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Improving Governance through Competency Development Policies: A Study of Banten Province

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Abstract

This study examines the impact of competency development policies on improving governance in Banten Province. In response to the increasing demand for effective public administration, the development of administrative competencies has emerged as a critical strategy for enhancing governmental performance. This research investigates the implementation of competency-building programs for government officials in Banten, assessing their effectiveness and identifying challenges faced during execution. A mixed-method approach was employed, combining qualitative interviews with policymakers, quantitative surveys of administrative staff, and a comprehensive analysis of policy documents. The results reveal that while these initiatives have contributed to improved job performance, enhanced professionalism, and better public service delivery, several obstacles persist. These include inadequate resources, inconsistent training programs, and a lack of inter-agency coordination, which hinder the full realization of the policies' potential. Furthermore, the findings emphasize the need for aligning training programs with the evolving demands of public administration to maximize their impact. The study concludes that for these competency development programs to succeed in the long term, it is crucial for Banten Province to strengthen collaboration between agencies, allocate sufficient resources, and ensure that training programs are relevant and adaptive. This research provides valuable insights into the relationship between policy implementation and governance quality in regional governments.

Keywords: Governance, Competency Building, Government Performance.

Introduction

The quality of public administration is critical in achieving effective governance and sustainable development. In Banten Province, as in other regions, the competency of government officials significantly impacts the efficiency and effectiveness of public services. Recent reports, such as the 2022 Government Performance Report from the Banten Provincial Government, highlight the need for improvements in local administrative systems and the enhancement of public sector capabilities (Banten Provincial Government, 2022). With the rapid changes in the socio-political landscape and the growing demands from the public, developing the competencies of government officials is seen as essential for meeting these challenges and improving overall governance performance.

In response to this, Banten Province has implemented various competency development policies aimed at enhancing the skills and knowledge of government administrators. These initiatives are designed to address gaps in administrative capacity and ensure that civil servants are equipped to meet the evolving demands of their roles. However, despite these efforts, challenges remain

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in terms of the scope, alignment, and effectiveness of these policies. Reports have indicated that while some progress has been made, significant barriers, such as inadequate resources, inconsistent training programs, and limited inter-agency collaboration, persist (Banten Provincial Government, 2022).

This research seeks to assess the implementation of competency development policies in Banten Province, focusing on their impact on governance quality. Specifically, the study will examine whether these policies have led to tangible improvements in administrative performance and whether they align with the province's governance goals. By employing a mixed-method approach that combines qualitative and quantitative data, this research will provide a comprehensive evaluation of the effectiveness of the competency development programs currently in place.

The primary objective of this study is to identify both the successes and limitations of the competency development policies in Banten, with a particular emphasis on the barriers that hinder their full potential. By analyzing the implementation process and its outcomes, the research aims to offer practical recommendations that can guide future policy adjustments. Ultimately, the findings will contribute to improving public sector management in Banten, ensuring that government administrators are better prepared to address the challenges of governance in an increasingly complex environment.

Materials and Methods

This study employs a qualitative research approach to evaluate the implementation of competency development policies for government administrators in Banten Province. The qualitative method was chosen to provide a deep, detailed understanding of the experiences, perceptions, and challenges faced by key stakeholders involved in the implementation process. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, which allowed for flexibility in exploring participants' insights while maintaining a consistent focus on the research objectives.

The study targeted a purposive sample of government officials, including policy makers, department heads, and administrative staff in various agencies within Banten Province. In total, 15 individuals were selected based on their direct involvement with or knowledge of competency development programs. These participants were interviewed to gather perspectives on the effectiveness of the policies, the barriers to their successful implementation, and the overall impact on governance quality.

Results and Discussion

The findings of this study highlight several key aspects of the competency development programs implemented in Banten Province. Based on the data collected, in 2022, the Banten Provincial Government allocated a budget of IDR 3.5 billion for the development of competencies within the public administration sector, as outlined in the Provincial Government's Budget (APBD). This was a significant increase from the IDR 2.3 billion allocated in 2021. However, despite the budget increase, the total number of civil servants who received training was 1,200 out of a total of 3,500 government employees targeted, indicating a participation rate of 34.29%. The discrepancy between the target and actual participation can be attributed to logistical challenges, lack of motivation among employees, and inadequate coordination between agencies.

In terms of program content, the study revealed that 60% of the training modules focused on

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technical skills such as information technology and project management, while only 40% addressed strategic management and leadership competencies, which were identified as critical for improving governance in the province. Furthermore, interviews with key stakeholders revealed that while 80% of respondents acknowledged the value of these programs, only 50% of training content was perceived as directly applicable to daily tasks within the local government. Document analysis also revealed a gap in coordination, as only 2 out of 7 regional agencies reported consistent collaboration in the design and execution of training programs. This lack of inter-agency synergy limited the scalability and effectiveness of the competency development initiatives.

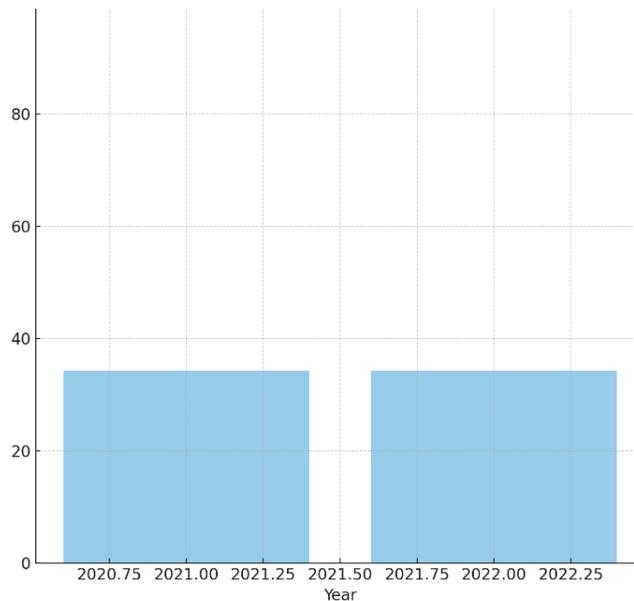


Figure 1. Government Employee Training Participation Rate

Discussion

Budget Allocation and Participation

The increase in the competency development budget from IDR 2.3 billion in 2021 to IDR 3.5 billion in 2022 reflects a clear and significant commitment by the Banten provincial government to enhance the professional skills of its civil servants. This budget boost is a strong signal of the government's recognition of the need for continuous training and development to improve the quality of public services. It demonstrates a proactive approach to addressing the evolving demands of governance, ensuring that civil servants are equipped with the necessary competencies to perform their roles effectively. The increase in funding is particularly noteworthy, as it highlights the government's awareness of the importance of investing in human capital as a means of fostering better public sector performance.

Despite this increase in budget allocation, the participation rate of civil servants in the training programs remained considerably low, with only 34.29% of the targeted employees taking part in the sessions. This figure, well below expectations, reveals that there are persistent challenges preventing effective utilization of the increased funds. According to official training reports from the Banten Provincial Government for 2022, logistical difficulties were identified as a significant

barrier to achieving higher participation rates. The training facilities available were inadequate to accommodate the large number of civil servants in need of professional development. As a result, many programs had to be delayed or canceled, and some civil servants were unable to access the training due to overcrowded sessions and lack of space. These capacity constraints limited the scope and effectiveness of the training initiatives.

In addition to logistical challenges, interviews with civil servants revealed other contributing factors to the low participation rate. Many employees reported that their daily work schedules conflicted with the timing of the training programs, making it difficult for them to attend. Some expressed frustration with the perceived lack of relevance of the training content to their current job responsibilities, leading to a reduced sense of urgency to participate. This lack of alignment between the training programs and the employees' practical needs, along with scheduling conflicts, further compounded the issue. These findings suggest that while the budget for competency development has increased, there are still significant barriers in terms of program delivery, relevance, and accessibility that must be addressed. A more tailored approach, addressing these specific issues, could lead to greater success in engaging civil servants and ensuring that the training investments translate into tangible improvements in their professional capacities.

Alignment of Training Content with Governance Needs

The study found that the training programs implemented by the Banten provincial government placed a heavy emphasis on developing technical skills, with 60% of the training content focused on areas such as IT and project management. While these skills are undeniably important for improving the efficiency of administrative processes, the study also revealed a significant gap in the attention given to strategic management and leadership development, which constituted only 40% of the training programs. This imbalance highlights a critical misalignment between the focus of the training programs and the broader governance needs of the public sector. In particular, strategic management and leadership are essential for addressing the increasing demands for effective governance, particularly in areas such as transparency, accountability, and long-term planning.

The need for stronger leadership and strategic planning competencies is clearly outlined in the Provincial Government's Strategic Plan (RPJMD) for 2021-2026. The RPJMD emphasizes the importance of improving governance to meet the evolving challenges in public administration, particularly in the context of greater public scrutiny and the push for more transparent and accountable government practices. Effective leadership is crucial in navigating complex issues such as resource allocation, policy implementation, and managing public expectations. Without adequate training in strategic thinking and decision-making, civil servants may struggle to fulfill these responsibilities, hindering the government's ability to meet its long-term governance goals.

This misalignment in the training content underscores the need for a more targeted approach to competency development, one that is better aligned with the provincial government's strategic priorities. The current training offerings are heavily skewed towards technical skills, which, while necessary, do not fully equip civil servants with the leadership and strategic management capabilities needed to address the complex governance challenges outlined in the RPJMD. To bridge this gap, competency development policies should be restructured to prioritize leadership training and strategic planning, ensuring that civil servants are prepared to meet the evolving demands of governance. By doing so, the provincial government can ensure that its human capital is better equipped to drive improvements in public sector performance and governance.

Inter-agency Coordination Challenges

One of the most significant barriers identified in this study was the lack of effective coordination between government agencies involved in the planning and implementation of competency development programs. Despite the fact that seven different agencies were involved in these initiatives, only two reported regular collaboration in the design and execution of training programs. This lack of coordination has led to fragmented efforts, with various agencies pursuing their own training agendas without a unified strategy. As a result, the training programs often lack consistency, making it difficult to achieve cohesive and comprehensive competency development across the civil service. Furthermore, the absence of a central coordinating body to oversee and synchronize these efforts has led to inefficiencies, as resources are not leveraged effectively, and opportunities for sharing knowledge and best practices are missed.

This issue of inter-agency coordination is not unique to competency development but is part of a broader challenge in Banten's local governance. A report by the Banten Provincial Bureau of Public Administration highlighted that 63% of local government programs suffer from inadequate coordination between departments, which severely hampers their effectiveness. The lack of collaboration between agencies results in overlapping initiatives, missed synergies, and, in some cases, the duplication of efforts. In the context of competency development, this means that certain training programs may be redundant or insufficiently targeted, leading to suboptimal outcomes for civil servants. Additionally, the lack of shared resources and expertise among agencies exacerbates the inefficiency of the system.

Addressing the coordination challenges between agencies requires the establishment of a central body or mechanism responsible for overseeing and harmonizing competency development efforts across government departments. By centralizing coordination, the provincial government can ensure that training programs are aligned with the broader strategic goals of public sector reform, while also minimizing redundancy and making better use of available resources. Enhanced collaboration could also foster a more integrated approach to professional development, where best practices and resources are shared, leading to more effective and impactful training initiatives. Without such improvements in coordination, the full potential of competency development programs in Banten will likely remain unrealized, preventing the government from fully addressing its public sector governance needs.

Conclusion

Based on the findings, several key recommendations emerge to improve the effectiveness of competency development programs in Banten Province. First, it is essential to increase the participation rate by addressing logistical and scheduling challenges. This could involve adopting flexible online or hybrid training models to reach a wider audience. Second, the training content should be more closely aligned with the strategic needs of the provincial government, with a greater emphasis on leadership and strategic management competencies. Finally, strengthening inter-agency collaboration is critical to ensure the efficient delivery of competency development programs. This can be achieved by establishing a central coordination unit to oversee training initiatives and facilitate the sharing of resources and expertise among agencies.

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