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FACTORS INFLUENCING INDIVIDUAL PERFORMANCE IN AN INDONESIAN GOVERNMENT OFFICE

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Abstract

Reformation in Indonesian government offices leads to many substantial changes, and demands improved job performances while arguably loading employees with more work. This research aims to understand factors that potentially influence job performance in Indonesian government offices that carries on such reformation. Using adapted scales from previous studies, this research investigates the role of workload, responsibility for others (level of responsibility to care for other people) and need for achievement on employee's performance. A survey to all full-time workers in an Indonesian government office is conducted. Contrary to expectation, workload does not influence employee's performance. Instead, regression analysis demonstrates that, employee's need for achievement and responsibility for others are significant factors affecting individual performance. These results are important because they highlight the significance of need for achievement for the success of reformation in this office, and by extension for reformation in Indonesia. The results are also interesting because this is the first study that points out to the role of responsibility for others in influencing individual performance in Indonesia which is characterized by collectivistic culture. This paper discusses the contributions of these results for theory and practice.

***Keywords**: Indonesian public, need for achievement, responsibility for others, workload.*

The rapid development of science, internet, and information technology, as well as the changing nature of strategic environment requires excellent service and support from governments. Unfortunately, there are many cases of improper governance systems in Indonesia which debilitate the government responses and give rise to the demand for bureaucratic reformation in Indonesia. Bureaucratic reformation is a strategic step to build excellent government institutions, to improve the role of civil servants, and to sustain national development. In other words, bureaucratic reformation is needed to fulfill dynamic changes in society. Formally, bureaucratic reformation is defined as a continuous and gradual

transformation process to achieve good governance in government institutions. This process consists of many steps in the implementation phase, and requires competent human resources.

Pilot Office A is one of part Vertical Office Unit in Directory of Treasury, Ministry of Finance that is chosen as one of the first Indonesian government institutions to implement bureaucratic reformation. As a public service provider, Pilot Office A has an important role in budget management such as budget control, and state fund efficiency. Its performance is measured by the amount of government revenue, proper budget management, efficiency in budget execution, and effectiveness in state asset management. Therefore, the performance of Pilot Office A will affect government performance such as delay in civil servant salary payment, delay in progress of government projects, delay in budget execution. Since it is chosen as a pilot project in bureaucratic reformation, Pilot Office A is expected to improve its performance significantly and to achieve vision and mission of this reformation. Poor performance of this office may be used as an indicator that bureaucratic reformation in Indonesia, especially in that office, does not work well.

There are some changes in work demand and time pressure in this office due to bureaucratic reformation. For example a task that is used to be completed in one working day, now needs to be accomplished in only one hour. This higher job turnaround requires employees to work faster. If employees cannot finish their work on time then they will have to work overtime. This new requirement also produces potential conflict between employees as each employee can only do their job well if their coworkers conduct satisfactory work performances.

In this paper, employee's performance is defined as actions and accomplishment that are expected to be supplied by individuals in the time set (Roa, 2004). Because employees should perform work in accordance with the tasks in the job description, their assessment is usually based on the job description prepared by the organization. In other words, employee's performance may be measured in terms of the in-role behavior, or the work they do in accordance with the tasks in the job description. The purpose of this research is to know factors that influence employee performance in the Pilot Office A. The aim is to understand these factors which can be used to improve organizational performance, as Daft (2002) argues that it is the role of the organization to improve the performance of its employees.

Preliminary interviews with six employees of Pilot Office A suggest that individual performance at Pilot Office A is potentially influenced by the amount of work that they do (quantitative workload), the quality of work that they are expected to do, the level of responsibility for people and the need for achievement. This research is conducted to confirm the interview results.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Workload is defined as the amount and the quality of work need to be done by a person in a certain time period (Jex, 2002). Workload (quantitative and qualitative) could be in optimal con-

dition, excessive, or lacking. Under conditions of excessive workload, the individual must meet more obligations than s/he is able to do in the time available. Conversely, in the lack of workload conditions, individual is working below his / her capacity (Watt, 2002). Both conditions, having to do too much or too little, may not be good for employee's performance, because both conditions may trigger stress.

Specifically, Ivancevich and Matteson (2005) argue that one key aspect of stress is workload. When employees are expected to do too many things within a limited time period, or to perform with a much higher quality that his capacity, employees may experience stress, and lower his/her performance (Schultz, 2006). Webster, Beehr and Love (2011) demonstrate how workload influences level of stress. Their respondents were 479 employees, majority were women with the average age was 45. They found that although workload could be appraised primarily as challenges or hindrances, they could also simultaneously be perceived as being both to varying degrees. In other words, workload potentially influences stress.

Webster, Beehr and Love (2011) explain that experiencing high job demands (e.g. workload and responsibility) requires effort that is unavoidably associated with strain (e.g. accelerated heart rate or acute fatigue). Even if people do not experience psychological strain, it is likely that stressors such as workload cause people to work harder and longer, which may impact their physical health. Through their research, Galy, Cariou and Melan (2011) demonstrate that task difficulty would directly influence mental workload causing participants of their study to engage in high cognitive effort that produces stress.

In addition to cognitive or mental work produces by workload, time pressure may also generate perception of workload. Binnewies, Sonnentag and Mojza (2009) conducted a research using daily survey that able to portray individual's perception of time pressure and their job performance. From their 99 participants they conclude that it is time pressure that reduces job performance. Galy, Carious and Melan (2011) explain that, although time pressure has no affect on workload, it activates emotional component that affect cognitive load. Thus, time pressure generates perception of workload, which then limits individual performance.

In brief, the relationship between workload and outcomes may depend upon the intensity of the stress created by workload, its duration, the number of operative stressors, and alternatives the individual sees as being available to him or her. Whereas workload and health complaints were related only indirectly through work-home interference, a direct relationship existed between workload and work-related negative affect (Geurts et al., 2003). Negative affect such as feeling angry, frustrated or irritated (either or not work-related) might be an acute and direct response to workload (or daily hassles in general) that appears and disappears more easily. Therefore, we hypothesize that:

H1: There is a significant negative relationship between the amount of

work (quantitative workload) and employee performance.

H2: There is a significant negative relationship between the quality of work (qualitative workload) and employee performance.

While workload refers to the amount of quality of work need to be done by the person him/herself, responsibility for people refers to the duty to take of other people's performance or well being. In many cases responsibility towards others is a potential source of stress, because it is related with factors outside the control of the employees. Ivancevich and Matteson (2005) specifically argue that having responsibility for other people's well being and careers may trigger high level of pressure and producing a lot of stress. Consequently, responsibility for others may lower employee's performance.

Contrary to Ivancevich and Matteson (2005), Li (2009) asserts that by making a worker directly responsible for another's person welfare, a strong incentive is potentially created. In a series of six experiments, Li (2009) explores six conditions under which social incentives may be more motivating than direct pay-for-performance incentives. Li (2009) finds that high performance standards motivate high performance under direct incentives but that social incentives generate a consistent level of motivation that does not vary by performance standard. Li also finds that social incentives, but not direct incentives, are more motivating under conditions designed to increase feelings of responsibility toward the other person or increase the cost of disappointing the other person. Thus, we hypothesize that:

H3: There is a significant negative relationship between responsibility for others and employee's performance

According to Robbins and Judge (2010), need for achievement is a necessity to achieve success. McClelland (1987) defines the need for achievement motivation as that drives one to achieve success in competing with a size advantage (standard of excellence). McClelland (1987) found that individuals with high achievement individuals distinguish themselves from others by their desire to do things better. They are looking for situations where they can get a personal responsibility to find solutions to problems, can receive immediate feedback on performance so it can easily determine whether they are growing, and where they can find a goal that is challenging enough for them (or the medium level of risk). When these characteristics are prevalent, high-achieving individuals will be very motivated.

Lee, Sheldon and Turban (2003) define achievement goal patterns or goal orientation as how individuals perceive and respond to achievement situation. They conducted a research that examines how 3 personality characteristics, derived from self-determination theory (autonomy, control, and motivated orientations), influence performance and enjoyment through achievement goal patterns, goal level, and mental focus. Data were collected from 284 students at five different points in time, from which they concluded that different personality types affect different mental focuses which then affect the effort allocated to achieve goal and to enjoy their performance.

Table 1. Reliability

Variables	Reliability Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
Individual Performance	0.804	6
Workload quantitative	0.403	5
Workload qualitative	0.510	5
Responsibility for people	0.742	5
Need for Achievement	0.464	4

Further, George and Jones (2002) argue that individuals with a high need of achievement have a special desire to perform challenging tasks well and to meet their own personal standards for excellence. They like to be in situations in which they are personally responsible for what happens, like to set clear goals for themselves, are willing to take personal responsibility for outcomes, and like to receive performance feedback. In brief, need for achievement have been linked to various outcomes such as performance, intrinsic motivation, response to feedback, and sales performance (Lee, Sheldon, and Turban, 2003). Thus, we hypothesize that:

H4: There is a significant positive relationship between need for achievement and employee's performance.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research is non-experimental research where variables are not manipulated and controlled by the researchers because the manifest is in progress and cannot be manipulated (Kerlinger and Lee, 2000). The respondents are all fulltime workers in the Pilot Office A (i.e., 56 employees). The questionnaire consists of three measurements, which are adapted and modified from performance scale. The scales are in Role Behavior (Van Dyne and Yee, 2005), Stress Diagnostic Survey (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1987) and need for achievement (McClelland, 1987). These scales are chosen because they are commonly used in organizational behavior research.

In role behavior (Van Dyne and Yee, 2005) is used to measure performance. It consists of two dimensions: (1) job knowledge and accuracy of work, and (2) productivity. This tool has 6 items with Likert scale from 1 to 6: 1 is for Never, 2 is for Rarely, 3 is for Sometimes, 4 is for Often, 5 is for More Often, 6 is for Always.

Stres Diagnostic Survey (Ivancevich and Matteson, 1987) is measuring instrument that is used to measure stress level at workplace. There are 15 statements to measure three work stress aspect: workload quantitative, workload qualitative, and responsibility for people. This tool uses Likert scale from 1 to 6. Need for achievement, McClelland (1987) consists of 4 items. Span of valuation is from -3 to +3. However, to simplify and to avoid negative response from respondents, the researchers change the valuation to Likert Scale from 1 (very inappropriate) to 6 (very appropriate).

Cronbach alpha (α) is used to test data reliability in this research. Kerlinger and Lee (2000) stated that measuring tools are reliable if its coefficient α is from 050 to 0.60. However, Kaplan and Saccuzzo (2005) convey that measuring instruments are reliable if

Table 2. Mean and Standart Deviation (SD)

Variables	Mean	SD
Indivual Performance	5.25	0.720
Workload quantitative	2.77	0.934
Workload qualitative	2.43	0.710
Responsibility for people	2.06	1.375
Need for Achievement	4.09	0.721

Table 3. Analysis Result Simple Regression (Coefficient β, F-value of R and value of ΔR^2) (n = 56)

	Individual Performance
Model	
Workload quantitative	-0.029
Workload qualitative	-0.277
Responsibility for people	0.310**
Need for Achievement	0.291*
Value of R	0.472a
Value of R^2	0.223
Value of F	3.662

*. P<.05, **. P<0.01 (2-tailed)

its coefficient α is from 0.70 to 0.80. Table 1 shows the reliability score of each scale. It shows that all scales but one (qualitative workload) have acceptable reliability score according to Kerlinger and Lee (2000).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Table 2 demonstrates that employee's in Pilot Office A perceived that they performed their job quite well (Means of 5.25 from a six point scale). They also perceive that their workloads (quantitative and qualitative workloads) are at a medium to low level (mean below 3 in a six point scale), and their need for achievement is at a moderate to high level (mean score 4 in a six point scale). Their level of responsibilities for people, however, is at a low level (mean score: 2.06 in a six point scale).

To test the hypothesized relationships and know which factors influence employee's performance in Pilot Office A, we conducted a simple regression (see Table 3). Results show that employee workload, in terms of the amount and quality of work, has no relationship with employee's performance. In other words, there is no support for H1 and H2, and can be concluded that in Pilot Office A, employee's performance is not influenced by the amount of work or the quality of work that is expected from them. Responsibility for people, however, has a positive and significant relationship (see Table 3). It suggests that, in Pilot Office A, employees tend to perform better when they perceive that they have higher responsibility for people. This result is not expected (H3 is not supported). Finally, table 3 shows that need for achievement has significant and positive relationship with employee's performance (H4 is accepted). It means that employee's tend to perform better when they have a high need for achievement.

CONCLUSION

The purpose of this research is to know several factors that influence

employee's performance in a government institution in Indonesia that carries on a reformation. Results suggest some interesting contributions. Before discussing the contributions, it should be noted that the questionnaires in this study have reliability scores from 0.5 to 0.8. The scales with reliability score 0.5 are workload and need for achievement, suggesting that the internal consistency of the scales are not high. Future research need to adapt and modify the scales to get measurements with better Cronbach Alpha scores. Further, the measurement in this study is a self-report measurement with a limitation that people tend to picture themselves in a more favorable way and do not portray the real situation (Bakker, et al, 2007).

Although the study has some limitations, it produces many significant contributions for theory and practice. It demonstrates that, firstly, quantitative and qualitative workload has no relationship with employee's performance. These results differ from previous studies that show negative relationship between workload and employee's performance (Ivancevich and Matteson, 2005; Schultz, 2006). This difference could occur because the level of workload in Office Pilot A is only at a moderate level. It indicates that a moderate level of workload may not cause stress that impairs individual performance. This result is especially relevant because it was conducted in May 2012 (second quarter) where the stakeholders had not request payment from government fund. However, the research may produce different finding if it was conducted during the months of October to December (fourth quarter), because the workload will be high in this quarter. Further research may want to investigate the relationship between employees' workload and their performances during the times of high pressure (October – December).

This finding is consistent with Galy, Cariou and Melan (2012) who argue that task difficulty affect only participants' perception of cognitive efforts needed to perform the task. When employees have to think harder or to put more effort to analyze and finish their tasks, cognitive load or qualitative load will be increased. In the second quarter (April – June), the difficulty of the job is not high, the cognitive effort is moderate, and therefore workload does not show significant relationship with employee's performance.

The current research also support Webster, Beehr and Love (2011) who argue that individual's appraisal is the key factor in explaining the relationship between workload and job performance. When individuals perceive workload as challenges they may not be debilitated by stress, and thus performance may not be impacted. Thus, the relationship between workload and job performance is influenced by individual tendency, including individual personality type.

Learning from Lee, Sheldon and Turban (2003) that show the importance of personality type on individual's tendency to perform better, future research may want know more about influence of personality in relationship between workload and performance. One such example is a research by Cox-Fuenzalida, Swickert and Hittner (2004) who argue that higher levels of neuroticism would be associated with

significant decrements in performance following changes in workload history. It appears that, at least in terms of reaction time, either a sudden increase or decrease in workload can produce a significant performance decrement for those scoring higher in neuroticism. In addition, the role of optimism and pessimism may also influence individual's appraisal of workload which then may impact performance. Future research may want to learn from, Szalma (2009) about how this type of personality influence coping responses and job performance.

Secondly, the current research contributes in demonstrating that employees' performance is positively influenced by their needs for achievement. This result is in line with the need for achievement research that was conducted by McClelland (1987). In achievement motivation, McClelland find out that to achieve better performance, people with high achievement motivation act differ from others. They tend to seek moderately challenging goals and objectives, to seek situations that allow them to solve problems and to receive positive feedback about their performance. Because the workload level of employees' in Pilot Office A is at a moderate level (mean score 2.77 for quantitative workload and 2.43 for qualitative workload), it allows people with need for achievement to do their job well.

The third contribution of this research is related to its finding that show positive relationship between employee's performance and responsibilities for others. This result is not consistent with previous studies which demonstrate that responsibility for others cause stress that harm employee's performance (Ivancevic and Matteson, 2005). The findings of the current study may occur because of two reasons. Firstly, the level of responsibility for people in Pilot Office A is at a low level (mean score 2.06 in a 1-6 scale) suggesting that this level of responsibility does not cause stress. That is why their relationship with employee's performance is positive. Secondly, as argued by Griffin, et.al (2007), individual task behavior may affect team outcomes. In other words, it can be assumed that responsibility toward others indirectly influence team performance. Applying that logic, it could be that, in Pilot Office A individual performance is triggered by other employee's performance to increase their team effectiveness, which in turn influence their performance. The relative importance of these behaviors may vary depending on several factors such as the level of task interdependence in a team, nature of jobs and type of organizations (public or private organizations).

Finally, the positive and significant relationship between responsibility for people and employee's performance in this data set suggests that for Indonesian people responsibility for people may trigger their tendency to perform better. One possible explanatory variable to explain this result is the collectivistic nature of Indonesian people. Collectivists define the self as interconnectedness and interdependence with significant others of various groups. Collective interests have primacy in collectivistic cultures (Triandis, 1995 in Chen, Peng and Saparito, 2002). Further, collectivism is associated with a sense of duty toward one's group, interdependence with others, a

desire for social harmony, and conformity with group norms. In this view, behavior and attitudes of collectivists are determined by norms and demands of the in-group such as extended family or close-knit community (Green, Deschamps and Paez, 2005). People in a collectivistic culture tend to construct their meanings of live in terms of their relationship with others, not in term of their individual jobs. Therefore, responsibilities for others in this kind of culture may produce positive drive for employees to perform better. We call for further research in this area to test the relationship in other venues and other collectivistic cultures. By so doing, there is a possibility to advance organizational behavior theory especially in understanding on individual and cultural factors affecting individual behavior.

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