



## **The Role of Leaders in Improving Employee Performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate**

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### **Abstract**

Leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance, particularly in government environments such as the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate. This study aims to analyze the role of leaders in enhancing employee performance, describe the level of employee performance, and identify factors that act as obstacles to this process. This study employs a descriptive qualitative approach, utilizing data collection techniques that include observation, interviews, and documentation. The informants in this study include the Regional Inspector, the Assistant Inspector, the Head of the General and Personnel Subdivision, and several employees of the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate. The results of the study show that leaders have three leading roles in improving employee performance, namely personal roles, decision-maker roles, and roles as sources of information. Inspectors play an active role in motivating, making strategic and participatory decisions, and filtering and conveying relevant information to employees. In addition, employee performance has generally improved, but there are still obstacles, including low work discipline, a lack of firmness in enforcing rules, and limited human resources and employee training.

**Keywords:** Leadership; Performance; Inspectorate.

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## PENDAHULUAN

Human resources are a crucial factor in the success of an organization, both on a small and large scale (Handoko, 2019; Hasibuan, 2016; Mathis & Jackson, 2001). In the context of government organizations, the quality of human resources has a significant influence on the effectiveness of public services and the achievement of strategic goals (Santoso & Harefa, 2015; Utama, 2020; E. S. Wahyuni et al., 2016). Local governments, as the spearhead of services to the community, are highly dependent on the performance of competent and professional state civil servants (Muin, 2014; Shujahri Am, 2010). One of the essential elements in supporting the effectiveness of government work is leadership. Effective leaders can provide direction, motivation, and create a conducive work environment to increase employee productivity (Khan et al., 2020; Manuain, 2022; Siregar et al., 2018). Therefore, the role of leaders in improving employee performance is a vital aspect that warrants research, especially at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate.

Limited human resources are also a significant obstacle to the operations of the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate. The accumulation of workload on several employees causes supervision tasks to be less than optimal. Weak supervision performance can open up opportunities for irregularities in the use of the regional budget and reduce efficiency in public services (Aulianto et al., 2019; Sitohang, 2024; T. Wahyuni, 2021). As a result, the accountability and transparency of local governments can be called into question, which has the potential to erode public trust in government institutions. Therefore, it is essential to analyze the role of leadership in improving employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate.

The Inspectorate has the primary function of supervising the running of local government, ensuring compliance with

regulations, and preventing irregularities in the use of budgets and resources. However, the challenges faced in improving employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate are still quite significant. Initial observations indicate that the level of employee discipline is suboptimal, characterized by low participation in the morning apple and a tendency to leave the workplace after breaks. Additionally, there are still employees occupying positions that do not align with their competencies and educational backgrounds, thereby reducing their effectiveness in performing their duties.

In the context of public services, public demands for transparency and accountability are increasing, especially in the era of information disclosure (Baiti et al., 2020; Hardiyansyah, 2018; Suryani & Suharyanto, 2016). The Inspectorate, as a supervisory institution, has a significant responsibility in ensuring that every policy and use of the regional budget is conducted by applicable regulations. Frequent phenomena, such as development projects that are not running effectively or inconsistencies in budget use, are becoming increasingly critical public issues. Therefore, improving the performance of Inspectorate employees is an urgent need to ensure that supervision of local government operations can run optimally.

In addition to leadership and motivation factors, aspects of facilities and infrastructure also play a role in supporting employee performance. A conducive work environment, adequate facilities, and an efficient work system can increase the work effectiveness of employees (Arifa & Muhsin, 2018; Aspiyah & Martono, 2016; Hermawan, 2022). Therefore, in addition to examining the role of leadership in enhancing employee performance, this study will also identify the obstacles encountered during this process.

Employee performance is influenced not only by financial factors such as salary

and benefits, but also by various other factors that impact work motivation. Effective leaders must understand these factors to create a work environment that supports increased productivity. Employee work motivation can be enhanced by fulfilling basic needs, including job security, social recognition, rewards, and opportunities for personal growth and self-actualisation. By meeting these aspects, employees will be more motivated to work optimally and contribute to achieving organizational goals.

This study aims to analyze the role of leaders in improving employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate. In addition, this study aims to describe employee performance and identify factors that hinder the enhancement of employee performance. This research aims to provide recommendations that the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate can implement to enhance the effectiveness of supervision and public services in the area.

## RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a descriptive qualitative approach to understand the role of leaders in improving employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate. This method aims to describe phenomena holistically through observation, interviews, and documentation. The study subjects include employees of the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate, with a focus on the Regional Inspector, the Assistant Inspector for Apparatus and Government Supervision, and the Head of the General and Personnel Subdivision. The tools used in this study include interview guidelines, questionnaires, and documentation tools such as recordings and observation notes.

This study employs a qualitative descriptive design, utilizing a purposive sampling technique, where informants are selected based on their position and involvement in the leadership structure

within the Inspectorate. The main variables analyzed in this study include the role of the leader, which provides for interpersonal relationships, the role of information, and the role of decision-making; employee performance, reviewed from the aspects of discipline, task effectiveness, and compliance with organizational procedures; as well as obstacles in leadership, such as limited human resources, low discipline, and lack of a transparent evaluation system.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### The Role of Leaders in Improving Employee Performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate

Leadership is a crucial factor in enhancing employee performance, particularly in government organizations such as the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate. A leader is not only responsible for providing direction and supervising employee performance but also plays a role in creating a conducive work environment and motivating employees to achieve optimal performance. Employee motivation does not depend only on salary. Still, it is also influenced by other factors such as a sense of security at work, social needs, appreciation for achievements, and opportunities for self-development. Therefore, effective leaders must be able to understand the needs of their employees and provide support that enhances their productivity.

In the context of the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate, the role of leaders in improving employee performance can be analyzed using Henry Mintzberg's theory, which includes three leading roles: personal roles, decision-maker roles, and roles as sources of information. Each of these roles has a significant impact on employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

### 1. The Personal Role of Leaders in Improving Employee Performance



As a leader, the Regional Inspector of Mandailing Natal Regency is responsible for conducting various ceremonial activities and fostering interpersonal relationships with employees and external parties. This role not only includes attending official events but also ensuring good interaction between leaders and employees. Based on interviews with several employees of the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate, it is evident that the Inspector actively motivates employees to perform their duties properly by existing rules.

Additionally, the Inspector maintains communication with various parties outside the organisation to gather helpful information for the institution's development. One of the employees mentioned that the Inspector not only gave directions but also built a good relationship with the employees and provided direct motivation. However, even though the Inspector treats employees well, there are still shortcomings in terms of firmness in taking action against employees who make mistakes.

## **2. The Role of Leaders in Decision Making**

As a leader, the Regional Inspector of Mandailing Natal Regency has a vital role in decision-making, both strategic and operational. This decision-making process has a significant impact on the organisation's effectiveness, particularly in addressing problems that arise in the work environment.

Based on interviews with several employees, it is known that the Inspector is responsible for making decisions related to the problems faced by the organization. In urgent situations, the Inspector remains capable of making appropriate decisions and is responsible for the corrective actions taken. Additionally, the Inspector provides space for employees to offer input and suggestions before decisions are made.

Good interaction between leaders and employees in the decision-making process shows that Inspectors apply participatory

leadership. This is evident in the Inspector's practice of holding regular meetings with employees to address various existing issues. With this approach, employees feel valued and more motivated to contribute to the organization.

## **3. The Role of Leaders as a Source of Information**

In addition to providing motivation and guidance for decision-making, leaders also serve as a central source of information within the organization. Information obtained from various sources, both internal and external, must be analyzed and communicated to employees in a clear and easy-to-understand manner.

During the interview, the employee stated that the Inspector constantly monitors incoming information, both from within and outside the organization. Inspectors are also open to input from employees and ensure that the information received is analyzed adequately before being used in policy-making.

## **The Impact of Leadership on Employee Performance**

Employee performance in an organization is influenced by various factors, including the leadership style employed by the leader. Employees who feel valued and given opportunities to develop will be more motivated to work well. On the other hand, if leadership is ineffective, employee performance tends to decline, which in turn affects the organisation's overall productivity.

Based on the interviews conducted, the performance of employees at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate has shown significant improvement. The Inspector expressed appreciation to employees who completed their duties well, as well as provided wise solutions to problems that arose in the work environment.

## **Obstacle Factors for the Role of Leaders in Improving Employee Performance at**

## the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate

One of the primary obstacles to improving employee performance is the low level of employee discipline. Discipline is a crucial factor in creating an effective and productive work environment; therefore, if employee discipline is low, the overall performance of the organization will also be affected.

Based on an interview with the Regional Inspector of Mandailing Natal Regency, Mr. Rahmad Daulay, ST., the main obstacle faced in improving employee performance is the lack of discipline in carrying out duties and responsibilities. Some employees still frequently exhibit non-compliance with established rules, such as arriving late, failing to participate in organizational activities, and lacking initiative in completing work. This indiscipline hampers organizational tasks and reduces the effectiveness of public services provided by the Inspectorate.

In addition to the discipline factor, other obstacles to improving employee performance include the lack of firmness in enforcing rules and providing sanctions for employees who violate existing provisions. Based on the statement of Inspectorate officer Khairul Saleh, ST., the leaders have attempted to enforce the rules more strictly; however, in practice, there is still tolerance for disciplinary violations committed by certain officials. This leads to injustice in the work environment, where disciplined employees feel undervalued, while undisciplined employees do not get clear consequences. If this condition persists, the work motivation of disciplined employees can decrease, ultimately affecting the organisation's overall performance.

Additionally, the lack of training and skill development is also a significant obstacle to improving employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate. Employees who do not receive adequate training often struggle

to carry out their duties effectively. In the ever-evolving world of work, the need for upskilling and competencies is critical. However, if the organization does not provide sufficient training programs, employees will experience a competency gap that can impact their productivity.

In addition to discipline and firmness in imposing sanctions, limited human resources are also a significant obstacle to improving employee performance. The limited number of employees results in an uneven workload, where some employees are assigned more tasks than others. This can cause an imbalance in the distribution of work and increase the potential for burnout among employees with a heavier workload. A high workload without adequate support can lead to a decrease in work quality and increased stress levels among employees.

Another obstacle that contributes to low employee performance is the lack of effective communication between leaders and employees. Good communication is essential in creating harmonious work coordination. If communication within an organization is ineffective, misunderstandings will occur during the implementation of tasks, and problems will be slow to resolve. Leaders must be able to communicate clearly and transparently with their employees so that every task can be carried out correctly and does not cause confusion among employees.

## CONCLUSION

This study concludes that leadership plays a vital role in enhancing employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate through three main aspects: personal role, decision-making role, and role as a source of information. Inspectors have carried out their duties effectively, providing motivation, solving problems promptly and responsibly, and filtering and conveying clear information to employees. Overall, employee performance has improved, supported by appreciation

and solutions provided by leaders to various work obstacles. However, there are still challenges in the disciplinary aspect, which require more decisive action so that employee performance is optimised and organisational goals can be achieved effectively.

Obstacles to the role of leaders in improving employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate include the existence of several employees with low discipline levels. Meanwhile, the strategy carried out in overcoming obstacles in improving employee performance at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate is included in the field of discipline, where the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate emphasizes more on improving discipline for employees, then is stricter in sanctioning employees who violate discipline and rules that apply at the Mandailing Natal Regency Inspectorate.

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**Aprin Al Hamdi, Audia Junita & Nina Siti Salmaniah Siregar, Peran Pemimpin Dalam Meningkatkan Kinerja Pegawai Pada Inspektorat Kabupaten Mandailing Natal**

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