

Assessing the work ethic among employees of the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat

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ABSTRACT

The investigation into the operational dynamics within the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City has highlighted several pertinent issues regarding the conduct and performance of its employees. Notably, instances of chronic tardiness, diminishing morale, and waning motivation among staff members have been identified as factors contributing to suboptimal task execution and operational efficiency. These phenomena manifest in passive engagement with duties, tardiness in task completion, and unauthorized absences during working hours, collectively undermining the organizational efficacy and productivity. Central to addressing these challenges is the concept of work ethic, which encompasses the holistic demeanor and approach of individuals within the State Civil Service towards their professional responsibilities. This research aims to elucidate how these principles of work ethic manifest among the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat, focusing on diligence, commitment, creativity, collaboration, punctuality, and fairness. Analysis reveals a commendable adherence to these fundamental aspects of work ethic among personnel, indicating a robust commitment to professional standards and performance excellence. Diligence is evident in the conscientious execution of tasks, while commitment and dedication underscore a steadfast allegiance to organizational objectives. Creativity fosters innovative problem-solving, while collaborative dynamics promote a culture of cooperation and healthy competition. Punctuality ensures timely task completion, and fairness permeates interpersonal interactions. Overall, the findings reflect a positive implementation of work ethic principles among the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat, indicating a promising trajectory towards enhanced organizational effectiveness and performance optimization.

KEYWORDS

Work Ethic; State Civil Apparatus; Performance; Bureaucracy

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Introduction

Implementing various authorities in the era of regional autonomy in cities and districts demands employees with high ability and integrity, particularly in fostering creativity to fulfill their responsibilities effectively. Education, training, and targeted recruitment are primary avenues for securing personnel aligned with organizational needs. However, beyond skill acquisition, enhancing work ethic through career development within local government organizations is vital. Good regional governance principles serve as a cornerstone for realizing autonomy's objectives, emphasizing improved government services, community welfare, democratic participation, national identity, justice, equality, regional autonomy, and harmonious center-region relations (Dwiyanto, 2008). Human resources, particularly regional officials, play a pivotal role as agents of reform, service providers, and community enablers, with their regulatory and control functions crucial for optimizing civil service performance (Mahanggoro, 2018). Work ethic, a key capacity instrument, influences employee morale, stability, and performance, encompassing commitment, work structure, motivation, discipline, and organizational support. Internal factors, including commitment to organizational goals, motivational policies, and conducive work environments, significantly impact productivity.

Despite these principles, challenges persist in state civil apparatus (ASN) performance at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat, characterized by tardiness, low morale, passive behavior, and incomplete tasks. The discrepancy between official working hours and actual productivity reflects a lack of work ethic, with some employees prioritizing personal interests over professional duties. Additionally, the absence of seriousness in task completion undermines organizational progress, revealing a prevailing mindset focused solely on financial gain. While regulatory frameworks like the Bengkulu Mayor Regulation No. 44 of 2018 emphasize ethical conduct and competency, actual practice deviates, indicating a gap between policy intent and implementation realities. This disparity underscores the need for targeted interventions to cultivate a robust work ethic among ASN.

In the contemporary landscape, ASN must demonstrate competence, discipline, and creativity within the framework of legal statutes governing civil service. However, the multifaceted nature of the problem necessitates a focused research inquiry, prompting a comprehensive examination of work ethic implementation at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat. As a government bureaucracy responsible for citizen services, the Regional Secretariat holds a

pivotal role in delivering efficient and responsive governance to Bengkulu City residents. However, the observed discrepancies in employee behavior underscore systemic deficiencies that hinder effective service delivery.

To address these challenges, interventions must encompass comprehensive strategies targeting both individual behavior and organizational culture. Strengthening recruitment processes to align with organizational needs, coupled with ongoing education and training initiatives, can ensure a pipeline of qualified and committed personnel. Moreover, fostering a culture of accountability and professionalism through performance appraisal systems and adherence to ethical codes is imperative. This includes enforcing operational standards, promoting creative thinking, and instilling a commitment to quality and timeliness in task execution. Additionally, aligning organizational policies with employee incentives can incentivize proactive engagement and performance excellence.

Ultimately, the transformation of work ethic within the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat requires a concerted effort at both individual and institutional levels. Leadership must play a pivotal role in setting clear expectations, fostering a supportive work environment, and modeling ethical behavior. Furthermore, collaborative efforts between management and employees are essential to co-create a culture of excellence and accountability. By prioritizing these initiatives, the Regional Secretariat can overcome systemic challenges and fulfill its mandate as a service-oriented public organization committed to community welfare and progress.

Literature review

Work ethic

In essence, a work ethic is a set of positive work behaviours rooted in strong cooperation, fundamental beliefs, and total commitment to an integral work paradigm. The term paradigm here means the main concept of work itself, which includes the underlying idealism, governing principles, driving values, born attitudes, and standards to be achieved, including the main character, basic thoughts, and code of ethics, moral code, and code of behaviour for its adherents (Sinamo, 2016). The work ethic in question is the implementation and completion of the tasks of an individual State Civil Apparatus regarding the totality of the individual's personality and how the individual himself expresses, views, and believes in a job so that it becomes a characteristic habit for acting and achieving optimal work results. In general, work ethic is all good habits (discipline, honesty, responsibility, perseverance and patience) based on ethics that must be carried out in the workplace. Establishing a work ethic in the workplace also seeks to avoid accumulating wealth in an unethical manner (fraud). Work ethic prioritizes a person's intentions rather than the results of a person's work. According to Darwish A. Yuosef, as cited by Ratna Wijayanti (2017), work ethic is underscored by several pivotal factors shaping individuals' approach to work. These include a steadfast commitment to hard work, unwavering dedication and commitment to assigned tasks, a propensity for creativity in problem-solving and task execution, fostering a culture of cooperation and healthy competition within the workplace milieu, adherence to punctuality in meeting deadlines and completing tasks, and upholding principles of justice and generosity in interpersonal interactions within the professional sphere. These elements collectively contribute to the cultivation of a robust work ethic, serving as guiding principles for individuals in achieving optimal performance and contributing effectively to organizational objectives.

Efforts directed towards cultivating a productive work ethic yield not only individual but also societal productivity enhancements, a progression achievable through several strategic steps. Firstly, targeted education plays a pivotal role, fostering the development of a robust mental attitude and instilling positive character traits such as initiative, creativity, risk-taking propensity, systematicity, and skepticism. Secondly, the ongoing cultivation of national discipline is essential, serving to nurture a productive human mindset conducive to sustained productivity gains. Finally, the cultivation of work motivation is imperative, emphasizing the concept of work as sacrificial, wherein individuals willingly sacrifice leisure and personal gratification in exchange for wages, which serve as compensation for such sacrifices. Through these concerted efforts, a culture of productivity can be fostered, driving both individual and societal prosperity.

In general, the factors that influence work ethic are grouped into two things (Djanjendra in Widyanata, 2022), namely:

1. Internal Factors

Someone with a work ethic can be influenced by motivation that comes from within themselves or internal factors. Work ethic is a view and attitude that is based on the values that a person believes in. Work ethic is determined by the quality of education, expertise and skills each possesses to improve human resources. Employee negative emotions that are not managed well will become a source of problems that can reduce effort and hard work, affecting productivity, profitability, job satisfaction, and work morale and ultimately reducing the company's success in achieving its targets. Negative emotions that cannot be managed well will affect work ethic.

2. External Factors

The culture embedded for a long time in society can influence the work ethic that individuals will display. This culture includes discipline and a mental attitude believed by the local community. A society with a forward orientation system will have a high work ethic. Meanwhile, people with a conservative social system will have a low work ethic.

Work ethic will be influenced by the work environment, which can improve individual performance. Work facilities, salary or benefits, and work relationships influence the work environment. Working relationships between

individuals and each other can increase work productivity when individuals can deal with their work and also the psychological calm that arises from these working relationships.

State Civil Apparatus

Definition of asn according to statutory regulations

In Law Number 5 of 2014, the State Civil Apparatus, abbreviated to ASN, is a profession for civil servants and government employees with employment agreements who work for government agencies. State Civil Service Employees (ASN Employees) are Civil Servants and Government Employees with a Work Agreement appointed by Government Officials or entrusted with other State duties and paid based on statutory regulations.

Definition of asn according to experts

According to experts such as A.W. Widjaja and Musanef, employees, commonly referred to as State Civil Apparatus (ASN), represent the human labor force indispensable for achieving organizational objectives. A.W. Widjaja emphasizes the holistic nature of employees, encompassing physical, mental, and spiritual aspects, underscoring their indispensable role as the primary capital in collaborative endeavors aimed at attaining specific goals within government institutions or private entities. Similarly, Musanef defines employees as individuals engaged in work activities and compensated through salaries and allowances, whether by government bodies or private organizations. Moreover, Musanef elucidates the role of employees as executors mobilized by managers to accomplish tasks aimed at realizing organizational objectives. In essence, both perspectives underscore the crucial role of employees in driving organizational performance and achieving desired outcomes, whether in the public or private sector.

Government organization (regional secretariat)

Based on their function, government organizations in a country can be grouped into four types of classification, namely: 1) central government organizations, 2) local government organizations, 3) organizational units that are not fully government (semi-government) and 4) autonomous organizations and bodies (Tjokroamidjojo in Sinaga, et al. 2022). By the scope of this writing, the government organizations referred to in the second group are regional government organizations whose duties are carried out based on autonomy. In Law Number 32 of 2004, it is referred to as city/district regional government. Article 18 of the 1945 Constitution and its explanation expressly oblige the government to implement decentralization and deconcentration politics in the constitutional sector by establishing autonomous regions and the existence of administrative regions. Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government states explicitly that regional, city or district governments are formed based on the principle of decentralization, while provincial and regional governments are formed based on the principles of decentralization and deconcentration.

About the function of the government, Ndraha stated in Rahayu (2022) that the government has two types of functions, namely primary and secondary: the government functions primarily as a provider of public services that are not privatized, including defence and security services, and civil services, including bureaucratic services. These two types of functions are abbreviated as service functions. The government functions secondarily as a provider of the needs and demands of the governed for goods and services that they cannot fulfil themselves because they are not, including the provision and development of facilities and infrastructure. This function is abbreviated as the empowerment function. Rasyid in Labolo (2008) stated that there are three essential functions of government: "service, empowerment and development." Another government function is empowerment. This function is becoming apparent with the increasing debate about Human Rights (Ndraha in Rahayu, 2022). This is also in line with the increasingly limited ability of the government to provide community facilities and infrastructure. So far, the role of the government has been very strong. We enthusiastically discuss what the government "should" do, and we seldom discuss what the government "can" do, and we rarely discuss what the government "can" do. Darmawan, D. (2020). The concept of empowerment is an effort to achieve a dynamic balance between the government and the governed.

Methods

This research adopts a descriptive analysis methodology underpinned by a qualitative approach. The primary objective is to delve into and uncover insights regarding the application of work ethic among the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in their roles at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat. The research specifically focuses on elucidating various dimensions of work ethic, including diligence, commitment, creativity, collaboration, punctuality, fairness, and generosity within the workplace context. To achieve this, the study utilizes both primary and secondary data sources. Primary data is collected through purposive sampling, employing methods such as interviews, observations, and documentation review to gather firsthand insights from relevant stakeholders. Additionally, secondary data sources, including regulatory documents and reports, are consulted to complement and enrich the primary data findings.

Subsequently, the collected data undergoes analysis following the approach outlined by Miles and Huberman, as described in Rijali (2019). This analysis comprises three key stages: data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing or verification. Data reduction involves the process of condensing and organizing the gathered information to distill the essential elements pertinent to the research objectives. Following this, data display techniques, such as tabulation, categorization, or visualization, are employed to present the condensed data in a structured and accessible format. This facilitates a comprehensive understanding of the research findings and enables meaningful insights to emerge.

Finally, the process culminates in conclusion drawing or verification, where the condensed and displayed data are analyzed to draw meaningful conclusions or verify existing hypotheses. This stage involves synthesizing the findings, identifying patterns or themes, and drawing inferences based on the analyzed data. Through this iterative process, the research aims to provide a nuanced understanding of the application of work ethic among ASN at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat, shedding light on their adherence to principles of diligence, commitment, creativity, collaboration, punctuality, fairness, and generosity in the workplace context.

Results and Discussion

Hard work

Working hard can be interpreted as working with enthusiasm or motivation. State Civil Servants at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat must work hard, which means working seriously, wholeheartedly and honestly. The way to start working hard is that first thing to do is to create hope, namely the desire that you want to achieve so that it encourages each employee to continue trying and never give up. The second is the totality of carrying out their duties and main functions because that will invite strong motivation, too. In the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat, it is included in the Excellence indicator, which means working hard, smartly, thoroughly and wholeheartedly to provide the best results. The leadership always provides direction and motivation during the morning roll call before starting work. It always directs each Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat employee, following their respective positions to achieve their goals. However, based on observations, there are still employees who, when carrying out their work duties, still show a resigned attitude and always ignore their duties and responsibilities.

Commitment and dedication to work

The steadfast commitment to fulfilling primary tasks and responsibilities epitomizes the dedication of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City, with an emphasis on the unwavering determination displayed in executing their duties. This commitment permeates the ethos of all ASN members within the Regional Secretariat, underscoring their collective resolve to discharge their obligations diligently. This dedication to duty is instilled through various avenues, including comprehensive education and training programs (Diklat), which emphasize the cultivation of determination, seriousness, and motivation in the performance of their roles. Throughout these educational initiatives, ASN members are imbued with the imperative of prioritizing their duties as civil servants, notwithstanding any concurrent engagements or extraneous endeavors pursued to augment their income, such as engaging in supplementary business ventures. This holistic approach underscores the paramount importance attributed to the fulfillment of their duties as ASN members, thereby fostering a culture of unwavering commitment and dedication within the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City.

Creativity during work

Creativity during work, meant here, is a breakthrough or solution to every problem in work, a breakthrough or solution carried out by the State Civil Apparatus at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City. What is most needed is a breakthrough or solution to every problem so that it can be addressed immediately and can be resolved immediately. According to what is expected. However, the problem is still relatively minor. In that case, the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat State Civil Apparatus can make breakthroughs or solutions. However, if faced with a problem that is classified as serious, the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) does experience difficulties. Thus, implementing breakthroughs or solutions for every task problem at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat has yet to be implemented optimally. Then, creativity in work, such as always thinking and acting strategically for the benefit of the future based on research results found that the State Civil Apparatus at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat, if viewed from the implementation of their duties, always thinks and acts strategically for the benefit of the future has been carried out well. The State Civil Apparatus (ASN) will act strategically, following procedures based on those set by the rules and the government. The State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is very reluctant or avoids acting in ways that do not follow procedures. Work ethic is measured by creativity in general; State Civil Servants (ASN) think creatively with evidence that there is a breakthrough or solution to every problem in carrying out their duties and always think and act strategically for the benefit of the future.

Cooperation and competition in the workplace

The State Civil Apparatus at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat is always cooperative in collaborating with other employees; for example, when there is a difficult job, they are accustomed to helping each other as long as it is within their respective abilities. Some are even willing to work overtime when helping fellow employees. Who still needs to finish their work? Then, in this principle of cooperation, each employee must be open in everything he does under his main duties and functions because one of the professional work ethics is the desire to learn and be open to constructive criticism regarding increasing the capacity of human resources, State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Regional Secretariat Bengkulu City, if viewed from the implementation of its duties, always collaborates in developing itself with other employees, this has been carried out well because based on the results of interviews and observations, the State Civil Apparatus at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City is always open in all matters regarding the implementation of its duties, employees do not hesitate to exchange opinions with each other. Moreover, information can help each other develop themselves, especially related to carrying out their duties. Then, based on the research

results, the State Civil Apparatus at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat does not have a feeling of competition or a sense of having a sense of togetherness. Hence, they can collaborate with the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), especially if they are open in everything they do under their main duties and functions and work together in developing themselves with other employees. The State Civil Apparatus at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City has a firm belief in the principles in carrying out their duties, and it is proven that each State Civil Apparatus (ASN) is not afraid of their work and always adheres to the principles in carrying out their duties so that the assigned tasks are completed as expected.

Punctuality in work

In evaluating the overall work ethic of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) concerning punctuality within the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat, it becomes apparent that there remains room for improvement. Through comprehensive observations and interviews, it is evident that punctuality issues persist, manifesting in various forms such as delays in commencing scheduled events, tardiness in reporting for duty, frequent requests for leave or work permits, and unexplained absences from work. These observations underscore a notable lack of discipline regarding time management among ASN members, indicating a gap between organizational expectations and actual behavioral norms. The prevalence of punctuality challenges within the Regional Secretariat highlights the need for targeted interventions aimed at fostering a culture of timeliness and accountability among ASN members. Strategies to address this issue may include the implementation of stricter attendance policies, enhanced monitoring mechanisms, and targeted training programs focused on time management and accountability. Additionally, fostering a supportive work environment that prioritizes punctuality and recognizes the importance of timely task completion can further reinforce desired behavioral norms among ASN members. Moreover, it is essential to acknowledge the broader implications of punctuality challenges within the Regional Secretariat, as it not only impacts individual performance but also organizational effectiveness and public service delivery. Delays in starting events or tardiness in reporting for duty can disrupt workflow and hinder the timely completion of tasks, ultimately affecting service quality and stakeholder satisfaction. Thus, addressing punctuality issues is imperative not only for improving internal efficiency but also for upholding the Regional Secretariat's reputation and credibility within the community.

This can be seen in the following recapitulation of employee absences at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat:

Table 1. Recapitulation of Employee Attendance at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat

Year	Percentage (%)			
	Arrive on time	5-30 minutes late	Permit/leave	Without notice
2022	94%	40%	10%	35%
2021	96%	30%	15%	45%
2020	97%	20%	15%	50%
2019	90%	25%	10%	30%
2018	98%	30%	5%	30%

Source: Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat Documentation, 2023.

Work discipline that is fading and not firm in this case is regarding punctuality in work, which is feared to also result in other things such as delays in completing the implementation of tasks or a decrease in the level of performance productivity in carrying out the duties of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City.

Justice and generosity in the workplace

The State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City exemplifies a commendable commitment to justice and generosity in the execution of their duties, underscoring their adherence to governmental regulations and ethical principles. Evidenced by their ideal demeanor towards established rules, ASN members demonstrate an unwavering dedication to fairness and impartiality in their interactions with others. They exhibit a steadfast adherence to procedural guidelines when addressing issues, ensuring transparency and equity in problem resolution. Moreover, their proactive engagement often yields innovative approaches to task execution, thereby facilitating the effective realization of overarching objectives outlined in these regulations. The implementation of justice and generosity principles in duty execution is executed with precision, as evidenced by their consistent application in various workplace scenarios.

The discussion segment serves to contextualize these findings within the broader framework of existing knowledge and societal implications. It elucidates how the observed behaviors of ASN members contribute to the body of knowledge regarding organizational ethics and public administration practices. By showcasing the alignment between their actions and the principles of justice and generosity, this research underscores the significance of ethical conduct in fostering a conducive work environment and upholding public trust. Furthermore, the integration of these findings with the Introduction section highlights the study's contribution to enhancing understanding of ethical behavior within bureaucratic structures and its broader implications for societal well-being. Through this comprehensive analysis, the research not only enriches academic discourse but also offers practical insights for promoting integrity and accountability in public service delivery.

Conclusion

Based on the analysis of the discussion, it can be concluded that the work ethic of the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in carrying out their duties at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat is directed at 6 (six) important aspects, namely (1) Hard Work; (2) Commitment and Dedication to Work; (3) Creativity During Work; (4) Cooperation and Competition in the Workplace; (5) Punctuality in Work; and (6) Justice and Generosity in the Workplace. Regarding hard work, the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat is included in the Excellence indicator, which means working smartly, thoroughly and wholeheartedly to provide the best results. However, based on observations, there are still employees who, when carrying out their work duties, still show a resigned attitude and always ignore their duties and responsibilities. In the aspect of commitment and dedication to work, all State Civil Apparatus at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City commit to carrying out these tasks because, from the start, they have been given directions in various Education and Training (Diklat) to have determination, seriousness and motivation in carrying out the implementation—his task.

In the aspect of creativity during work, work ethic is measured by being creative in general. State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City think creatively with evidence that there is a breakthrough or solution to every problem in carrying out their duties. They always think and act strategically for the benefit of the times. Front. In the aspect of cooperation and competition in the workplace, the State Civil Apparatus at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat is always open in all matters regarding the implementation of their duties; employees do not hesitate to exchange opinions and information and even help each other to develop themselves, especially regarding the implementation of their duties. Regarding punctuality in work, the State Civil Apparatus in the context of punctuality at the Bengkulu City Regional Secretariat still needs to be higher. This can be seen from the observations and interviews regarding punctuality; often, there is a delay in starting an event, late arrival time for work, frequent taking of leave/work permits, and absence from work without explanation due to lack of discipline regarding time. Regarding justice and generosity in the workplace, the State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Regional Secretariat of Bengkulu City already has justice and generosity towards carrying out their duties at work. This is proven by the ideal attitude of employees regarding the rules set by the government. They will never hesitate to show principles and a fair attitude towards others; they will adhere to these rules, including the procedures they will follow when resolving problems.

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