

**PRODUCING COMPETENT VOCATIONAL HIGHER EDUCATION
GRADUATES: EVIDENCE FROM TOURISM
INSTITUTE OF TRIATMA JAYA**

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ABSTRACT

Penelitian ini mengkaji tentang peran Sekolah Tinggi Pariwisata Triatma Jaya sebagai salah satu lembaga pendidikan tinggi vokasi di Bali dalam menciptakan sumber daya manusia yang kompeten yang memenuhi kualifikasi yang disyaratkan Masyarakat Ekonomi Asean. Wawancara semi terstruktur dengan pertanyaan terbuka dilaksanakan dengan pimpinan Tinggi Pariwisata Triatma Jaya untuk mengetahui usaha-usaha yang dilakukan untuk memenuhi kompetensi tersebut; dan juga hasil penelusuran lulusan ahli madya pariwisata dan sarjana pariwisata untuk mengetahui apakah mereka langsung bekerja atau tidak. Selain itu, observasi lapangan dilaksanakan selama enam bulan untuk mendapatkan bukti-bukti nyata dari perguruan tinggi untuk mendukung data penelitian. Penelitian ini menemukan bahwa sekolah tinggi pariwisata vokasi memegang lulusan yang kompeten yang menguasai soft competence dan hard competence yang memungkinkan untuk berkompentensi secara internasional di antara negara-negara Asean dengan melakukan penguatan internal dan eksternal yang mana institusi menyesuaikan kurikulum dan memperbaiki laboratorium yang sesuai dengan kebutuhan internasional; dan memperluas kerjasama pada hotel jaringan internasional dimana mahasiswa bisa mendapatkan praktek kerja industri serta melakukan kerjasama dengan Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi untuk mensertifikasi kompetensi mahasiswa sebelum lulus.

Kata Kunci: Pendidikan Tinggi Vokasi, Kompetensi, Masyarakat Ekonomi Asean, Sertifikasi

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 within the member of Association of South East Asian Nations.

COMPETENCE AND ITS SIGNIFICANCE

Contemporarily the notion of competence has been widely discussed among business scholars from certain research areas to contextualise the core criteria of competence in particular firms. Markowska (2011) for instance,



discusses the competence with specific reference to entrepreneurial competence which is argued to be developed to recognize the innovative chances and also to potentially involve in entrepreneurial activities by looking at the knowledge that can be learnt during the work involvements and also the process of acquiring such knowledge which gained from and served as practical work experiences. This means that competence leads to innovations of enterprises that change dynamically to grab any future opportunities and to reach their business goals.

Indonesia in particular, 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.

Mitchell (1994) has noted that competence is learnable in which particular competence can be gained through process of learning. This suggests that competence may be acquired from formal educations in vocational schools and informal educations including in training centres providing particular courses



for specific competence; and it is also possibly gained from practical experiences adapted in their work places (Markowska 2011). These two sources of gaining competence allow people to possess particular competence by mastering the knowledge of their work, the skill needed to carry out their duties and the attitude that shall be performed in such position. In other word, competence covers two major qualifications including soft and hard competences.

The soft competence is performed in the ability of people mastering the knowledge of the products within their work positions and environments which is intangible and can only be assessed from their fluencies describing or explaining the product knowledge and also their performances dealing with any workloads in their positions; the hard competence is performed in the way the people understand and apply the sequences of completing particular works which can be visually seen as so called tangible and shall be gained through immediate learning in schools or workplaces. This is to argue that competence is not only

learnable, but also dynamic which goes and flows accordingly with the most current competency demands; and transferable in which the competence is transferred from their instructors or colleagues and also from upper level positions such as supervisors and managers.

Markowska (2011) has even noted that the immediate work experiences in certain enterprises serves as initial entrepreneurial competence in which people do not only learn the knowledge and skills of particular occupations while being employed in the company, but they also begin to learn how to set up a future business since they learn the entire business procedures that possibly allow them to establish a similar corporate someday by adapting the entrepreneurial learning gained during the fieldwork. However, such entrepreneurial competence does not guarantee somebody to be an entrepreneur since they need capital to set up a business to finance the entire running of the corporate; and it does not also perform legal recognition stating that someone is competent on particular position, which the competence



recognition can only be gained through process of competence certification test that organised by authorised government bodies.

In Indonesia, 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 Nomor 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.

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. This research is using qualitative method in which the data were collected



through observations, field notes and semi-structure interview.

Observations were undertaken between May and December 2016 to investigate the detailed learning process both the in-class theories and also out-class practices conducted in the laboratory where the student gain their practical experiences. During the observations researcher took some notes on the observed activities that written in the research diary and also taking a number of pictures to visualize definite efforts undertaken by the institute which further elaborated in the discussion.

Furthermore, face-to-face interviews were also conducted with the authorised personnel involving the chancellor of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya to explore the efforts done by the institute in preparing competent graduates and also challenges faced during the process of learning; and also with the Head of Department for Quality Assurance of the institute to investigate the internal standards made to meet the expected competence. Additionally, a number of pictures were also captured to visualize definite efforts

undertaken by the institute to ensure the graduate quality.

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.

FINDINGS

Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya has done number of efforts in preparing competent graduates undertaking Hospitality Business Management, 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.

The core subjects learnt at the Hotel Studies include two major hotel competencies such as room division that covers front office and housekeeping competencies; and food and beverage which cover food and beverage production (kitchen) and beverage service (restaurant) competencies. These competencies allow the graduates of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya to work in any of the four occupations such as receptionist (Front Office Department), room attendant (Housekeeping Department), waiter/waitress or cook/chef (Food and Beverage Department) (picture 1).



Source: Fieldwork 2016/2017

Picture 1.

Students attending housekeeping practice

Understanding the knowledge of room division and food and beverage division serves as the “soft competence” of the students wherein they know the entire works in such departments that include the significance of the profession, roles within the organization, job descriptions and standard operating procedure governed in each of the division; in which they are all gained from the in-class learning process. Meanwhile, the “hard competence” is gained during the practical lesson simulated directly by the students in the hotel laboratories under lecturer’s supervision. This serves as initial skills that must be mastered by all students before starting their official trainings in hotel and restaurant industries.



In addition, the newly added subjects on the current curriculum such as tourism act, hotel security system and children and women protection on tourism that adapted from the Indonesian National Qualification Framework and World Tourism Organization policy are aimed to meet the international qualification standard and to lead the graduates are able to compete with other international graduates to occupy hotel vacancies within the Asian countries. The attempt to revisit the curriculum done by the Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya suggests that an international standard is required to bring the graduates going international and accepted in hotel industries across the Asian nations as stated on the articles of the signed agreement of Asean Economic Society agreed by the South East Asian Nation leaders; and therefore, it is insufficient to only meet the demands or requirements of local hotels in Bali only.

1. Bridging students worldwide

Another policy applied by the institute to qualify the graduates is to

obligate the students to attend English course provided by the institute during their studies. This compulsory course is given for three levels of general English (pre-elementary, elementary, intermediate) which goes for 40 hours each level and to finish with two prediction tests including Test of English for International Communication (TOEIC) and Test of English as a Foreign Language (TOEFL).

The first English course is obligatory served prior to the first semester begins to ensure all students having different education backgrounds: senior high schools and vocational high schools understand English while joining the class. Further, the remaining levels are served in the end of semesters until they all reach a total of four levels. This English course is an additional knowledge of the specific English lectures gained formally in the class pursuant to the governing curriculum such as English for Food and Beverage Production, English for Food and Beverage Service, English for Front Office and English for Housekeeping which allow the

students to be familiar with very particular English expressions on each department and shall be used when they begin their practical works or real work later in hotel or restaurant. Thus, English is considered as a lifetime intangible property gained during their times in the institute which leads them to international world. Since the last decade, there have been xxx students undertaking internship in English speaking countries which the institute contemporarily corporates with including Malaysia, Singapore, France, and Australia (picture 3) (Training Department of Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya 2017).

In addition to English, all students are also obligated to attend Japanese lectures which served in two semesters. This allows student to master other foreign language which also supports them in process internationalization of the graduates. Moreover, the recent policy applied by the institute to encourage the students to have their practical works overseas, in which Japan has been served as one of the countries selected by the students to spend their fieldworks. In 2016, there were

six students undertaking a year internship in Japan where they could study while working in five star hotels; and this number increased sharply to 20 students in 2017 (picture 2). This suggests that mastering foreign language like Japanese supports the principal competence gained in the institution to compete world widely.



Source: Fieldwork 2016/2017

Picture 2.

Users from Japan introducing Japanese culture and work etiquette to students prior to their departure for a-year practical work in Japan

Furthermore, encouraging lecturers to continue their educations to meet the standard requirements of being lecturers as stipulated in Teacher and Lecturer Act 2005 is also considered as internal empowerment in which the lecturers should obtain at least a Master Degree and preferably Doctoral Degree. Now there have been three lecturers possessing doctoral degree



and the other three lecturers are still in process of obtaining the same degree at Udayana University-Bali; while others just meet the minimum requirement stipulated by the government (Interview 10 January 2017).

2. Course composition

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. Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya currently has two main laboratories including room division laboratory (reception, laundry, room) and food and beverage division laboratory (kitchen, restaurant and bar).

The students practise the in-class theories in these laboratories under the supervisions of the assigned lecturers; and they spend much more time here rather than in the class which explicitly composes 60% for laboratorial practices against 40 in-class courses. This composition differentiates vocational higher educations and non-vocational higher educations which most likely to focus on the theories rather than

practices. Such complete set of laboratories allow students to have internal practices in all hotel departments before they are having their six-month on the job training or entering real works in the tourism industries.

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 grade. 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 France, Singapore, Japan and Australia to give opportunities to the students having

their practical experience through training programs (picture 3 and 4) (Interview 10 October 2016). A year in-house training programme is applied for all students; in which the Diploma III students have two schedules on the job trainings on the third and fifth semester for six months each; and the Diploma IV students have also 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 educational capital and very great experience supporting their future carriers.



Source: Fieldwork 2016/2017

Picture 3.

Users engaging with students before interview process for a six-month training recruitment



Source: Fieldwork 2016/2017

Picture 4:

Head of Bachelor Degree Program of Applied Tourism Science Dr I Nengah Subadra (right with red T-shirt) officially departed students having a year training program in Australia

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 Lembaga Sertifikasi Profesi (LSP) PARINDO which primarily aimed at certifying the graduates possessing particular occupational level which termed as "competence certification program" as elaborated below.

3. Competence certification for international qualification

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.



Source: Fieldwork 2016/2017

Picture 5.

Students attending certification test for food and beverage production competence

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 undertake 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 (picture 6). 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.



Source: Fieldwork 2016/2017

Picture 6:

Students attending certification test
for food and beverage service
competence

During the period of three years between 2011 and 2016, Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya has certified 446 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 5 July 2017).

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.

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.



The soft and hard competences gained during the study at the Tourism Institute of Triatma Jaya which proven by the possession of “certificate of completion” and “competence certificate” are served as international qualifications that enable the graduates compete with other graduates from other institutions to occupy the vacant positions in the hotel-related businesses in Bali and beyond.

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