

Analysis of Merit System on Filling High Leadership Positions in the Government of East Manggarai Regency

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this research is to analyze the application of merit system in the implementation of open selection for high leadership positions in the context of a local socio-cultural setting. The merit system policy in this open selection in this research refers to the Regulation of the Minister of Administrative Reform and Bureaucratic Reform (Permenpanrb) Number 15 of 2019. This research was conducted in the East Manggarai Regency Government utilizing a post-positivist research approach with qualitative data collection techniques. The findings showed that the implementation of open selection for filling JPT in East Manggarai Regency was not based on succession planning, there were differences in administrative requirements with relevant regulations; the addition of several administrative files. The background checking process is only carried out based document-driven and conducted indirectly to the participants' work environment. The process of monitoring and evaluation or re-mapping for elected officials is carried out periodically. The limited number of elected officials with different socio-cultural backgrounds is due to the composition of employees and selection participants who mostly come from the East Manggarai Regency area and share the same socio-cultural background.

Keywords: Civil Service, Merit System, Open Selection, Primordialism.

INTRODUCTION

One of the pivotal issues in Indonesia's reform process is how to achieve good governance. Employees play a significant role in implementing good governance. Besides that, the strategic role of employees in government administration and development necessitates continuous reform in the civil service sector [1]. The number of State Civil Apparatus in Indonesia on December 2021 was recorded at 4.046.187 people, consisting of 3.995.634 Civil Servants (PNS) and 50.553 Government Employees with Work Agreements (PPPK) (Source: BKN, 2021) with a variety of distributions based on agencies, positions, and educational backgrounds. This presents a unique challenge This poses a challenge itself in carrying out personnel reform, which inevitably must be conducted to create good governance and also enhance competitiveness in global competition.

The process of civil service reform was also challenged by the enactment of regional autonomy and the authority of Civil Service Officer (PPK) held by political officials. The regional autonomy in which there is ethnocentrism causes the process of filling positions in bureaucracy based on the spirit of regional sons [1]. In accordance with Law Number 5 of 2014, "Civil Service Officer are officials who have the authority to determine the appointment, transfer, and termination of Civil Servants (ASN) employees and foster civil servants' management in government agencies in compliance with the provisions of law and regulations". Therefore, it allows the officials leverage their power to gain political support through the bureaucracy. This concern is also conveyed by Ward [2] in his journal which discuss the difficulty of implementing merit-based bureaucracy that emphasizes achievements, when local bureaucracy enjoys strong discretionary control over the distribution of state resources.

In Indonesia, the design of Bureaucratic Reform has been regulated in Presidential Regulation Number 81 of 2010. The improvement efforts undertaken from 2010 to 2025 encompass 8 (eight) areas of change, one of which is the area of human resources of civil servants with the expected outcome of change in the formation of human resources of civil servants with integrity, neutrality, competence, capability, professionalism, high performance, and prosperous.

Civil Servants is a resource of governance and development hence it becomes an essential component. Therefore, policies and management of Civil Servants need to be continuously changed. The reformation of personnel management policy in Indonesia itself has started since the issuance of Law Number 43 of 1999 concerning Amendments to Law Number 8 of 1974 concerning the Basic Principles of Civil Service. The regulation contains arrangements for Civil Servants Management as an initial step in personnel reform. The reform of civil servants become one of the challenges that are quite heavy and significant for the government. Through bureaucratic reform, the Indonesian government has taken the right step as the designer in implementing reforms in public administration, noting that the patrimonial system that governs Indonesian bureaucrats and its existing values have been seen as obstacles in changing bureaucratic behavior to achieve reform objectives [3].

The demand for improving the performance of public officials is increasing, especially when linked to the government's effort to enhance the country's competitiveness in global competition [4]. Building an effective resource management system is not an overnight task. It requires internal competence and external support, especially from the main actor in the organization, including political leaders, management, employees, and citizens. When pursuing an improvement, the focus should not solely be on speed instead, using the right resources. Indonesia's civil service system or state apparatus has been undergoing continuous improvements, with various steps being taken to maintain independence in its management process. One of the efforts made in managing civil servants is by implementing a merit system, although it is quite lagging compared to other countries such as Singapore, which implemented it earlier. The merit system has long been known in government areas, started by philosophers Aristotle and Plato, who believed that a country should be led by the smartest, most virtuous, and most accomplished individuals. The good side of meritocracy ensures that the bureaucracy has a qualified public service performance capable of designing more targeted programs (Anderson, 2003).

Through the Civil Servant Law, KASN has the function of supervising the implementation of the merit system in government institutions and is responsible for tracking data and information on the implementation of the merit system. To ensure the embodiment of the Merit System, KASN is authorized to carry out monitoring and evaluation of policy implementation of civil servants' management in each government institution by assessing the implementation of the merit system based on the adoption of 8 (aspects).

Based on data from KASN (2022), the assessment of the application of the merit system has been carried out by KASN since 2019. By the end of 2022, 442 government institutions have been assessed for applying the merit system by KASN, comprising 34 Ministries, 21 LPNK, 30 Provinces, and 357 regencies/ Cities. This means there are approximately 26% or 155 institutions that are currently in the process of establishing/guiding the implementation of the merit system based on the targets in the national priorities in the National Medium-Term Development Plan for the Year 2020-2024.

The Merit System covers 8 (eight) aspects: workforce planning; procurement; career development; promotion and transfer; performance management; compensation, rewards, and discipline; protection and services; and the last aspect is the information system. The merit system in Indonesia was legally formalized in 2014 through Law No. 5/2014 [5] concerning State Civil Apparatus. The law stipulates that qualifications, competencies, and job performance are the foundation of ASN management applied fairly and reasonably without distinguishing between religious background, ancestry, race, skin color, gender, marital status, age, disability (without discrimination), and political background. This system seems to be a criticism of the fertile practice of nepotism and primordialism in the world of work. Therefore, the merit system is one of the results of the bureaucratic reform agenda launched to create a neutral bureaucracy that serves public needs and is free from the practice of Corruption, Collusion, and Nepotism.

NTT Province is a pluralist area with over 50 ethnicities and 3 large islands, making it vulnerable to primordial influences. The issue of primordial influence in civil servants' employee management efforts was once addressed by [6], who explained that 38.9% of respondents stated that personnel placement in the bureaucracy in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT), East Kalimantan, and East Java should be local residents (sons of the region). This aligns with [1] statement that the problem of recruitment in local governments cannot be separated from issues like strong regional egoism, the existence of fraternal and affiliation ties, and the tendency to prioritize local residents (sons of the region). If viewed from the perspective of policy, the condition that prioritizes regional sons regardless of their competence is a form of primordialism culture which is the main root of why meritocracy fails in filling positions from socio-cultural factors [7].

Research [8] found that ethnic and religious elements in East Nusa Tenggara (NTT) combine in such a way as to create a primordial sentiment, forming the foundation for bureaucratic behavior in perceiving and approaching all bureaucratic activities, including the pursuit of bureaucratic positions and the dynamics of struggle and access to structural positions. Even though, historically, ethnicity and religion have become the basis that colored the character of early governance in NTT. This polarization of society within the sphere of ethnicity and religion was later carried over into the dynamics of the NTT government, as seen in the process of regional expansion. Back before the arrival of foreigners, the people of NTT, who inhabited the islands of Flores, Pantar, Sumba, Adonara, Alor, Rote, Sabu, Solor, Timor, and others, hardly had a government system based on customary unity led by a king. Royal relations between one island and kingdoms on other islands were disconnected, often leading to conflicts and wars. The arrival of the Portuguese and Dutch then strengthened this condition. During this period, religion became another significant aspect beyond ethnicity that shaped the communality of people in NTT. This pattern was particularly evident in the Flores region and parts of Timor (Belu and North Central Timor) that were controlled by the Portuguese, which later enlarged into a base for Catholicism, while the Timor region (South Central Timor and Kupang), Sumba, Sabu, and Rote became a base for the enlarged of Christianity and Protestantism [8].

Through the process of recruitment, it is expected that qualified and appropriate officials can be obtained to achieve an effective, efficient and successful local government in serving the community, as previously ethnic considerations in the recruitment process tended to be stronger, especially if there was a similarity in ethnicity (clan) which was then tied to the existence of a "network" with officials in the local government who came from the same ethnicity or clan [9].

Therefore, per the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation Number 15 of 2019, every government institution must apply the principles and avoid prohibited practices in the merit system. Currently, the implementation of filling high leadership positions is carried out openly in a competitive manner. One of regions that has already implemented an open selection for filling high leadership positions is East Manggarai Regency. In 2021, an open selection was held to fill 7 (seven) high leadership positions. However, until 2023, East Manggarai Regency is still in the process of fostering the merit system with a temporary score of 173 or a poor predicate.

LITERATURE REVIEW

MERITOCRACY

The merit system is known as the opposite of the spoil system. Guy Peter (1995) provided a more detailed explanation of the relationship between the merit system and the spoil system. The merit system approach is based on the character of bureaucracy developed by Weber, whereby public officials should be selected based on criteria of ability and merit rather than subjective criteria such as caste, sense of class, or language. The assumed selection system in the bureaucracy should be able to recruit the best personnel, and the merit system becomes the instrument to achieve this. In the long run, Merit System will maintain the integrity of the government by ensuring a quality, fair, diligent, and competent recruitment process (Berman, 2015).

[10] argues that merit substitutes political action, favoritism, and other discrimination. Merit operates more as a value or principle that implies fairness, equality, and performance in public employment. [10] describes a merit system as a process for hiring, paying, developing, promoting; retaining, disciplining, and dismissing people based on ability and performance fairly and orderly. [11] simply defines merit as the best person for a particular job, which implies that a person is selected for a position because of their qualities and abilities, not because of non-merit factors such as ethnicity, religion, family, friends, region, social class, gender, wealth, politics, and so on. McCourt defines the best person as first, employment at any level means that the merit principle applies to the promotion and recruitment of new employees. Second, the best candidates are those who prove to be the most accomplished and competent. Third, being open to all means that the appointment process is not from within or internal or from a limited range of candidates. Fourth, systematic, transparent, and competitive means that the process of appointing the best people is done systematically, transparently, and competitively. [11] admits that the practice will encounter several obstacles due to its limited definition. First, obstacles will occur if merit is defined as "able to do the job". Therefore, opportunities for nepotism can occur between the selection committee and its relatives. Second, there will be political patronage, where nepotism is represented as a moral obligation between 'father' and 'son' as expressed by [11], "a social altruist, discharging a noble obligation to political supporters, family members and others". Furthermore, the third obstacle is the possibility of discrimination on irrelevant individual factors such as gender, ethnicity/race, religion, etc.

PRIMORDIALISM AND ETHNICITY

Clifford [12] claims that humans have primordial ties to what he describes as the 'gifts' from social existence, whether direct kinship or a particular religious and/or linguistic community. He further explains that:

“These congruities of blood, speech, custom, and so on...have an ineffable, and at times overpowering, coerciveness in and of themselves. One is bound to one’s kinsman, one’s neighbour, one’s fellow believer, ipso facto; as the result not merely of personal affection, practical necessity, common interest, or incurred obligation, but at least in great part by virtue of some unaccountable absolute import attributed to the very tie itself. The general strength of such primordial bonds, and the types of them that are important, differ from person to person, from society to society, and from time to time. But for virtually every person, in every society, at almost all times, some attachments seem to flow more from a sense of natural – some would say spiritual – affinity than from social interaction.”

In other words, he does not explicitly state that the 'gift' from social existence is inherently primordial but rather emphasizes individuals' attachment towards it. [12] perceives this attachment as deep-rooted and perhaps even inevitable from individuals who form ethnic groups or ethnic nations. Meanwhile, [13] asserts that primordial ties are embodied in ethnicity, signifying the relationship between one thing and another that cannot be separated in a person's life, traditionally exists in society, which is continuously present both in the past and today as a collective consciousness.

The correlation between primordialism and ethnicity is also conveyed by [14] that primordialism generally considers that social groups are characterized by descriptions such as culture, religion, territory, language, and social organization that are objectively based as something that is 'given' and cannot be denied. From the points above, it can be seen that there are 4 (four) dominant values in the concept of primordialism politics which are also in line with [6]. The four things are ethnicity, kinship, social status, and customs.

OPEN SELECTION OF HIGH LEADERSHIP POSITION

Berman and others implicitly combine the concepts of recruitment, selection and promotion in a topic "processes and skills: from start to finish" [15]. The selection process will be considered good if it has two categories of variables: criteria and predictors. This success has several factors, such as performance achievement, loyalty, organizational commitment, and good history/background (such as work attitude and behavior and human relations). Meanwhile, predictor variables relate to tasks, expertise, education, and skills to predict whether someone will succeed in their job (Riggio, 2009).

Meanwhile, Almond and Coleman (1996) claim that currently, there are at least two recruitment models in the political system. The first model is an ascriptive style, where individuals are chosen based on lineage and social status, gender, race, ethnicity, and religion to occupy certain positions. The second model is recruitment based on achievement-oriented, which emphasizes technical expertise and leadership to avoid collusion in the created policies.

Regarding the phases in bureaucratic recruitment, according to Thoha [16] there are several phases, such as identifying needs for the procurement of civil servants (including those promoted to officials), identifying requirements, determining potential candidates, selection process, announcing results to candidates and informing candidates who have passed. From this process, it is expected that the officials who will be recruited are qualified and competent so they can develop local governments that are effective, efficient, and successful in serving the public.

Berman (2016) further explains that merit selection is a type of selection that focuses on technical qualifications by using a process that analyzes jobs and requires open procedures. Berman mentions that there are 4 (four) steps in the selection process: (1) Selection of “tests”, (2) Screen, interview, and checks (reference and other), (3) Negotiate and hire, (4) Postselection considerations. The first step is an administrative selection to distinguish between those who meet the requirements and those who do not meet the requirements such as educational background, work experience, and licenses. Then, In the second stage, the people who pass the administrative selection and meet the requirements will be identified and screened through various tests such as interviews, background checks, and others in accordance with the number of people who will be included in the next selection. The third stage will be negotiating and selecting the best candidate and his/her backup if the best candidate resigns. And the fourth stage includes other post-selection considerations such as drug testing and medical check-ups.

The current implementation of open filling for high positions in Indonesia refers to the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucracy Reform Regulation Number 15 of 2019 concerning Open and Competitive Recruitment of High Leadership Positions in Government Institutions, as follows:

1. Preparation Stage

The preparation of open selection is done by selecting vacant positions according to the 10 (ten) conditions that have been determined, planning the preparation of the selection along with a document planning and creating a selection committee.

2. Implementation Stage

The implementation of open selection is done by setting the requirements as a candidate for officials as stated in the letter/announcement and registration procedures. Next, the selection stages, such as submission of applications, background check, administrative selection, and final interviews, as well as the appointment of the best candidates.

3. Monitoring and Evaluation

The final stage in the open selection process for JPT, which is then carried out by KASN supervising the implementation of the entire process, starts from the formation of the selection committee to the inauguration of PPT and issuing recommendations based on the monitoring results.

METHODS

The paradigm or approach utilized in this research is the post-positivist paradigm. In this research, the researcher bases this research on existing theories and constructs it into the operationalization of research so it can be closer to reality. It does not depart from the idea of the researcher alone, which then formulates a new theory. In addition, [17] mentioned that research that has been conducted by post-positivist begins with a theory, then collects the data that supports or contradicts the theory and makes necessary revisions before additional testing is performed. In this research, the researcher chose the theories that were deemed suitable for the research problem, then used supporting data collection using qualitative data, which in this research were obtained through interviews and documents.

Qualitative data in the form of documents are acquired from documents consisting of books, scientific articles, journals, electronic publications, legislation, and theses. At the same time, the data from the interview is acquired through interviews with the Assistant of KASN, the Secretary of the Civil Servants and Human Resources Development Agency of East Manggarai Regency, Participants of the Open Selection in East Manggarai Regency in 2021, and the Open Selection Committee in East Manggarai Regency in 2021.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The Best Person for Every Job

The concept of the best people is defined as having jobs available at every level, the best candidates who have proven to be the most outstanding and competent, the process is available for all, and the implementation is systematic, transparent, and competitive. In the first definition, jobs available at every level are the merit principle which is applied to the promotion and recruitment process based on qualifications, competence, and performance. In the East Manggarai Regency Government, the filling of JPT is done through an open selection process in accordance with the provisions in Permenpanrb Number 15 of 2019 [18], whose procedures include preparation, implementation and monitoring, and evaluation. In the preparation stage of the selection process, it is performed by mapping vacant positions, identifying the qualifications and competency standards required for each position, creating a Selection Committee, scheduling the selection process, determining the selection method and system, and drafting the JPT selection announcement. Furthermore, the implementation stage of filling the JPT is conducted by announcing the selection process along with a list of vacant positions and their requirements, implementing the selection stages, and determining the PPT candidates. All stages that have been passed lead to an evaluation which eventually results in a recommendation from KASN as formal evidence that the selection process has been conducted in compliance with applicable policies and regulations.

For the second definition, the availability of the best candidates is proven by the participants who managed to become a PPT participants with the highest scores and fulfill the requirements in each selection stage. The process of selection includes Administrative Selection (knockout system), Managerial Competency Selection/Assessment Center (weightage 25%), Competency Field Selection /Papers (weightage 20%), Track Record (weightage 20%), and final interview (weightage 35%). The best candidates are determined based on the suitability of qualifications and competencies through a selection process that produces a score ranking. The ranking results are based on the scores, which are then announced by the Selection Committee to the selected participants. The Selection Committee then also presents the scores and three names of PPT candidates to the Personnel Supervisory Officer (PPK), which is the Regent. PPK then picked one of the three names of PPT candidates.

The third definition is open to all, in this case the open selection is for anyone who meets the selection requirements, not limited to certain groups. The selection of filling leadership positions in East Manggarai Regency Government is performed openly and is not only intended for Civil Servants (PNS) in East Manggarai Regency but is also open to all civil servants in the province, Regency/City throughout the NTT province complies with the letter of announcement issued by the Regent of East Manggarai Regency to the Regents /Mayor of the NTT province and the heads of Regional Apparatus under the NTT Provincial Government.

The fourth definition is a process that is conducted systematically, transparently, and competitively. The open selection process held in East Manggarai Regency is done systematically in accordance with the schedule and stages that have been informed initially when announcing vacant positions. The selection process is carried out transparently and competitively by openly announcing each stage's score in accordance with the selection procedure for filling JPT as stated in the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform Regulation (Permenpanrb) Number 15 of 2019. Besides that, the selected PPT is the candidates who gained the highest scores in the selection process.

Selection Process in Filling JPT

The selection process in filling JPT consists of administrative selection screening of candidates with interview mechanisms and background checks, selection process, negotiation, and consideration after the selection. The first process is administrative selection, intending to assess the completeness and suitability of the administrative documents required for participant registration. Provisions regarding administrative files that are needed to acquire the requirements contained in Permenpanrb Number 15 of 2019, namely application letter, letter of rank and position certification, last educational certificate, tax returns, results of work performance assessments for the last 2 (two) years, curriculum vitae and asset declaration report. In the selection process of JPT in East Manggarai Regency, there are differences in which there are 12 (twelve) administrative documents needed beyond those listed in Permenpanrb Number 15 of 2019, namely, certificates of leadership training, certificates of technical and functional training ever participated in (minimum 20 hours of study), health certificates, PPK recommendation regarding approval to join the selection process, and papers/essays. Additional administrative process requirements imply a commitment to getting the best candidates to meet the first stage's administrative requirements.

The second process is candidate screening through interview mechanisms, such as background checks and others which are then ranked based on the highest scores and grades. JPT selection in East Manggarai Regency is carried out by an assessor or Management Competency Assessment Team from the Regional Civil Service Agency of NTT Province with an accredited Assessment Institution A utilizing methods stipulated in Permenpanrb Number 38 of 2017 concerning The Competency Standards for Civil Servants Positions. Then the selection of papers The selection of papers drafted by the participants will then be presented and explored for socio-cultural competence. The selection committee carries out the interview stage by exploring several dimensions, namely passion, motivation, character, and behavior. Then a background check with a track record is carried out by the Selection Committee with emphasis or excavation sources of information: the participant's track record or job history, long-term job history or tenure, achievement/performance record, relations and achievements, the participant's discipline record (indiscipline data), social life record, religious life record, national and state life, the participant's family and social community life, the participant's immediate family track record. However, the process of background checks is only carried out based on documents. It does not include visits to the participant's previous workplace or interactions with colleagues, superiors, subordinates, and others in the working environment.

The third process is selecting and negotiating the best candidates and their backup if the best candidates step down. In the selection process, the best candidates in JPT filling selection are carried out by the Selection Committee based on the results of the score ranking in outcomes of the selection

process. The Selection Committee consists of 5 (five) people, comprised of the Secretary of the Regional Government (as the chairman), the Head of BKPSDM (as the internal representative), and members from external parties, including professionals, academics, and community figures. This aligns with the requirements where the number of selection committees is at least 5 (five) people with a maximum ratio of 45% internal members.

The fourth or final process in the selection process of choosing the best candidate, according to The Selection Process Theory, is post-selection considerations such as the results of drug tests and medical check-ups. The last JPT selection in East Manggarai Regency is the selection with interviews mechanisms performed by the selection committee by deepening the 4 (dimensions). Moreover, the results of drug tests and medical check-ups are provisions at the administrative selection stage, as evidenced by Health Certificate" from the Community Health Center or General Hospital.

Primordialism

Ethnicity

Ethnicity is derived from the Greek *ethnos*, which means a community whose inhabitants come from the same descent [6]. The word *ethnic* becomes a predicate for the identity of a group or a person [19]. Ethnicity is simply translated as a collection of groups that are shaped to build themselves on togetherness or collectivity centered on common norms, values, beliefs, symbols, and culture [6]. In addition, ethnicity is often based on the similarity of blood [20]. In districts/cities in Indonesia.

Among the more than 45 tribes in East Nusa Tenggara Province, there is a tribe from Manggarai, which is the indigenous tribe of the people of East Manggarai Regency. The Primary High Leadership Officials (PTP) in East Manggarai Regency are dominated by employees with the Manggarai Tribe who are indigenous to East Manggarai and the majority are Catholic., However, the opportunity to occupy high leadership positions is also open to other ethnicities. For example, the Regional Secretary comes from Sumatra with a Batak tribe and is a Protestant Christian. Then, among the total 34 PTP positions, 4 of them are occupied by officials with non-East Manggarai backgrounds. Meanwhile, in the 2021 JPT selection process, participants or those who applied were dominated by employees with the Manggarai tribe, with only 3 people, or 10%, who were not from the Manggarai tribe. However, this matter was not considered in the selection process, where there were no questions or special considerations regarding ethnicity. In addition, employees with non-Manggarai backgrounds can still follow the entire selection process until the inauguration based on the scores obtained. In the position of the Head of the Department of Food Security and Fisheries of East Manggarai Regency, the official who passed came from the Sumba tribe.

Kinship Politics

The phenomenon of kinship politics can be found in various forms and levels of bureaucracy. This is as a result of primordial politics that is closely related to nepotism and collusion, where kinship politics also takes the role of distribution practices among blood family members. [6]. Nepotism can potentially participate in the recruitment process, where basically nepotism can encourage the acceptance process, appointment, and reappointment promotion of family members or close friends in government positions [6]. In the implementation of open selection in East Manggarai Regency, the elected officials have no blood relations with the PPK or the Authorized

Official (PyB). Besides that, in the selection process, there are no requirements or considerations related to the existence of blood relations with PPK and PyB.

Social Statuses

Social status is often referred to as the position or rank of a person in the community, which reflects the rights and obligations of individuals in practicing behavior [21]. Linton [22] divided social status into 2 (two) forms based on how it is obtained: social status obtained automatically, such as based on descent, and social status obtained through efforts, such as based on positions in work. Based on the results of interviews and documentation on the open selection process, there are no question points or consideration points that are used as the basis for selecting officials related to social status, besides that the elected officials do not have a certain social status in the community, either automatically obtained or obtained through effort.

Customs

Customs for local leaders and communities are interpreted as identities in the form of norms, values and symbols that can form existence, self-esteem and guidelines in regulating social and government relations as well as weapons to defend themselves when facing attacks from outsiders [6]. In the process of implementing open selection, customs do not become a consideration in the selection of officials.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis of the research results, in the implementation of the merit system in the open selection of JPT in East Manggarai Regency, the best person who occupies the JPT is acquired through an open selection process in accordance with the selection procedures as stipulated in Permenpanrb Number 15 of 2019. The mechanism carried out has also been systematically aligned with the stages submitted in the announcement of the selection process. The selection is also conducted transparently, where the results of gained scores from all participants are announced at each stage of the selection. Then, from the aspect of competition, the selection process is carried out competitively where the selection process from the beginning is announced through a wide media to be followed by all employees both from within the East Manggarai Regency Government and civil servants in the Province, Regency / City throughout the NTT Province as long as the employee meets the criteria. In the administrative selection mechanism, some requirements had different documents, including certificates of leadership training, certificates of technical and functional training ever participated in (minimum 20 hours of study), health certificates, PPK recommendation regarding approval to join the selection process, and papers/essays. Deepening background checks are only carried out based on documents submitted by participants. It does not include visits to the participant's origin. The monitoring and evaluation process by related institutions; KASN, has been conducted. The selection committee performs the selection of the best candidates by referring to the scores and rankings of each participant in all positions from each selection process.

In the local socio-cultural context of primordialism, no primordialism values were considered in the selection process, whether in terms of ethnicity, kinship politics, social status or customs [23]. At all stages, from administrative requirements to interviews, there were no questions or special requirements related to these aspects of primordialism. Regarding the number of officials

who occupy JPT, the majority have the same ethnic background because the candidates who registered 90% are natives of East Manggarai, but for candidates who have different backgrounds, they still have the same opportunity with the result that in one position, namely the Head of the Food Security and Fisheries Office of East Manggarai Regency, the official who passed was from the Sumba Tribe

Within the local socio-cultural context of primordialism, primordialism values were not considered in the selection process, whether in terms of ethnicity, kinship politics, social status, or customs. At all stages, from administrative requirements to interviews, there were no questions or special requirements related to these aspects of primordialism. Regarding the number of officials who occupy JPT, most of them have the same ethnic background because the candidates who registered are 90% East Manggarai natives. However, candidates with different backgrounds, still have the same opportunity with the result that one position, namely Head of the Department of Food Security and Fisheries of East Manggarai Regency, the official who passed came from the Sumba tribe.

From the conclusion of the analysis conclusion on the implementation of the merit system in the local socio-cultural context in East Manggarai Regency, some recommendations given to the concept of the best Person are the acceleration of succession planning (talent pool) in the East Manggarai Regent Regulation. Meanwhile, in the selection process, it is necessary to undertake a comprehensive background check, not solely focusing on evaluating curriculum vitae, but also considering the applicant's place of origin and work environment. Meanwhile, if viewed by the local socio-culture to maintain quality by not considering aspects of primordialism as a consideration in the selection process.

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