

Effectiveness of the Transfer of Senior High School and Vocational High School Management from District to Provincial Government

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ABSTRACT

This study aimed to identify the effectiveness of the transfer of Senior High School and Vocational High School management from district to provincial government. The study was conducted at a Senior High School and a Vocational High School in *Timor Tengah Utara* (TTU) district, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. In-depth interviews were used to collect the data from the participants. Data were analysed using a qualitative data analysis framework. Results indicated that the transfer of Senior High School and Vocational High School management from district to provincial government led back to centralisation of services and increased span of control of provincial education department, causing ineffective service management and delivery. Such transfer also increased the size of provincial education department, the size of work unit at provincial education department and the workload of this department, which caused ineffectiveness of work performance of its staff. Limited availability of staff or human resources, increased complexity of work, instability in problem solving and risk were the consequences of the transfer of Senior High School and Vocational High School management from district to provincial government, leading to ineffectiveness of service delivery. These results indicate the needs for the establishment of Technical Implementation Unit (TIU) in each district to improve the management of Senior High School and Vocational High School, and service delivery.

Key words: Effectiveness, transfer, management, senior high school, vocational high school, district, province, TTU, Indonesia.

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INTRODUCTION

The enactment of Law No. 32/2004 on Regional Government has an impact on education autonomy. The logical consequence of the implementation of education policy is that regency and municipal governments need to adapt education management in the context of autonomy and democracy (1). Autonomy in the field of education is understood as giving a broad, real and authority to the district and municipal governments to formulate participatory and coordinative education planning by empowering all potential of planning resources (2). In line with this, what is meant by regional autonomy is the autonomous regional authority to regulate and manage the interests of local people according to their own initiative based on community aspirations in accordance with existing legislations (3, 4).

Government Regulation No. 18/2016, article 15, point 3 states that government affairs relating to secondary education are administered by the provincial office, while primary and junior high school education is provided by the district governments. This government regulation is derived from Law No. 23/2014 on regional autonomy (5). According to Daoed Joesoef, education in Indonesia in general and in East Nusa Tenggara in particular, is in trouble (6). National education is even facing a major crisis and therefore needs improvement. The transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government is aimed at improving the management of service delivery to the schools and teachers (7). Such transfer was initiated due to several issues including the delay of the payment of teachers' salary and many other issues.

Several previous studies have reported that the effectiveness of education management is supported by a good organizational structure that utilizes its human resources (8, 9). Another research indicates that education management will work well and effectively if it is supported by adequate and sufficient human resources (10). This is because human resources are one of the vital elements in running the management of an organization or

institution (9). The size of the organizations or institutions is also reported to be one of the decisive elements for the effectiveness of institutional management including management of educational institutions (11). Large organizations or institutions experience managerial difficulties to meet the needs of all staff and clients equally (12). Many clients or staff are often unreachable in service delivery. Similarly, limited availability of facilities often makes it difficult for staff or clients to access services provided for them (5). Therefore, this study aimed to identify the effectiveness of the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district and municipal government to provincial government in East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia.

METHODS

Study Design and Data Collection

A qualitative study was conducted in 2017 at a Senior High School and Vocational High School in TTU district, East Nusa Tenggara, Indonesia. Data collection was conducted using in-depth interview method. This qualitative design was employed because it allowed the research to observe the situations and settings of the participants and to have direct interaction with them (13-15). The study participants were recruited using purposive sampling technique. Before interviews, the participants were informed that their participation is voluntary and that they could withdraw their participation during the interview if they feel uncomfortable. Each participant signed and returned a written consent form at the interview day prior to commencing the interviews. Each participant was informed that ethical approval for this study was obtained from Nusa Cendana University, Kupang, Indonesia.

Data Analysis

The interviews were recorded using a tape recorder. Data were transcribed verbatim into coding sheets and translated into English for further analysis. Thematic data analysis was conducted to identify the emerging themes from the data. The analysis process was guided by a framework analysis (16). This framework analysis starts from familiarisation with the data by reading them line by line and making comments, identification of emerging themes, indexation to the entire data, charting the data, and mapping and interpretation of the data (16, 17).

RESULTS

Decentralisation

Decentralisation was indicated to be an important aspect that should be considered in the evaluation of the effectiveness of the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government. It was because the concept of decentralisation was seen as a supportive factor for quick and flexible decision making at district level. Several participants interviewed commented that the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from regency to provincial government was not effective yet and had negative impacts on teacher in particular:

“The transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government is a step backward because the government at district level does not have authority to manage, and step by step this will lead back to centralisation of management and services. Besides, this transition period seems stagnant and senior high school teachers experience difficulties in many aspects related to they duties as teachers” (Participant 5).

“There are lots of constraints and overlapping concerns that need to be handled by the provincial government. For example, the authority has been given to the provincial government but the fund and infrastructure are still handled by the district governments” (Participant 2).

Span of Control

Span of control referring to the number staff effectively controlled by a leader in an organisation seemed to have an influence on the effectiveness of the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government. Participants put forward that such transfer automatically increased the responsibility of provincial government for senior high school teachers at all districts. Wide span of control led to ineffective work performance, coordination and leadership:

“Before the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government the span of control was small because senior high schools and vocational high schools were managed by district government. Now they are managed by the provincial government and even though the provincial government has established 11 TIU, but 1 TIU manages 3 to 5 districts so the services provided are ineffective” (Participant 1).

”Span of control is too wide. Previously senior high school and vocational high school were managed by each district government but now the provincial government takes over the management. Each TIU should manage senior high schools and vocational high schools in 3 to 5 districts. They have limited time, ability and knowledge and attention, and therefore senior high school and vocational high school teachers often complain” (Participant 1).

The Size of the Organisation

The size of organisation had a big influence on work performance of staff or employees. It was indicated that the higher the structure of an organisation or institution, the more awkward its environment is. Such environment was indicated to be full of threats. Participants expressed that the size of an organisation and the coverage of services would definitely have an influence on the service delivery. Some of them commented that the big size of service coverage makes it difficult for them to manage:

“I was worried in the beginning of the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government because of the big size of coverage. Therefore, we have established 11 TIU, and each TIU handles 3 districts. The coverage is too big which makes it difficult to manage them effectively” (Participant 9).

The Size of Work Unit

The size of work unit seemed to also influence the effectiveness of service delivery. The transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government increased the size of work unit and workload of education department at provincial level. This was also reported to influence work behaviour, presence, work satisfaction and increased work-related disputes:

”I think the size of work unit has big influences on effectiveness of service delivery. Therefore, we are now making a report to the Governor of East Nusa Tenggara province, recommending the establishment of TIU in each district to reduce the size of work unit and its coverage” (Participant 6).

Complexity

Complexity was another aspect raised by the participants as the consequence of the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government. The complexity was indicated to be relating to the number of work items including asset management, finance and human resources that should be managed:

“The work is very complex after the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government. It is now very difficult in terms asset, human resource and financial management” (Participant 8).

“There are many problems faced by the education department at provincial level after the transfer of the management of senior high school and vocational high school from district to provincial government. The problems include teacher database and regional income and expenditure budgets. This is because the management of the transfer is not fully understood by the staff” (Participant 5).

Instability

Instability was raised as another consequence of the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government. The interviewees

commented that the management of senior high school and vocational high school at provincial government level was still instable because the condition was different. It was small and did not need to involve many elements prior to the transfer but now there are many elements that need to be involved and the management process takes time:

”It was very easy to neutralise internal or external problems within the provincial education department before the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government. But now it is very difficult to manage because there are many elements that should be involved. Therefore, it seems unstable” (Participant 10).

”About stability, it was very easy to control but after the transfer, the provincial government needs time to find a good system and it takes time” Participant 3).

Safety versus Risk

Safety and risk were two factors reported to influence the effectiveness of service delivery from the education department at provincial level to the schools and their teachers. Safety and risk were related to the level of pressure that could lead to unpleasant feelings or worries among the staff at this department which could influence their work performance:

”The risk facing the staff at education department at provincial level is bigger after the transfer. There are a number of components in the department structure that cannot be handled because teacher affairs that should be handled are overloaded. Besides, the numbers of districts handled by one TIU and limited infrastructure hinder the effectiveness of service delivery” (Participant 9).

Attachment to Organisation

Attachment to organisation emerged during the interviews as an important aspect supportive of the effectiveness of service delivery. Participants interviewed articulated that they have commitment to their organisation and to putting into practice the programs of their institution. However, it was indicated that teachers experienced difficulties in accessing the services because the office was too far and each office [TIU] covered 3 districts:

”After the transfer we from 3 districts including Malaka, Belu and TTU attach to one TIU which is located in Belu district. Therefore, the service process is awkward and difficult. Besides, it is too far from here. We expect that each district has one TIU so that the service is effective and efficient” (Participant 3).

Availability of Staff

Availability of staff was indicated to have big influence on the effectiveness of the management of senior high school and vocational high school by the provincial education department. Several participants commented that limited human resources available in each TIU at district level influenced the service delivery or led to low level of service quality provided for teachers at all districts:

“Before the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government, the numbers of staff were sufficient because they are from the district governments. But after the transfer the they are from provincial government, so there are insufficient staff assigned in each TIU to provide services for teachers from all districts under its service area” (Participant 7).

DISCUSSION

This study aims to identify the effectiveness of the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government. Consistent with the results of several previous studies reported elsewhere (18, 19), this study suggests that decentralisation was a very important aspect supportive of the effectiveness of the implementation of programs of organisations or institutions. This is because decentralisation brings public services closer to people at the lower level and people can easily access each public service (20). However, the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government seems to bring public services far away from senior high school and vocational high school teachers, leading ineffectiveness of service delivery. Likewise, the findings of the current study inform that the smaller the span of control of education department, the better the service delivery is, and vice versa. These

results are in line with previous findings (11), reporting that span of control of an institution or organisation is a supporting factor for the effectiveness of the implementation of a program.

Findings of the current study also suggest that the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government increased the size of provincial education department and its work unit, leading to ineffectiveness of management and service delivery to the schools and teachers. These are in line with the results of previous studies (11, 12), reporting that management of an organisation or institution is often influenced by its size, the bigger the size of an organisation the more difficult it is to organise. Likewise, big organisations or institutions are much more complex to manage compared to organisations or institutions with small size because big size organisations have complicated problems or issues. This often leads to ineffective management and service delivery to clients or recipients or staff. The current study also shows that the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government caused instabilities within the provincial education department. These instabilities often emerge as the consequence of inability to manage various complicated problems among schools and teachers under the control of this department. This finding supports the results of studies reported elsewhere (7, 9, 20) that unsolved problems within institutions can cause instabilities and ineffective management of organisations.

Furthermore, this study's findings indicate that such transfer also increased the risk for staff of the provincial education department due to inability of the department to handle the needs of all senior high school and vocational high school teachers. Similar results have been reported in several previous studies (1, 21) that organisations with bigger size are difficult to satisfy the needs of all staff or employees. This is also underpinned by another

finding of the present study that provincial education department has limited number of units and staff at district level which made them unable to service senior high school and vocational high school teachers effectively

CONCLUSIONS

The current study reports that the transfer of senior high school and vocational high school management from district to provincial government leads to ineffective management of the schools and their teachers. Increased span of control, the size of provincial education department and its work unit and the workload of the department and its unit, and reduced level of decentralisation are some of the examples. Such transfer is also reported to lead to increasing complexity, instability and risk of the department due to the increased number of schools and teachers under its control, which makes it difficult for the department and its unit to satisfy the needs of the schools and teachers. Besides, limited number of TIU and staff assigned to handle schools and teachers at district level is also reported to lead to infective service delivery. These results indicate the needs for the establishment of TIU in each district to improve the management of senior high school and vocational high school, and service delivery.

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