

ASSESSING THE PERFORMANCE OF SUB-DISTRICT HEADS AS REGIONAL APPARATUS IN LOCAL GOVERNANCE: EVIDENCE FROM MAJALENGKA REGENCY

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Abstract

The decentralization policy in Indonesia, mandated by Law No. 23 of 2014, has placed the Head of District as a strategic actor in local governance, particularly in delivering public services, coordinating inter-unit functions, and maintaining social stability. Despite this mandate, performance gaps remain, as shown by community dissatisfaction in Majalengka District. This study aims to analyze the performance of the Head of District in Majalengka within the framework of regional autonomy. Grounded in performance, public service, and leadership theories, the research employs a qualitative approach with data collected through observation, interviews, documentation, and literature review. Data analysis follows Miles and Huberman's model, supported by triangulation for validity. The findings reveal that while governance functions are generally effective and efficient, challenges persist in service optimization and delegation of authority. This study contributes to the literature by integrating multidimensional performance indicators and offers practical implications for enhancing district-level governance.

Keywords: Head Of District, Performance, Local Governance

A. INTRODUCTION

The administration of government in Indonesia is fundamentally based on the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which mandates the principles of decentralization, decentralization, and co-administration within the framework of regional autonomy. Since the enactment of Law No. 23 of 2014, local governments have been granted broad authority to regulate and manage governmental affairs, including the optimization of sub-districts as the frontline of public service delivery. The position of the sub-district has therefore become strategic, as it encompasses responsibilities in service provision, community development, and maintaining socio-political stability. However, practical realities indicate persistent challenges, such as public complaints regarding the quality of services in Majalengka Sub-district. This condition illustrates a gap between regulatory mandates and the actual implementation of governance at the sub-district level (Republic of Indonesia, 2014).

Previous studies have emphasized these dynamics from various perspectives. Prastiwi (2015) revealed that the implementation of regional autonomy policies has led to structural and functional changes in local governance, including the role of the Head of District. Ningrum, Ningsih, and colleagues (2021) found that the performance of sub-district officials often falls short of regulatory standards, resulting in poor quality public services. Meanwhile, Bernardin and Russel (1993) emphasized that employee performance can be measured by

indicators such as quantity, quality, creativity, discipline, and leadership, all of which directly influence organizational effectiveness.

This study shares similarities with the aforementioned research in its focus on the performance of sub-district officials as local government apparatuses. Nevertheless, it differs by specifically examining the implementation of delegated authority to the Head of District in Majalengka, with particular emphasis on public service delivery, inter-unit coordination, and a broader set of performance indicators, including effectiveness, flexibility, and independence, which have been less explored in previous studies.

These differences highlight the originality of this research, which contributes to the literature by extending the analysis of Head of District performance beyond conventional indicators such as quantity and quality of work. By incorporating additional dimensions—namely effectiveness, flexibility, independence, and leadership—this study enriches the theoretical and practical understanding of the strategic role of the Head of District in the implementation of regional autonomy, particularly in the context of Majalengka Sub-district.

The urgency of this study lies in the pressing need to ensure that the decentralization policies stipulated in Law No. 23 of 2014 are effectively realized through improved performance at the sub-district level. Given that the Head of District serves as the frontline of local government in delivering public services, enhanced performance will directly impact community satisfaction, regional development effectiveness, and the preservation of social stability (Republic of Indonesia, 2014).

Based on this background, the objective of this study is to analyze the performance of the Head of District of Majalengka as a local government apparatus in carrying out delegated functions, particularly in public service delivery, coordination with other local units, and the implementation of devolved authority. The findings are expected to provide both academic and practical contributions to optimizing the role of sub-district heads within the framework of regional autonomy in Indonesia.

B. LITERATURE REVIEW

Performance Theory

Performance is defined as the work results achieved by an individual or a group within an organization in accordance with their authority and responsibilities to attain organizational goals legally and ethically (Bernardin & Russel, 2013). Performance theory emphasizes that the quality of employee performance can be measured through the achievement of predetermined standards. In the context of public organizations, performance reflects not only efficiency but also the effectiveness of services delivered to society. Employee performance is highly influenced by ability, motivation, and working environment conditions. Therefore, evaluating the performance of government officials is essential to assess the success of decentralization policy implementation. Indicators:

- Quantity of work
- Quality of work
- Creativity
- Work discipline
- Leadership

Public Service Theory

Public service refers to a series of activities carried out to meet the needs of society in accordance with prevailing laws and regulations (Hardiyansyah, 2011). Public service theory highlights the importance of providing services that are fast, accurate, and transparent in order to improve citizen satisfaction. Within the framework of public administration, service

delivery is regarded as the core of local government implementation. Good service quality reflects a professional and accountable bureaucracy. Therefore, public service becomes one of the main benchmarks of decentralization effectiveness at the sub-district level. Indicators:

- Responsiveness
- Responsibility
- Accountability
- Equity
- Transparency

Leadership Theory

Leadership is the process of influencing, directing, and coordinating the activities of organizational members to achieve common goals (Robbins & Judge, 2017). In governmental organizations, leadership requires the ability of a leader to integrate vision, mission, and public policies. Effective leadership is characterized by the ability to build communication, provide motivation, and make appropriate decisions. Public leaders such as sub-district heads (*camat*) serve as central figures in maintaining social stability and the performance of government apparatus. Therefore, leadership theory is essential to analyze how the leadership style and strategy of sub-district heads influence the effectiveness of public service delivery. Indicators:

- Vision and strategic direction
- Communication skills
- Decision-making
- Subordinate motivation
- Control and supervision

C. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

This study employed a qualitative research method, focusing on the performance of the Head of District (*Camat*) as a regional apparatus in the administration of local governance in Majalengka Regency. The primary techniques of data collection included field studies through observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation. Observation was conducted by directly examining the performance of the sub-district office. In-depth interviews were carried out with the Head of District, the Secretary of the District Office, and several sub-divisions and sections within the Majalengka sub-district administration. Documentation was undertaken by gathering and analyzing official documents relevant to governance performance. In addition, a literature review was conducted to supplement field data, utilizing research reports, scholarly articles, and other sources that provide contextual insights into the study.

The data sources consisted of both primary and secondary data. Data analysis followed the framework of Miles and Huberman as cited in Sugiyono (2017), encompassing data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To ensure the validity of findings, data triangulation was applied through three approaches: source triangulation, methodological triangulation, and time triangulation. This methodological approach was designed to strengthen the credibility of the findings and to provide a comprehensive understanding of the Head of District's performance within the context of local governance.

D. RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Work Quantity

At the District Office of Majalengka, the performance of the Head of District reflects professionalism, where behaviors and actions are carried out responsibly, skillfully, and with

commitment according to professional standards and ethics. The Head of District also demonstrates a proactive attitude, defined as the ability or habit of taking initiative and action. In practice, this includes planning, implementing, and evaluating assigned tasks, while ensuring that each staff member performs duties according to their respective functions and service operational standards. Furthermore, the Head of District continuously motivates subordinates to work effectively, as motivation is a process of providing encouragement and incentives, either directly or indirectly, so that employees feel inspired to work harder, remain productive, and stay committed to organizational goals. A culture of harmonious cooperation and the development of good relationships with external stakeholders is also consistently maintained.

Work Quality

The Head of District provides guidance and direction to employees, while fostering harmonious cooperation and effective communication between leaders and subordinates. This process involves giving instructions, advice, and supervision to ensure that tasks are completed correctly, in line with plans, and organizational objectives. The Head of District also instills creativity in completing work on time and in compliance with applicable norms and regulations, while encouraging discipline according to operational standards and organizational functions. Employees' understanding of their duties can be observed from their educational background, skills, and timely completion of tasks, which collectively support the success of local governance in the era of regional autonomy. Furthermore, efforts to improve staff performance quality significantly contribute to the achievement of organizational programs.

Knowledge of Work

In the Majalengka District Office, work performance is guided by core duties and functions (tupoksi) as well as established standard operating procedures (SOPs). These serve as routine responsibilities assigned to each individual according to their position in the organization. The District Office also implements regional policies as part of public policy execution, requiring the Head of District to coordinate all activities across departments. Knowledge of tasks and functions has been successfully implemented, with the Head of District consistently ensuring effective coordination in work processes.

Creativity

Creativity at the District Office of Majalengka is demonstrated through the introduction of original ideas and innovations aimed at addressing emerging challenges. Such initiatives are usually developed when obstacles in service delivery arise, often during staff training or evaluation sessions. However, challenges remain, as many employees tend to be passive, reluctant to provide input, or hesitant to propose constructive criticism that could improve organizational innovation. To address this, the District Office provides rewards for employees who successfully complete tasks on time or contribute creative ideas. Innovations proposed by staff are also promoted at the district or provincial level, demonstrating a broader application of organizational creativity.

Cooperation

The Head of District encourages cooperation among staff by fostering respect, tolerance, and solidarity, while emphasizing discipline and compliance with regulations in delivering public services. Monthly internal meetings are held to evaluate performance and improve coordination, ensuring that teamwork supports organizational objectives. While decision-making is generally led by the Head of District, this sometimes limits staff participation in the process, indicating a top-down leadership style that prioritizes organizational interests over individual contributions.

Perseverance in Work

The Head of District ensures consistent employee attendance and punctuality through the use of a digital attendance system, with records periodically evaluated and reported. Commitment to responsibilities is strengthened by the signing of integrity pacts, reinforcing accountability to both superiors and the public. Employees are instilled with integrity, adaptability, and a strong work ethic, ensuring reliability in public service delivery. Challenges faced in the workplace are addressed by encouraging persistence and resilience, supported by an organizational culture committed to service excellence.

Initiative

Initiatives in the Majalengka District Office are demonstrated through idea proposals, monthly coordination meetings, and proactive communication between the Head of District and staff. Such initiatives function as a forum for evaluation, planning, and problem-solving to improve governance and public service delivery. Employees also show initiative by supporting colleagues' tasks, ensuring that organizational performance is maximized even beyond regular working hours.

Personal Qualities

The Head of District models discipline by arriving and leaving on time, setting an example for staff and cultivating a positive work culture. Communication within the office emphasizes mutual assistance, collaboration, and the provision of constructive suggestions. Furthermore, personal consistency and professionalism are maintained by applying corrective measures when employees violate organizational rules, thereby fostering discipline and motivating staff to improve performance.

Effectiveness

Effectiveness is reflected in employees' ability to work professionally and proactively at all stages, from planning to evaluation. Harmonious cooperation and external stakeholder relations contribute to smooth implementation of tasks, while education and skills strengthen work quality. Staff are placed according to their expertise, which enhances service delivery and organizational efficiency. Effectiveness is thus supported by professionalism, timeliness, knowledge, creativity, cooperation, perseverance, initiative, and personal qualities that collectively enable the achievement of organizational goals and public service outcomes.

Flexibility

Flexibility in performance refers to the ability of individuals and organizations to adapt to changes in work conditions, including time, methods, and tasks, without being constrained by rigid routines. At the District Office, flexibility is demonstrated through proactive attitudes, innovative creativity, willingness to take initiative, and adaptability to dynamic conditions. This flexibility is further supported by harmonious teamwork and a conducive work environment, enabling the delivery of responsive and adaptive public services.

Independence

Independence is demonstrated through the ability to perform tasks and responsibilities without relying heavily on external supervision. Employees at the District Office of Majalengka perform duties professionally and proactively, while showing initiative in problem-solving and accountability in completing assignments. This independence is further strengthened by leadership motivation and openness to coaching, thereby building a productive and self-reliant work culture in public service.

Leadership

The leadership dimension underscores the pivotal role of the Head of District in guiding, directing, motivating, and supervising employees to achieve organizational effectiveness. Effective leadership is not limited to task delegation, but also encompasses the ability to articulate a clear vision, inspire commitment, and align individual performance with broader

institutional goals. By cultivating a conducive work environment, the Head of District ensures that employees feel valued, engaged, and empowered to contribute to public service excellence. Furthermore, leadership effectiveness is demonstrated through the strategic optimization of human resources, enabling the right placement of staff according to expertise and enhancing overall productivity.

In the context of Majalengka, leadership is reflected in transparent communication, consistent encouragement, and the promotion of creativity and innovation among subordinates. The Head of District also emphasizes the importance of collaboration, building cohesive teamwork while maintaining accountability through supervision and evaluation mechanisms. This human-centered leadership style fosters adaptability and resilience, which are crucial in addressing complex governance challenges. Ultimately, such leadership practices not only improve organizational performance but also strengthen public trust in local governance institutions.

E. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the performance of the Head of District in Majalengka, as a local government apparatus, has generally been carried out effectively and efficiently, particularly in the realm of general governance, although several aspects remain suboptimal. The findings indicate that while the Head of District demonstrates leadership, service delivery, and performance that align with decentralization objectives, challenges persist in ensuring consistent efficiency and effectiveness in handling delegated autonomy functions. These results confirm that the research objective—to assess the performance of the Head of District in local governance—has been achieved, while also contributing to the literature by integrating performance, public service, and leadership theories in the context of district-level governance in Indonesia. To strengthen future practices, local government stakeholders are advised to improve supervision, enhance staff capacity, and develop innovative service models that address community needs more responsively. For researchers, further studies may employ mixed-methods or comparative approaches across different districts to deepen the understanding of leadership and governance performance. The limitations of this study lie in its qualitative scope and reliance on a single case, which future research should expand for broader generalizability. At the policy level, the findings imply the necessity for district governments to adopt more transparent, accountable, and community-oriented governance frameworks that can sustain public trust and enhance service effectiveness.

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