

Analysis of the Utilization of Assessment Center Results in Civil Servant Career Development in the Regional Government of North Sulawesi Province

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Abstract. *Assessment center is a comprehensive method to assess the ability, competence and suitability of a person with a certain role or position, by measuring technical and non-technical competence. The North Sulawesi Provincial Government in supporting the bureaucratic reform process has the responsibility to implement employee development programs through the assessment center method before holding a position as a high-ranking official. This study was conducted to explain the utilization of assessment center results in career development (promotion, rotation/mutation, and competency development) of Civil Servants (PNS) in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government. Qualitative design was used in this study. The research findings that the utilization of assessment center results by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government in this case through BKD as the personnel management official has not been effective enough because there are still elements of subjectivity in the mutation/rotation of Officials/Employees. In terms of selection/filling of JPTP (Promotion), the North Sulawesi Provincial Government is committed to continuing to use the Assessment Center method even though in reality there are still elements of subjectivity when it is already in the selection committee. In addition, the results of interviews with informants indicate that the utilization of assessment center results has not been optimal due to various factors, including political intervention, lack of understanding of assessment centers, implementation of the merit system, organizational culture, talent management systems, and budget issues and availability of training, as well as regulations/legal umbrellas.*

Keywords: *Civil Servant, Assessment Center, Career Development*

Received: July 28, 2024

Revised: August 20, 2024

Accepted: September 30, 2024

INTRODUCTION

The success and achievement of organizational goals are highly dependent on the quality of its human resources. Through their ability to generate creative ideas and innovative solutions, set goals and design strategies, humans can provide a competitive advantage for organizations. According to Robbin (in Nuri Nurhayati & Dwi Novitasari, 2021) "every organization must have goals that they want to achieve, for that maximum resources are needed to achieve the goals of the organization, employees are the key to determining the success of the organization". The process of forming competent human resources is an ongoing effort, requiring a long time and consistent efforts. As the main pillar of development, civil servants have the responsibility to continue to develop themselves so that the organization can achieve its goals (Bandiyono et al., 2021).

Article 70 of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) Law expressly provides rights and opportunities for all ASN to improve their abilities through various development activities such

as education, training, and seminars. Furthermore, this law requires every government agency to prepare a competency development program. According to Maulana, (2023) the government must ensure that every civil servant has the opportunity to learn and develop because every civil servant has the right to equal opportunity to improve their abilities, and the government is obliged to provide the necessary facilities. In order to have competent, integrated, and professional employees, a continuous competency development system is needed (Dewi, 2020). In addition, it requires a high commitment from all parties to create a conducive work environment so that every employee can work professionally and free from bad influences such as corruption, collusion and nepotism so that the organization can achieve its goals. To ensure the sustainability of optimal management development, companies need to implement the right strategy (Parinsi & Musa, 2023). One strategic effort that can be taken is to use the Assessment Center (AC) method.

Assessment Center (AC) is a comprehensive method for evaluating employee managerial potential. Through a series of assessments, Assessment Center (AC) can help companies identify employees with high potential to occupy leadership positions. Thus, companies can carry out effective succession planning and ensure the availability of quality leadership talent in the future. Placing employees in positions that match their abilities is the main goal of competency assessment (Wahdati et al., 2022). Human resource management practitioners generally recognize how important this assessment is in the overall employee management process because fair and objective assessments not only benefit employees but also contribute greatly to the success of the organization (Qatrin & Mulyasari, 2023). Performance assessments provide employees with a comprehensive picture of their performance, including existing abilities, weaknesses that need to be improved, and potential that can be developed to achieve higher career goals.

Currently, it has become a topic of discussion among the community, especially in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government, that bureaucracy is still one of the nests of Corruption, Collusion and Nepotism (KKN) practices. In fact, there are many issues of nepotism in career development (job promotions) and employee placement (mutation/rotation), where information circulates in the community that there is still political influence and power from local government officials, and employee placement is not in accordance with the competencies they have. According to Habibi, (2020) this shows that the bureaucracy as the spearhead of public services has not optimally shown significant changes from the conditions before the reform. In addition, efforts to develop civil servant competencies have not been carried out optimally by various SKPDs in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government Environment, even in the North Sulawesi Provincial BKD itself. Public officials should uphold political neutrality and develop careers based on a merit system that prioritizes competence and track record (Maulana, 2021).

It is undeniable that the intervention of political officials towards bureaucratic officials is difficult to separate. Align with research from Sarah, (2022) on the other hand, the placement of employees who do not match their competence will hinder the achievement of optimal performance, so that institutional goals cannot be achieved effectively and efficiently. For this reason, a system is needed in employee career development that is able to be objective or at least can reduce the level of corruption, collusion and nepotism that occurs in the bureaucracy (Murti & Rizkika, 2023). The efforts of the North Sulawesi Provincial Government in supporting the bureaucratic reform process are certainly in line with the Government's Vision and Mission with the 2020-2024 National Bureaucratic Reform Road Map. The vision of the North Sulawesi Government is "North Sulawesi Advanced and Prosperous as Indonesia's Gateway to the Asia Pacific", with one of the missions being "Improving the Quality of North Sulawesi Humans."

In line with the vision and mission of the North Sulawesi Government, the Regional Civil Service Agency has made efforts to accelerate human development by participating in several employee development programs through the assessment center method. The purpose of the assessment center is to be able to identify high-potential employees who are ready for promotion, determine the right training program to develop their abilities, and assess a person's suitability

for both the current position and the position they will hold later (Megaster, 2023). To occupy a position as a Senior Leadership Official in a government agency, an employee must meet the established requirements and take part in an open competitive selection (in PP No. 11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management and Permen PAN & RB No. 15 of 2019 concerning Filling Senior Leadership Positions Openly and Competitively in Government Agencies). The assessment center stage is an absolute must and must be carried out by all participants who take part in the open selection for senior leadership positions (Suryanto & Darto, 2020).

In the Regulation of the State Civil Service Agency Number 26 of 2019 concerning the Development of the Implementation of Civil Servant Competency Assessments, that "Assessment Center is a standardized method carried out to measure competency and predict employee success in a position using several measuring instruments or simulations based on job competencies and carried out by several Assessors". Assessment Center is a method based on competency and in accordance with international standards. According to the generally recognized definition, this method is used to provide objective and accurate assessments of individual skills, knowledge and abilities that are very important for work success. However, the current problem is how the results of the assessment of potential and competency through the assessment center method have been used/utilized properly, especially in the development of civil servant careers in the North Sulawesi government environment or simply implementing applicable regulations.

Based on previous research conducted by Sugiyanto (2013) namely on the Role of Assessment Centers in Employee Career Development in the Yogyakarta Special Region Government, especially at the Employee Competency Measurement Center, which stated that the role of assessment centers is good and very important to be implemented so that career development is right on target, especially for employee promotions and mutations/transfers as well as for employee competency development at the Employee Competency Measurement Center. Research conducted by Vivaldi, (2020) namely on the Influence of the Assessment Center Method on the Career Development of Employees of PT Bank Tabungan Negara (Persero) Tbk Head Office, stated that the assessment center method has a positive and significant effect on the career development of Employees of PT Bank Tabungan Negara (Persero) Tbk Head Office.

METHODS

This research is a qualitative descriptive study using the phenomenon analysis approach that occurs and presents an analysis of the research results (Thompson et al., 2021). This study raises problems from the phenomena that occur. Researchers try to analyze how the utilization of assessment center results in the development of civil servant careers. Researchers use a qualitative approach because they want to dig deeper into the utilization of assessment center results in the development of civil servant careers in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government Environment, and the factors that cause the assessment center results to not be optimally/effectively utilized. There are two types of data needed in this study, namely primary data and secondary data (Sugiyono, 2012). Primary data is collected by the researcher directly from the first source or the place where the research object is conducted, namely through interviews and observations. Secondary data is data obtained indirectly that has been collected by other parties previously, such as data from books, articles, existing documents. The focus of this study is how the utilization of assessment center results has been used in the development of civil servant careers which include promotions, transfers/rotations, and employee competency development. The data analysis process carried out is interactive and continuous until it reaches the data saturation point, as explained by Sugiyono, (2009). Data analysis in this study consists of three activity flows, namely data reduction, data presentation and drawing conclusions or verification (Miles & Huberman, 2007).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

North Sulawesi Province is located at the tip of Sulawesi Island, and borders the Philippines to the north. The capital of North Sulawesi is Manado. The North Sulawesi Provincial

Government consists of 11 Regencies, 4 Cities, 159 Districts, and 1,691 Sub-districts, with a total population in this province of 2,620,933 people, with a total area of 13851.64 km². The Vision of the North Sulawesi Provincial Government is "North Sulawesi Advanced and Prosperous as Indonesia's Gateway to Asia Pacific", and in realizing this vision one of its missions is "Good and Clean Government Supported by Synergy Between Regions", in line with that the Regional Personnel Agency is a Regional Work Unit within the North Sulawesi Provincial Government which is directly involved in governance, especially in realizing better human resource management for the apparatus. In carrying out its functions, the Regional Civil Service Agency has carried out various methods to improve the capacity and capabilities of human resources, especially Civil Servants in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government, especially for the purposes of selection, mapping (rotation/mutation) and competency development through potential and competency assessments using the Assessment Center method.

Appointment, transfer, and dismissal of ASN is a very sensitive area for bureaucrats in the regions because it is full of political interests. However, with the existence of Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning ASN and PP Number 11 of 2017 concerning Civil Servant Management, it has brought a breath of fresh air to the management of ASN management in Indonesia which must be implemented with a merit system. Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus mandates that the development of Civil Servant personnel is based on a merit system. In this regard, the appointment of Civil Servants, especially in high-ranking pratama leadership positions, is carried out based on the principle of professionalism, with an open selection system through competency test assessments through assessment centers.

With the mandate of the law, the regional government of North Sulawesi Province in supporting the merit system has used the assessment center method in implementing the assessment of the potential and competence of civil servants both for Open Selection (Promotion), Mapping (Rotation/Mutation) and in Competency Development. Therefore, from the results of the research that has been conducted by the author through data collection, the following data was obtained:

Table 1. Data on Participants of High Ranking Officials and Administrator Officials

Information	Total Administrator Officers	Total Number of Senior Leadership Officials
	257 People	42 People
Those who have participated in potential and competency assessment activities using the assessment center method	91 People	42 People
Those who have never participated in potential and competency assessment activities using the assessment center method	166 People	-

State Civil Service Agency Regulation Number 26 of 2019 concerning the Development of Civil Servant Competency Assessment Implementation explains that the Assessment Center is "a standardized method carried out to measure competency and predict employee success in a position using several measuring instruments or simulations based on job competencies and carried out by several Assessors". The Assessment Center is a competency-based assessment approach that refers to international standards. According to Schmidt, (2023) stated that the Assessment Center is a structured assessment program, where prospective employees or existing employees are tested for their abilities in various situations that simulate actual work. According to Sanatana, (2023) in the Assessment Center method there should be: Various evaluation techniques (multi-method), By involving a number of observers/Assessors (multi-Assessors) to assess a number of employees, and the Use of various simulations related to work, interviews, and psychological tests (multi-instruments). Dessler, (2009) explains that career development is

a series of lifelong activities (such as workshops) that contribute to the exploration, establishment, success, and achievement of a person's career.

According to Handoko, (2008) Career development is an employee's personal efforts to achieve a career plan. According to Hasibuan, (2017) career development is a series of activities that aim to help employees determine their future careers. Career development can also be interpreted as the transfer of employees to higher positions with greater responsibilities. The components of career development according to Hasibuan, (2017) are education, training, transfers, job promotions, length of service, competence. Other indicators are work motivation, individual environment, work ability, employee performance, personal growth. Utilization of Assessment Center Results is important in Civil Servant Career Development in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government. Assessment center is a procedure used by HR management to evaluate individuals in terms of their abilities that are relevant to the needs of the organization. Utilization of assessment center results is how agencies/organizations that have used the assessment center method utilize the existing results optimally for career development and HR development, both as a basis for promotions, employee transfers/rotations, competency development, and so on.

Utilization of Assessment Center Results in Civil Servant Career Development

High-ranking leadership positions (JPT) are strategic positions in supporting a progressive, responsive, and participatory bureaucracy through public service tasks, government tasks, and development tasks that they carry out. In carrying out such tasks, each high-ranking official must ensure the accountability of the position, according to their respective levels. Considering the strategic tasks carried out by JPT and the accountability of their position, the appointment and placement of a High-ranking Official deserves special attention. In Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, specifically regulates JPT and its filling in central and regional agencies through an objective selection mechanism based on a merit system. This certainly aims to recruit leaders or officials who have integrity, competence, and are able to manage all cultural differences, ethnic and religious backgrounds, and the interests of all elements of society.

According to Santoso, (2023) to face the above problems and also the challenges and dynamics of globalization, leaders who have high integrity and competence are needed to carry out their roles. In line with the public's expectations for improving the quality and performance of the bureaucracy, leaders in public office are expected to be able to formulate policies that are pro-community and oriented towards the benefits of the results. In addition, bureaucratic leaders in this case are high-ranking officials, must have integrity, qualified abilities, both technical and managerial abilities, and the ability to manage all existing differences for the benefit of the community. Thus, it is time for the government to choose and place an official who will occupy a position in the government bureaucracy appropriately so that it can produce officials who have moral excellence, are clean, caring, and professional.

In addition, in terms of mapping (rotation/mutation) of employees where the placement of employees should be adjusted to the competencies and qualifications they have so that it can have an impact on improving the performance of the organization/agency, and in terms of developing employee competencies where Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) Article 70 emphasizes that competency development is the right of all ASN to improve their abilities through various existing development activities. So that in this law, government agencies are required to prepare competency development programs. The State Civil Service Agency (BKN) in accordance with the mandate of Article 48 letter b of Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, is tasked with fostering and conducting ASN competency assessments. In addition, in the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Number 15 of 2019 concerning the Open and Competitive Filling of High-Leading Positions in Government Agencies in the selection of managerial and socio-cultural competencies, the assessment center method can be used.

Thus, all Central Government Agencies and Regional Governments in terms of open selection to fill the positions of senior, middle and pratama leaders can use the assessment center method. The North Sulawesi Provincial Civil Service Agency has used the assessment center method in assessing potential and competence in the context of open selection for Pratama Senior Leadership Officials and for the purpose of mapping administrative employees. The authority of the PPK in fostering ASN management in the agency environment that is so dominant has indeed become a classic problem that is still being discussed to this day in realizing transparent, accountable and objective ASN management. Ideally, the results of the potential and competence assessment using the assessment center method that have been submitted by the BKN to the regional agency in this case the North Sulawesi Provincial BKD can be informed to the assessee or the assessee's superior to obtain feedback from the results.

Because the results of the potential and competence assessment using the assessment center method can not only be utilized by the agency, but can also be utilized by the participants so that the person concerned can plan his own development or plan his career. However, the reality in the field is not like that. From the results of interviews obtained from several informants (assessee/participants) stated that they had not received an explanation regarding the results. This shows that there is a lack of transparency from the Personnel Development Officer regarding the assessment results. From the interview results, it was found that participation in the potential and competency assessment process using the assessment center method is considered an obligation for all Senior Leadership Officers and Administrator Officers who administratively meet the requirements. The process is followed simply to validate the obligation to participate in recruiting candidates for Senior Leadership Officers for vacant positions.

The JPT selection process carried out through the established stages ultimately seems to be only a procedural form, where in reality the implementation in the field has been modified in such a way that it will get the candidates expected by the Personnel Development Officer. In addition, the rules related to the assessment center results only weigh 20% -25% of the assessment used in the implementation of open selection, so it can be said that in the case of open selection there is still room for the selection committee to be intervened by the personnel management officer, and the final result is determined by the PPK itself. Meanwhile, in terms of employee mapping (rotation/mutation), from the interview results above, some have indeed been placed according to their potential and competence, especially for JPTP, while for administrators it has not been fully carried out, and there is still an element of subjectivity in carrying out employee rotation and mutation. In addition, one dimension in career development is the competence dimension (Dessler, 2009).

The competence dimension is an element related to the ability (capability), having the knowledge and expertise to carry out a job or position effectively and efficiently. According to Dessler, (2009) competence is the ability and characteristics possessed by a civil servant, in the form of knowledge, skills, and behavioral attitudes that can produce the performance and achievements needed in carrying out their job duties, so that the employee can carry out tasks effectively and efficiently. Meanwhile, education and training are one of the factors that influence careers, both directly and indirectly. Education and training carried out by an employee can hone and increase knowledge, abilities, and skills so that the person concerned is able to do the job well.

The results of the potential and competency assessment using the assessment center method contain the strengths and development areas of the employee, so that it is expected to provide input to the PPK and personnel managers in compiling the training curriculum and developing the potential and competencies of employees. The strengths and development areas of the participants presented can be used in analyzing and mapping what competencies should be developed and improved from an employee. From interviews obtained from several informants (assessee/participants) stated that they did not know the development recommendations from the results of the competency assessment, because the results were not conveyed. In providing training to employees according to the recommendations of the

assessment center results, there was only 1 participant who had received training after participating in the potential and competency assessment activities. While other participants said they had not received training or development, and they themselves had no initiative in finding the form of training and development they needed.

The main reason the Personnel Development Officer did not provide training or development according to the recommendations of the assessment center results was due to the limited budget owned by the agency for organizing education and training and because they followed training programs that had been determined by the agency (did not determine new training programs). In addition, at the beginning of the budget year, they have already compiled what training needs are needed by employees in their agency environment, so it is quite difficult to change the previously compiled training curriculum, to be in accordance with the recommendations of the assessment center results.

Factors Causing Less Effective Utilization of Assessment Center Results

The utilization of potential and competency assessment results using the assessment center method is currently the focus of BKN's attention in the process of organizing ASN management. BKN must immediately find a way out so that the assessment center results can be utilized effectively by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government. Although this utilization will be related to various factors, with a strong commitment from both BKN as the supervisor of personnel management and the Personnel Management Officer in this case with the North Sulawesi Provincial BKD and coordinating with SKPDs in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government, it is hoped that it can optimize ASN development through the results of existing assessment centers, especially in building a Talent Management system in realizing a merit system.

From the analysis that has been carried out by researchers, the results of the assessment center have not been/are less utilized optimally due to several things, as follows: (1) Lack of Understanding of Assessment Centers and Lack of Leadership Commitment. Many parties, including agency leaders, do not fully understand the main purpose of assessment centers, which is to measure potential and competence comprehensively, not just academic scores. In addition, PPK has difficulty in interpreting assessment center results correctly. Often, the results are only seen partially without considering the overall context. Meanwhile, civil servant career development is often not a top priority for leaders. Factors such as high workloads and short-term performance demands are prioritized, as well as the lack of resource support, both financial and non-financial, for the implementation of periodic assessment centers due to the large assessment costs and utilization of the results; (2) In accordance with Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, government agencies are required to implement a merit system in ASN management, but in the field, many agencies are not ready to implement the merit system; (3) The organizational culture of public institutions in Indonesia is usually characterized by civil servants who are reluctant to compete professionally, this is due to one of the reasons being that employee career development (transfers, promotions, training, etc.) is usually carried out based on reasons unrelated to the merit system; (4) Talent Management System. Talent Management System is a strategy for developing human resources in an organization that includes a series of processes to obtain superior human resources, starting from recruitment, identification, development, and retaining employees is with the existence of a talent management system.

Assessment Center is part of the talent management process that aims to identify talented employees. Unfortunately, most agencies in the work area of Regional Office XI Manado, including the North Sulawesi Provincial Government have not utilized the assessment center method to build and have a talent management system that can be used as a guideline in employee development, as a follow-up (feedback) from the results of the assessment center. Budget Issues and Availability of Training. The most striking obstacle in utilizing the assessment center results, as expressed by the informant, is the budget issue and the availability of training that is in

accordance with the employee competency gap. So far, the assessment center results have only been used as a requirement for the appointment of the Pratama High Leadership Position which must go through an open auction system.

Although the assessment center results show the weaknesses of the assessment center participants, there is no training organized by central or private agencies that can improve their competency deficiencies. These training and budget limitations are what have caused the utilization of the assessment center results to stagnate. Of course, personnel managers already understand very well that civil servants have the right to 20 hours of lessons per year and because this is a mandate of the law, there is certainly a separate budget plot for employee training. However, this budget will swell if the training is carried out outside the region and requires various costs for SPPD. This is what then makes many agencies, especially in the regions, hampered in carrying out development. In addition to requiring a large budget, the type and quota of limited training are also the main obstacles faced.

CONCLUSION

Based on the discussion of the research in the previous chapter, several conclusions can be drawn that the implementation of potential and competency assessment activities using the assessment center method for civil servants in the North Sulawesi Provincial Government in order to develop their careers has been carried out for the past 2-3 years. This activity was attended by Senior High-Level Officials and Administrator Officials, which aimed to conduct open selection of Senior High-Level Officials and for mapping (rotation/mutation). In essence, the results of the assessment center can not only be used for the selection of Senior High-Level Officials and for Mapping (rotation/mutation), but in accordance with the existing concept, the results of the potential and competency assessment using the assessment center method from an employee can be used to develop the competence of the employee concerned. Facts in the field show that the use of assessment center results by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government in this case through the BKD as the personnel management official has not been effective enough because there are still elements of subjectivity in the mutation/rotation of Officials/Employees. The existence of strong political situation/intervention factors, especially in the Regional Government, has resulted in ineffectiveness in the utilization of assessment center results, both in the appointment of Administrator Officials and in the mapping (rotation/mutation) of employees. Lack of Understanding of the Assessment Center and Lack of Leadership Commitment. The factor of the unpreparedness of agencies in implementing the merit system as a whole is related to the regulations regarding current ASN management. The less competitive public organizational culture has made government agencies a comfort zone for most employees. The Regional Government of North Sulawesi Province has not yet implemented a talent management system. The budget and availability of training or training that is in accordance with the employee competency gap are among the factors that become obstacles in employee development. Talent management, including potential and competency assessment activities using the assessment center method, does not have a strong legal standing in the laws and regulations.

SUGGESTION

Based on the research results, the researcher provides suggestions that the Personnel Development Officer should be delegated to an Official who is considered quite neutral from practical political interests, so that it is expected that the policies taken related to ASN Management development can be objective. Open selection must be based on potential and competency assessments. Acceleration of the preparation of a talent management system by the North Sulawesi Provincial Government as a reference in developing PNS careers. The implementation of the Merit System eliminates the open selection system which is time-consuming and costly.

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