
STRENGTHENING INSTITUTIONAL CAPACITY TO IMPROVE THE HUMAN DEVELOPMENT INDEX IN KALIMANTAN UTARA PROVINCE

MOCHAMMAD SARKAWI

DOCTORAL STUDENT OF PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE,
HASANUDDIN UNIVERSITY, MAKASSAR, INDONESIA

BADU AHMAD

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, HA-
SANUDDIN UNIVERSITY, MAKASSAR, INDONESIA

MUH. AKMAL IBRAHIM

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, HA-
SANUDDIN UNIVERSITY, MAKASSAR, INDONESIA

SAWEDI MUHAMMAD

DEPARTMENT OF ADMINISTRATIVE SCIENCE, FACULTY OF SOCIAL AND POLITICAL SCIENCE, HA-
SANUDDIN UNIVERSITY, MAKASSAR, INDONESIA

DIDIK ISKANDAR

PUBLIC ADMINISTRATION, UNIVERSITAS NEGERI MAKASSAR, INDONESIA

ABSTRACT

Improving the Human Development Index (HDI) in Kalimantan Utara Province faces complex challenges due to geographical disparities and institutional fragmentation. This study aims to analyze efforts to improve the HDI in Kalimantan Utara through the lens of capacity building. Using a qualitative approach and case study design, data were collected through in-depth interviews with stakeholders from planning and technical agencies, as well as analysis of strategic documents. Data analysis was conducted using the UNDP Capacity Development theoretical framework, which covers the individual, institutional, and systemic levels. The results of the study show that capacity building efforts are still partial. At the individual level, there has been an increase in the competence of the apparatus, but it is not yet evenly distributed. The most significant weaknesses were found at the institutional level, where the coordination capacity between OPDs is still ad hoc and technical capacity is hampered by unintegrated data. At the systemic level, although a regulatory framework is in place, its implementation is hampered by a sectoral work culture that does not support synergy. This study concludes that strengthening integrated institutional capacity, especially at the institutional and systemic levels, is a fundamental prerequisite for accelerating equitable and sustainable HDI improvement in Kalimantan Utara.

Keywords: Institutional Capacity, Human Development Index (HDI), Regional Development, Governance, Kalimantan Utara.

INTRODUCTION

The paradigm of global development has undergone a fundamental shift in recent decades, moving away from a narrow focus on economic growth towards a more holistic and human-centered approach. The Human Development Index (HDI), popularized by the United Nations Development Programme (UNDP) since 1990, is the main manifestation of this shift. As a composite indicator, the HDI measures the quality of life of a population through three essential dimensions: health, reflected in life expectancy; education, measured by average and expected years of schooling; and decent living standards, measured by per capita expenditure. Indonesia's HDI, in particular, not only serves as a barometer of welfare, but has also been deeply integrated into the national policy architecture, becoming a strategic instrument in development planning, government performance evaluation, and even as one of the key variables in determining the allocation of the General Allocation Fund (DAU).

In this national context, Kalimantan Utara Province presents a highly relevant and complex case study. As the youngest province in Indonesia, which geopolitically occupies a strategic position as the front porch of the country, improving the HDI in Kalimantan Utara carries a double urgency. On the one hand, it is a

constitutional mandate to improve the welfare of its citizens; on the other hand, it is a manifestation of the state's presence and an effort to reduce development gaps that could trigger social, economic, and security issues in the border region. However, efforts to accelerate human development are faced with deep structural challenges.

Data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) consistently shows that Kalimantan Utara HDI growth rate still lags behind the national average. Even more worrying is the sharp spatial disparity within the province itself. There is a wide development gap between economic and administrative centers such as Tarakan City and districts in inland and border areas such as Nunukan and Tana Tidung. This gap is rooted in classic development problems: limited access to quality education and health services, as well as an economic structure that is still highly dependent on the extractive sector with low added value and vulnerable to global price fluctuations.

Faced with these multifaceted development problems, conventional top-down and fragmented inter-sectoral policy approaches have proven inadequate. Modern public administration literature emphasizes that the effectiveness of policy implementation is no longer seen solely as a technical issue or a matter of resource availability, but rather as a question of governance.

In this context, to achieve effective governance, adequate capabilities or capacities are needed throughout the government system. This is where the concept of capacity building becomes a relevant analytical framework. The United Nations Development Programme (UNDP, 1998) defines capacity building as a continuous process in which individuals, organizations, and communities as a whole acquire, strengthen, and maintain the capabilities necessary to set and achieve their own development goals.

This framework offers a holistic approach by emphasizing that capacity building must occur simultaneously at three interrelated levels: the individual level (improving skills, competencies, and motivation civil servants), the institutional level (improving organizational structures, managerial processes, and coordination mechanisms), and the systemic level (strengthening regulatory frameworks, policies, and a supportive collaborative work culture).

Various programs to improve the Human Development Index in Kalimantan Utara involving synergy between Regional Apparatus Organizations (OPD) and partnerships with non-governmental organizations in essence are efforts to develop capacity. However, its implementation is often hampered by coordination issues, overlapping programs, and strong sectoral egos, indicating that this capacity development process has not been integrated and systematic. There is a gap between the policies formulated at the top level and the actual capacity at the implementation level.

Departing from the discrepancy between the strategic urgency of improving HDI and the reality of institutional capacity challenges in the field, this research is crucial. The aim is to analyze in depth the efforts to improve HDI in Kalimantan Utara through the lens of capacity development theory, with a focus on diagnosing the strengths and weaknesses in each level individual, institutional, and systemic levels to identify strategic intervention points for strengthening development governance

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a qualitative approach aimed at gaining a deep and holistic understanding of the phenomenon of institutional capacity building in efforts to improve HDI. This approach was chosen because it is able to capture the complexity of social interactions, institutional dynamics, and the specific context surrounding development governance, which cannot be measured numerically. The research design used is a case study, which allows researchers to conduct intensive investigations into the "case" of HDI policy implementation in Kalimantan Utara Province in its natural setting. The location was selected purposively, considering that this province has significant variations in HDI achievements between regions and represents governance challenges in border areas.

Data collection was carried out using several techniques to ensure data richness and validity. The main technique was semi-structured in-depth interviews with informants who were selected through purposive sampling and snowball sampling techniques. Informants were individuals who had knowledge, experience, and direct involvement in the planning and implementation of the HDI improvement program, including leaders and staff from Bappeda, the Education Office, the Health Office, the Border Agency, as well as representatives from academia and civil society. In addition, non-participant observation was conducted to directly observe the dynamics of interaction in cross-sector coordination meetings. The third technique was documentation study, which involved analyzing relevant documents such as the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD), OPD reports, BPS data, and related regulations. Data analysis was carried out interactively, adopting the model developed by Miles and Huberman, which consists of three simultaneous activity streams: data reduction, data presentation, and conclusion drawing. To maintain the credibility of the results, source triangulation was carried out by comparing data from various informants and data collection methods.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

An analysis of efforts to improve the Human Development Index (HDI) in Kalimantan Utara Province, when examined through the lens of capacity building, shows that the strengthening process that has taken place is still partial and has not been holistically integrated at the three fundamental levels: individual, institutional, and systemic. Findings in the field indicate a paradox, where there is strong policy commitment at the strategic level, but this has not been fully translated into effective implementation due to a capacity deficit at the operational level. The following discussion will analyze the capacity conditions at each level and their impact on the HDI improvement program.

At the individual level, which focuses on the knowledge, skills, and motivation of officials, this study found that there have been sporadic efforts to improve competence. Local governments, both at the provincial and district levels, routinely send officials to attend training and technical guidance related to development planning, health management, or education curricula. However, capacity building at this level still faces two main challenges. First, these efforts are not yet evenly distributed.

In-depth technical competencies, such as the ability to perform complex development data analysis or formulate evidence-based policies, tend to be concentrated among a handful of officials in central planning agencies such as Bappeda/Litbang. In contrast, officials in sectoral technical OPDs or at the district level, who are at the forefront of implementation, often lack equivalent analytical capacity. Second, the sustainability of individual capacity is hampered by high rates of staff rotation and transfer.

The knowledge and expertise that has been built through training is often lost when an official is transferred to another irrelevant position. As a result, institutions continuously experience "institutional amnesia" and fail to capitalize on investments in human resource development, which ultimately weakens the quality of IPM program planning and implementation in the field.

The most significant weakness and core of the problem was identified at the institutional or organizational level. This level includes the structure, processes, working mechanisms, and internal culture of public organizations. The research findings clearly show the existence of acute institutional fragmentation. Although Bappeda/Litbang is formally appointed as the coordinator, its coordinative capacity in practice is very limited. Existing cross-sector coordination mechanisms, such as the Musrenbang forum or thematic meetings, more often function as administrative rituals than as arenas for authentic strategic collaboration. As expressed by a key informant, "Cross-sector coordination is carried out through forums, although its effectiveness is highly dependent on the leadership and commitment of the relevant officials.

This confirms that inter-agency synergy still relies on personal initiatives and relationships, rather than on an established and institutionalized system. The absence of a permanent IPM task force with a clear mandate and resources means that each OPD tends to return to working in its own "silo" after the meeting is over.

Institutional technical capacity is also hampered by data fragmentation. Each OPD manages its own information system without a shared integrated data platform for IPM planning and monitoring purposes. The absence of a single source of truth not only makes it difficult for Bappeda to develop comprehensive plans, but also leads to program overlaps and inefficient budget allocation.

At the systemic level, which includes the regulatory framework, macro policies, and norms that form the "rules of the game" for all actors, there is actually a fairly strong formal foundation. The placement of IPM as one of the main priorities in the Regional Medium-Term Development Plan (RPJMD) document and various Governor Regulations demonstrates political commitment at the highest level. However, this formal policy framework has failed to be internalized into a collaborative work culture at the bureaucratic level.

Sectoral egoism remains the dominant unwritten norm, whereby each OPD prioritizes the achievement of its own performance indicators and budget absorption rather than contributing to the collective achievement of IPM targets. The existing systemic environment does not yet provide effective incentive or sanction mechanisms to encourage or "force" collaboration. In addition, the involvement of international development partners such as GIZ and SKALA, while positively helping to fill capacity gaps, also implicitly shows that the local system is not yet fully independent and sustainable.

Dependence on these external projects risks making capacity development efforts temporary and not institutionalized within the local government system itself. Thus, even though supporting regulations are in place, the existing systemic environment is not conducive enough to transform fragmented work patterns into a synergistic orchestration of human development.

CONCLUSION

Efforts to improve the Human Development Index in Kalimantan Utara Province are fundamentally a challenge of capacity building that has not been managed systematically. Although there has been progress at the individual level, its effectiveness is hampered by serious weaknesses at the institutional and systemic levels. Institutional capacity is fragmented by a sectoral work culture, ad hoc coordination mechanisms, and an unintegrated data system. This hinders the realization of synergistic and evidencebased program planning and implementation. As a result, various flagship programs in the education, health, and economic sectors have not been able to produce optimal impacts in reducing HDI disparities between regions.

Future strategies must prioritize integrated capacity building, with a primary focus on strengthening the institutional and systemic levels. This includes formalizing coordination mechanisms through the establishment of a permanent HDI task force, investing in an integrated data system, and reforming the performance evaluation system to provide incentives for cross-sector collaboration. Without strengthening a solid institutional foundation, efforts to accelerate human development in Kalimantan Utara will continue to be slow and partial

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