

Issues in Coaching and Mentoring in Basic Training for Civil Servant Candidates: A Qualitative Study

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ABSTRACT

Coaching dan mentoring are widely used as learning methods not only for private employees but also for civil servant candidates. Before becoming a civil servant in any Government institution in Indonesia, one should participate in compulsory training named Basic Training. Based on Regulation of the Head of State Administration Agency Number 12 of 2018, coaching and mentoring are used as one method of distance learning in addition to that of classical learnings. In its implementation during the habituation stage, some issues arose when performing both coaching and mentoring, since they involve a close relationship between coach and coachee also mentor and mentee. This research aims to identify those issues to enable all parties in coaching and mentoring to be aware of the immerging issues, as well as providing them some alternative solutions. Deep interviews with 5 training participants and 1 training organizer were undertaken to gather sufficient information. A qualitative approach was performed using triangulation to conclude the research. The research found that the majority of issues regarding coaching and mentoring are related to the role of coach and mentor in facilitating the learning activity such as the different understanding of how to conduct coaching and mentoring, overlapping between coaching and mentoring, mentor having an insufficient understanding of how to conduct mentoring, mentors urging mentee to follow their opinion, etc. However, by performing coaching and mentoring, the training participants were encouraged to think about, express, and discuss the new ideas with their coach and mentor as well as discover solutions to the problems at work. Thus, the advantages of coaching and mentoring as a learning method are confirmed aside from some issues that emerged.

Keywords: *Coaching, Mentoring, Basic Training.*

1. INTRODUCTION

Basic Training, previously called *Diklat Prajabatan* and currently known as *Latsar CPNS* or is compulsory training for every civil servant candidate to attend. Based on the Regulation of the Head of the State Administration Agency Number 12 of 2018 concerning Basic Training for CPNS, this training is carried out in both classical and non-classical forms. Classical training is a learning process that is carried out face-to-face in the classroom, while non-classical training is a learning process that can be done through e-learning, workplace guidance, outdoor training, distance training, and/or internships. Basic Training aims to develop the competence of civil servant candidates which is performed in an integrated manner, including the ability to show the attitude and behavior of defending the country; actualize the basic values of civil servants in carrying out their duties; actualize position and the role

of civil servants within the framework of the Republic of Indonesia, and demonstrate mastery of the required technical competencies by task field [1].

The structure of the Basic Training curriculum is Agenda for State Defense Behavior (classical), called Agenda 1; Agenda for the Basic Values of Civil Servants (classical), called Agenda 2; Agenda for the Position and Role of Civil Servants in the Republic of Indonesia, called Agenda 3; and the Agenda of Habituation (non-classical), called Agenda 4. This research focuses on the habituation agenda. This learning agenda facilitates the participants to carry out the actualization process through self-accustoming to the competencies that have been obtained through various training subjects that have been delivered on the previous agendas. The Agenda of Habituation consists of learning activities such as Conception of Actualization, Explanation of Actualization, Design, and Guidance of Actualization,

Evaluation of Design of Actualization, Debriefing of Habituation, Actualization in the workplace, Preparation for Evaluation of Actualization, and Evaluation of Actualization. This agenda is also meant to verify whether participants have been able to apply the contents of the previously studied learning materials to the real situation at work.

At the off-campus or non-classical stage, participants are required to prepare a report named Actualization report. In this case, the participants receive guidance from a coach, namely a supervisor appointed by the Human Resource Development Agency (*BPSDM*) Jakarta Province, and a mentor, namely a direct supervisor or one appointed by the participant agency staffing officer. Coaching aims to maximize the potential of participants in achieving achievements and obtaining satisfaction at the training venue and work [2-5]. Meanwhile, mentoring is more likely to provide support, guidance, input, and share experiences with others, in the case of basic training, especially in applying basic values to the habituation agenda and in carrying out daily work.

However, in its implementation, some obstacles can affect the quality of coaching and mentoring [6], for example, the support of the organizers for the implementation of coaching and mentoring, the competence of the coach and the mentor in guiding, the characteristics of the coach and the mentor, the relationship between the coach/mentor with coachee/mentee, and so on. [7] explained that the achievement of the goals set by the coachee in the Basic Training is determined by endogenous and exogenous factors. Endogenous factors, for example, the coachee's ability to help the coachee recognize his / her potential and guide the coachee to achieve his goals. Meanwhile, exogenous factors such as work environment, organizational culture, and support from the Mentor as the direct supervisor of the participants. These factors, if not handled properly, can have an impact on not achieving the goals of coaching and mentoring at the beginning, namely to guide training participants in preparing their actualization and implementation activities, so that they have an impact not only on the quality of actualization activities but also on the results of actualization and evaluation. graduation qualification.

In addition, [8] also explained that problems occur not only in coaching but also in mentoring and counseling, especially with the misperception of the role and function of coaching, mentoring, and counseling that is not working properly. Often occurs where the roles and functions of coaching overlap the roles and functions of mentoring, coaching, and counseling. As stated by [9] that the credibility of a coach as well as a mentor is influenced by his competence in implementing coaching and mentoring.

Coaching in Basic Training has proven to have an important role in helping training participants as agents of change to achieve their respective actualization goals [7, 10], is also useful for improving coachee performance in carrying out duties [11]. In addition, coaching also has a positive and significant effect on participant satisfaction [8], [12], and participant graduation qualifications [13] in Leadership Training. On the other hand, [14] states that the relationships created during mentoring have great potential to facilitate career advancement and psychosocial development in early and mid-adulthood mentees by providing tools for completing work tasks. For that beneficial things offered by coaching and mentoring in various trainings, it is then essential to study the issues occurred during the activities in order to conduct an effective coaching and mentoring.

Based on preliminary observations during the implementation of coaching and mentoring of Basic Training Group III Year 2019 at Human Resource Agency Jakarta Province, it is known that there are several obstacles in implementation including the high ratio of coach and coachee, tight coach schedules, seminars, and teaching, extra coaching outside the specified schedule, the coaches different abilities and methods in coaching, the lack of understanding of the mentor's role and function in mentoring, limited information about mentoring to mentors in participating agencies, and other technical issues that indirectly impact the quality of coaching implementation and mentoring.

The coaching and mentoring activity in Basic Training at Human Resource Agency Jakarta Province was followed by numerous training participants as many as 3955 participants divided into 132 batches for Group III, consist of 541 people in 2015, 865 people in 2016, and 2549 people in 2019 [15]. This large number also has an impact on the high ratio of coaches to coachees, so that the potential for implementing coaching is less than optimal. The novelty of the research is that up to the present, there has never been any research or evaluation on the effectiveness of coaching and mentoring in Basic Training, especially on which that focused on the issues that happened during coaching and mentoring.

The purpose of this research is to study the issues commonly emerged in the coaching and mentoring activity in Basic Training Group 3 the Year 2019, at Human Resource Agency Jakarta Province, which could lead to ineffective coaching and mentoring. Those issues are then discussed to find the best solution for later become recommendation, as to confirm that the issues can be prevented from happening and also have proper solutions in the future.

2. METHODOLOGY

The research is performed using a qualitative approach, which is the type of non-statistical inquiry method that focuses on the analysis of a social phenomenon and the sample used is typically small. Data analysis techniques used are data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing [16]. Triangulation is used to simplify the validation of the data through cross verification from more than two sources. An interview is a meeting of two people to exchange information and ideas through question and answer, so that meaning can be constructed in a certain topic [17].

The data for this research were collected through document study and deep interviews. The type of interview conducted in this research was the unstructured interview, where the activity used no systematic interview guideline besides a general outline only. Key informants include 5 (five) training participants which were chosen by purposive sampling representing final grades of Very Satisfactory, Satisfactory, and Passing; along with 1 (one) training organizer of Basic Training. Interviews were undertaken by phone and WhatsApp by asking openly about how the participant experienced coaching and mentoring during the habituation stage, by the aim of this study. The results of the interview were collected invoice records and transcripts.

Data reduction was then performed to sharpen and classify the data along with discarding the unnecessary, followed by triangulation. Source triangulation was done to compare the interview results between the training participants and the training organizers. A theoretical triangulation was also executed by comparing those results of interviews with the document or regulation about Basic Training. The next step is data presentation, which was compiling data and information using text to enable a conclusion to be drawn. The recommendation was also delivered in addition to the conclusion, for better coaching and mentoring activity in Basic Training in the future. This research was conducted at Human Resource Agency, Jakarta Province in January 2020.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Coaching issues

At the habituation stage, the participants of Basic Training were involved in series of consultation meetings with both coach and mentor to assist them in writing the actualization report [1]. The coach is someone appointed by the Training organizer (BPSDM), who has the necessary competence in exploring the potential of participants' self-development in implementing the learning habituation agenda. A coach as described in [18] is a tutor whose job is to help trainees by stimulating their thinking and all the resources they have, building their

self-awareness process, and creating various strategies to solve the problem.

The interview results of the training participants indicate that coaches have performed well in doing their responsibilities in assisting the preparation of the actualization reports. This can be understood from statements as follow:

The key respondent from participant said: *"I felt that the coach has contributed great support for me in compiling and studying data for my actualization reports as well as motivating me to do my best. My coach is very helpful and open-minded for new ideas and deep discussion. Not forcing something beyond my capabilities"*

Another key respondent from participant commented: *"The coach guided me to think about alternative solutions to my problem at work and in writing the actualization report. She offered help when needed, yet not authoritarian"*

The other key respondent from participant said: *"My coach always offers me his opinion regarding my problem or a certain situation, yet leaving the final decision to me."*

The training participant felt assisted by the coach during the coaching session. Not only in giving motivation, but more than that, the coach also provides some inputs if the participants experiencing obstacles in implementing actualization at work. In accordance to the *International Coaching Federation (ICF)* which is an institution accredited coaching training program in [19], coaching is an interactive process tool that allows individuals, a team, an organization, even companies to develop and achieve their strength faster and better in a more efficient way. This is also in line with [20] which states that coaching is an attempt to facilitate someone to achieve certain goals or performance. On coaching activities, the main focus is the object, in this case, the coachee, because each coachee has different potential. One of the benefits of coaching is to embrace that potential and maximize it.

However, due to the great number of participants in Basic Training as many as 3955 participants, the ratio between the number of coach and coachee is quite big and somehow affects the coaching sessions.

This aligns with the respondent's statement during the interview with the key respondent from participant: *"I learned that my coach has many coaching groups to handle at the sometimes. That, even the coaching is performed well as required, the coach seldom forgets about the actualization topics of their coachees and*

mixes up with other topics or participant from other coaching groups”

Another key respondent from participant responded: *“I think my coach is responsible for too many coaching groups so that occasionally I notice my coach looked a bit tired and not fully focus in the coaching session. The schedule sessions”*

Even though [1] doesn't arrange the standard ratio between coach and coachee in the habituation agenda of Basic Training, but BPSDM as the training organizer realizes that this is already taken into consideration, as the number of participants is numerous and the time is limited to conduct the Basic Training which is in only one year after the civil servant candidates got accepted [21]. The key respondent from the training organizer confirms the situation as follows:

“Coach handles up to 10 coaching groups, (5 participants per group) at the same time because the comparison between the number of coaches with the number of participants is quite large. There are 3955 training participants of Basic Training in 2019 with only 45 coaches assigned. However, coaches are allowed to refuse to accept coaching groups that are not by their abilities.”

Another issue about coaching in Basic Training is that the duration and quantity of coaching are so limited so that participants felt the need for additional coaching sessions to assist them in completing the actualization report.

As a key respondent from participant says: *“The official coaching schedules arranged by the training organizer are only 3 sessions, which is for me is insufficient both the quantity and the duration for each session. However, some coaches offer additional sessions if requested by the participant while some others don't”*

Another key respondent commented: *“I and some other friends felt that the coaching sessions are too limited for us to discuss the actualization report. We are lucky enough to have such coach that can be reached personally outside the scheduled session via WhatsApp or email for extra coaching.”*

For this circumstance, the training organizer responded that the coaching schedule of three sessions was drawn up taking into account the number of coaches and the number of training participants. However, some coaches had willingly dedicated their spare time for extra sessions of coaching which was performed electronically and/or face-to-face as needed.

These conditions align with [6] that confirmed coaching as an activity that needs focus and a supportive atmosphere to produce good results. The coach must be

willing and able to share information with the coachee; the coach also has to have dedication and enough time in the coaching process. For coaching to run well, the relationship between coach and coachee must be based on trust and organizational conditions.

Along with those issues, training participants have also felt the need for formal guidelines provided by the training organizer about coaching and mentoring activity. There are some conditions where the at some point, the coach and also mentor has to have the same point of view in assisting the coachee.

The key respondents from participants said: *“Coaches have different methods of coaching, as well as directing the participant to write and complete the actualization reports. Seems like there are no standard guidelines about how to write actualization reports as the final reports are different for a different coach.”*

While another key respondent from participant commented: *“The unavailability of standard guidelines for the implementation of coaching to the preparation of the actualization reports causes the differences method in coaching between one coach and another.”*

The other key respondent from the participant replied: *“Different educational background between the coach and coachee sometimes becomes challenging for the coach in assisting the writing of actualization report”*

For this condition, the training organizer respondent reacts: *“Coaching implementation guidelines have been prepared in several meetings. However, some coaches prefer to have their methods in coaching.”*

In addition, the regulation about Basic Training [1] is still new and has changed several times in the last few years, hence there is no solid example for standard guidance. This allows training organizers to manage everything for themselves.

3.2. Mentoring issues

The mentor is the participant's direct supervisor or others who appointed by the agency/unit where the participant originally based, who has certain competence of providing support, guidance, and input, as well as sharing experiences of success or failure needed by the participant to pursue the habituation agenda [1]. If the coach is someone with the main responsibility is to provide motivation and explore the strength of the coachee, the mentor is more like providing knowledge and sharing experience about how to do the job in the assigned unit.

During the habituation agenda, participants are required to immediately carry out the actualization activities that have been planned with full discipline and responsibility, according to the planned schedule. Coach

and mentor are obliged to guide and implementation of activities, the accuracy of actualization of the substance of the subject matter of the training, and the quality of the results of the achievement [22].

Response from the key participants about the role of the mentor is as follows: *“Mentor suggests the implementation of actualization according to his educational background and experience as well as serving in for the unit.”*

“Mentors support the implementation of actualization activities and even support for these activities to be submitted for innovation competitions”

“For me, mentoring is quite effective. My mentor was very supportive and cooperative in assisting me to deliver actualization ideas even though I had only moved into the unit a week.”

These lines support the idea of [23] [24] that mentoring enable to improve performance of human resources in the company as well as enhancing the quality of performance and work effectiveness of members of the organization through intensive conversation, self-direction, and increased self-confidence in contributing positively to the organization. The mentor should be able to inspire innovation, guiding to overcome obstacles, providing support and assistance, monitor and directing and improving the quality of performance and effectiveness work [3].

However, there are also some issues emerging while performing mentoring concerning the availability of mentors in their busy schedules. As the key respondent commented as follows:

“The obstacle that I overcome when mentoring is the limited time for mentoring because the mentor has other more important things to do.”

On the other hand, there are still mentors who had a lack of understanding or misperception about the objective of mentoring itself. Instead of providing guidance and support to the genuine idea from the training participants, certain mentors maintain on keeping their thoughts to be applied in the actualization report. To be taking into consideration that the actualization is carried out only one week after the training participant being placed at the current unit, thus the participants have not yet mastered the main tasks and functions of the field and it is difficult to determine issues and problem-solving ideas for actualization. The role of mentor for this circumstance is very essential.

“My mentor wanted the actualization activity to run as perfectly as possible within the limited implementation timeframe. It is difficult to meet his expectations and for that, the reporting process experiences obstacles.”

“In my opinion, mentoring is ineffective because some mentors are imposing their students to do actualization the way he wanted to be, for the sake of mentor and agency pride.”

Mentor as direct superiors of the training participant is the one who has required competencies to assist training participants and to guide step by step to complete the actualization report. In mentoring, competence needed is the ability to listen, manage differences, setting goals, and building relationships [1]. The fundamental responsibility of the mentor is providing corrective feedback; thus, the knowledge and experience of the mentor offer a great contribution in supporting the participants. This aligns with [25] that mentoring has a very broad function, namely the career function and the psychosocial support. The career function in mentoring aims to support mentoring participants in learning their work and preparing career advancement in the organization. Meanwhile, psychosocial functions play a role in supporting and ensuring the development of the participant's existence mentoring in work and daily life. Mentors can show this function by sharing personal experiences and encouraging participants to be open when faced with work problems. Function careers that aim to enhance career development consist of five things: 1) support; 2) knowledge and views; 3) training; 4) protection; and 5) challenging tasks. On the other hand, psychosocial functions explain identity participants and increase confidence in abilities consist of four things: 1) the role of exemplary; 2) acceptance and confirmation; 3) counseling; and 4) friendship.

Issues about mentoring in Basic Training also related to the evaluation from the mentor to the training participant. The evaluation composition for the training participant based on [1] are 1) evaluation of behavior and attitude; 2) evaluation of academics; 3) evaluation of actualization; 4) evaluation of strengthening of technical competence at work; and 5) final evaluation. In this case, the mentor is assigned to evaluate on the fourth, which means a personal evaluation from the mentor concerning the performance of training participants at work. Some of the key respondents responded:

“I do not agree with the assessment outside of actualization, for example, the assessment from the mentor. It would be fairer if there is guidance on how to do the assessment as well as a clear explanation about the assessment criteria. My mentor judged based on the novelty of the activity instead of evaluating the process and the result of the actualization itself.”

“Sometimes there are still subjective mentors so if the mentor doesn't like the mentee, the mentor gives a bad assessment”

The mentor's evaluation of the training participants in the workplace has no clear guidelines so that the assessment of the training participants was not objective because it was not based on work processes and results. Based on [1] that it is not required to conduct training for Mentors, nor is there a specific guide prepared for Mentors in carrying out their responsibilities. The main focus of Basic Training is not for mentors, but the candidates of civil servants. The quality of mentors is expected to be qualified through technical, managerial, and socio-cultural training, by [21], which increases employee competence by at least 20 hours per year. However, the training organizer could manage to provide criteria for evaluation, especially for the mentor so that every mentor knows how to assess their mentee based on the concerned regulation and the mentee received a fair grade.

For new mentors, the process of actualization is something unfamiliar to handle, which sometimes leads to the lack of responsibility in performing mentoring. It would be beneficial to do special training where the training organizer can provide sharing knowledge and experience to the newly joined mentors so that they would have a better understanding of their roles and responsibilities.

4. CONCLUSION

Coaching and mentoring that has been implemented as a part of Basic Training these last few years is aimed to introduce the training participants to much more aggressive and interactive learning methods aside from the classical learning method in the class. By performing coaching and mentoring, the training participants were encouraged to think about the new idea, express and discuss the idea and invent a solution semi-privately with their coach and mentor. The advantages of coaching and mentoring as a learning method are statistically proven. However, some issues commonly emerge during its implementation. From this conducted study, it can be summarized that the issues appeared mostly as a cause of unclear understanding about the role of coach and mentor, lack of understanding about the regulation concerning the Basic Training itself, the lack of coordination between the training organizer, training participant and other parties in the coaching mentoring process, and other issues related to administration.

Some recommendations for the training organizers are to consider conducting in house training for all the parties involved in coaching and mentoring including a coach, mentor, master of trainer, examiner, etc about the regulation of Basic Training; to manage to prepare a comprehensive guidebook that about coaching and mentoring based on the applied regulation; to set a standard ratio between coach and coachee also mentor and mentee since it affected the physical condition of coach also the available time of the coach; and to improve

the quality of service given by the training organizer to the training participant, especially concerning administration process and documentation.

ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

Highest appreciation to the Head of Human Resource Agency, DKI Jakarta Province for her kind support and encouragement, as well as fellow facilitators for positive inputs along with the research.

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