

CHAPTER I

INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background of Apprenticeship

Apprenticeship programs are an essential component of vocational and higher education, designed to bridge the gap between theoretical knowledge and practical experience. Through apprenticeship, students are given the opportunity to apply the concepts and skills they have learned in class to real-world situations within professional industries. This program also plays a crucial role in preparing students to develop work discipline, adaptability, communication skills, and problem-solving abilities, all of which are necessary to compete in today's dynamic job market.

Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis (Polbeng) is a state vocational higher education institution located in Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia. Established in 2000 under the Bengkalis Bangun Insani Foundation (YBI), Polbeng initially operated as a private institution. In early 2008, the institution initiated its conversion to public status by seeking formal support from YBI, the Bengkalis Regency Government, and the Regional House of Representatives (DPRD) of Bengkalis. This proposal was subsequently submitted to the Ministry of National Education through the Directorate General of Higher Education in 2009.

On February 9, 2011, Polbeng, together with YBI and the Bengkalis Regency Government, presented its feasibility report to the Minister of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (KemenPAN-RB) as part of the official state conversion process. The institution was formally granted public status on July 29, 2011, through Ministerial Decree No. 28 of 2011 concerning the Establishment, Organization, and Governance of Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis. The official inauguration was conducted on December 26, 2011, by the Minister of Education and Culture of the Republic of Indonesia.

As a modern vocational institution with a strategic role in strengthening national industrial competency, Polbeng is committed to developing high-quality human resources and advancing applied education in response to the demands of the Industrial Revolution 4.0. Upholding its vision to become a nationally and internationally recognized center for vocational education, Polbeng focuses on producing competent, innovative, and industry-ready graduates who are capable of contributing to both national development and global competitiveness.

Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis (Polbeng) is a state vocational higher education institution located in Bengkalis Regency, Riau Province, Indonesia. As a practice-oriented institution, Polbeng emphasizes applied learning to prepare students to become professionally competent and industry-ready graduates. Within this framework, the English for Business and Professional Communication study program requires students to undertake an apprenticeship program after successfully completing six semesters of coursework. The apprenticeship is conducted in the seventh semester and spans a duration of approximately six months, serving as a compulsory component of the curriculum to ensure real-world professional exposure.

In accordance with this academic requirement, the author carried out an apprenticeship at Rich Tour and Travel, a tourism service company based in Batam, Riau Islands. Rich Tour and Travel specializes in providing a wide range of travel and tourism services tailored to meet the diverse needs of domestic and international tourists. This apprenticeship placement enabled the author to directly engage with the professional environment of the tourism industry, particularly in areas related to communication, service coordination, and customer relations.

As part of its commitment to producing graduates who are skilled and industry-ready, Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis requires students to undertake an internship program as one of the academic obligations in the curriculum. This activity is expected to provide students with practical learning experiences relevant to their field of study, while also fostering professionalism and technical

competencies. In Indonesia, the tourism industry has become one of the most promising sectors contributing to economic growth. As a country rich in natural and cultural diversity, tourism continues to grow, creating high demand for professional services in travel management, customer service, and hospitality. Batam, located in the Riau Islands Province, is one of the most popular destinations, strategically positioned near Singapore and Malaysia, making it a hub for both domestic and international tourists.

To support the growth of this sector, tour and travel companies play a vital role in providing comprehensive services such as ticketing, tour packages, accommodations, and travel assistance. Apprenticeship in such companies give students exposure to the dynamics of the tourism industry and the opportunity to gain direct experience in business operations and customer engagement.

Rich Tour and Travel, based in Batam – Riau Islands, is a company that provides various tourism and travel services to meet the needs of tourists. By carrying out an internship in this company, students are expected to learn not only about the operational aspects of a tour and travel business but also about marketing strategies, service quality, and professional work ethics. This experience serves as a valuable step in preparing students from Politeknik Negeri Bengkalis to face future professional challenges in the tourism sector.

1.2 Purpose of Apprenticeship

1. To find out the operational process of a travel agency, especially related to tour package preparation, booking systems, and coordination with tourism stakeholders.
2. To find out the challenges commonly faced in the tourism industry and how service providers handle customer expectations and problem-solving in real situations.
3. To find out how English is applied in business communication practices, including email writing, customer assistance, and promotional activities for both domestic and international clients.

1.3 Significance of the Apprenticeship

The practical work carried out is very beneficial for several parties such as students, companies, and State Polytechnic of Bengkalis:

1. For the Student

This apprenticeship provides the author with the opportunity to obtain real professional experience in the tourism industry, particularly in communication, service handling, and client relations. It enhances the author's practical competence in using English for business and professional purposes, while also improving skills in adaptability, problem-solving, and workplace professionalism.

2. For the Company

The apprenticeship contributes to the company by offering additional support in handling administrative and communication-related tasks. The presence of an intern also brings fresh perspectives, especially in enhancing English-based communication and promotional content. Moreover, the company benefits from the opportunity to identify and develop potential future talents.

3. For the State Polytechnic of Bengkalis

This apprenticeship strengthens the institution's collaboration with industry partners and ensures alignment between academic curriculum and real-world professional demands. It also serves as an evaluation medium to assess the effectiveness of the English for Business and Professional Communication study program in preparing students to meet industry standards and global employability.