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The Influence of Organizational Culture and Democratic Leadership Style on Employee Performance at the Trade and Industry Service of Bandung Regency

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Abstract

The present study is motivated by a fundamental issue, namely the suboptimal performance of employees at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency. This issue is evident in the low quality of work, lack of punctuality, and minimal employee initiative. For instance, deficiencies are observed in the preparation of accountability reports, coordination, administration, and financial bookkeeping, which remain ineffective. Additionally, employees tend to wait for instructions rather than taking the initiative to complete tasks, thereby hindering the optimal execution of technical material assessments and facilitation processes. These problems are suspected to stem from an ineffective organizational culture and leadership style. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the extent to which organizational culture and leadership style influence employee performance within the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency. The research adopts a quantitative approach and employs an explanatory survey method. The findings indicate that, partially, organizational culture influences employee performance by 37.8%, while a democratic leadership style has an impact of 11.5%. Simultaneously, organizational culture and democratic leadership style collectively affect employee performance by 49.3%, whereas the remaining 50.7% is influenced by epsilon (other factors beyond the two variables examined).

Keywords: *Organizational Culture, Democratic Leadership Style, Employee Performance.*

INTRODUCTION

In general, organizational culture can be understood as the patterns, norms, beliefs, and values that prevail within an organization. These patterns, norms, beliefs, and values influence the actions and behaviors of human resources or employees within the organization, thereby impacting their performance (Schein, 1985). Therefore, organizational culture should serve as a fundamental framework adopted by the organization to guide actions, solve problems, and develop employees who can adapt to their environment while fostering unity among organizational members.

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Employees who internalize the values of an organization will perceive these values as the organization's identity. These values and beliefs are then reflected in their daily work behaviors, ultimately shaping individual performance. When each employee demonstrates strong individual performance, it contributes positively to overall organizational performance. On the other hand, an organization's success in achieving its goals is not solely determined by the effective implementation of management principles but also by other factors, including organizational culture. Organizational culture, therefore, represents a shared set of values and beliefs that form the foundation of an organization's identity. Since organizational culture is built upon a collective agreement among members, it facilitates broader consensus for individual and organizational interests.

The significance of organizational culture lies in its role as a guiding force that shapes attitudes and behaviors within an organization. As a result, organizational culture influences performance, commitment, confidence, and ethical behavior. This aligns with the findings of Denison (1990) and Cameron & Quinn (2011), who emphasize the positive relationship between a strong organizational culture and employee performance. In addition to organizational culture, the success of an organization's performance in achieving its goals can also be influenced by leadership style. One leadership style that can determine the success of an organization's performance is democratic leadership style (Susanti, 2015). This type of leadership places humans as the main and most important factor in the organization. Therefore, democratic leadership style is considered a protector and savior from behavior that wants to advance and develop the organization. In addition, it is also manifested through the behavior of the leader as an implementer.

The democratic leadership style describes a leader who tends to involve employees in decision-making, delegate authority, encourage employee participation in determining work methods and goals, and view feedback as an opportunity to develop employees. One of the most effective leadership styles is democratic leadership, as it fosters decision-making abilities among subordinates.

An organization that adopts a democratic leadership style actively seeks input and perspectives from its employees regarding decisions to be made. A democratic leader listens attentively, carefully evaluates employees' ideas, and incorporates their contributions as long as they are feasible for implementation. Additionally, employees are encouraged to enhance their self-regulation skills and take on greater responsibilities within the organization.

A democratic leader, in carrying out their duties, is open to receiving and even encourages opinions and suggestions from subordinates, including constructive criticism. These inputs serve as valuable feedback and considerations for future decision-making and policy formulation.

Moreover, a democratic leader possesses self-confidence and places trust in their subordinates, believing in their ability to work

effectively and responsibly. Such a leader consistently fosters a sense of camaraderie and unity, striving to motivate employees in performing and enhancing their work capabilities. Additionally, a democratic leader provides opportunities for team members to develop leadership skills by delegating authority and responsibilities, thereby nurturing future leaders within the organization. Therefore, the leadership factor is one of the strengths of the organization in supporting the success of the organization in achieving its goals (Syahla et al., 2024).

This is understandable, as leadership plays a crucial role in mobilizing and guiding subordinates in carrying out their tasks, enabling them to achieve the expected performance. Ensuring that employee performance aligns with the organization's vision, mission, and programs is essential, as ultimately, employee performance significantly influences overall organizational performance.

The importance of organizational performance in public institutions is closely related to their primary function: serving the public. This indicates that the quality of public services is ultimately reflected in the performance of both individual personnel and the organization as a whole. In other words, the performance demonstrated by public officials represents the overall performance of the bureaucracy (organization). Therefore, the performance of a public organization also serves as an indicator of public satisfaction, as it directly impacts the quality of public services provided.

An initial survey conducted at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency identified a fundamental issue: the suboptimal performance of public officials. This issue is evident from several key indicators.

First, the quality of employee performance has not yet reached an optimal level. This can be observed in the work output of officials in the General Subdivision, particularly in the implementation of procurement processes and the preparation of accountability reports, which remain ineffective. *Second*, the reporting and evaluation of activities in the Finance Subdivision have not been carried out effectively. *Third*, a lack of initiative among some employees is still prevalent, as they tend to wait for instructions from their superiors rather than proactively executing their responsibilities.

The reinforcement of these various problem indications can be observed in the table below:

Table 1. Employee Performance Implementation at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency

No	Task Description	Target	Realization	Remarks
1	Accountability Report of the General Subdivision	Error-free documents	Documents contain many errors (2 documents per month)	Disrupts planning and program development

No	Task Description	Target	Realization	Remarks
2	Implementation of Reporting and Work Evaluation in the Finance Subdivision	Completed by the 5th of each month	Completed on the 7th of the following month	Delayed by 2 working days, affecting financial administration and bookkeeping
3	Analysis of Facilitation Materials for the Preparation of Office Guidelines	Work initiative achieved	Work initiative achieved at 65%	Lack of initiative disrupts technical material analysis and facilitation

Source: Researcher's Observations, 2024.

Empirically, the identified issues above are strongly suspected to be related to the lack of a conducive organizational culture and a leadership style that is not fully democratic, thereby affecting employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency, West Java. Therefore, this study focuses on how organizational culture and democratic leadership style influence employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

An organization is established as a means to achieve predetermined goals. This entity must manage various activities directed toward accomplishing the organization's objectives. Therefore, the individuals who operate within this framework and carry out organizational activities play a crucial role, as their behavior in performing tasks reflects the organization's functioning. Such behavior directly influences individual performance, which, in turn, impacts the overall organizational performance (Sutrisno, 2011).

This is why a strong organizational culture supports the achievement of organizational goals, whereas a weak or negative culture clearly hinders or contradicts these objectives. In an organization with a strong culture, shared values are deeply understood, embraced, and actively upheld by the majority of its members (employees). As a result, organizational culture serves as a strategic tool for addressing various changes and paradigm shifts within the organization. In line with this perspective, Hasibuan (2020) states that: "Personnel leaders are responsible for aligning managers and employees with the desired culture, fostering a sense of ownership of that culture, and maintaining accountability at all levels of the organization. Therefore, personnel must educate and equip leaders and managers to exemplify cultural values and fulfill their roles in cultivating the desired culture."

On the other hand, organizational culture also plays a crucial role in determining employee performance. In this context, Deal and Kennedy, as cited in Wibisono (2011: 60), state that "To create a high-performance organization, a strong and integrated culture must be established in various ways to achieve outstanding results." Reinforcing this perspective, Robbins (1996) emphasizes that "The role of organizational

culture is crucial in enhancing performance. A strong organizational culture provides employees with a sense of certainty, enabling them to grow and develop together." These views suggest that a conducive organizational culture, on a personal level, significantly contributes to improving employee performance.

In line with the above context, Denison and Mishra (1996: 168) state that "Organizational culture has four integrative principles regarding the reciprocal relationship between organizational culture and organizational effectiveness. These four principles are referred to as the four main cultural traits, which include involvement, consistency, adaptability, and mission."

A more comprehensive perspective is presented by Robbins, as cited in Ardana and Lukman (2018: 167), who identifies the following key aspects of organizational culture: (1) Innovation and risk-taking, (2) Attention to detail, (3) Outcome orientation, (4) People orientation, (5) Team orientation, (6) Aggressiveness, (7) Stability.

In line with the research topic, which positions democratic leadership style as one of the variables under study, Thoha (2013: 50) conceptually states that democratic leadership is associated with personal power and the involvement of followers in problem-solving and decision-making processes. The democratic leadership type refers to leaders who embrace democratic principles, not merely those who are elected democratically. This leadership style is characterized by a leader's willingness to accept, appreciate, and consider suggestions, opinions, and advice from staff and subordinates. Therefore, it can be understood that an effective leadership style within an organization involves providing motivation to employees and offering clear guidance, ultimately enhancing their performance.

Therefore, leadership, both directly and indirectly, has a positive influence on increasing employee motivation. A leader employs a specific approach to motivating employees, which is referred to as a leadership style. Leadership style plays a crucial role in shaping how subordinates perform their tasks.

Leadership serves as an aspirational force, a source of enthusiasm, and a creative moral strength that influences organizational members to adjust their attitudes in alignment with the leader's vision and expectations. Through effective leadership, employees are encouraged to adopt behaviors and mindsets that support the organization's objectives. In line with this context, Rivai et al. (2019: 122) identify three types of leadership styles that influence subordinates in achieving organizational goals.

First, the authoritarian leadership style, also known as directive or dictatorial leadership, relies on a power-based approach in decision-making and structural development. In this style, power is the dominant factor within the organization, and decisions are made unilaterally by the leader. Second, the democratic leadership style is characterized by a cooperative decision-making process in organizational development. Under democratic leadership, subordinates tend to exhibit high morale,

collaborate effectively, prioritize work quality, and demonstrate self-direction in carrying out their tasks. Third, the laissez-faire leadership style, or free-rein leadership, grants full authority to subordinates. In this loosely structured organizational setting, the leader takes a passive role, providing only supporting materials and participating in decision-making only when requested by subordinates.

Regarding the democratic leadership style, Pasolong, as cited in Ariani (2015: 10), identifies four key indicators: (1) decision-making is conducted collaboratively, (2) leaders appreciate the potential of each subordinate, (3) leaders listen to criticism, suggestions, and opinions from subordinates, and (4) leaders engage in cooperation with their subordinates. From a different perspective, Franklyn, as cited in Onong Effendy (1993: 200), outlines three indicators of democratic leadership: (1) a good relationship between leaders and employees, (2) recognition and appreciation of employees, and (3) management that listens to subordinates' aspirations.

Furthermore, in the context of the relationship between leadership and organizational culture, Handoko (2008) provides the following narrative: "If subordinates' behavior aligns with the programs outlined by the leader, the value obtained is high. Conversely, if individual behavior within the organization deviates significantly from the standards set in the leader's work program, the value is low. Therefore, organizational culture is created by its leader."

To achieve optimal performance, it is essential to consider the influencing factors, such as organizational culture and leadership style. Organizational culture serves as an invisible social force that drives individuals within an organization to engage in work-related activities. Meanwhile, leadership plays a crucial role in mobilizing and directing the organization toward its goals, a responsibility that is both significant and challenging.

In line with the research topic, which positions employee performance as the dependent variable, employee performance is conceptually defined as "the work outcomes achieved by an employee in accordance with their main duties, functions, work programs, and authority" (Satibi, 2012). Consistent with this definition, Mitchael, as cited in Sedarmayanti (2009), outlines several parameters for measuring employee performance, including: work quality, work quantity, job knowledge, cooperation, initiative, and creativity.

METHOD

In accordance with the research topic under investigation, this study employs a quantitative approach. The research method used is an explanatory survey, while data collection techniques include questionnaires, literature review, observations, and in-depth interviews. The study's respondents consist of 146 administrative employees from the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency. Data analysis is conducted using the Structural Equation Model (SEM).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Influence of Organizational Culture on Employee Performance

The research findings and discussion indicate that organizational culture has a significant influence on employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency, with a path coefficient of 0.378 (37.8%) and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). This figure demonstrates that organizational culture contributes substantially to shaping employee performance. Based on the study results, the research hypothesis is supported, confirming that organizational culture—measured through innovation and risk-taking, attention to detail, outcome orientation, people orientation, team orientation, aggressiveness, and stability—has a significant impact on employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency.

1. Dimension of Innovation and Risk-Taking

The research findings reveal that the dimension of innovation and risk-taking has been empirically well-implemented within the organization. This is reflected in the recognition of risk-taking as an essential factor in fostering employee creativity, although some respondents perceive that work pressure remains relatively high. Therefore, leadership must address this aspect to ensure that excessive pressure does not hinder employees' creative potential. Additionally, the study highlights that a strong innovation culture, supported by risk-taking, is crucial for fostering organizational creativity. By valuing experimentation and viewing failure as part of the learning process, organizations can create a productive and innovative work environment. This approach not only ensures organizational relevance in a dynamic environment but also enhances overall competitiveness.

The research findings also indicate the presence of a creative and innovative work culture, where employees are encouraged to take initiative. The innovation and risk-taking dimension within the organizational culture at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency has been well-implemented, as the majority of employees demonstrate creativity, innovation, and initiative while receiving full trust from their leaders, despite experiencing work-related pressures. This aligns with the perspective of Cameron & Quinn (2006), who emphasize that risk-taking is essential for fostering creativity within an organization. This view is further reinforced by Purwoko (2018), whose research highlights a positive correlation between innovation, risk-taking, and employee performance.

2. Dimension of Attention to Detail

The research findings indicate that the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency has successfully established a detail-oriented work culture. However, periodic monitoring remains necessary to ensure continued efficiency. On the other hand, employees demonstrate high accuracy and meticulousness in performing their tasks, reflecting a quality-oriented work culture. In other words, while the organization has effectively fostered a detail-focused work culture, regular supervision is still required to maintain efficiency. A combination of a strong work culture and effective oversight can create a productive and innovative

work environment, ensuring that employees remain precise in their tasks while enhancing overall organizational performance..

3. Dimension of Outcome Orientation

The research findings reveal that the majority of employees at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency demonstrate a strong commitment to achieving optimal results. In organizations with a strong outcome-oriented culture, decision-making, work processes, and employee behavior are primarily directed toward achieving measurable results, both quantitatively and qualitatively. This orientation is often associated with performance-based reward systems, where incentives or recognition are granted based on individual or team achievements in meeting predetermined targets. Therefore, the leadership of the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency may consider introducing additional rewards for employees with high performance, further motivating them to maintain and enhance their productivity.

The research findings also reveal that outcome orientation is not solely focused on achieving targets but also plays a crucial role in fostering innovation, self-development, and creativity throughout the process. Organizations with a strong outcome-oriented culture tend to exhibit high adaptability to external environmental changes, as they continuously seek new ways to enhance efficiency and effectiveness. In this context, outcome orientation serves as a powerful motivational tool for individuals within the organization, encouraging them to work diligently, develop their competencies, and strive for higher performance standards. This approach not only improves organizational success but also enhances employee engagement and long-term productivity.

4. Dimension of Team Orientation

The research findings indicate that team orientation at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency has been effectively implemented, fostering a team-based work culture and strong inter-team collaboration. This is evident from the good cooperation among employees, leadership support, and a reward system that motivates collaboration.

The strength of team orientation is reflected in several key characteristics:

a. Employees are expected to support and collaborate with one another in completing tasks.
b. Honest and transparent communication among team members helps build trust.
c. Decision-making is conducted collectively, incorporating input from all team members.

To further enhance team orientation, continuous efforts should be made to strengthen teamwork by conducting regular team-building training and development programs. This will reinforce collaboration and improve overall performance within the institution. This dimension highlights the critical role of teamwork, aligning with Meredith's (1993) Team Orientation Theory, which asserts that team orientation enhances coordination and work efficiency. This view is further supported by La

Mansur et al. (2015), who found a strong and significantly positive relationship between team orientation and organizational performance.

5. Dimension of People Orientation

The research findings reveal that employees at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency have successfully established good cooperation with other work units, reflecting strong interpersonal relationships within the organization. In fostering these relationships, organizational support for employees plays a crucial role. Organizations with a high people orientation tend to place greater emphasis on employee well-being, including career development and training opportunities. Additionally, employee involvement in decision-making emerges as a significant indicator of people orientation. This involvement psychologically enhances job satisfaction and employee loyalty, fostering a more engaged and committed workforce. By prioritizing employee well-being and participation, the organization can create a positive and supportive work environment, ultimately leading to improved overall performance.

The research findings also indicate that the people orientation dimension within the organizational culture has been empirically well-implemented. This is reflected in the performance of the majority of employees, who demonstrate diligence, punctuality, and effective collaboration with other work unit members. These findings align with the Human Relations Approach proposed by Mayo (2000), which emphasizes the importance of interpersonal relationships in supporting productivity. This perspective is further reinforced by La Mansur et al. (2015), whose research highlights a strong and significant relationship between team orientation and organizational performance. Thus, fostering a work culture that prioritizes interpersonal relationships, teamwork, and employee well-being can enhance both individual and organizational productivity, contributing to sustained performance improvements.

6. Dimension of Aggressiveness

The research findings indicate that employees at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency have demonstrated diligence and dedication in performing their duties. The establishment of this strong work culture also reflects the institutional performance of the office as a whole. Successfully fostering such a culture requires active participation from employees, particularly in implementing the official programs that have been established. However, the study also reveals that excessive aggressiveness in carrying out tasks can lead to employee burnout, which in turn negatively affects performance and the quality of work. Therefore, a balance must be maintained between high work demands and the motivation and incentives provided to employees. For this reason, leaders within the organization should implement stress management training programs and introduce effective motivation and incentive models to ensure that employees remain enthusiastic, productive, and capable of sustaining high performance.

The findings above align with the Burnout Model proposed by Leiter & Maslach (1997), which suggests that excessive ambition can lead to job burnout. This perspective is further reinforced by the research of Hamsiah et al. (2022), which highlights that employees who demonstrate enthusiasm in completing their tasks and do not rely heavily on their superiors exhibit strong initiative in their work. This proactive approach is categorized as a positive work behavior, contributing to better performance and organizational effectiveness. To prevent burnout while maintaining high motivation, organizations should implement strategies that balance workload and well-being, ensuring that employees remain engaged, productive, and resilient in their professional roles.

7. Dimension of Stability

The research findings indicate that the majority of employees feel valued and relatively comfortable in performing their tasks within the organization. This underscores the importance of organizational stability in creating a supportive and comfortable work environment. In this context, organizational leaders should provide employees with opportunities for career development, ensuring that they feel secure and confident in their roles. Career growth opportunities contribute to higher job satisfaction and long-term commitment, reinforcing employees' sense of stability within the organization. Furthermore, effective leadership plays a crucial role in establishing and maintaining a healthy organizational climate, which supports employees' career development and enhances workplace stability. The research findings also demonstrate that strong leadership fosters organizational commitment and improves employee competencies, ultimately contributing to a more stable and well-established organizational culture.

The Influence of Democratic Leadership Style on Employee Performance

The hypothesis testing results show that the democratic leadership style influences employee performance by 0.115 or 11.5%. This influence has a probability value (p-value) of 0.000 < 0.05. These results indicate that democratic leadership significantly affects employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency. In other words, the democratic leadership style is considered capable of improving employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency. The success of the democratic leadership style is partially determined by a good relationship between leaders and employees, recognition of employees, and management that listens to subordinates' aspirations.

1. Dimension of a Good Relationship Between Leaders and Subordinates

The research findings show that a good relationship between leaders and subordinates has been well established within the organization. This indicates a genuine effort by leadership to foster effective communication, support employee needs, and create a harmonious work environment. A strong relationship between leaders and subordinates serves as a fundamental basis for building trust,

enhancing work motivation, and strengthening employee loyalty to the organization.

The findings indicate that the dimension of a good relationship between leaders and subordinates within the context of democratic leadership has been effectively implemented. This is reflected in strong relationships between superiors and subordinates, the development of camaraderie, and the presence of mutual trust between leadership and employees. This aligns with Greenleaf's (1977) Servant Leadership Theory, which emphasizes that harmonious relationships strengthen employee loyalty. These findings are further supported by the research of Olla and Andriyani (2017), which highlights that leaders engage in two-way communication with employees and are not hesitant to seek assistance from them. This approach requires active encouragement from all parts of the organization to be fully effective. A similar perspective is expressed by Kartono (2014:86), who argues that the strength of democratic leadership does not lie in the "person" or individual leader, but rather in the active participation of all organizational members.

2. Dimension of Employee Recognition

The research findings indicate that employee recognition has empirically influenced employees, as the majority of employees feel valued due to the implementation of democratic leadership principles, which encourage active participation and acknowledge their contributions. Such an approach not only enhances employee job satisfaction but also contributes to improving organizational performance at the institutional level.

Employee recognition within the context of democratic leadership plays a crucial role in shaping a positive organizational culture, where employees feel valued, leading to greater motivation, increased effort, and higher contributions to the organization. Additionally, recognition psychologically enhances employees' confidence and commitment to the organization (Ayu Andarista, 2021). By consistently providing recognition, organizations can foster employee loyalty, ultimately reducing turnover rates. The research findings also reveal that in organizational environments where recognition is valued, employees feel more encouraged to express new ideas and suggestions, resulting in innovation, creativity, and improved work processes (Irdayanti, Ansar & Wahira, 2023).

3. Dimension of Management that Listens to Subordinates' Aspirations

The research findings indicate that most employees feel that their aspirations are being heard, reflecting active employee participation in decision-making. This enhances their involvement in shaping organizational policies, making them feel that they play a role in determining the organization's outcomes. In this regard, organizations should establish formal communication channels to gather ideas and suggestions from employees. When employees feel that their voices are acknowledged, they tend to be more engaged and motivated to contribute positively toward organizational goals. This condition also signifies the

presence of an inclusive and responsive organizational culture. Leaders who demonstrate concern for employees' feelings and needs can strengthen relationships, which not only positively impacts job satisfaction but also enhances overall organizational performance. By continuously fostering a culture of active listening, leadership can ensure that employees remain motivated and engaged in achieving shared objectives.

CONCLUSION

Based on the analysis conducted, this study identifies three key findings. First, organizational culture has a partial influence on employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency, with an influence of 0.378 or 37.8%. This influence is determined by several factors, including innovation & risk-taking (0.045 or 4.5%), attention to detail (0.048 or 4.8%), outcome orientation (0.052 or 5.2%), team orientation (0.072 or 7.2%), people orientation (0.076 or 7.6%), aggressiveness (0.052 or 5.2%), and stability (0.033 or 3.3%). Second, democratic leadership style has a partial influence on employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency, with an influence of 0.115 or 11.5%. This influence is determined by a good relationship between leaders and employees (0.033 or 3.3%), employee recognition (0.031 or 3.1%), and management that listens to subordinates' aspirations (0.052 or 5.2%). Third, organizational culture and democratic leadership style simultaneously influence employee performance at the Trade and Industry Office of Bandung Regency by 0.493 or 49.3% (37.8% + 11.5%), while the remaining 0.507 or 50.7% is influenced by other factors beyond these two variables.

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