

Meritocracy in the Placement of State Civil Apparatus: An Analysis of the Alignment Between Academic Achievement and Positions in the Gorontalo Regency Government

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Abstract

The placement of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is a crucial component of civil service human resource management, as it determines the alignment between an employee's competencies and the duties and responsibilities of their assigned position. One key aspect to consider in ASN placement is academic achievement, which can serve as a basis for ensuring that employees possess a knowledge background relevant to the positions they hold. This study aims to analyze the alignment between academic achievement and ASN placement within the Gorontalo Regency Government from a meritocratic perspective. A qualitative approach was employed, utilizing data collection techniques such as observation, interviews, and document analysis. Research informants included personnel staff, structural officials, and ASN personnel who had undergone placement or position transfer processes. The analysis utilized academic achievement indicators as outlined by Siswanto (2013) regarding employee placement. The findings indicate that academic achievement has been a factor in ASN placement decisions, particularly through the alignment of education levels and fields of study with position requirements. However, it has not yet served as the sole basis for determining placements. In practice, academic considerations interact with work experience, organizational needs, the availability of personnel resources, and other administrative factors. This situation suggests that the merit principle in ASN placement requires strengthening through competency mapping mechanisms and more objective documentation, ensuring that placement decisions are both administratively and substantively justifiable. This study underscores the importance of academic achievement as a tool for achieving ASN placements that better align with competencies and the needs of the government organization.

Keywords: Meritocracy, ASN placement, Academic Achievement, Competence, Gorontalo Regency Government

Introduction

The State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is one of the important elements in government administration because the success of public organizations is determined not only by policies and budgets but also by the quality of the personnel who implement various programs and provide services to the community. ASNs are assigned to various positions with different duties, functions, authorities, and responsibilities. Therefore, the ASN placement process is an

important part of government management because it is directly related to an organization's ability to achieve its established objectives.

Employee placement is fundamentally not merely concerned with filling a vacant position but also involves ensuring compatibility between employee characteristics and job requirements. Appropriate placement can provide employees with opportunities to optimally utilize their knowledge, abilities, and experience. Conversely, inappropriate placement can lead to various problems, such as low work effectiveness, difficulties in carrying out duties, longer adaptation periods, and less optimal achievement of organizational objectives. From the perspective of personnel management, the merit principle is one of the important foundations of ASN management. Meritocracy places qualifications, competence, performance, and position requirements as the basis for managing personnel resources. Accordingly, ASN placement should not be based solely on the administrative needs of the organization but should also consider the abilities and qualifications of the employees to be placed.

One aspect related to placement suitability is academic achievement. In the context of employee placement, academic achievement can be assessed through educational level, field of study, and the suitability of educational background with the characteristics of the position. Educational background does not automatically indicate that an ASN is capable of performing a particular position, but it serves as one of the initial indicators of relevant knowledge in the field of work. Siswanto (2013) explains that several indicators need to be considered in employee placement, namely administrative requirements, academic achievement, experience, and physical and mental health. This study specifically focuses on the academic achievement indicator. This limitation is intended to obtain a more in-depth analysis of the extent to which academic background is considered in the ASN placement process.

This context is relevant to the Gorontalo Regency Government, which has local government agencies with diverse task and functional characteristics. These differences in organizational characteristics result in different competency requirements for ASNs. ASNs working in health, education, finance, public works, planning, personnel management, and administrative services require competencies that are not entirely the same.

In practice, the suitability between ASN educational backgrounds and the positions they occupy is an important issue to examine. The question that arises is whether academic background genuinely serves as one of the primary foundations for ASN placement or merely functions as an administrative requirement. The distinction between “having an appropriate diploma” and “possessing academic competencies relevant to the job” also needs attention in the personnel placement process. This issue becomes increasingly important when ASNs are placed in positions with specific technical requirements. When educational backgrounds are not entirely relevant to the field of work, ASNs require additional adaptation and learning processes to perform their duties effectively. Conversely, the suitability of educational backgrounds for positions can provide a more relevant knowledge base for carrying out duties.

Based on the initial research observations, it was found that the suitability of educational backgrounds for positions has not always been a dominant consideration in the ASN placement process. In some circumstances, ASNs have been assigned to jobs that are not entirely aligned with their educational fields. This condition does not necessarily mean that the placement is incorrect, because organizations also consider personnel availability and organizational requirements. However, it indicates an opportunity to examine further how academic achievement is used in the ASN placement process.

Furthermore, educational documents tend to be easier to verify than the actual abilities of ASNs to perform their jobs. Consequently, academic achievement may be treated merely as an administrative requirement rather than as a source of information for assessing competency suitability for a position.

This condition demonstrates the importance of viewing personnel placement not merely as an administrative process but also as a decision-making process that needs to consider substantive aspects, including competency suitability for position requirements. This perspective is consistent with the view in legal philosophy that government policies and decisions should not merely comply with formal provisions but should also be directed toward substantive justice in their implementation (Aneta et al., 2025).

Another issue concerns the suboptimal mapping of ASN educational backgrounds against the competency requirements of each position. Effective mapping is necessary so that organizations not only know the number of available ASNs but also understand the types of knowledge and competencies possessed by each employee. Thus, placement decisions can be made more objectively. Based on these conditions, this study focuses on meritocracy in ASN placement by examining the suitability of academic achievement for the positions occupied. This study is important not to evaluate individual ASNs but to examine how the placement system within government organizations accommodates academic qualifications as a basis for managing personnel resources.

Methods

Research Design

This study uses a qualitative approach with a descriptive research design. This approach is used because the study aims to gain an in-depth understanding of the processes and considerations used in placing ASNs based on academic achievement. Moleong (2021) explains that qualitative research seeks to understand the phenomena experienced by research subjects holistically, including behavior, perceptions, motivations, and actions, by describing them in words and language within a specific context. This perspective supports the use of a qualitative approach in this study because the researcher needs to gather information from personnel officials, structural officials, and ASNs regarding how educational backgrounds and academic achievement are considered when assigning individuals to particular positions.

Research Location and Period

The study specifically focuses on units or local government agencies related to personnel management and the ASN placement process, particularly agencies responsible for personnel affairs and several local government organizations in which ASNs are assigned. These units were selected so that the researcher could obtain information from parties who understand the placement process as well as from ASNs who have experienced or undergone placement in particular positions.

Research informants were selected purposively, based on the consideration that they possessed knowledge and experience relevant to the research problem. Informants could include officials responsible for personnel affairs, structural officials involved in ASN placement, and ASNs with experience in placement or position transfers.

Research data were obtained through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Subsequently, the data were analyzed using the interactive model of Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which comprises data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. Data validity was established through source and method triangulation.

Thus, the research location and approach were designed to obtain an empirical overview of the extent to which academic achievement serves as a basis for consideration in ASN placement and how it corresponds to the positions occupied within the Gorontalo Regency Government.

Data Source Triangulation

Data were collected through three techniques: (1) direct observation of situations and the behavior of citizen participation; (2) in-depth interviews with voters, non-voters, and key informants, following the principle that informants' words and actions constitute the primary data sources in qualitative research (Lofland, in Moleong, 2014); and (3) documentary studies of public records and official electoral data.

To improve data validity, the study employed source and method triangulation. Source triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from personnel officials, structural officials, and ASNs. Meanwhile, method triangulation was conducted by comparing the results of interviews, observations, and documentation.

Thus, the data obtained were not based solely on informants' statements but were also confirmed through empirical conditions and available documents. This strategy is important for obtaining a more objective overview of the extent to which academic achievement is used as a consideration in ASN placement within the Gorontalo Regency Government.

Research Results

The research results indicate that academic achievement is one of the considerations in ASN placement within the Gorontalo Regency Government, particularly through educational level and the suitability of the field of study with the position occupied. Educational background is used as preliminary information to assess the knowledge possessed by ASNs and its relevance to job requirements. However, the research results also indicate that the alignment between educational fields and positions is not yet fully achieved for all ASNs. In practice, placement also takes into account organizational needs, personnel availability, and position characteristics. This condition means that academic achievement is not always a determining factor but continues to function as one consideration in placement decision-making. In addition, education tends to be more readily used as an administrative requirement because it can be verified through personnel documents, while its use as a substantive basis for assessing the relevance of competencies to positions still needs to be strengthened.

Research Findings

Based on the overall research results, several important findings emerged concerning academic achievement in ASN placement within the Gorontalo Regency Government.

Academic Achievement Has Become One Basis for Placement

The first finding indicates that academic achievement has been used as one consideration in ASN placement. Educational level and field of study are among the information considered in the placement process. This indicates that efforts have been made to connect ASN characteristics with organizational needs. Education has not been entirely disregarded in the placement process but has become part of the personnel information used to determine ASN positions. Employee placement is fundamentally concerned not only with filling positions but also with ensuring compatibility between employee characteristics and job requirements. Aneta (2021), through research on the effect of job placement on employee performance, demonstrated a relationship between placement and employee performance. This finding

strengthens the argument that ASN placement needs to consider the compatibility between individual capacities and position characteristics. Therefore, placement should go beyond fulfilling administrative requirements and should support effective task implementation and organizational performance.

This finding indicates the existence of practices that move toward implementing merit principles because placement decisions are not entirely detached from individual qualifications.

Alignment Between Education and Position Has Not Yet Been Fully Achieved

The second finding indicates that the alignment between educational fields and positions is not yet fully achieved. There are still circumstances in which ASNs perform jobs that differ from or are not entirely aligned with the disciplines acquired through formal education. This condition reveals a gap between the ideal principle of qualification-based placement and the reality of organizational needs. ASN placement is influenced not only by educational backgrounds but also by organizational needs, employee availability, and position structures. This finding also indicates that implementing merit principles requires an approach that considers not only formal qualifications but also the organization's capacity to map its human resources.

Academic Achievement Still Has a Strong Administrative Dimension

The third finding is that academic achievement tends to be used as an administrative requirement. Educational levels and academic documents are relatively easy to verify and therefore easier to use in personnel administration processes. Meanwhile, using education as a basis for measuring the relevance of knowledge to a position requires a more in-depth analytical process. This condition means that academic achievement has not yet been fully utilized as a substantive instrument for determining ASN suitability for a job. This finding is important because meritocracy concerns not only the fulfillment of formal requirements but also the compatibility between employee capacity and position requirements.

Mapping Education to Position Requirements Is Not Yet Optimal

The next finding indicates that mapping ASN educational backgrounds against position requirements is not yet optimal. Local governments possess data on ASN education, but this data needs to be processed and utilized more systematically to support the placement process. Effective mapping should be able to show the distribution of ASN educational backgrounds, the competency requirements of each position, and the positions of ASNs whose qualifications are relevant to those requirements. Suboptimal mapping can result in ASN academic potential not being fully utilized in placement decision-making.

A Gap Exists Between Merit Principles and Organizational Needs

The final finding indicates a gap between merit-based placement principles and the practical needs of organizations. Merit principles require objective consideration of qualifications and competencies, while organizations must, in practice, deal with the available personnel resources. This condition means that ASN placement cannot always be based exclusively on educational alignment. Organizational flexibility is part of the placement process, but such flexibility must remain within the framework of objectivity and position requirements.

Discussion

Academic Achievement from the Perspective of Siswanto's Placement Theory

The research results can be explained through the employee placement theory proposed by Siswanto (2013). According to Siswanto, academic achievement is one indicator that needs to be considered in employee placement, alongside administrative requirements, experience, and physical and mental health. This study specifically focuses on academic achievement because this aspect is directly related to the knowledge qualifications possessed by ASNs. The research findings indicate that educational level and field of study have become considerations in the placement process.

However, the implementation of this indicator has not been fully optimized. This is evident from the continued existence of ASN placements that are not entirely aligned with educational backgrounds. This finding indicates that placement theory cannot be applied mechanically but needs to be adapted to organizational conditions. From Siswanto's perspective, academic achievement serves as one basis for placing employees in suitable positions. In the context of the Gorontalo Regency Government, this principle is evident in the placement process, but it still needs to be strengthened in terms of the relevance of fields of study to position requirements.

Meritocracy and the Suitability of Education for Positions

The research findings indicate that academic achievement is related to the principle of meritocracy in ASN management. Meritocracy places qualifications and abilities as important foundations for personnel management. In the context of ASN placement, meritocracy implies that employees should be assigned to positions based on qualifications relevant to those positions. Education is one of the initial indicators that can be used to assess this suitability.

However, the research results show that education cannot be used as the sole basis for determining an individual's competence. A high level of education does not automatically indicate that an ASN can perform all the duties of a position effectively. Similarly, an educational field that is not entirely aligned with a position does not automatically mean that an ASN lacks the ability to perform the job. Therefore, in the context of this study, meritocracy is more appropriately understood as an effort to establish a rational match between ASN qualifications and job requirements, with education serving as an important source of information in this process.

Education as a Formal and Substantive Qualification

The research findings reveal a distinction between the function of education as a formal qualification and its function as a substantive basis for ASN placement. As a formal qualification, education is used to ensure that ASNs meet a particular educational level. This function is important because organizations require minimum standards for certain positions. However, as a substantive basis, education should not be limited to the possession of a diploma. Organizations need to consider the field of study, the relevance of knowledge, and the relationship between education and job responsibilities.

The research findings indicate that the formal function is relatively easier to implement than the substantive function. This is one reason why the suitability between education and positions has not yet been fully optimized. Thus, strengthening meritocracy requires a shift in perspective from "the ASN meets the educational requirements" to "the ASN possesses educational qualifications relevant to the position requirements."

Educational Alignment Is Not the Only Measure

One important implication of this study is that educational alignment cannot be used as the sole measure for determining the suitability of ASN placement. Government organizations are

complex organizations with diverse human resource needs. Under certain circumstances, ASNs with different educational backgrounds can be assigned to particular fields as long as they possess the ability to perform their duties and meet job requirements. Therefore, the more important issue is not merely whether an ASN's education matches the field of the position but whether the academic qualifications are compatible with job requirements.

This approach allows organizations to remain flexible without abandoning the principle of objectivity. Accordingly, meritocracy does not have to be interpreted as rigid educational alignment but rather as a decision-making process that can be justified based on qualifications and position requirements.

Strengthening Academic-Based ASN Mapping

The research findings indicate the need to strengthen ASN mapping based on educational backgrounds. The Gorontalo Regency Government needs to identify more systematically the distribution of educational levels and fields of study among available ASNs. This mapping can serve as a basis for identifying ASNs whose academic backgrounds correspond to organizational needs. With such mapping, placement can be conducted in a more planned manner rather than being based solely on short-term needs. Academic mapping can also help local governments identify fields experiencing shortages of human resources with particular educational backgrounds. This information can be used for competency development planning, further education, and personnel reorganization. Thus, ASN educational data does not merely function as an administrative personnel archive but can be developed into a strategic information base for ASN management.

Conclusion

This study highlights that environmental management and community well-being in African countries are closely interconnected through ecological conditions, institutional capacity, socioeconomic vulnerability, and governance quality. Environmental challenges such as land degradation, deforestation, water pollution, biodiversity loss, climate variability, and unsustainable resource extraction directly affect livelihoods, food security, public health, and the overall resilience of local communities. At the same time, the effectiveness of environmental management is strongly influenced by the capacity of formal and informal institutions to coordinate policies, enforce regulations, allocate resources, and involve communities meaningfully in decision-making. The findings show that decentralization and community-based natural resource management can support more responsive and locally grounded environmental governance, but their effectiveness depends on the actual transfer of authority, adequate financial and technical support, transparent benefit-sharing mechanisms, and protection against elite capture and unequal participation. Socioeconomic conditions further shape environmental outcomes because communities with limited income opportunities and high dependence on natural resources are often more vulnerable to environmental degradation and less able to adapt to ecological change. For this reason, sustainable environmental management should not be separated from broader development priorities. Strategies such as livelihood diversification, ecosystem restoration, nature-based solutions, climate adaptation, institutional strengthening, and inclusive community participation need to be integrated within a coherent development framework. Stronger coordination among government agencies, customary institutions, civil society, private actors, and local communities is also essential for addressing environmental problems that cross administrative and sectoral boundaries. Improving community well-being therefore requires environmental policies that combine ecological protection with social inclusion, economic opportunity, institutional accountability, and long-term resilience. Such an integrated approach can

strengthen the ability of African communities to respond to environmental pressures while supporting more equitable and sustainable development outcomes.

Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the study focuses only on the academic achievement indicator in ASN placement and therefore does not provide a comprehensive picture of other placement indicators, such as administrative requirements, experience, and physical and mental health. Second, the study was conducted within the context of the Gorontalo Regency Government, meaning that the findings primarily describe conditions within that local government environment and cannot be directly generalized to other regions with different organizational characteristics and personnel policies. Third, the study places greater emphasis on the suitability of educational backgrounds for positions, while technical competence, managerial competence, and ASN performance have not been examined in depth. Therefore, further research is needed to examine the relationship between academic achievement, competence, experience, and performance in developing a merit-based ASN placement system.

Recommendations

Based on the research results, several recommendations can be made. First, the Gorontalo Regency Government needs to strengthen the mapping of ASN educational backgrounds against the requirements and characteristics of each position so that placement does not merely fulfill administrative requirements but also considers substantive competency suitability. Second, personnel data management needs to be developed as a basis for decision-making in ASN placement and career development, particularly by integrating information on education, competence, experience, and position requirements. Third, the ASN placement process needs to be implemented more consistently in accordance with merit principles through job analysis and workload analysis that are updated regularly, so that placement decisions can be objectively justified and support organizational professionalism and effectiveness.

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