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REVIEWING ACEH GOVERNMENT SCHOLARSHIP MANAGEMENT

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ABSTRACT

The Aceh Government recognizes the importance of human resource development as part of its regional development efforts. Through the Aceh Human Resource Development Agency (BPSDM), the Aceh Government provides educational scholarships to the best sons and daughters of Aceh. These scholarships not only serve to assist with educational financing for those in need but also aim to enhance the quality of human resources that can support future development in Aceh. However, there are several governance challenges related to the management of educational funds handled by BPSDM Aceh. This study aims to analyze the scholarship management by BPSDM Aceh from a managerial perspective. The research uses a qualitative-descriptive method, conducting in-depth interviews with selected informants. The data obtained is then analyzed using George R. Terry's management theory, which includes four main functions: Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling. The findings indicate that not all of these management functions have been optimally implemented by BPSDM Aceh in managing the educational scholarships.

Keyword: Scholarship; Management; Aceh Government.

ABSTRAKSI

Pemerintah Aceh menyadari pentingnya pengembangan sumber daya manusia (SDM) sebagai bagian dari upaya pembangunan daerah. Melalui Badan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia (BPSDM), Pemerintah Aceh memberikan beasiswa pendidikan kepada putra-putri terbaik Aceh. Beasiswa ini tidak hanya berfungsi untuk membantu pembiayaan pendidikan bagi yang membutuhkan, tetapi juga bertujuan meningkatkan kualitas SDM yang handal guna mendukung pembangunan Aceh di masa depan. Namun, dalam pelaksanaannya, terdapat beberapa tantangan terkait tata kelola dana pendidikan yang dikelola oleh BPSDM Aceh. Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengelolaan beasiswa oleh BPSDM Aceh dengan pendekatan manajerial. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah kualitatif-deskriptif, melalui wawancara mendalam dengan informan yang telah dipilih. Data yang diperoleh kemudian dianalisis dengan menggunakan teori manajemen dari George R. Terry, yang mencakup empat fungsi utama: Perencanaan (*Planning*), Pengorganisasian (*Organizing*), Penggerakan (*Actuating*), dan Pengendalian (*Controlling*). Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa belum semua fungsi manajemen tersebut diterapkan secara optimal oleh BPSDM Aceh dalam pengelolaan beasiswa pendidikan.

Kata Kunci: Beasiswa; Manajemen; Pemerintah Aceh.

INTRODUCTION

Aceh Province is one of the regions going through quite worrying development turbulence. The westernmost province of Sumatra was hit by vertical conflict in the period 1976-2005 and the Tsunami natural disaster in 2004. The conflict and tsunami disaster had devastated Aceh and had an impact on the loss of society and government in all fields (Klitzsch, 2014; Mudjiharto, 2020; Mujib et al., 2014; Vidyattama et al., 2021), so that until now Aceh is still in the process of development in all aspects of community life. The education sector is believed to be one of the most affected by these two major events (Amin, 2018; Astuti, 2017). As a result, many students were directly impacted, which hindered the effective transfer of knowledge, teaching and learning processes, as well as other educational activities, ultimately causing significant harm to both the community and educational institutions in Aceh.

The ratification of Law Number 11 of 2006 on the Government of Aceh marked a pivotal moment, offering new hope for comprehensive education reform in the region (Amin, 2018; Nurdin et al., 2020; Usman & Hadi, 2021). According to Article 215, paragraph (1) of the law, “Education in Aceh is an integral part of the national education system, tailored to the characteristics, potential, and needs of the local community”. This provision grants the Aceh government the authority to design and manage educational programs that reflect the region’s unique cultural, religious, and social context, with a particular focus on Islamic education.

Since 2005, the Aceh government has increasingly invested in human resource development, notably through the Human Resources Development (PSDM) program, which provides scholarships to Aceh’s youth. Initially established as the Aceh Scholarship Commission (KBA), the institution was renamed the Aceh Human Resources Development Institute (LPSDM) in 2009. In 2017, LPSDM was integrated into the Aceh Human

Resources Development Agency (BPSDM), which now oversees the administration of government scholarships in the province.

In order to achieve the desired goals, a program or policy requires good management (Nursam, 2017; Sugiarti, 2023), including the provision of scholarships. A good education fund management process needs to be implemented so that the goal of improving the quality of education itself can truly be achieved optimally. Basically, management is interpreted as a process of planning and controlling resources so that something effective is produced (Fardiansyah et al., 2022). Furthermore, if it is related to the world of education, the ultimate goal of the governance process is to improve quality, so that the management process here will form a better and more focused quality education.

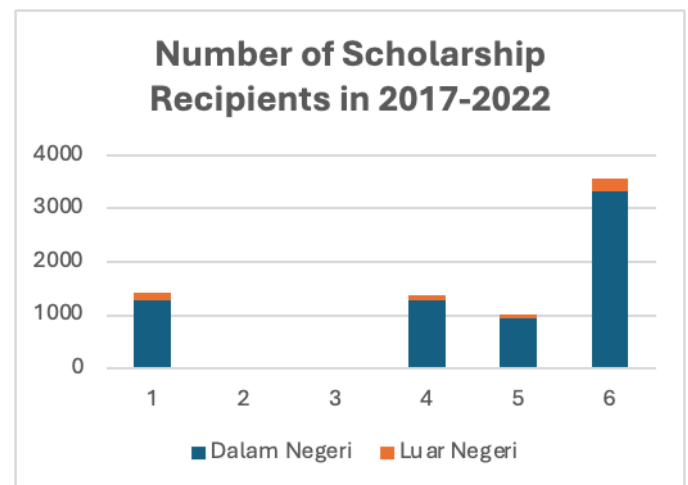


Figure 1. Acehnese Scholarship Recipients

The number of Aceh Government scholarship recipients from 2017 to 2022 as illustrated in graph 1 above seems to fluctuate. Based on data compiled from BPSDM's annual final report, the number of scholarship recipients in 2017 was 1,413 people with a total budget of around Rp. 109,326,530,100,000.00- (One Hundred Nine Billion Three Hundred Twenty Six Million Five Hundred Thirty Thousand One Hundred Rupiah). However, this program was halted in 2018 and 2019 due to uncovered corruption cases, then was only implemented again in 2020. Furthermore, the number of scholarship recipients in 2020 has seen a

decline, namely as many as 1,376 people with a total budget of around Rp. 58,722,688,285,000, 00- (Fifty Eight Billion Seven Hundred Twenty Two Million Six Hundred Eighty Eight Thousand Two Hundred Eighty Five Rupiah). The number of scholarship recipients will decrease again in 2021, namely as many as 1,031 people with a total budget of around Rp. 134,719,000,000.00- (One Hundred Thirty Four Million Seven Hundred and Nineteen Million Rupiah). Only in 2022 will the number of domestic and foreign scholarship recipients increase drastically to 3,553 people with a total budget of around Rp. 134,719,000,000.00- (One Hundred Thirty Four Million Seven Hundred and Nineteen Million Rupiah). Only in 2022 will the number of domestic and foreign scholarship recipients increase drastically to 3,553 people with a total budget of around Rp. 134,719,000,000.00- (One Hundred Thirty Four Million Seven Hundred and Nineteen Million Rupiah). Only in 2022 will the number of domestic and foreign scholarship recipients increase drastically to 3,553 people with a total budget of around Rp. 134,719,000,000.00- (One Hundred Thirty Four Million Seven Hundred and Nineteen Million Rupiah).

The management of the Aceh Government scholarship program is an interesting thing to study. The researcher reviewed a number of literature related to the implementation of scholarships in Aceh Province, however, only a few specifically examined this matter. First, Arfiansyah (2017) tries to examine the effectiveness of the Aceh Government scholarships and their contribution to development in Aceh. However, the research results have not been able to present a concrete discussion regarding the extent to which scholarships have been able to bring about meaningful change, even so he appreciates a number of service improvements developed by the government in distributing scholarships.

Second, Asemki et al. (2021) conducting a comparative study between scholarships from the Aceh Government and the Papua Government. They

explained that the two scholarships were aimed at developing the quality of regional human resources, however, the management of the scholarship management for the Aceh Regional Government looked better than the Papua Regional Government, because the Aceh Regional Government carried it out more autonomously while the Papua Regional Government was still being intervened by the central government. Even so, these two scholarships have not been able to provide a solution to job opportunities for local people after bringing home a diploma.

Third, Irfansyah & Ismail (2022) focuses on the performance of LPSDM/BPSDM employees in selecting scholarship recipients. Although there is a number of criticisms from certain parties regarding transparency, researchers claim that the selection process is in accordance with legal procedures and regulations. Lastly, Rizkiah et al. (2023) also criticized the performance of BPSDM, they really hoped for improvements in management, such as collecting data on human resource needs, making a grand design for Aceh's human resource development, and making a tracer study to find out alumni who have contributed to development in Aceh.

Based on several studies above, it was found that the performance of BPSDM Aceh continues to be in the spotlight of many parties. Therefore, BPSDM Aceh must pay close attention to what is the goal, so that what has been set can be achieved as desired. Based on the background above, the authors are interested in conducting research on the Management of the Aceh Government Scholarship Management by BPSDM Aceh.

RESEARCH METHODS

This research adopts a qualitative approach with a descriptive focus, aiming to describe and interpret the research subjects in their natural context without manipulating the data. The primary objective of qualitative research is to gain a deep understanding of key phenomena (central phenomena) through

field-based exploration. The informants for this study were selected using purposive sampling, a technique that involves choosing participants based on specific criteria and considerations. According to Spradley (2007), the criteria for selecting informants include: (i) individuals who have been involved in the research subject over an extended period, and (ii) those who remain actively engaged in the activities being studied. Based on these criteria, the informants in this study are as follows:

Table 1. Informants

No	Name (Initials)	Gender	Work	Information
1	CP	Man	Civil servants	Head of HR development and BPSDM Cooperation Division
2	NL	Woman	DPRA member	DPRA member, Commission VI
3	SNY	Woman	Student	Scholarship grantee
4	SFA	Woman	Student	Scholarship grantee
5	MAF	Man	Student	Scholarship grantee
6	R.A	Man	Student	Scholarship grantee
7	MZ	Man	Student	Scholarship recipient alumni
8	RS	Man	Self-employed	Scholarship recipient alumni
9	FN	Man	Self-employed	Scholarship recipient alumni

The table above outlines the civil status and background of the informants. A diverse group of informants was selected to provide a comprehensive perspective on scholarship management at BPSDM.

These individuals include both current scholarship recipients and alumni, as well as key stakeholders involved in the scholarship management process. Their involvement offers valuable insights into the functioning and impact of scholarship programs in Aceh.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This research discusses the management of the Aceh Government scholarship program which is managed by the Aceh Province Human Resources Development Agency (BPSDM). Based on the results of interviews conducted in the field, BPSDM Aceh can be identified in managing the Aceh Government scholarship program through basic management functions according to Terry (2021) namely Planning, Organizing, Actuating, and Controlling.

Planning

BPSDM Aceh is the Aceh Working Unit (SKPA) which has duties and functions in the field of Aceh Human Resources Development. The Aceh Government initially established LPSDM to oversee the Aceh Government scholarship program, as there was no formal institution in the region tasked with managing scholarships. However, in 2017, the responsibility for managing the scholarships was officially assigned to BPSDM. As a result, LPSDM, which was a non-structural and ad-hoc body, was merged into BPSDM. This integration was part of a policy by the Aceh Governor to streamline scholarship management and eliminate any potential overlap in responsibilities. As explained by informant CP, the Head of the Human Resources Development and Cooperation Division:

“Before BPSDM, the Aceh Government created LPSDM because there was no structural institution to manage scholarships. But since 2017, BPSDM has been given the structural responsibility for managing these scholarships. Therefore, LPSDM, being a non-structural and temporary institution, had to be merged. The Governor’s decision to integrate

LPSDM into BPSDM was intended to avoid dual management of scholarships. Now, everything, including infrastructure, documents, and financing, has been transferred to BPSDM.”

As of now, BPSDM is the sole entity responsible for managing the Aceh Government scholarship program, in line with the implementation of Governor Regulation No. 28 of 2019 concerning Aceh Government scholarships. The existence of institutional dualism results in disharmony among policy implementers, so this not only impacts institutional performance but also impacts people's satisfaction in enjoying services (Zaenuddin et al., 2018). In this way, efforts to avoid dualism in leadership through merging institutions is a very appropriate step, because this has a significant impact on public performance and services.

Meanwhile, the CP informant specifically provided an explanation related to the purpose of awarding the scholarship, as well as the following explanation:

“The aim of this Aceh Government scholarship is because it wants to help Acehnese children to study at a higher level. In particular, the Aceh Government is preparing funds to send the best sons and daughters abroad to study and return to advance Aceh in the future. "This arises because after the tsunami, Aceh lost a lot of human resources, so it needs to be overcome with existing funds to provide scholarships to create smart and progressive Acehnese children.”

Based on the explanation provided by CP, the Head of the Human Resources Development and Cooperation Division, it can be concluded that the primary goal of the Aceh Government scholarship program is to support the people of Aceh in furthering their education. Each year, the Aceh Government allocates funds to send Acehnese citizens to study both domestically and abroad. This initiative arose in response to the region's prolonged

conflict, which lasted nearly 30 years, and the devastating 2004 tsunami that severely depleted Aceh's human capital.

The development of the education sector is widely recognized as a critical driver of economic growth and the advancement of other sectors. Many countries believe that quality education is a key investment that can sustain long-term economic strength (Hanushek, 2013; Irianto, 2017). This understanding has gained broad acceptance and is now a cornerstone of development policies worldwide. In this context, the Aceh Government scholarship program represents a strategic effort by the government to cultivate highly skilled human resources capable of driving the region's progress. This aligns with the objectives of Governor Regulation No. 28 of 2019, which seeks to enhance the capacity of human resources to support Aceh's development.

To achieve the desired outcomes, effective planning is essential in the implementation of the Aceh Government scholarship program. According to Terry (2021), planning involves determining the tasks that must be completed by the group to meet the outlined objectives. It also includes decision-making processes, which involve selecting among various alternatives. This concept is reflected in the Aceh Government's decision to establish BPSDM as the institution responsible for managing the scholarship program. Through BPSDM, the Aceh Government has committed to offering scholarships annually to facilitate the education of Acehnese citizens both in Indonesia and abroad. Ultimately, the scholarship program is part of a broader effort to produce a skilled workforce that will contribute to the continued development and prosperity of Aceh.

Organizing

In this study, the organization was carried out in grouping the activities of the Aceh Government scholarship program selection process which consisted of administration selection, written exams and interviews. As explained by the CP informant

who said that:

“We refer to the provisions of Pergub No. 28 of 2019, in the pergub it is explained that to select recipients of this scholarship must go through 3 stages. The first stage is administration, the second stage is an academic potential test, and the third stage is an interview. After the three stages have been passed and declared a new pass for the person concerned to be asked to find an LoA, then he will look for the desired campus. When he graduated from one of the universities, the Aceh Government distributed a scholarship to him. The Pergub also describes the requirements needed.”

Governor Regulation Number 28 of 2019 explains the selection process that scholarship applicants must go through. After the participants pass the selection process, prospective scholarship recipients are asked to find a Letter of Acceptance (LoA) according to the desired campus and after that the new Aceh Government through BPSDM distributes education funds. A transparent and strict selection process in the scholarship program can produce more committed scholarship recipients (Amsar et al., 2018). In addition, a rigorous selection process also helps identify prospective scholarship recipients who have academic potential and a long-term commitment to their personal development. Therefore, requesting prospective scholarship recipients to seek a Letter of Acceptance (LoA) from the desired campus in accordance with regulations, as explained in Aceh Governor Regulation Number 28 of 2019, is an appropriate step. This ensures that scholarship recipients have carefully considered their options and have a strong commitment to the study program they will undertake.

The SFA informant who received the scholarship program explained the scholarship selection process as follows:

“The initial selection takes the form of administration where participants send the

requested documents. After the announcement of passing the administrative selection, participants take a kind of intelligence and psychological test. After being declared passed, participants are asked to fill out a form and submit several additional mandatory documents such as IELTS and others. And the final stage is interviews with several panelists. After that, just wait for the graduation announcement.”

The SFA informant is a recipient of the Aceh Government scholarship program in collaboration with DAAD Germany, the selection process that went through was quite long and attached several documents as administrative requirements. SFA informants also underwent an interview stage with several professional staff from Indonesia and Germany. After being declared passed, SFA informants must take German language training for 7 (seven) months in Jakarta. In addition, the FN informant as the recipient of a domestic scholarship conveyed the stages which were more or less the same as the SFA informant that “the selection process begins with administrative selection, followed by a basic ability test and then finally with an interview.”

The selection process that the FN informant went through was not as long as that of the SFA informant, this was because the SFA informant applied for a scholarship program in cooperation with Germany and the FN informant applied for a domestic scholarship program. The selection process for the Aceh Government scholarship program, as outlined in Aceh Governor Regulation No. 28 of 2019, Article 7, paragraph (1), specifies that scholarship applicants must meet certain general requirements. These include possessing an Aceh-issued ID card (KTP) and a commitment to return to Aceh after completing their studies.

These general requirements are designed to ensure that applicants meet the necessary qualifications for the scholarship, reflecting a structured and disciplined approach in the selection

process. By establishing clear and rigorous criteria, the Aceh Government can effectively filter candidates, ensuring that only those who are committed to their educational goals are considered. The implementation of these general requirements, as outlined in the regulation, is a rational and strategic measure to ensure that scholarship recipients demonstrate a strong commitment to their academic and professional futures, particularly in contributing to Aceh’s development upon their return.

In line with Terry’s (2021) concept of the *organizing function*, this process involves grouping activities and assigning responsibilities to ensure that goals are achieved. Organizing is essential for managing all the necessary resources, including human resources, to ensure the successful implementation of the scholarship program. By effectively organizing the selection and management of scholarship recipients, the Aceh Government can maximize the program’s impact and support the region's long-term development objectives.

Actuating

After successfully completing the selection process and receiving the final announcement of their acceptance, prospective scholarship recipients are required to sign a contract with the Aceh Government. This scholarship contract outlines the terms and conditions of the scholarship, establishing a formal agreement between the Aceh Government and the recipients regarding various aspects of the scholarship arrangement.

The signing of the scholarship contract represents a critical step in ensuring a well-structured and accountable relationship between the scholarship recipients and the government. It also serves as a mechanism to uphold the integrity of the educational funding provided. As noted by Charbit & Romano (2017), scholarship contracts are valuable tools for enforcing the obligations and responsibilities of recipients. Data indicates that recipients who fail to adhere to the contract’s terms may face sanctions,

such as suspension or termination of their scholarship funding. This ensures that scholarship recipients remain committed to the terms they have agreed to with the government.

In the context of the Aceh Government Scholarship program, these contracts play a crucial role in maintaining accountability and ensuring that the allocated education funds are utilized appropriately. Scholarship recipients are provided with comprehensive financial support, covering departure fees, accommodation costs, living expenses, tuition, and book fees—entirely funded by the Aceh Government. According to secondary data collected by the researchers, the financing components for both domestic and international scholarships include:

Table 2. Scholarship Funding

Scholarship Financing Components	
Domestic Scholarships	Overseas Scholarships
Tuition fee	Tuition fee
Cost of living	Cost of living
Boarding costs	Insurance fee
Book costs	Boarding costs
Thesis/thesis/dissertation fees	Book costs
arrival fee	Thesis/thesis/dissertation fees
Ticket fee for 1 trip and 1 return trip	arrival fee
	Ticket fee for 1 trip and 1 return trip
	Visa Fees

Source: BPSDM Aceh

The scholarship financing component provided by the Aceh Government refers to Aceh Governor Regulation Number 28 of 2019 which is outlined in the study contract agreed upon by the scholarship recipient and the Aceh Government. The funding is adjusted to the recipient of the scholarship. Overall domestic and foreign scholarships receive the same funding. However, the only difference is that overseas scholarship recipients receive insurance

fees and visa fees, this adjusts the need for documents that must be completed to enter the destination country to study.

Based on interviews with several scholarship recipients, the scholarship contract serves as an agreement between the Aceh Government and the recipients, outlining various terms and conditions for receiving the scholarship. Recipients are required to sign a contract that details both their rights and obligations. Some key provisions in the agreement include: the recipient's commitment not to accept scholarships from other sources, avoid engaging in illegal activities, refrain from joining organizations that contradict the Pancasila ideology, not apply for transfers to other universities or study programs, participate in language training, and agree to return to their home region after completing their studies.

According to the scholarship recipients interviewed, the implementation of the Aceh Government scholarship program has largely gone as promised. They reported that the funding process during their studies was smooth, with no significant delays. However, CP, one of the informants, did highlight some challenges in the fund distribution process. CP explained:

“In the selection process, there are technical matters handled by BPSDM, which can be resolved. However, external factors, such as the need to align with campus or training schedules, present challenges. The funding is tied to the fiscal year, which creates a mismatch between the academic calendar and the budget cycle, causing delays in disbursement.”

From this statement, it can be concluded that a key issue in the fund distribution process is the misalignment between the budget disbursement schedule and the academic or training calendar, which results in delays. BPSDM manages the Aceh Government scholarship program in collaboration with various institutions, as explained by CP:

“BPSDM partners with both public and private universities (PTN-PTS) in Indonesia. For

international scholarships, there are several models of collaboration, such as Cost Sharing with DAAD Germany, the Split Site Master of Environment program between Syiah Kuala University and the University of Rhode Island in the U.S., as well as other partnerships that adapt to the needs of the Aceh Government, universities, or the Ministry of Education and Culture.”

These collaborative efforts are aimed at strengthening relationships between institutions and facilitating the scholarship process, ensuring that the necessary resources and support are in place to benefit scholarship recipients. Collaboration between two or more institutions in the context of providing scholarships is a smart strategy and has proven to be effective in supporting higher education. Collaboration between educational institutions and local governments in providing scholarships can result in wider access to education (Williams, 2017). In this case, cooperation between the Government of Aceh and educational institutions or external parties, such as Germany's DAAD in the previous example, allows for greater availability of scholarships for outstanding Acehnese students. Apart from that, collaboration between institutions can produce a variety of better opportunities (Whittington, 2023). The data shows that scholarship recipients who receive support from inter-agency partnerships tend to have access to a variety of study programs and educational institutions. This creates greater opportunities for scholarship recipients to better pursue their interests and talents. Therefore, collaborations such as those described in the context of the Government of Aceh Scholarships allow students to explore a wider range of educational options.

On the other hand, the most crucial weakness of the management of the BPSDM scholarship award is the absence of a tracer study to see alumni of the Aceh Government scholarship who have returned and contributed to the development of Aceh. As explained by the CP Informant as follows:

"BPSDM does not yet have a tracer study, this is also one of the human resource deficiencies in managing it. In the future, it will continue to be improved so that we also know where scholarship graduates have worked and their contribution to Aceh."

The absence of a tracer study to monitor the contribution of the Aceh Government scholarship alumni who have returned and participated in the development of Aceh is indeed a significant deficiency in the management of scholarships. Tracer study is an important element in successful scholarship award management (Khasanah, 2019), in addition, it can also help the government to evaluate the success of the program and identify areas that need improvement. Therefore, post-scholarship tracking can help the Aceh government gauge the extent to which investment in higher education has a positive impact on regional development.

In the context of the Aceh Government Scholarship program, this gap should be addressed through a more systematic approach to tracking the achievements and contributions of alumni. By collecting detailed data on alumni outcomes, the Aceh Government will be better equipped to assess the long-term impact of the scholarship program and identify areas for improvement in its management and execution.

According to Terry (2021), the *actuating function* involves motivating and guiding group members to work effectively toward achieving shared goals. In this regard, the implementation of the Aceh Government scholarship program has largely aligned with the guidelines set out in Aceh Governor Regulation No. 28 of 2019 concerning Aceh Government Scholarships. However, there remain some challenges that need to be addressed to enhance the program's management and ensure even better outcomes moving forward.

Controlling

It is important to monitor scholarship

management to see how the scholarship awarding process is running according to what has been determined. This approach also allows for any obstacles in the scholarship awarding process to be promptly evaluated and addressed, ensuring timely resolution of issues. Monitoring is an important tool for maintaining transparency accountability (Ríos et al., 2016), and is also very important for maintaining the success of a program/policy (Pondaag et al., 2017). Meanwhile, Informant NL as a member of DPRA Commission VI said that:

"There is monitoring carried out, at least before the scholarship is awarded and halfway through the scholarship and when the scholarship ends. Previously, we called BPSDM and asked them to present data on who the recipients were who had received scholarships and where they were now. Then data on who will be given, what category they belong to. Then halfway through the journey, are there any problems with the scholarship recipient children, how are they going to school, so we have to continue to follow up."

According to informant NL, one of the key functions of the DPR is its oversight role. The DPRA exercises this supervisory function by overseeing the entire process of scholarship distribution under the Aceh Government Scholarship program. This oversight begins before scholarships are awarded, with the DPRA requesting reports from BPSDM regarding the recipients' data and the institutions from which they graduated. Additionally, the DPRA, particularly Commission VI, monitors the scholarship process to identify and address any issues that may arise. This comprehensive monitoring is an essential aspect of the DPRA's supervision of BPSDM in managing the Aceh Government scholarship program.

Throughout the implementation of the scholarship program, BPSDM, as the institution responsible for managing the program, also monitors the academic progress of scholarship recipients. As explained by CP, Head of Human Resources

Development and Cooperation at BPSDM:

“We monitor the students’ academic progress and make an agreement with them before they depart. BPSDM conducts at least annual monitoring visits to universities to directly observe the study process. Additionally, we receive reports from the institutions themselves. Students are also required to submit a progress report, and we have provided a form on our website for them to complete.”

BPSDM conducts annual monitoring visits to universities for international scholarship recipients and semesterly visits for domestic scholarship recipients. These visits are designed to assess the students’ academic progress, address any obstacles they may be facing, and review the study progress reports that recipients must submit each semester. In addition, BPSDM also has the right to terminate the contract if the progress of the study is not in accordance with what has been determined. This is expected to foster a sense of responsibility to the recipients to study diligently and achieve good grades. This is in accordance with the acknowledgment of the SFA informant who stated that:

“I think even though it is not controlled at all times, the role of BPSDM control is quite significant, where we were asked to make a study progress report at the end of the financing year along with a transcript of grades. BPSDM has the right to terminate the contract and not continue financing if a student's study progress does not meet expectations, so I believe this "forces" each scholarship recipient to develop a sense of responsibility.”

After completing their studies, scholarship recipients are required to report back to BPSDM by submitting a copy of their diploma. This is considered a personal responsibility for each recipient, as it reflects their accountability in utilizing the scholarship provided by the Aceh Government. In line with this, informant CP explained:

“Scholarship recipients must report back and submit a copy of their diploma as part of our data collection process. This allows us to track alumni and ensure they fulfill their obligation to return to Aceh, with the aim of creating job opportunities and contributing to the development of the region.”

Similarly, informant MZ added: “After we completed our studies, we were all asked to return to Aceh and submit copies of our diplomas to BPSDM”. From these statements, it can be concluded that after finishing their education, scholarship recipients are obligated to report to BPSDM and submit their diplomas. This reporting process is essential for documenting the successful completion of their studies and tracking alumni. Moreover, recipients are expected to return to Aceh and contribute to its development after their education.

According to Terry (2021), the *controlling function* involves identifying and applying methods and tools to ensure that plans are executed as intended. This concept aligns with BPSDM’s efforts in overseeing the scholarship program. BPSDM actively monitors the progress of scholarship recipients by conducting annual visits to universities for international students and semesterly visits for domestic students. Additionally, after completing their studies, scholarship recipients must report back to BPSDM and submit their diplomas.

Effective scholarship management is crucial, as it serves as the mechanism for achieving the program’s goals. As the institution responsible for managing the Aceh Government scholarship program, BPSDM must ensure that the program is administered efficiently to meet its objectives. While the current management process has been effective, there are still areas for improvement, such as increasing transparency in the selection process, especially since exam results are not made public.

CONCLUSION

Based on the research findings and discussion, the study concludes that the Aceh

Government scholarship program has been implemented effectively in accordance with the guidelines set forth in Aceh Governor Regulation No. 28 of 2019. The program has generally run smoothly, fulfilling its intended objectives. However, there are still challenges that need to be addressed to enhance its management and ensure greater effectiveness. One of the key considerations is that the scholarship program should be more closely aligned with the specific needs of the Acehnese people, ensuring that the competencies developed through the program directly contribute to the region's socio-economic development.

In light of these conclusions, the researcher offers the following recommendations: BPSDM should strengthen its governance structures by improving the management of data related to the educational needs of the region, with a particular focus on human resource development to support Aceh's broader development goals. This can be achieved by creating a comprehensive Grand Design for Aceh's human resource development. Such a strategy would ensure that prospective scholarship recipients are selected in alignment with the region's needs, optimizing the impact of the scholarship program. Furthermore, the knowledge and skills acquired by scholarship recipients should be harnessed in a way that benefits the region, addressing any imbalances in workforce distribution and ensuring that graduates are employed in areas where their skills are most needed.

Additionally, it is recommended that BPSDM conduct tracer studies to track alumni and assess their contributions to Aceh's development. This would provide valuable insights into the long-term impact of the scholarship program and help inform future program adjustments to ensure that human resources are utilized efficiently and effectively. By addressing these areas, the Aceh Government scholarship program can become a more targeted and impactful tool for regional development, with a clear focus on the effective absorption of human resources into the local economy.

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