The Influence Of Soft Skills And Employee Empowerment Through Job Satisfaction On Civil Servant Performance In North Padang Lawas Regency

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Abstract

Employees help to improve and enhance the performance of the institution. Therefore, employee performance must be considered when they work. Therefore, this study will investigate the relationship between Job Satisfaction and Soft Skills with Civil Servant Empowerment in North Padang Lawas Regency. This study uses a quantitative method with 150 samples. The results of the study indicate that soft skills have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, and employee empowerment also has a significant effect on employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction can be mediated by soft skills and employee empowerment on employee performance.
Keywords: Soft Skill, Employee Empowerment, Job Satisfaction, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

The problem of ASN employee job satisfaction throughout the region, especially in North Padang Lawas Regency. Leadership does not affect how effective the operations of the service or work unit are in achieving individual and service or work unit performance targets. In the process of developing a service or work unit, effective leadership ensures that organizational goals can be achieved optimally (Broekema et al., 2019). Leaders can have a direct impact on performance, employee satisfaction, and organizational commitment (Afsar et al., 2016; Kara et al., 2013; Ozturk et al., 2021). Based on the idea that no one leadership style is truly suitable for every situation and condition, a transformational approach to choosing effective leadership is the best alternative choice (Rafferty & Griffin, 2004; Ridwan et al., 2021).

The mismatch between employee skills or expertise and the tasks or responsibilities given by company management is the cause of low employee performance in several studies (Evianisa et al., 2021; Paillé & Meija-Morelos, 2019; Stirpe et al., 2021). So, based on this statement, we can see that the level of employee expertise affects their performance. In general, employee expertise is divided into two categories: hard skills and soft skills. Hard skills are technical skills embedded in a particular job, such as the ability to solve machining problems. Soft skills are abilities beyond technical and academic abilities, which focus on interpersonal and intrapersonal abilities.

If hard skills are improved without being followed by soft skills, it will affect the level of employee work performance. Employees with good soft skills will tend to be enthusiastic to continue to improve and achieve their best level of work performance. Soft skills are also an important component that must be improved in employees. Organizations not only need employees who have academic and technical abilities, but also need employees who communicate well, are able to adapt to changes in the environment, are enthusiastic about work, and work well together (Gunarathne et al., 2021).

Research that focuses on assessing and testing the influence of soft skills on employee performance found that the main task of ASN employees is to provide services to the community, so they must have good soft skills to support their performance. In addition, research

that focuses on assessing and testing the influence of soft skills on employee performance found that because the main task of ASN employees is to provide services to the community, ASN employees must have good soft skills. These soft skills can encourage employees to be friendly and polite, find the best solutions to community problems, provide excellent service even in stressful situations, and construct others well (Botke et al., 2018; Gunarathne et al., 2021; Lyu & Liu, 2021).

In addition, it was found that employees felt they did not have good leadership; 18 of them stated that they disagreed, and only 12 stated that they agreed. In addition, the results of interviews with ASN employees supported this finding: most employees did not have the courage when asked to lead a work group because they believed that their abilities were lacking. Agencies or services in North Padang Lawas Regency must not only consider the condition or level of soft skills of their employees, but must also actively empower employees to improve their abilities to help achieve company goals.

Based on the term "employee empowerment", employee empowerment can be defined as an effort by organizational management to encourage and improve the abilities of its employees in an effort to achieve organizational goals (Motamarri et al., 2020). In addition, the problems related to employee empowerment in the Work Unit and Office of North Padang Lawas Regency are as follows: employees are not given the freedom to choose methods to complete tasks independently; employees do not have control over their own work (Karatepe, 2013). In the Work Unit and Office of North Padang Lawas Regency, employees are not allowed to choose the best way to complete their work. This is one of the problems with employee empowerment, which is considered an important element of management practices that focus on improving individual or organizational performance (Karatepe, 2013; Saleem et al., 2019; Yin et al., 2019).

Furthermore, studies investigating the effect of employee empowerment on their performance found differences. For example, research by Tuffaha (2020) and Iqbal et al. (2020) found that employee empowerment had a significant effect on employee performance, while research by Saleem et al. (2019) and Özarallı (2015) found that employee empowerment did not have a significant effect on employee performance. Based on the phenomena, problems and research gaps above, the researcher determined that a study would be conducted on the Effect of Soft Skills and Employee Empowerment Through Job Satisfaction on Civil Servant Performance in North Padang Lawas Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Employee Performance

To determine the level of success of an employee, it is essential that they do the work they are given. The employee performance appraisal system is the result of the employee's work within the scope of his/her responsibilities. It is a formal and structured system used to measure, assess, and influence job-related traits. This system monitors employee behavior, such as absenteeism, work output, and makes decisions about salary increases, bonuses, promotions, and employee placement according to their abilities (Robert & Jhon, 2010).

Bernardin and Russel (2013) emphasized that considering employees as assets is very important. By treating employees as assets, employee performance and engagement increase automatically. Employee performance is very important to increase employee productivity. Employees who work to improve organizational performance must have knowledge of the elements that can affect performance. Performance is the result of employee work both in terms of quality and quantity that they do when doing their jobs according to their duties. Employee

willingness and skills are not enough to complete tasks without a clear understanding of what to do and how to do it.

Employee performance can be defined as the quality and quantity of work results achieved by employees in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to them, according to Luthans (2011). Performance, according to Özduran & Tanova (2017), is defined as the level of achievement of results after completing a particular task. Performance includes individual performance, group performance, and performance influenced by internal and external factors. Performance is defined by DeCenzo et al. (2016) as the willingness of employees to carry out an activity and perfect it according to their responsibilities with the expected results. When associated with performance as a noun, one of the entries of which is the result of a job, performance is the work result that can be achieved by employees of an organization in accordance with their authority and responsibility to achieve organizational goals legally, without violating the law and not contrary to morals or ethics.

Employee Job Satisfaction

The positive emotional state or feeling of satisfaction experienced by an individual as a result of their assessment of their job and work experiences is called employee job satisfaction. It is a measure of the extent to which employees' expectations, needs, and desires are met in their work environment. Some aspects of job satisfaction include the fit between employees and their supervisors, relationships with coworkers and supervisors, and working conditions and environment (Ridlwan et al., 2021; Stirpe et al., 2021; Suhartanto et al., 2018).

Satisfied employees tend to be highly motivated, have a strong commitment to the organization, and higher levels of productivity. Conversely, being unhappy with your job can lead to stress, decreased performance, and even high turnover. Management policies and practices, career development opportunities, compensation and incentive structures, leadership, work-life balance, and company culture and environment are some of the factors that influence job satisfaction. An individual's perception of fairness in the workplace, which includes treatment, task distribution, and compensation, also influences their job satisfaction (Goetz & Wald, 2022; Ozturk et al., 2021; Tkalac Verčič, 2021; X. Wang et al., 2021). Therefore, companies must pay attention to and manage the various factors that influence job satisfaction so that they can create a work environment that supports employee well-being.

Soft Skills

The term "soft skills" is used in sociology and society to indicate a person's level of emotional awareness (EQ), which consists of a group of socially accepted personality traits, communication, language, habits, friendliness, and optimism that characterize relationships with others. Soft skills are an addition to hard skills (a person's IQ), which are job requirements (Botke et al., 2018). Soft skills are life skills and abilities, either with the Creator, a group, or society. The concept of soft skills actually comes from the term emotional intelligence that we have known so far. Soft skills are broadly a combination of intrapersonal and interpersonal abilities (Botke et al., 2018). A person's level of intellectual intelligence (IQ) usually does not change, but emotional intelligence (EQ) can develop. Soft skills are life skills and abilities that a person has, in a group, or with other people. In addition, soft skills make a person more felt in society (Čuić Tanković et al., 2021).

Communication skills, emotional skills, language skills, teamwork skills, ethics and morals, manners, and spiritual skills are all necessary skills. Soft skills can make your life better, give you more friends, more success, and more happiness. They have no value unless they are applied in a valuable daily life (Wings et al., 2021).

Soft skills are possessed by each person, at different levels and degrees, which are influenced by the way we think, speak, act, and behave. Broadly speaking, soft skills are divided into two categories: a person's ability to manage themselves (intrapersonal skills) and a person's ability to interact with others (interpersonal skills). Interpersonal skills include communication skills, motivation, leadership, self-marketing skills, presentation skills, political awareness, leveraging diversity, service orientation, empathy, management, and efforts to change the world (Aryani et al., 2021; Oladokun & Gbadegesin, 2017).

Performance can demonstrate soft skills, such as the ability to speak that reflects ideas and information, the ability to explain a topic clearly, the ability to easily understand new topics, and the ability to interact and work together in groups. A person who has strong soft skills will demonstrate abilities that exceed their abilities as an employee (Caputo et al., 2019; Gunarathne et al., 2021). This ability arises because people who are independently involved are able to drive internal processes to continue learning, trying, and finding ways to improve themselves and their work. Therefore, mastery of soft skills is very important because it is needed for professional growth (Lyu & Liu, 2021).

Based on the explanation of the definition of soft skills above, it can be concluded that soft skills are non-technical skills that show personality traits. This can be seen in a person's behavior when interacting with others, language skills, habits, and traits that support optimistic behavior. Soft skills are a person's ability to motivate themselves and use their initiative, have an understanding of what to do and can do it well, are useful for dealing with small problems that arise suddenly, and can persist until the problem is resolved. Thus, soft skills are the power of self to change or overcome work problems.

Employee Empowerment

According to Durai (2010) stated that empowerment is a modern practice that is very important for human resources and is widely recognized in today's competitive business context. DeCenzo et al. (2016) divides a person's orientation towards their work role into four dimensions: meaning, competence, self-determination, and influence. The purpose of employee empowerment is to improve individual performance and help them achieve their goals by giving them the authority to participate in the decision-making process. Employees think about their own work and find what they need (Jones & George, 2012).

Roller (1998) defines empowerment as the transfer of power to those who are considered to need it most to complete a task well, giving decision-making responsibility, and providing the right authority and resources for each task. After the empowerment process is complete, there is a task to monitor and evaluate its success. to ensure that the serious efforts have produced the appropriate results. iHuman resource notification is very dependent on the existence of goals. Managers fear that without goals there will be anarchy, and staff act according to their wishes in chaotic freedom. However, the reality will happen, not anarchy, but still static. No one knows what to do, and organizational power is a sure thing.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative data approach through a survey method. In addition, this study also uses an observation method as a way to find out whether the survey results are in accordance with the problems discussed. Descriptive statistics are used. In addition, this study tests each research hypothesis that has been made through the use of inferential statistical techniques that are useful for drawing conclusions from data collected from research respondents. All Offices and Work Units of North Padang Lawas Regency are committed to conducting this research. All ASN employees in North Padang Lawas Regency are the subjects

of this study. This study uses the SEM sample collection technique, which requires at least 150 people to answer.

Data Collection Techniques

There are two types of data collected in this study: primary and secondary. Primary data is data that comes directly from the research subjects and can be used as an important source of analysis in research (Sugiyono, 2009). The primary data source of this study comes from the results of a questionnaire distributed to ASN employees in North Padang Lawas Regency. This study uses a Likert scale with five answer choices. In this study, the researcher used his own system and arranged a survey for all respondents. This is a system where the study only provides initial information about the purpose of the study and information to help respondents answer questions. On the other hand, each respondent fills in, answers, and provides all the data and statements given (Burns & Bush, 2010).

Validity and Reliability Test

Validity testing is used to evaluate the level of conformity of statements with the standards set for research (Hair et al., 2010). Irreliability testing is used to evaluate the stability of all statements with the phenomena and theories that have been proposed in the study. Good credibility test results will reflect the level of credibility of the statements made to answer the problems that arise at the research location. To evaluate the validity of a variable statement, the method is to compare the icronbach ialpha value with i0.6; the best level of validity is if the icronbach ialpha value is greater than i0.6 (Malhotra, 2010). reliability examination of ASN employees in North Padang Lawas Regency who were not included in the sample or research respondents The Smart-PLS application program was used to conduct SEM analysis for research version 3.0 to process data.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The Influence of Soft Skills on Employee Performance

For success in the workplace, soft and hard skills are needed together. Today's work world requires skilled resources. Employees must have high hard skills to meet office needs. In addition to having hard skills, in this era of tight competition, soft skills are also needed, namely skills in interacting with others (interpersonal skills) and skills in analyzing Soft skills are behavioral skills needed to develop and optimize a person's performance. Research by Ibrahim et al. (2017) found that soft skills are a determining factor in employee performance levels and can help employees become more productive in any situation. Research by Oladokun & Gbadegesin (2017) also found that soft skills can positively and significantly affect employee performance.

H1: Soft Skills have a significant influence on Employee Performance

The Influence of Employee Empowerment on Employee Performance

The management process of empowering all human resources of an organization to improve their abilities, increase their sense of responsibility, become reliable workers, and fulfill their assigned tasks is known as employee empowerment (Bloom, 2021). The process of implementing employee empowerment is also often referred to as training employees to think, act, behave, react, and carry out their duties (Roller, 1998). In essence, empowerment is intended to give all employees the responsibility and authority to make decisions that impact the quality and quantity of their work results (Iqbal et al., 2020; Tuffaha, 2020).

Employee empowerment is a very important process to improve employee performance and can only be done by experienced HR management practitioners. It should not be considered as a simple or routine thing that is done as part of formal HR management tasks. In addition, employee empowerment must produce significant results (Soliman et al., 2021). Research has

found that employee empowerment is used to encourage workers to work well, build independent workers, and control worker performance according to standards (Bloom, 2021). The results of several studies found that employee empowerment has a significant influence on employee performance individually or collectively (Iqbal et al., 2020; Tuffaha, 2020).

H2: Employee Empowerment has a significant influence on Employee Performance

The Role of Satisfaction Mediates the Influence of Soft Skills and Employee Empowerment on Employee Performance

In several studies, it was found that the more appropriate all aspects felt by an employee, the higher their job satisfaction (Chang & Lee, 2007; Suhartanto et al., 2018; Williams & Anderson, 1991). Other studies found that job satisfaction felt by an employee can improve their performance and may even encourage them to be more loyal to their company (Suhartanto et al., 2018; Yoopetch et al., 2021). In addition to having an impact on employee performance, job satisfaction variables can also be formed and influenced by soft skills, employee empowerment, and transformational leadership, each of which can have an impact on improving overall and individual employee performance (Akdol & Arikboga, 2015; Doleman et al., 2021; González-González & García-Almeida, 2021; Kara et al., 2013; Meng & Berger, 2019; Mickson & Anlesinya, 2019; Tsai, 2014).

H4: Job Satisfaction is able to mediate the influence of Soft Skills on Employee Performance

H5: Job Satisfaction is able to mediate the influence of Employee Empowerment on Employee Performance

CONCLUSION

One of the results of the study is that soft skills have a positive and significant influence on employee performance. In addition, the study also found that employee empowerment also has a significant influence on employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction can be influenced by the ability to mediate soft skills and employee empowerment. So, all of the variables mentioned above have a significant impact on employee performance in North Padang Lawas Regency.

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