The Influence of Leadership and Competence on The Performance of The Regional Secretariat Apparatus

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ABSTRACT : This study aims to analyze the influence of leadership and competency on the performance of civil servants at the Regional Secretariat of Sumedang Regency. The background of this research is the observed low level of effectiveness and work productivity among government employees, which is allegedly influenced by poor leadership quality and suboptimal technical and behavioral competencies. This is a quantitative explanatory research using simple and multiple linear regression analysis. Data were collected through questionnaires from 65 respondents using a census technique. The results show that both leadership and competency have significant partial and simultaneous effects on performance, with a combined coefficient of determination (R^2) of 70.7%. These findings highlight the importance of integrating leadership quality and employee competence in regularly enhancing public bureaucratic performance. Strategic recommendations are provided for strengthening merit-based HR development policies, transformational leadership training, and digitalized performance evaluations.

Keywords: Leadership, Competency, Apparatus Performance, Public Bureaucracy, Merit System

1. Introduction

The performance of government officials is a reflection of the quality of bureaucratic governance in serving the public interest. In the current era of bureaucratic reform and digital transformation, demands for professionalism and accountability of state civil servants (ASN) are increasing. The apparatus is required not only to carry out administrative tasks, but also to make real contributions to achieving regional development goals. In this context, the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat is one of the strategic centers in ensuring the effectiveness of the implementation of regional government policies (Johan et al., 2024) .

However, initial observations show that most of the apparatus have not shown optimal performance. This is indicated by weak internal control systems, unintegrated communication, and slow decision-making processes in carrying out tasks. This phenomenon reflects fundamental problems in two important aspects, namely the quality of leadership and individual competence of the apparatus. Non-adaptive leadership and uneven technical and managerial competence are the main inhibiting factors in improving organizational performance.

According to Sudarmanto (2019), effective leadership has a central role in motivating, directing, and building a productive work culture in public organizations. Leaders are not only decision makers, but also facilitators, communicators, and role models in encouraging positive change. Transformative, participatory, and value-based leadership is an urgent need in modern bureaucracy. Without the presence of a visionary

leader who is able to build strong interpersonal relationships, the public service process tends to be stagnant and unresponsive.

On the other hand, the competence of the apparatus is an essential prerequisite to ensure the achievement of optimal performance. Competence includes three main dimensions, namely knowledge, skills, and work attitudes that must be possessed simultaneously by each apparatus (Sofo, 2019). Competent apparatus will be able to adapt to the dynamics of regulations, demands of information technology, and the complexity of public service problems. Conversely, low competence can cause administrative errors, delays in service, and ineffective implementation of regional strategic programs.

The Ministry of PANRB through the Regulation of the Minister of PANRB No. 3 of 2020 concerning ASN Talent Management has emphasized the importance of a merit system based on competency and performance. However, the reality on the ground shows that the implementation of this system has not been running optimally. The evaluation of the merit system by KASN in 2021 found that many local government agencies still experience a gap between the competency needs of the position and the profile of the available apparatus. This shows that the issue of competency is a structural challenge that requires strategic intervention.

Considering the above problems, this study becomes relevant and urgent to be implemented. The aim is to empirically analyze the extent to which leadership and competence influence the performance of the apparatus in the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat. This study not only provides academic contributions in enriching public administration literature, but also provides practical recommendations for making evidence-based apparatus development policies.

Thus, the formulation of the problem to be answered in this research is:
1. How does leadership influence the performance of civil servants?
2. How does competence affect the performance of civil servants?
3. How do leadership and competence simultaneously influence the performance of civil servants?

The objectives of this research are to:
1. Analyzing the influence of leadership on the performance of the apparatus.
2. Analyzing the influence of competence on the performance of the apparatus.
3. Analyzing the influence of leadership and competence simultaneously on the performance of civil servants.

The benefits of this research include two aspects, namely:
- **Theoretical** : Contributing to the development of public administration theory, particularly in the study of public sector human resource management.
- **Practical** : To be a reference for the Sumedang Regency Government in formulating strategies to improve the quality of performance of civil servants based on measurable and targeted leadership and competencies.

2. Research Methodology

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory method. The purpose of this approach is to test the causal relationship between independent variables, namely leadership and competence, to the dependent variable, namely apparatus performance. The study was conducted in the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat environment as a unit of analysis because it has strategic characteristics in supporting the coordination function of regional government (Johan et al., 2019) .

The population in this study were all the apparatus working in the Regional Secretariat of Sumedang Regency, totaling 65 people. Because the number is relatively small, the sampling technique used was the census technique, so that the entire population was used as research respondents.

The research instrument used was a questionnaire with a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". This questionnaire was developed based on indicators of each variable as follows:
- **Leadership** : measured through the dimensions of decision making, communication, motivation, control, and responsibility.
- **Competence** : measured through the dimensions of technical knowledge, skills, work attitudes, and problem solving.

- **Apparatus Performance** : measured from the aspects of work quality, quantity, timeliness, and effectiveness of task implementation.

Before being widely used, the questionnaire was tested for validity and reliability. Validity testing was carried out using item-total correlation analysis, while reliability testing used the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The validity criteria were the calculated r value > r-table at a significance level of 0.05 , while reliability was said to be good if the alpha value > 0.70.

The data analysis technique used is simple and multiple linear regression analysis. Simple linear regression test is used to see the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable partially. While multiple regression is used to test the influence of leadership and competence simultaneously on the performance of the apparatus. All tests are carried out with the help of SPSS software version 25.

Hypothesis testing is done using t-test for each independent variable and F-test for simultaneous model. Significance value (p-value) is compared with alpha 0.05 . If p-value <0.05 then the hypothesis is accepted. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) is used to determine the magnitude of the contribution of independent variables in explaining the dependent variable.

The research period was carried out for two months, namely in February-March 2025. The research was conducted directly by distributing questionnaires to all respondents and data processing was continued after all questionnaires were collected.

With this structured methodological approach, it is expected that the research results will have strong internal validity and high empirical relevance for the development of human resource policies in the local government sector.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Based on the results of the regression analysis conducted on data obtained from 65 respondents in the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat, it was found that:

- **The Influence of Leadership on Apparatus Performance** shows a significance value of 0.000 with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.312. This shows that leadership has a positive and significant influence partially on apparatus performance.
- **The Influence of Competence on Apparatus Performance** provides significant results with a significance value of 0.000 and an R^2 value of 0.560. This shows that apparatus competence has a stronger influence than leadership on performance.
- **The influence of Leadership and Competence simultaneously on Apparatus Performance** shows significant results with a calculated F-value greater than the F-table at a significance level of 0.000 and a determination coefficient (R^2) value of 0.707. This means that together leadership and competence explain 70.7 % of the variation in apparatus performance.

Scientific Analysis and Discussion

The findings are in line with contemporary theories in public management. According to Yukl (2020), effective leadership in public organizations must be able to integrate strategic vision with interpersonal skills to build employee trust and commitment. In this context, empirical results show that the role of leaders as communicators and decision makers has a significant effect on the motivation and work efficiency of the apparatus.

In addition, competence as a more dominant variable than leadership, emphasizes the importance of developing technical capacity and work behavior in dealing with the complexity of modern bureaucracy. This strengthens Sofo's opinion (2019), which states that the performance of public sector employees is not only determined by managerial policies, but also by personal abilities in understanding tasks, acting professionally, and demonstrating integrity and responsiveness to service.

Within the framework of the ASN merit system, these findings confirm the urgency of implementing performance-based talent management principles as mandated in the Regulation of the Minister of PANRB No. 3 of 2020. When the merit system has not been implemented optimally, the organization will have difficulty in mapping HR and managing the potential of the apparatus strategically. Therefore, the results of this study provide practical implications for the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat to integrate ongoing training programs and reorganize the leadership structure based on values and competencies.

This study also strengthens the study conducted by Syauqi and Setyahadi (2021), which shows that leadership and competence together have a positive impact on ASN

performance in the ministry environment. Even more specifically, the results of this study indicate that interventions on the competence aspect can have a greater direct effect on increasing work productivity than interventions on the leadership aspect alone.

Thus, it can be concluded that efforts to optimize the performance of the apparatus need to be focused on two strategic paths: first, strengthening the capacity of participatory and transformative leadership; second, developing competencies that are systematic, measurable, and relevant to the needs of the position. Collaboration between the two approaches is the key to the success of bureaucratic reform at the regional level.

3. Results And Discussion

Hypothesis Testing Results

Based on the results of simple and multiple linear regression analysis of data from 65 respondents of apparatus at the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat, the following findings were obtained:

- **The Influence of Leadership on Apparatus Performance** : The t-test results show a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.312. This means that leadership has a significant influence on apparatus performance of 31.2 % . Thus, every increase in leadership quality will be followed by an increase in apparatus performance.
- **The Influence of Competence on Apparatus Performance** : The significance value of 0.000 and R^2 of 0.560 indicate that competence partially contributes 56% to performance variation. Competence is the dominant factor in this study.
- **Simultaneous Influence of Leadership and Competence** : The results of the F test with a significance of 0.000 and a determination coefficient of R^2 of 0.707 indicate that the two independent variables together explain 70.7% of the variation in apparatus performance, while the rest is influenced by other variables not studied.

Scientific Analysis and Theoretical Study

This finding shows a significant influence of the managerial dimension on bureaucratic performance. In the transformational leadership theory proposed by Bass & Riggio (2021), effective leaders are those who are able to inspire a vision of the future, provide individual support, and stimulate the intellectual of their subordinates. This is reflected in the context of the study, where a leadership style that is able to motivate, direct, and provide trust is an important factor in driving employee performance.

The results of this study also strengthen Mintzberg's (2020) argument that leadership in public organizations is not only about structural authority, but also interpersonal skills and complex problem-solving abilities. In the context of the Sumedang bureaucracy, leaders who are able to bridge the expectations of regional leaders and the dynamics of the apparatus in the field tend to be more successful in increasing work efficiency.

Meanwhile, the dominant influence of competence strengthens the competence approach according to Boyatzis (2022), which states that competence is not just an accumulation of knowledge, but also includes the ability to apply knowledge in a work context. This is in line with the findings of Sofo (2019), that competence consists of a combination of cognitive, affective, and psychomotor abilities that must be integrated into real work behavior.

In the context of implementing ASN management policies, these results reflect the importance of strengthening meritocratic policies as mandated in the ASN Law and Regulation of the Minister of PANRB No. 3 of 2020. When associated with the concept of Strategic Human Resource Management (SHRM), employee competency development should be part of the long-term strategy of public organizations to achieve sustainable outcomes.

Practical Implications

The implications of the results of this study include several important aspects:

1. **Reformulation of Training Policy** : Competency development programs must be designed based on competency gap analysis, not just based on the annual budget.
2. **Competency-Based Performance Evaluation** : Performance evaluation needs to integrate behavioral and technical competency dimensions into the SKP

(Employee Performance Target) system to produce fairer and more accurate performance assessments.

3. **Leadership Capacity Building** : Leadership training needs to focus on strengthening soft skills such as strategic communication, organizational empathy, and decision-making abilities in complex situations.

4. **Strengthening the ASN Merit System** : The merit system must be translated into recruitment, promotion, and job rotation practices that are based on competence and performance, not on seniority or political proximity.

5. **Digitalization of Performance Assessment** : Local governments are advised to develop digital dashboards to monitor competency and performance indicators in real time.

Comparison with Previous Research

This study supports the research results of Syauqi and Setyahadi (2021) which found that leadership and competence contributed significantly to the performance of ASN Ministry of Villages. However, in the context of Sumedang, the value of competence contribution ($R^2 = 0.560$) is higher than the study. This difference can be explained by differences in organizational structure, work culture characteristics, and service focus between central and regional institutions.

In addition, this study also provides enrichment to the findings of Nasution (2021) who emphasized the importance of synergy between the role of leaders and the technical abilities of employees in creating optimal service output. In the context of Sumedang, cross-sectional collaboration and collaborative leadership are key approaches in overcoming bureaucratic barriers.

3.5. Integration of Theory and Field Findings

These empirical findings indicate that the mixed model framework between transformational leadership theory and competency approach is very relevant in explaining the dynamics of apparatus performance at the regional level. The theoretical implication is the need for a multidimensional approach in analyzing performance, which not only looks at organizational structure, but also individual behavior and social interaction in the workplace.

Thus, these results and discussions enrich the literature on public administration by emphasizing the importance of integration between structural (leadership) and individual (competence) dimensions in advancing bureaucratic reform in the era of modern governance.

4. Conclusion And Recommendations

Conclusion

Based on the results of data analysis and theoretical discussion that have been presented, it can be concluded that leadership and competence play a significant role in determining the performance of the apparatus in the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat. Partially, leadership has an influence of 31.2 % , while competence has a greater contribution of 56%. Simultaneously, both variables explain 70.7 % of the variation in apparatus performance.

Conceptually, this finding confirms the importance of synergy between leadership quality and mastery of technical and behavioral competencies as the main foundation for achieving a responsive and accountable bureaucracy. A managerial approach that focuses on transformative leadership, as well as competency-based apparatus development, is a key strategy in optimizing the performance of public organizations.

Theoretically, this study strengthens the relevance of the Bass & Riggio (2021) leadership model, the Boyatzis (2022) competency approach, and the ASN merit system emphasized in national policies. The synergy between structural and individual aspects is the basis for bureaucratic reform based on values, integrity, and work effectiveness.

Recommendations

Referring to the results of empirical analysis and theoretical studies, the recommendations that can be put forward to improve the performance of the apparatus are as follows:

1. **Preparation of Strategic Plan for Human Resource Development** : Regional governments need to prepare a medium-term human resource development road map that is integrated with the RPJMD, based on job competency needs and workload projections.

2. **Implementation of Leadership Development Program** : The implementation of leadership training is not only formal administrative in nature, but must include

the development of transformational capacity and sustainable public leadership ethics.

3. **Digitalization of Performance and Competency Systems** : An integrated digital-based information system is required that can dynamically record competency profiles and performance of civil servants for the purposes of transfers, promotions, and reward systems.

4. **Improving Employee Managerial Literacy** : Regular training is held on managerial literacy, strategic planning, and problem solving to support adaptation to the demands of public service innovation.

5. **Integrated Performance Evaluation** : Encourage an evaluation system based on individual and team performance indicators , including 360-degree assessments that include superiors, peers, and related external parties (stakeholders).

6. **Collaboration with Human Resource Development Institutions** : Local governments can collaborate with universities, BPSDM, and professional certification institutions to ensure the quality and sustainability of civil servant development programs.

With the implementation of these recommendations, it is expected that bureaucratic reform in the Sumedang Regency Regional Secretariat can run more systematically and measurably. Optimizing the role of leaders and strengthening competence will be the two main pillars in building a professional, responsive, and competitive apparatus in the era of modern governance.

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