

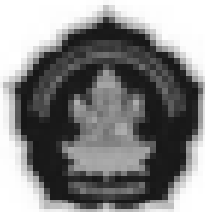
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# EXPLORING THE ROLES OF VOCATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATIONS IN CREATING COMPETENT GRADUATES: EVIDENCE FROM TOURISM INSTITUTE OF TRIATMA JAYA

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## ABSTRACT

*This article investigates the roles of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya as one of vocational higher educations in Bali in creating competent graduates that meet qualifications required for ASEAN Economic Community standard. A semi-structure interview with open-ended questions conducted with the Chancellor of Triatma Jaya Tourism Institute to elicit the efforts undertaken to meet such competence; and also tracer study of current bachelor degree graduates to investigate job titles occupied after remaining for four years in the institute. Additionally, a six-month observation was also done to collect immediate evidences from the institute to support the research. The finding shows that vocational tourism institute plays such great roles in preparing competent graduates possessing both soft and hard competences that liable to compete internationally within the ASEAN counties by applying both internal and external empowerments wherein the institute straightens the curriculum and improve the laboratory that correspond to international requirements; and enlarges cooperation with international interchange hotels where the students gained practical work experiences and binds cooperation with National Certification Agency to certify students' competences before leaving the institute.*

*Keywords: vocational higher education, competence, ASEAN Economic Community, certification*

## 1. Introduction

Bali as one of the most unique and well-known culture-based tourism destinations in the world demands both international standard infrastructure and superstructure to **meet the tourists' needs during their visits on** the island. The infrastructure of tourism includes tourist attractions, airports, harbours, roads, medical services, accommodations, food and beverage services; and the infrastructure includes social and cultural institutions, hospitality. Infrastructure like tourist attractions and amenities for instances, have been claimed as a significant pull factor motivating tourists to visit particular tourist destination (Cakici and Harman 2007). In the same vein, Eid and El-Gohary (2015) argue that hospitality provided by tourism enterprises in the destination is also argued as an important attribute expected by tourists to add the value of their holidays as they find all their needs are met in excellent service which can only

be served or prepared by competent human resource.

In Bali, the rapid developments hotels, villas, restaurants and other tourism facilities in Bali is unfortunately not supported by the developments of vocational higher educations that prepare qualified human resources that able to meet the tourists demands. The existing tourism training and education centres that offer non degree programme only support the human resources for low level positions that tend to provide less earnings. Meanwhile, the needs of qualified higher education graduates have not been met since the limited number of vocational tourism higher educations that create competent human resources that able to occupy higher position such as supervisor and managers. This paper attempts to explore the roles of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya in preparing highly qualified and competent graduates that able to compete with other job



seekers as the joint agreement of ASEAN Economic Community implemented.

## 2. Literature Review

Contemporarily, competency has been lawfully regulated in the Act of Republic of Indonesia Number 10 of 2009 in which anybody who works in certain company shall be competent in their work area. More specifically, competency in tourism, is defined as a set of knowledge, skill and attitude that shall be possessed, understood and mastered by tourism-related-workers that set as bases to develop work professionalism to perform excellent services in order to meet customers' satisfactions (Undang-Undang No.10 Tahun 2009). Similarly, Chanduvi, et al (2011) define competence as "the ability to apply knowledge and skills, and when appropriate, show personal attributes". This definition is also focus the ability of person possessing knowledge, skill and attitude that shall be performed in relation the profession concerned. In other word, that the demands of tourists on the visited destination shall be met and served by competent hosts preparing services such as accommodations, food and beverage, guided tours who mater the aforementioned qualifications which can be proved from the ownership of competence certificate through a set of certification test process that assessed by certified assessors appointed by Indonesian certification agency.

Furthermore, the notion of certification is also prescribed in the abovementioned Tourism Act, in which professional certification is defined as process of conferring certificate to tourism workers to support increasing the quality of tourism products, service and management. This suggests that professional competence certification is very useful for the workers which most likely aiming at ensuring and preparing definite evidence to the users that they are competent in certain subject, area or occupation, planning their future carriers and

measuring the level of their achievement, gaining international competence recognition and promoting their profession world-widely (Badan Nasional Sertifikasi Profesi 2014). This corresponds to the notion of competence certification argued by Chanduvi, et al (2011) in which it is aimed at achieving public recognition through documentation of current work ability.

**At provincial level, Bali's government also** regulates the significance of competence certification which regulated in current Regional Regulation Number 2 of 2012 on Cultural Tourism of Bali. The regional government of Bali adapts the certification concept to signify that recognition of competence is essential in development of tourism industries on the island; and even, professional competence certifications have now been served as one of requirements for extension of tourism business license (Peraturan Daerah Provinsi Bali No.2 Tahun 2012). This is aimed at ensuring the tourism extended licenses of the tourism business have qualified and competent workers to serve the customers using the services.

## 3. Research Method

The research was undertaken at the Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya, located on Jalan Kubu Gunung, Desa Tegal Jaya, Kecamatan Kuta Utara, Kabupaten Badung, Bali between May and October 2016. This research is using qualitative method in which the data were collected through observations, filed notes, semi-structure interview with the chancellor of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya and also compiled form academic data shared by academic staff and Head of Department for Quality Assurance of the institute. The collected data were verified and triangulated to understand how the institution has played roles in preparing competent graduates supporting the tourism development in Bali by giving interpretations during the writing process based on



researcher's knowledge and observations to give a meaning to the research.

#### 4. Discussion

Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya has done number of efforts in preparing competent graduates, which mainly grouped into two such as internal and external empowerments. More specifically, internal empowerment refers to any improvements undertaken within the institution including revisit of curriculum that adapted with Indonesian National Work Competence Standard (SKKNI) as determined by the National Professional Certification Agency and Indonesian National Qualification Framework KKNI that determined by Ministry of Research and Technology and Directorate General for Higher Education and also considering the market demands (specific requirements) needed by users to ensure the process of three or four education applied at the Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya produce competent outcomes.

Furthermore, encouraging lecturers to continue their education to meet the standard requirements of being lectures as stipulated in Teacher and Lecturer Act 2005 is also considered as internal empowerment in which the lecturers should obtained a Master Degree and preferably Doctoral Degree. Now there have been three lecturers possessing doctoral degree and the other two are still in process of obtaining the same degree (Interview 10 October 2016).

Improvements of laboratories used by the students for practice are also committed by the institution to ensure all laboratories meet the nowadays practical facilities that exactly like in the hotel or restaurant. Currently Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya has two main laboratories including room division laboratory (reception, laundry, room) and food and beverage division laboratory (kitchen, restaurant and bar). These complete

set of laboratory certainly help student to have internal practices before they are having their real trainings in the tourism industry.

Another important empowerment done by the institution is accreditation of the study program to indicate the liability of the study program nationally. The assessment made by the National Accreditation Board for Higher Educations confirms that all study programs at Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya such as Hotel Management (for Diploma IV Programme) and Hotel Management and Tourism Management (for Diploma III) are accredited with B marks. This suggests that the study programs are nationally liable to recruit students and apply learning and teaching process.

Meanwhile, the external empowerment committed by the institution is bind agreements with hotels and restaurants in Bali and overseas such as Singapore, Japan and France to give opportunities to the students having their practical experience through training programs (Interview 10 October 2016) . The Diploma III students have only once on the job trainings on the fourth semester for six months; and The Diploma IV student have training session twice on the fourth semester (for their professional interest) and on the sixth semester for management level training that last for six months each. This training period used by the students to see and understand the real works practised in hotels, villas and restaurant that will be served as primarily and very great experience supporting their future carriers.

Additionally, one most important cooperation made by Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya to grants producing quality graduate is to cooperate with one of **Bali's Tourism Certification Agencies** named LSP Parindo which primarily aimed at certifying the graduates possessing particular occupational



level which termed as "competence certification program" as elaborated below.

### **Competence certification at Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya**

Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya commits to reach its vision "Becomes the leading tourism institute in Bali in 2018 in creating competent and creative hotel and tourism human resource possessing sense of entrepreneurship and mastering knowledge and technology and having good moral"; and also to meet current demand of tourism industries that require highly qualified graduate to occupy upper level positions by certifying all graduates on professional certification programme to recognise that they are competence on particular job titles; and more importantly to be able to compete with free flow of Asian expatriates who might be interested in working in tourism sectors in Bali as consequences of signing the joint agreement on ASEAN Economic Society.

Additionally, as a vocational higher education that creates competence graduates, Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya binds an agreement with PARINDO Professional Certification Agency to ensure that the graduates are academically capable and vocationally competent in which the graduates are obtained academic degree certificate and professional competence certificate upon their completion studying in the institute.

All students of Diploma IV (Bachelor Degree of Applied Tourism Science programme) on the eighth semester and Diploma III (Associate Bachelor Degree of Tourism programme) on the sixth semester are obliged to take competence test organised by Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya in collaboration with PARINDO Professional Certification Agency – an independent

certification office in Bali appointed by National Professional Certification Agency. This competence certification test is annually conducted in the last week of June or a week prior to the viva or oral final examination and served as one of requirements to complete the study. During the last three years between 2013 and 2015, Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya has certified 151 competent graduates who undertook different major fields of studies including Management of Food and Beverage, Management of Hotel Accommodation, Management of Tour and Travel and Management of Businesses Hospitality (Academic Department 14 October 2016).

The competence certification organised by the institute plays such great role in easing the graduates to find jobs in tourism sectors. The tracer study undertaken by Quality Assurance Department of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya in 2016 shows that all graduates are employed within four months. In other words, the graduates have short unemployed period as they only need time between one and four months to find their expected jobs (Quality Assurance Department 17 October 2016). This suggests that graduates of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya are competent in their professions possessing knowledge, skill and attitude of the work and liable to occupy middle dan upper level managements such as supervisors, managers and directors.

### **5. Conclusion**

Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya as one of the tourism vocational higher educations in Bali has played great roles in preparing competent graduates that shortly employed in tourism industries. The liability of the institution to create such qualified human resources has been due to the empowerments made consistently by the institution to meet the specific requirements as prescribed in



Indonesian governing laws and demands of the users.

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