Leadership Styles in Improving the Performance of Civil Servants at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province

Abdul Halil Hi. Ibrahim a, Saiful Deni b, Thamrin Husain c, Samsuddin Abdul Kadir d

Abstract

In this research, the author employed a qualitative research approach to explore the role of leadership styles in improving civil servant performance at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. The study found that the Secretary of the North Maluku Province employed a democratic leadership style, which involved effective communication, collaborative decision-making, and motivation. This leadership style positively influenced civil servant performance and contributed to the achievement of organizational goals. The research also identified challenges in improving civil servant performance, including issues related to employee discipline, limited supporting facilities, and delays in salary processing. These challenges underscore the importance of addressing discipline-related issues and providing necessary resources to enhance performance. In conclusion, the research highlighted the significance of leadership styles in government organizations and their impact on civil servant performance. It emphasized the need for leaders to prioritize employee discipline and create a conducive work environment. Additionally, it called for continuous efforts from civil servants to improve their performance and contribute to organizational success.

Keywords
communication; leadership style; motivation; performance and state civil apparatus; work environment;

Corresponding Author
a
Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Indonesia

Manuscript submitted: 27 July 2023, Manuscript revised: 18 August 2023, Accepted for publication: 09 Sept 2023

This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/).

Contents

Abstract .......................................................................................................................................................... 200
1 Introduction ............................................................................................................................................. 201
2 Materials and Methods .......................................................................................................................... 202
3 Results and Discussions ....................................................................................................................... 202
   3.1 Leadership styles in improving the performance of civil servants at the secretariat of the North Maluku Province .................................................................................................................. 202

a Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Indonesia
b Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Indonesia
c Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Indonesia
d Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Indonesia
1 Introduction

Human resources are a vital asset for any organization, as their role in implementing strategies is crucial. Human resources are the individuals within an organization directly related to their work. Having high-quality and professional human resources is the expectation of any organization. Organizations with such resources can achieve optimal performance at the individual and team levels, leading to realizing organizational goals and objectives.

One of the critical aspects of work is achieving good performance in line with the performance standards set by the organization. Performance reflects the achievement level in implementing activities, programs, and policies to realize an organization's goals, objectives, missions, and visions. To achieve good performance in government organizations, the performance of civil servants must be excellent.

Performance assessment can be conducted informally through comments or feedback from superiors or subordinates. However, a more relevant review includes formal and structured evaluations performed by the organization or competent institutions. Continuous formal performance evaluations provide a comprehensive view of an employee's work, including job-related traits, work standards, behavior, work results, and employee attendance (Trudeau, 2008).

To improve organizational performance in government, the performance of civil servants is crucial. The performance of civil servants is influenced by various factors, including their competence, leadership, work environment, commitment, and external pressures. Therefore, evaluating civil servants' performance is essential to measure the organization's success in achieving its vision and mission (Amabile et al., 2004).

The Secretariat of the North Maluku Province plays a significant role in coordinating and providing technical and administrative services to all government agencies in the region. Therefore, assessing the performance of civil servants in this organization is essential, as it helps gauge the quantity, quality, and efficiency of services, motivation, and budget adjustments (Schueth, 2012).

Analyzing civil servant performance is crucial for evaluating the success or failure of their assigned tasks and functions. Unfortunately, information regarding civil servant performance is limited, as it is not considered a significant priority. This lack of attention is evident in promotions, often based on leaders' personal preferences and the paternalistic culture within local government organizations.

Furthermore, there is a noticeable culture of paternalism within the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province, where subordinates find it difficult to express disagreement with their superiors openly. This can hinder innovation and creativity among civil servants. Additionally, when leaders are absent, there is a perception that subordinates must wait for their return to seek guidance rather than taking initiative.

The above challenges indicate that civil servant performance in the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province needs to meet the expected standards. Various factors influence their performance, including competence, motivation, leadership, environment, commitment, and external pressures.

Concrete actions are needed to improve civil servant performance and achieve organizational goals. This includes fostering organizational commitment, which can positively impact employee performance. Commitment to the organization reflects employees' engagement, loyalty, and sense of belonging, all of which can contribute to improved performance (Cummings et al., 2010).

Leadership is another critical factor that needs attention within the organization. Effective leadership is essential for creating a conducive work environment and enhancing employee performance, ultimately leading to higher productivity. Thus, your research will explore the role of leadership styles in improving civil servant performance at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province.

---

2 Materials and Methods

In this research, the author employs a qualitative research approach, focusing on leadership’s role in improving civil servants’ performance at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. Qualitative research emphasizes inductive analysis rather than deductive analysis. Data collected is not intended to support or refute hypotheses formulated before the research begins. Instead, abstractions are developed based on the specifics gathered and categorized through a rigorous data collection process (Sutopo, 2006).

The data collected include words and images. Moreover, everything gathered may hold the key to what has been researched. Thus, the research report will contain data quotations to illustrate the report’s presentation (Moleong, 2002).

3 Results and Discussions

3.1 Leadership styles in improving the performance of civil servants at the secretariat of the North Maluku Province

As an effort to enhance the image, work, and performance of government agencies towards professionalism and to support the establishment of good governance, there is a need for a unified direction and vision for all government employees/civil servants that can be used as guidance or reference in carrying out both managerial and operational tasks in all areas and units of government agencies comprehensively.

A government organization’s human resources (HR) consists of leaders and employees/civil servants. The Secretariat of the North Maluku Province is part of a government organization that has 439 civil servant employees/officials distributed across several Bureaus within the Secretariat. To achieve the desired organizational performance, various methods must be employed by a government leader or superior, including the use of appropriate leadership styles.

The role of a leader is crucial in achieving the organization’s desired goals, particularly in government organizations like the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. This is primarily related to improving the performance of employees/civil servants in carrying out their duties following their roles and functions. Improving employee/civil servant performance is the result of the work that can be achieved by individuals or groups within an organization within their respective authorities and responsibilities to achieve the organization’s goals.

In this context, leadership styles significantly improve civil servant performance at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. According to interviews conducted by the author with Mr. Drs. M. Ali Fataruba, the Head of the Bureau of Government and Regional Autonomy, the leadership style of the Secretary of the North Maluku Province in improving civil servant performance within the Secretariat includes; 1) The leader is highly communicative and responsive to various issues in the governance process. 2) The leader prefers a persuasive approach to problem-solving but remains firm in making decisions to resolve issues. 3) The leader consistently monitors the performance of civil servants in each Bureau within the Secretariat, thereby achieving performance improvement over time.

The interviews suggest that the leader (Secretary of the North Maluku Province) is responsible for steering the organization and is highly transparent in various matters. Additionally, the leader actively involves all employees/civil servants and seeks their input in decision-making processes. This leadership style is essential in facilitating transparent discussions and resolving performance issues collaboratively.

Similarly, the Head of the Organization Bureau, M. Irwanto Ali, emphasized that the Secretary of the North Maluku Province is known for his approachable and motivating leadership style. The leader fosters a sense of unity and engages employees/civil servants in decision-making, resulting in collectively made decisions. The leader is also known for being resolute, prioritizing professionalism, providing guidance, and maintaining discipline in the workplace. This commitment to discipline is reinforced through attendance records, ensuring employee/civil servant punctuality and diligence in delivering excellent public service.

In summary, leadership styles are essential in any organization, whether formal or informal. The leadership style applied by a government leader or superior plays a significant role in improving the performance of civil servants. Effective leadership directs employees’ efforts in achieving the organization's
goals. The leadership style described in this study reflects the leader’s role in steering the organization, fostering employee commitment, and achieving organizational objectives (Geba et al., 2019).

Theoretical perspectives, such as those presented by Kartono (2010), underscore the multifaceted functions of leaders, encompassing planning, policy-making, expertise, external group representation, control, mediation, exemplification, symbolic representation, rewards, and punishment, ideology, and methodology, all of which contribute to leadership effectiveness in improving employee performance.

In conclusion, leadership styles significantly influence an organization, and the leadership style described in this research is vital in enhancing the performance of civil servants at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. The leader’s role as a communication facilitator, decision-maker, and motivator creates a conducive environment for employees to thrive, ultimately contributing to the organization’s success in delivering public services (Akyildiz et al., 2008; Eyrich et al., 2008).

Furthermore, the Secretary (Sekda) always motivates every employee working in the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province to have a high work spirit and the intention to improve their performance over time continually” (Results of the interview on April 4, 2022, in the Secretariat Office).

Based on the above interview results, it is evident that a democratic leadership style is consistently applied by the Secretary of the North Maluku Province to enhance the performance of civil servants. The leader (Sekda) possesses a democratic spirit, and therefore, issues related to organizational matters and even performance issues for civil servants are always discussed and deliberated collectively with other employees. Additionally, the leader (Sekda) serves as a motivator for the employees working within the Secretariat.

The improvement of employee/civil servant performance can also be determined by the implementation of work programs, achievements made, and the impact of the programs. To achieve good employee/civil servant performance, it is essential to have work programs that genuinely involve all parties, especially the employees/civil servants working within government agencies, specifically within the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. Regarding preparing work programs to improve employee/civil servant performance, Mr. Drs. Irwan A Husen, M.Si, Acting Head of the Bureau of Development Administration, stated, "The leader, in this case, the Secretary of the Province, is democratic. For instance, decision-making is not solely done by the Secretary of the Province but involves employees or subordinates, where subordinates can provide input when needed. Every government organization has work programs that should involve employees/civil servants so that decisions are made collectively or collegially. After decisions are made, the leader also provides moral and material motivation to employees to encourage them to work effectively" (Results of the interview on April 4, 2022, in the Secretariat Office).

Based on these interview results, it is evident that in decision-making, whether related to work programs or other activities, the leader (Sekda) always involves the employees/civil servants in determining the direction of policies to improve their performance within the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. Decision-making in government organizations, when done collectively, leads to the implementation of decisions collectively. This aligns with the statement by Dermawan (2004), which suggests that decision-making is a dynamic process influenced by various forces, including organizational environments, knowledge, skills, and motivation. Decision-making involves selecting alternative solutions or courses of action from several available alternatives to solve problems.

Baron & Byrne (2008), also state that decision-making involves combining individual or group efforts and integrating existing information to select one of several possible actions. Besides the decision-making process, the leader (Sekda) often motivates employees/civil servants to work to the best of their abilities and follow their respective roles and functions. Hj. Rahma Hasana, Head of the Bureau of Social Welfare at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province, stated, "The leader, in this case, the Secretary of the Province, is always open and accepts all suggestions and criticisms from employees/civil servants. The Secretariat of the Province is a government institution with the sole duty of providing services to the public. Therefore, the leader (Sekda), as the top leader in the organization, has the responsibility of guiding employees/civil servants to work effectively and efficiently, to be disciplined in their work, and to adhere to the established rules for arriving and leaving the office” (Results of the interview on April 5, 2022, in the Secretariat Office).

Based on the interview results above, it is clear that in any organization, a leader/superior figure (Sekda) is needed to provide moral and material support to motivate employees/civil servants to improve their performance continually. This leadership style ensures organizational stability among employees/civil servants within the Secretariat, as it indicates that the leader always pays attention to and fosters

communication between the leader (Sekda) and subordinates (employees/civil servants) to meet all the interests of serving the public.

From the explanations above, it can be concluded that the leadership style of the Secretary of the North Maluku Province is highly democratic and ideal for influencing and motivating employees in their work. This is achieved through various means, including using authority and policies to enhance the performance of employees, ultimately contributing to the achievement of organizational goals and effective public service delivery. According to Thoha (2013), democratic leadership is a style that emphasizes cooperation, with coordination of work from all subordinates. Democratic leadership focuses on the active involvement of every group member, starting from goal setting, decision-making, and discipline, requiring decisions to be made collectively from the bottom up.

Additionally, Kartono (2010), suggests that democratic leadership style can be measured by several indicators, including the ability to make decisions, motivate, communicate, control subordinates, responsibility, and emotional control.

### 3.2 Challenges in improving the performance of civil servants at the secretariat of the North Maluku Province

Leadership functions based on the authority of a leader to persuade, influence, and motivate employees or subordinates to carry out a series of activities to achieve organizational goals. According to the author, leadership can be effective when a leader, in addition to influencing subordinates, can motivate them to achieve optimal employee performance. Motivation and guidance from leaders are driving factors for achieving the organization's goals carried out by its employees.

As described previously, the leadership style of the Secretary of the North Maluku Province is highly democratic, primarily focusing on providing motivation and establishing effective communication patterns with subordinates so that employees (civil servants) spontaneously perform their work in line with orders or established work programs. Because a leader’s words or influence are the interactive results of individual or personal and situational factors, a leader can inspire others in a planned and prearranged organization, creating high morality, enthusiasm, and motivation to complete their respective tasks with the expected results (Berson et al., 2001).

A democratic leadership style in improving the performance of employees/civil servants. This is a way for someone to influence a group of people or subordinates to work together enthusiastically and confidently to achieve predefined goals. The success of an organization, both as a whole and in various groups within a specific organization, largely depends on the leadership style within that organization (Saleem, 2015).

The quality of leadership in a government organization can play a dominant role in achieving its success in carrying out its various activities, mainly seen in the performance of its employees/civil servants. Therefore, the leader’s role is crucial in shaping the character of employees/civil servants to remain committed to their work tasks.

Leaders within an organization must have qualities that set them apart from their subordinates, the employees/civil servants. This distinction inspires their subordinates to act enthusiastically, commit, and try to achieve set goals. However, more than merely motivating all employees/civil servants is required. There must also be encouragement for employees to have a strong interest in their work. Thus, while a leader’s attention is directed towards their subordinates, the performance and work ethic of their employees/civil servants will be high.

Despite the motivation and guidance provided by a leader, various challenges may still arise in efforts to improve the performance of employees/civil servants in the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. Good performance cannot be achieved if employees/civil servants face issues in their work, which can affect their ability to improve their performance. Rahwan K Suamba, Head of the Leadership Administration Bureau, stated, "Even though there is motivation from leadership, it is acknowledged that not all leadership styles are seen as perfect by everyone (Maclean et al., 2000; Schunk & DiBenedetto, 2020). Various challenges may still be encountered in improving employee/civil servant performance. The challenges faced in improving employee/civil servant performance include 1) Lack of punctuality in arriving at work, as most employees do not reside in Sofifi; 2) Limited supporting facilities in some work units; 3) Delayed processing of employee/civil servant salaries, which can lead to reduced motivation for work" (Results of the interview on April 4, 2022, in the Secretariat Office).
Based on this interview, it is evident that in every organization or government institution, employees/civil servants face various challenges in their work. These challenges, such as undisciplined behavior, limited supporting facilities, and unmet employee/civil servant welfare, often become the main determining factors in improving employee/civil servant performance. Therefore, leaders need to minimize the challenges employees/civil servants face in performing their duties.

Jamaluddin Wua, Head of the General Bureau, expressed the same sentiment: "Leaders may not always fully understand the conditions of employees/civil servants at work. Perfection is not absolute; shortcomings or challenges may be encountered in every job. Speaking of improving employee performance, it all depends on leaders who understand their employees' conditions and employees who are committed to advancing and improving the organization. Indeed, employee discipline has become a challenge today, so leadership needs to be firm to discipline employees in their work" (Results of the interview on April 4, 2022, in the Secretariat Office).

Based on this interview, the challenges faced in improving the performance of employees/civil servants in the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province are primarily related to the undisciplined behavior of employees/civil servants in performing their tasks. Employee/civil servant discipline in government agencies has become a subject of discussion that needs to be examined and acted upon appropriately so that employees/civil servants are more disciplined, especially in punctuality.

Employee/civil servant discipline at work is a critical issue that must be addressed with strict measures. The presence of Government Regulation Number 53 of 2010 concerning Civil Servant Discipline has several goals. First, it aims to ensure that Civil Servants at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province are disciplined and adhere to their duties and responsibilities as stated in their respective positions. Second, the success standard of Government Regulation Number 53 of 2010 regarding Civil Servant Discipline is that all employees must be aware that as public servants, they have a responsibility to be disciplined, especially in terms of punctuality at work.

From these two goals, it is clear that employee discipline in government agencies is crucial and should be enforced. However, the enforcement of discipline should also be accompanied by actions against undisciplined employees so that employees feel responsible for adhering to Government Regulation 53 of 2010.

4 Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussions presented in the previous chapter, the following conclusions can be drawn:

a) The democratic leadership style employed by the Secretary of the North Maluku Province is ideal because it emphasizes work values that improve employee/civil servant performance. It also effectively motivates and guides employees/civil servants within the Secretariat, enhancing civil service performance.

b) The leadership is open to receiving suggestions and criticism, and decision-making is consistently carried out collectively through deliberative meetings, resulting in collective agreements.

c) Discipline among employees/civil servants, particularly punctuality, has become a primary factor in improving performance at the Secretariat of the North Maluku Province. Additionally, limited supporting facilities and employee/civil servant welfare issues affect the performance of civil servants.

Acknowledgements

Thanks to all those who have supported the publication of this manuscript.

References


Biography of Authors

Abdul Halil Hi. Ibrahim
Is Associate Professor of Social and Political Science Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Ternate, Indonesia.
Email: Chalilibrahim101@gmail.com

Saiful Deni
Is Professor of Social and Political Science Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Ternate, Indonesia.
Email: Ipuldeni.ummu@gmail.com

Thamrin Husain
Is Lecturer of Social and Political Science Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Ternate, Indonesia,
Email: thamrin892@gmail.com

Samsuddin Abd Kadir
Is Master Student of Public Administration Universitas Muhammadiyah Maluku Utara, Ternate, Indonesia
Email: Samsuddin@gmail.com