows that the ASN competency development strategy at the East Java Human Resources Development Agency (BPSDM) is still hampered by budget constraints, a lack of instructors, and training programs that do not fully align with job requirements (Hernawati et al., 2022). A similar finding was found in research in Central Java Province, which concluded that meeting ASN competency development needs is not optimal because training is often general and not specific to certain positions (Ayu et al., 2022). Other research confirms that competency development has a significant impact on civil servant performance. Simbolon and Meilani (2023) demonstrated that competency development, job distribution, and internal supervision positively

impacted civil servant performance within the Riau Province Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP) (Simbolon & Meilani 2023). This means that without an appropriate competency development strategy, organizational performance will struggle to achieve its desired targets. In East Kalimantan, similar issues also exist. Research at the West Kutai Regency Inspectorate shows that job competency is a crucial factor influencing employee performance, alongside motivation and work discipline. This indicates that the competency gap among civil servants in the region remains a strategic issue that must be addressed immediately (Tallona *et al.*, 2022). The West Kutai Regency Bappedalitbang, as a regional agency, plays a vital role in regional planning, research, and development. This task requires civil servants (ASN) with high competencies in planning, policy analysis, and development research. However, on the ground, many civil servants still have educational backgrounds that are not aligned with their positions, and limited access to relevant training. For example, an internal evaluation showed that in 2022, only 27% of civil servants in the West Kutai Bappedalitbang participated in competency development programs in accordance with job analysis, far below the target of 68%. This low achievement illustrates the imbalance between competency development policies and implementation at the regional level.

Furthermore, the transition from structural positions to functional positions at the West Kutai Research and Development Agency (Bappedalitbang) in 2021 further complicated the problem. Twelve civil servants previously holding structural positions had to adapt to new roles as planners, policy analysts, and science and technology analysts. This change, while aligned with national policy, created gaps because not all employees possessed the competencies required for these functional positions. This situation aligns with findings in West Kalimantan, which emphasized that meeting mandatory civil servant competency development hours was often hampered by limited training resources and the lack of systematic competency mapping (Febrisoni, 2022). If left unchecked, the competency gap between civil servants (ASN) in the West Kutai Regional Development Planning Agency (Bappedalitbang) will weaken the quality of regional development planning. Civil servants who lack adequate technical and managerial skills are likely to produce planning documents that are inaccurate, lack innovation, and are unresponsive to community needs. Therefore, developing ASN competencies is an urgent need that cannot be postponed, whether through formal education, technical training, technical guidance, or non-classical learning mechanisms based on digital technology.

Several previous studies have highlighted the importance of civil servant competency development in improving bureaucratic performance, but they still face various limitations. Hernawati *et al.* (2022) found that civil servant competency development strategies in East Java were hampered by funding, instructors, and the suitability of training programs. Ayu, Karningsih, and Harsoyo (2022) showed that the fulfillment of civil servant competency needs in Central Java was suboptimal due to the general nature of training. Simbolon and Meilani (2023) demonstrated that competency development significantly impacted civil servant performance at the Riau Province Financial and Development Supervisory Agency (BPKP), but focused more on the inter-variable relationships without addressing specific strategies at the regional level. Meanwhile, Tallona, Dwijatenaya, and Musmuliadi (2022) emphasized the crucial role of employee competency in civil servant performance at the West Kutai Inspectorate. However, this study did not address the in-depth aspects of civil servant competency development within the development planning agency. Thus, there is still a research gap regarding the development of civil servant competencies in the Bappedalitbang of West Kutai Regency, which plays a strategic role in development planning. Therefore, this research is crucial to fill this gap. This research focuses on answering the question, "How is the development of civil servant competencies in Bappedalitbang of West Kutai Regency?"

THEORETICAL BASIS

Capacity development is a multidimensional process encompassing human resource development, organizational strengthening, and institutional reform, with the goal of driving sustainable change, not just temporary solutions (Danquah *et al.*, 2023; Merino & Carmenado, 2012; Ubels *et al.*, 2010). Its role is crucial in various sectors, such as climate change adaptation, environmental conservation, public sector innovation, education, and community development. Each sector requires strategies tailored to local characteristics and led by local actors. (Franco & Tracey, 2019; Palm, 2020) For capacity development to be effective, the approach must be contextual, aligned with the capacities, needs, and priorities of local communities, rather than simply adopting external models or uniform approaches (De Bruyn, 2019; Saleh *et al.*, 2022; Sokona, 2022). Successful strategies are those that value local knowledge while considering the socio-political, economic, and cultural realities of the implementation site. (Hope, 2011; Leeman *et al.*, 2015; Susana & Ignacio, 2012) Therefore, capacity development needs to be carried out comprehensively at various system levels, including structures, mechanisms, human resources, skills, and supporting instruments (Potter & Brough, 2004). These efforts can be realized through

various learning methods, such as workshops, seminars, internet-based learning, independent study, and short courses that serve to increase participants' knowledge, skills, and confidence (Decorby-Watson et al., 2018). Furthermore, as the need for integration of research evidence into policy and practice increases, capacity development must also provide new skills and structural support to enable stakeholders to manage and utilize this knowledge effectively. (Golhasany & Harvey, 2023) However, despite significant investments globally, many capacity-building initiatives have yet to demonstrate long-term impact. This is often due to weak local ownership, a lack of adaptation to contextual needs, and limited sustainable funding (Goldberg & Bryant, 2012). Therefore, the future direction of capacity development must emphasize locally based, flexible, and integrative strategies that build lasting capacity across sectors and institutions.

METHOD

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the phenomenon of ASN competency development in the Regional Development Planning Agency (BappedaLitbang) of West Kutai Regency in depth. The research location is BappedaLitbang of West Kutai Regency, East Kalimantan, which has a strategic role in regional development planning and research. Informants were determined using a purposive sampling technique based on the relevance of their positions to the research issues. Informants consisted of structural officials (Secretaries and Heads of Divisions), functional officials (Planners and Policy Analysts), and implementing staff. This selection aimed to ensure that the data obtained represented the planning, implementation, and evaluation of ASN competency development at various job levels. Data were collected through in-depth semi-structured interviews, observations of ASN activities, and analysis of documentation in the form of Strategic Plans (Renstra), Work Plans (Renja), and personnel reports. Method triangulation was carried out to ensure data credibility by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation (Denzin, 2017).

Data analysis used the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014) through reduction, presentation, and conclusion drawing, which facilitated the organization of information according to the research indicators: competency development planning, implementation, and evaluation. Data validity was tested through source triangulation (between structural, functional, and staff officials), method triangulation, and member checking to confirm interview findings with informants (Lincoln & Guba, 1985). This approach aligns with public policy research practices, where qualitative methods are used to examine the complexity of civil servant management and bureaucratic capacity development (Raudla et al., 2021). Furthermore, content validation of the interview instrument adhered to the principle of content validity to ensure that questions were truly relevant to the research objectives (Yusoff, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The theoretical framework in this study stems from the concept of ASN competency development, which emphasizes the importance of systematic planning, implementation, and evaluation. According to Hertati et al. (2023:229), competency development is a strategic process that must be designed from the planning stage based on needs analysis, implemented through relevant training programs, and evaluated measurably to assess its impact on organizational performance.

Competency Development Planning

Interview results indicate that civil servant competency development planning at the West Kutai Regency BappedaLitbang (Regional Development Planning Agency) still faces fundamental limitations. Informant 1 (Head of Planning) revealed that "competency development planning has been included in the Strategic Plan and Work Plan, but it is not yet fully based on job analysis. Most programs follow the central or provincial model." This was reinforced by Informant 2 (Secretary of BappedaLitbang) who added that "the budget for competency development is very limited, so only civil servants in certain positions can be facilitated." This situation indicates that planning remains administrative in nature, not fully strategic. This phenomenon aligns with research by Hernawati et al. (2022), which asserts that ASN competency development planning is often hampered by budget constraints and training programs that are not yet relevant to job requirements. Similarly, Ayu et al. (2022) also found that meeting ASN competency needs in Central Java is suboptimal because needs identification is often not specifically based on job analysis. Thus, competency development planning in West Kutai still shows a gap between actual ASN needs and the development plans developed.

Implementation of Competency Development

During the implementation phase, the civil servant competency development program at the West Kutai BappedaLitbang (Regional Development Planning Agency) has not been optimal. Informant 4 (Functional Planning Officer) stated that "the training attended was mostly general in nature, such as leadership and administration. Technical training relevant to the position, such as data-based planning or policy analysis, is still rarely available." Informant 2 added that "in 2022, only around 27% of civil servants participated in training related to job analysis, out of a target of 68%." This gap is consistent with research by Febrisoni (2022), which shows that meeting mandatory ASN competency development hours is often hampered by limited training resources and unsystematic competency mapping. Meanwhile, Simbolon and Meilani (2023) emphasized that competency development significantly impacts ASN performance, thus the low level of training participation in West Kutai has the potential to reduce organizational performance effectiveness. Furthermore, the equalization of structural to functional positions in 2021 also presented new challenges. Informant 1 stated that "ASN transferred to functional positions are still adapting to their new duties, while the available training does not fully support these demands." This aligns with the findings of Ayu *et al.* (2022), which found that training is often generic and does not adequately support the specific technical needs of functional positions.

Competency Development Evaluation

Evaluation of civil servant competency development at the West Kutai BappedaLitbang (Regional Development Planning Agency) is also still weak. Informant 3 (Policy Analyst Staff) stated that "evaluations are usually limited to administrative reports on training attendance, without considering whether the knowledge is used in the workplace." Similarly, Informant 4 stated that "there is no instrument to assess the impact of training on civil servant performance. After training, employees return to work without further monitoring." This aligns with research (Tallona *et al.*, 2022), which emphasizes the importance of employee competency as a dominant factor in ASN performance. However, competency development will be effective only if accompanied by implementation evaluation. Unfortunately, in West Kutai, evaluation remains administrative in nature and fails to address the extent to which training contributes to regional development planning. Given these conditions, it can be said that the evaluation of ASN competency development in West Kutai has not met the essence of learning evaluation, which should assess changes in work behavior. As Simbolon and Meilani (2023) emphasize, competency development should be measured by its impact on organizational performance, not just the quantity of training hours. The results of this study indicate that the development of ASN competencies in the West Kutai BappedaLitbang still faces obstacles at all stages: planning that is not based on job needs analysis, implementation that has not achieved targets and is not relevant to functional demands, and evaluation that is still administrative. These findings are consistent with several previous studies, but provide a new contribution by focusing on the context of the West Kutai BappedaLitbang, which plays a strategic role in regional development planning. Thus, this study emphasizes the importance of ASN competency development as a key factor in the success of the regional bureaucracy and simultaneously highlights the need for a more contextual, systematic, and sustainable strategy.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the development of ASN competencies in the West Kutai Regency BappedaLitbang has not been optimal at all stages, including planning, implementation, and evaluation. In terms of planning, competency development is not fully based on job analysis and is still affected by budget constraints, which make training prioritized only for certain positions. At the implementation stage, program implementation achievements are still low, with training being more general in nature than technical according to the needs of functional positions, so that ASN still experience difficulties adapting after job equivalency. At the evaluation stage, the existing mechanism emphasizes administrative presence without assessing the effectiveness of the application of new knowledge in daily work. These findings emphasize that ASN competency development needs to be directed toward more accurate mapping of job requirements, the provision of relevant training programs, and performance-based evaluations so that competency development is not merely an administrative obligation but actually impacts the quality of regional development planning. This study also fills a research gap by providing an empirical contribution to the study of ASN competency development in regional development planning agencies, particularly in the West Kutai Regency BappedaLitbang.

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