

Merit System in Recruitment and Selection Process of Civil Servant Candidate in Malang Indonesia (Implementation of Recruitment and Selection of Civil Servant Candidate in 2010)

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Abstract

Problems in the recruitment and selection of civil servant candidate (CPNS) related to transparency, competition, objectivity, and competence aspects. This study aimed to analyze the implementation and various obstacles in the application of the merit principles in recruitment and selection of CPNS. This study used post-positivism paradigm and qualitative method. Data were collected by in-depth interviews, Focus Group Discussion, and data documentation, continued by interactive data analysis. The result showed that the recruitment and selection process was not based on merit principles; which characterized by formation submission which is not based on the bureaucracy needs, indications of corruption, collusion, and nepotism, and applicants were not analyzed based on their passing grade. Based on the macro analysis, the conditions were caused by the policy framework as the basis for the implementation of the recruitment and selection which did not explicitly and clearly explained about the merit system. Otherwise, meso analysis found it was caused by overlapping authority between Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform and State Personnel Board as personnel management institutions. Furthermore, micro-analysis found three barriers on the recruitment and selection of CPNS which was not implemented based on the merit principles, i.e. administrative, political and cultural, and technical barriers.

Keywords: civil servants candidate, merit system, recruitment, selection.

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1. Introduction

Several studies and experience of developing countries indicate that the recruitment and selection not organized in a professional manner based on the merit system is the cause of low employee performance. The World Bank study shows that preferential or meritocratic achievement in the development of such employees in employee recruitment, selection procedures, and personnel management have provided the greatest impact on improving the overall performance of the administration, as compared with administrative aspects such as procedures, management systems, financial systems, and policy-making system. Furthermore, the study reveals that to cut the cronyism and political interference in the bureaucracy, civil service reform in several states must first be done to improve the recruitment and selection process to be transparent and competitive accompanied by an attempt to formulate a clear career path and employee performance evaluation system (World Bank, 2003). Therefore, the World Bank recommends that the personnel system reform that emphasizes competency-based recruitment as a key strategy in improving the performance of the public sector as a whole.

Weaknesses in recruitment and selection raise criticism—that in order to follow the selection process, candidates must fulfill too many administrative requirements, but not substantial. Some candidates even have to pay and cheat during the exam (Zen, 2006). This becomes a problem when the delivery of recruitment and selection is given to the district or city. Regionalism and kinship has led to the unfair recruitment process producing low quality officers. The tendency to prioritize the natives in the recruitment of civil servants is increasingly prominent. Thus, some time ago, the recruitment process in some areas has led to demonstrations and chaos situation (Prasojo, 2007).

Various problems occur in the process of recruitment and selection of employees in various districts/cities in Indonesia. The data from the Ministry of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform show that there are 40 districts/cities in 16 provinces violated the process in 2010 include: (1) appointing a person who did not take the test; (2) passing those recommended by the authority; (3) bribing the local committee; (4) manipulating the difficulty level of the test for certain candidates; (5) the local government did not immediately report the test results of the prospective candidates to the State Personnel Board, only reported to the Regional Personnel Board.

Recruitment is not based on the analysis of the needs of employees, job and workload analysis needed by the bureaucracy. Some individuals take advantage of this condition. Transparency and objectivity in determining the formation has been ignored although it is a pillar of the merit system. In 2010, the Ministry of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform did not attach the job and workload analysis in the filed formations; the real needs of employees were not know. This study focuses on the merit system in the implementation of a decentralized staffing system to see progress and constraints faced by the district after the decentralization, particularly in the process of recruitment and selection of civil servants. The downside is the selection process could impact on the poor quality of public services. Therefore, the district staffing reforms starting from the recruitment and selection process is a challenge that must be powered continuously so that local governments can provide maximum and professional service to the community in order to strengthen local government institutions starting from the implementation of transparent, objective, competitive, and promoting competency recruitment and selection.

2. Theoretical Review

2.1. Public Personnel System

The staffing system is part of the administration of the country where discretion is determined from the goal to be achieved — as submitted by Ban & Riccucci (2002) that public personnel system, normally termed as civil service systems, was developed to support goals central to the concept of public administration in a democracy. Likewise, as delivered by Riggs, administrative personnel are part of the public administration paradigm. According to Golembiewski, public administration can be understood through the locus and focus of government bureaucracy (Riggs, 1998).

The staffing system, according to Mosher in Islamy, is classified into four: (1) the political executive system are state employees with temporary system but they have the authority to make decisions and are outside the civil service; (2) the general civil service has permanent career employees with high status yet without the test, but it is a "gift or remuneration" and support from friends (spoil system);

(3) the professional career system is a professional employees with a permanent employee status, set career plans are, progressive, based on the principle of development, through the hierarchical position, based on professional expertise; and (4) the collective system is employment contract based on an agreement cooperation between labor (union) with government workers. The staffing system developed in developed countries such as the United States, France, Britain and Germany (Islamy, 1997).

2.2. Reform of Personnel in Administration Reform Perspective

In the framework of the administrative reform, one of the main factors and actors that play a role in the realization of good governance and good governance is the bureaucracy. Reliable apparatus must fill professional bureaucracy since the state apparatus not only implement the policy but also act as a facilitator for the development of society. The success of the development of the competitiveness of a nation is determined by its commitment to the systematic effort to fix the state apparatus (Prasojo, 2006).

Therefore, civil service reform is an improvement made in the effort to reform the administration of the government bureaucracy. Even the World Bank study in countries undergoing transition shows the same that the implementation of the administrative reform covers wide sectors and civil service reform is part of it (World Bank, 2003). Some civil service reform efforts should be directed to creating professional and independent civil servants, having the culture of serving the community. To address the staffing issues, a variety of levers to change the system towards the desired direction needs to be done.

Further said, these levers are: (1) the application of the merit system in the public bureaucracy; (2) strengthening civil service code of ethics and conduct; (3) reformulation of educational apparatus and demilitarization of public services; (4) development paradigm, mentality and culture of the public entrepreneur; and (5) controlling the active participation of civil servants in the activities of political events (elections) (Prasojo, 2007). Recruitment and selection in the context of civil service reform becomes a very important component for the implementation of public administration reform as it is one of the ways to improve the quality of personnel resources in addition to training and career advancement (Siegel and Myrle, 1985).

Therefore, in accordance with the purpose of the implementation of the administrative reform, it can be concluded that the recruitment and selection is the key to enhancing the quality of public servants required for the implementation of administrative reform as a whole.

2.3. Concepts and Indicators of Merit System

McNamee and Miller (2009) assert that merit is a characteristic of the individual, meritocracy is a characteristic of societies as a whole in which individuals are awarded a direct proportion of the results of operations and the ability of the individual. Michael Young popularizes the concept of meritocracy in his book "The Rise of the Meritocracy". In a broad sense, it is defined as a social order built around a notion of merit particularly subject, which is admitted as to be able to anticipate the social nature of the ideal (Daniels, 1978). Merit is defined as an individual characteristic, the meritocracy is a characteristic of society as a whole (McNamee and Miller, 2009). Thus, meritocracy is a social system in which a person's overall proportion awarded directly from the results of operations and ability. Thus, meritocracy can be run if there is a mechanism called the merit system.

McCrudden (1998), quoting Fallon, then identifies five different concepts of merit. In this model, merit is often understood as a synonym of non-discrimination, cronyism, or political favoritism. The second model is a general 'common sense' merit. This model requires that the qualities sought in order to achieve the goals should be viewed as generally valuable in the society. The third concept of merit is associated with strict job - relatedness. This model requires a tighter level of concordance between the tools (means) used and the objectives (ends) to be achieved. The fourth model is merit as the capacity to produce particular job-related results. The fourth model is likely to choose a broader view with regard to any elements contained in a job (what the job consists of). This model is more interested in the views that incorporate various ideas about the nature of work that can help the implementation of the work than simply the extent necessary to perform these jobs. The fifth model of merit is merit as the capacity to produce things that are beneficial to the organization. In this model, merit does not restrict of what is meant by merit—a person selected to do so.

Further elements of the merit system include withdrawal activity, development, and maintenance of employees. While the merit system indicator associated with recruitment and selection recruitment are: 1) good and reliable planning through creative and aggressive recruitment techniques; 2) all who participate in the program must be responsible and well-defined; 3) recruitment involves capable individuals and appropriate sources in an effort to get workers from all segments of society; 4) all applicants are treated fairly regardless of political background, race, color religion, ethnic origin, sex, marital status, age, or of disability, as well as getting the appropriate rewards to their privacy and constitutional rights; 5) selection is based on the ability, knowledge, and expertise through fair and open competition for all to have the same opportunity; 6) selection method can be used to ensure that only capable candidates get the job as well as their placement in the most appropriate position; 7) employees accepted should be protected from favoritism or fraud on the political objectives (Sulardi, 2005)

2.4. Barriers of the Merit System

Merit system relates to the management of professional personnel in a neutral, pressure-free environment. It is as stated by Shafritz, Hyde, and Rosenbloom in Sulardi (2005) "As with many questions in public administration, the issue of how the overall public personnel function should be organized has been plagued by an attempt to realize several incompatible values at once. Thus, achieving neutral competence requires the creation of a relatively independent agency to help insulate public employees from the partisan demands of political executives."

Besides the political reasons that hinder the implementation of the merit system, personnel management and nepotism is also an obstacle in the implementation of the merit system. As presented by Abdallah "nepotism is defined as the employment of relatives in the same organization or the use of family influence to employ them in other organization". This means that nepotism is hiring relatives in the same organization or use family influence to hire someone in another organization (Abdallah et al., 1998). Furthermore, Prasojo states that there are three key factors in policy implementation, in particular the recruitment and selection policies: technical factors are directly related to the activities and measures undertaken in the field, political factors related to the actors involved as well as the issues of authority and administrative factors related to the implementation mechanism (Prasojo, 2006).

Furthermore, Gatewood and Field (2001) found to implement good recruitment and selection, the process needs to be planned and implemented carefully. In fact, it should be done by a special part in the organization having the ability to predict and accurately assess the ability of each applicant's talents. This is in accordance with what is stated by Prasojo that in terms of recruitment and selection, executing agency should be separated from policy-making institutions and should be independent to avoid conflict of interest. In the implementation structure, the relationships in the chain must be a minimum; there is prevention and intervention outside, and there is control over the implementation (Prasojo, 2006).

3. Methods

3.1. Paradigms and Research Approach

This study used post-positivism paradigm. One of the aspects that characterize post-positivism paradigm is to use the theory as a reference, which is constructed such that it can be connected to the empirical world by making operational definitions. In addition to the reference to the theory of post-positivism characterized by the close relationship between researcher and the object studied, we may not be able to see the truth if the observation is done behind the scenes without being directly involved with the object; relationship between the observer and the object is interactive but researchers must remain neutral. In this regard, the study also used qualitative methods. We describe comprehensively the phenomenon under study as in the focus of research, which in turn can answer the problems that have been formulated and thus the research objectives can be achieved.

Table 1: Operationalization of the Concept of Research

Concept	Focus	Category
1. Planning	Specifies the number of employees in accordance with the needs of the organization	Determine formation Coordination with the parties involved in the recruitment and selection
2. Implementation of recruitment and selection of candidates of civil servants based on merit system	A recruitment and selection process in which people accepted meet the competence and qualifications specified in the formation and selection is carried out in an objective and transparent manner	All citizens are given equal opportunity Open competition Decision based on passing grade
3. The obstacles in the application of merit system	Obstacle encountered in the implementation of the merit system is in the process of recruitment and selection of candidates civil servants	Administrative barriers Political and cultural barriers Technical barriers

1.2. Data Analysis

Analysis of the data was used to answer the research questions using interactive data analysis by Miles and Huberman (1994). Data analysis was performed during and after the fieldwork. Researchers also conducted the analysis, processing, and writing research reports. The data analysis started by examining all data collected from various sources. The next step was to make data reduction and abstraction of the essence of each focus studied. Next was to put them in the form of units to be categorized. The next stage was to check the validity of the data. After completion of this phase, the researcher then moved on to the interpretation of the data and processed it into a research report.

4. Research Finding

4.1. Formation Stage

Formation is the basis of the recruitment and selection of civil servants. Each year, the formation of national civil servants is assigned by the Minister of Administrative Reform after listening to the opinion of the Minister of Finance and the consideration of the Head of State Personnel Board. Local governments were given the authority to propose the formation.

4.2. Job Analysis

Job analysis that has not been prepared properly is caused by a lack of available resources, both personnel resources and financial resources. Without a job analysis, employee needs cannot be known with certainty. The unavailability of job analysis can be a major cause of weak implementation of recruitment. Finally, the competence of employees is often not as expected so that the right man in the right place is hard to be realized.

4.3. Coordination Stage

One of the main things coordinated with the governors is scheduled recruitment of civil servant candidates. The schedule is done simultaneously to avoid overlapping. Actually, in coordination with the governors it is simply hearing about the schedule for recruitment. This means that the coordination function is simply about technical matters related to the recruitment and selection process.

Deputy of Human Resources and Bureaucratic Reforms states that coordination with governor also involves selecting state universities who will be partners in the selection process. However, the process of selecting state universities as a partner is not transparent and there seems to be collusion and nepotism. As the informant says that there are hidden interests between local governments and universities as partners. Finally, the selection still open up opportunities for the practice of corruption, collusion and nepotism. The selection of universities as a partner is expected to obtain competent human resources.

4.4. Merit System: Equal Opportunity, Open Competition and Fairness

To provide equal opportunities for the public to participate in the recruitment, announcement is made through the mass media and the government's official web. In the announcement, information included is about the requirements, level of education, and age, and other administrative requirements. Thus public can have equal access. Indications of selection that is not transparent and ignores the element of fairness are not easily revealed. Corruption, collusion, and nepotism occur systemically involving many actors. These conditions become barriers to the implementation of the merit system. The critical points are likely to lack of transparency, competition, competence and objectivity in the process of determining the formation, management of test results, and the announcement of candidates accepted. Other processes such as vacancy announcement, registration, and test execution are relatively free from the indications of collusion.

4.5. Decision: Passing Grade

The final stage of the recruitment process is the decision whether applicants are accepted or not. One of the main principles of the civil service system is to obtain the best candidates. Like those in the UN report that the " application should be sought as widely as necessary in the country to obtain qualified candidates" (UNDG, 2009). Selection philosophy to obtain the best candidates is basically dependent on the base or selection criteria and sources used. Decision on acceptance of candidates is based on passing grade. Gatewood and Field (2001), called this a top-down selection approach. This means that the results are ranked from the highest to the lowest. The weakness of the model is that there is no guarantee that the participants having the highest score will automatically have the adequate skills and abilities. This weakness can be minimized by determining the passing grade. It requires a minimum passing score in order to obtain quality selection results.

4.6. The Barriers of Merit System

4.6.1. Administrative and Technical Barriers

Recruitment and selection of civil servants is based on the provisions of the legislation. Law No. 43 of 1999 essentially adheres to the principle of merit, although not specifically within the settings.

The law provides that all functions and personnel management uses the merit principle. The problem, however, lies precisely in regulations of personnel management based on the principles of merit. Selection mechanism involving the university as a partner can cause problems such as the transparency. Potential collusion occurs in the recruitment process. Similarly, as stated by Prasojo (2006, 2007), in terms of recruitment and selection, the implementing agency (executing agency) should be separated from policy-making institutions. They must be independent to avoid conflict of interests. In the implementation structure, the relationship in the chain should be minimum so that it can prevent interference from outside, so that the control functions can be implemented effectively.

Technical barriers in the process of recruitment and selection of employees regarding *dkungan* infrastructure. Unpreparedness look at the handling of the application file receipt. And the absence of officers who can provide information to prospective applicants.

4.6.2. *Politic and Culture Barriers*

Conspiracy that occurs naturally cannot easily be traced because it involves many parties—Sulardi (2005) cited Ting Gong, calls this as collective corruption. That means, conspiracy carried out not only by individuals but also made on the agreement of the group, namely corruption committed by some people, and collusion to obtain the benefit of individuals and groups against public activities without regard to ethics and legality. The aspect conducted by officials with the aim to accommodate the interests of the officials, legislative, political parties, and various interest groups. Political corruption does not always involve money but also through the exchange of influence or favoritism to a group of people. Violations of the public interest to private interests appear both political and bureaucratic, organized and unorganized (Sulardi, 2005).

The public also likely to support the practice for collusion in the recruitment process of employees. This means that the people trying to lobby so that they can pass the selection in a way that is not fair. They take the shortcut; they do not want to compete. The culture tends to teach to be on top without hard work or fair competition (Personal Communication, 2011).

5. Conclusion

The results showed that formation submission has not been based on the analysis on the needs of employees, as well as job and workload analysis. This indicates the absence of the principle of objectivity in the filing of formation; there is even a tendency that the proposed formation is simply by design. Furthermore, in the second stage, direct appointment in terms of determining the college as a partner city government was found.

There are three factors inhibiting the application of the merit system in the recruitment and selection of employees. The first is the administrative barriers related to the lack of harmonization between the policy framework which became the legal basis for carrying out recruitment and selection of employees. Further, the system has not been described in detail including the principles of merit in the policy framework as the basis of law enforcement recruitment and selection of employees. It could disrupt the implementation of the mechanism of recruitment and selection of employees. The second is the political and cultural barriers.

The results showed indications of corruption in the process of recruitment and selection of employees. Results also indicate that the practice of transaction between applicants and committee still happens. The third is the technical barriers associated with the limited ability of personnel resources in carrying out the responsibility and the lack of infrastructure in the process of recruitment and selection of employees.

Thus, the need to reform the policy framework in detail to explain how the merit principle can be run is needed. There is also a need for harmonization of employment regulations in order to avoid overlapping regulations, including the improvement of the content of policy governing personnel management.

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