THE ROLE OF SELECTION BASED ON ACADEMIC CRITERIA IN THE RECRUITMENT PROCESS AT AN INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT UNIVERSITY

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ABSTRACT

The purpose of this study is to examine the process of the recruitment of students into a high-status Indonesian university, and to examine its effect upon the social composition of the student group, the utilization of talent, and its association with the incidence of disappointment for unsuccessful candidates.

It is suggested that the activity of selection, by which candidates available for recruitment are differentiated, may serve to discriminate between candidates on non-academic as well as academic criteria, to underutilize available talent, and to give rise to feelings of disappointment which could become focused on the institution. The suggestion is examined by comparison of successful and unsuccessful candidates.

The steps of the recruitment process which precede selection, are found to favor candidates who are unrepresentative of the society in several respects. The selection process itself is found not to differentiate between successful and unsuccessful candidates on cultural characteristics, but to differentiate on age, sex, and schooling backgrounds. The selection system is based on limited access as circumscribed by prior schooling, and provides for an inefficient utilization of talented candidates. Some of the consequences of the application of the quota system for the selection of faculty enrollments accord with national manpower priorities but others do not. Though a high level of incidence of disappointment ensues from selection, most candidates attribute lack of success to qualities of the candidate, and unsuccessful candidates tend less, rather than more, to explain their failure by reference to the institution.

Introduction

The process of recruitment into institutions of higher education has consequences which can be examined from many points of view. For the individual applicant and his family the process is a determinant of future occupational and social status. As in other developing countries in which there is a strong tradition of recruitment into "officialdom" from universities, and the public service provides a major employment sector, it can be
expected that recruitment into higher education in Indonesia has a very close relationship to future status (Coleman, 1965, p. 26). Success or failure in gaining admission can be expected to influence the individual's attitude toward the institution, and perhaps beyond the institution, toward the State. Abernethy and Combe (1965), for example, suggest that students who are dissatisfied with the conditions of learning tend to blame their plight on the government in power. In this way, consequences of the selection process can become consequences for the State.

The future social function of recruitment is to determine the composition of a future social elite or subelite in the society. The recruitment process defines the degree to which the student generation is representative of the society at large or is biased in its representation of particular social strata, ethnic, regional, urban-rural, or religious groups. The composition of the student groups is believed to affect the formation of student ideology in terms of the formation of "national" rather than parochial values (Fischer, 1965; Abernethy and Coombe, 1965) and to affect the disposition of students towards activism within and without the campus. On this point, for example, Archer (1972) suggests that students recruited from "lower classes" direct their concerns toward those aspects of institutions related to student success, whereas students recruited from "upper classes" are directed toward change and reform in the institutions and the society.

A third function of recruitment is explicitly concerned with the development of human resources. Recruitment criteria determine the extent to which available resources of talent are utilized, and the recruitment process channels the resources into particular discipline areas which in turn define the future supply of occupational skills in the workforce. The consequences of this function can be examined by the extent to which available talent is utilized and skills are developed in relation to future workforce requirements.

The whole recruitment process consists of a number of discreet, but interactive, activities. Students decide that they have fulfilled the requirements for entrance (as defined by the universities) and, if so, nominate for entrance. The institutions determine the rules for nomination to define the opportunities available to candidates, and determine the criteria which are used to select and reject candidates. Institutions also define the total number of candidates to be accepted and the distribution of this number between faculties. Each of these activities affects the consequences of the process for the individual, the society, and the effectiveness of human resource development.

The criterion to be used for the selection of students is probably the most controversial aspect of the recruitment process, because of its effect on the social composition and academic capability of the student group regardless of their number. Developing countries have usually adopted the criterion of completed academic attainment as part of the inheritance of institutions of