

RESEARCH ARTICLE



Female Leadership Style At Lkp Mayang Sari In Bengkulu City In Improving Employee Performance

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Abstract

This study aims to describe the female leadership style in improving employee performance at LKP Mayang Sari, Bengkulu City. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, data were collected through in-depth interviews, observation, and documentation involving the institution's leader and employees. The results reveal that the female leader effectively carries out interpersonal, decision-making, and informational roles. Her leadership style emphasizes discipline, role modeling, empathy, and motivation, all of which positively affect employee performance. Despite occasional challenges in decision-making—often influenced by emotion—the female leader demonstrates professionalism in leading the institution. The study suggests that female leadership can significantly contribute to organizational growth when supported by strong interpersonal competencies. These findings are expected to contribute to the development of public administration science, particularly in gender-based leadership studies.

Keyword: Female Leadership, Employee Performance, Leadership Style, Educational Institution, Public Administration

Introduction

Leadership is a key aspect in the success of an organization, both in the public and private sectors. The role of leaders is not only limited to strategic decision-making, but also to the formation of a productive and inclusive work culture (Northouse, 2013). As gender roles in modern society evolve, the involvement of women in leadership positions has become an increasingly relevant topic for academic study. In many cases, women face stereotypes and structural barriers in accessing leadership roles (Eagly & Carli, 2007).

Women as leaders are often assumed to be less assertive, too emotional, or unable to lead in high-pressure situations. In fact, recent research shows that female leaders tend to adopt participatory, communicative, and empathy-based leadership styles that are effective in driving team performance (Helgesen, 2010). In Indonesia, although there have been many affirmative policies that support gender equality, the representation of women in leadership positions in educational institutions or formal organizations is still relatively low. This shows a gap between policy and social reality (Ministry of PPPA, 2021).

LKP Mayang Sari in Bengkulu City is an example of a non-formal educational institution led by a woman. The existence of female leaders in this context is interesting because it is directly related to public perception, managerial effectiveness, and organizational performance. The leadership style applied by female leaders of LKP Mayang Sari shows a tendency towards strong interpersonal aspects such as providing motivation, being an example, personal attention to staff, and a relationship-based approach (Mintzberg, 1973). The interpersonal role in

female leadership can be seen from their ability to foster healthy relationships between leaders and subordinates, build trust, and create a work atmosphere that supports collaboration and active employee participation (Yukl, 2013). However, in some cases, women's leadership styles also face challenges, especially in terms of decision-making which is often associated with emotional preferences or lack of assertiveness (Eagly, Karau, & Makhijani, 1995). The old paradigm that associates leadership with masculine characteristics such as dominance, aggressiveness, and assertiveness is still a major barrier to the widespread acceptance of women leaders, especially in areas with strong patriarchal values (Connell, 2005). This phenomenon demands an empirical study that not only explains women's leadership styles conceptually, but also assesses their direct impact on the performance of the organizations or institutions they lead. This study seeks to explore how women's leadership styles can affect employee performance in the context of LKP Mayang Sari, a job training institution engaged in the convection sector, with a diverse number of employees and strict work demands. In this study, the concept of employee performance is understood as the real contribution of individuals in the organization to achieving the institution's goals, both in terms of quantity and quality of work (Robbins, 2009). Women's leadership at LKP Mayang Sari plays a role in creating a structured, disciplined work system, and is able to motivate employees to meet the specified targets, such as monthly production volume and compliance with work quality standards. Based on the results of initial observations, it was found that female leaders in this institution not only hold formal authority, but also play an important role in building collective work spirit through role models, persuasive approaches, and appreciation for individual achievements. The leadership style applied also includes transformational and transactional aspects, where leaders provide rewards for high performance, and provide coaching to employees who show low performance (Bass & Avolio, 1994). This study uses the theoretical framework of Mintzberg (1973) which divides leadership roles into three: interpersonal, decision-making, and informational, to analyze how these roles are carried out by female leaders in LKP Mayang

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Sari. In this context, female leadership is not only a symbol of gender representation, but as an active actor in organizational transformation through human resource management based on values, empathy, and role models. By examining the experience of women's leadership at LKP Mayang Sari, it is hoped that this study can enrich the literature on gender-based leadership in the local context, while providing practical contributions to the development of human resource management in non-formal educational institutions. The formulation of the problem in this study is how the leadership style of women at LKP Mayang Sari, Bengkulu City, improves employee performance. The purpose of this study is to describe in depth the practice and influence of women's leadership on employee productivity and work enthusiasm. This study is expected to be a reference in formulating policies for the development of women's leadership, especially in the education and job training sectors, and provide inspiration for other institutions in utilizing the potential of inclusive leadership for mutual progress.

Method

This study was conducted using a qualitative-descriptive approach that aims to understand in depth and holistically the phenomenon of female leadership in the context of non-formal job training institutions, namely LKP Mayang Sari, Bengkulu City. The qualitative approach was used because it was considered the most relevant to reveal the subjective meaning contained in the actions and social interactions between female leaders and their employees (Creswell, 2013).

The type of research used was a single case study, which allows intensive exploration of a particular unit of analysis in a specific time and space context. According to Yin (2018), case studies are very effective in answering the questions "how" and "why", which in this case relate to how women's leadership styles affect employee performance in the institution. The selection of informants was carried out purposively by considering the involvement and knowledge of the informants regarding the issues being studied. The main informant in this study was the female leader of LKP Mayang Sari, while additional informants consisted of administrative staff and implementing employees who had direct interaction in the organizational structure (Sugiyono, 2019). This technique allows researchers to obtain authentic narratives that are rich in contextual experiences.

The data collection technique was carried out using triangulation methods that included in-depth interviews, passive participant observation, and documentation. The interviews were semi-structured to allow flexibility in data collection but remained within the research theme corridor. Observations were conducted to obtain a direct picture of leadership behavior that appears in daily work, while documentation was used as supporting material and validation of the empirical data obtained (Moleong, 2017).

The main instrument in this study was the researcher himself, as is characteristic of the methodological tradition of qualitative research. The researcher functions as a data collector, analyzer, and interpreter. To maintain objectivity and minimize bias, a validation strategy was carried out through member checking, peer debriefing, and triangulation between sources and techniques (Patton, 2002).

The data analysis process was carried out following the interactive model developed by Miles, Huberman, and Saldaña (2014), which includes three main stages, namely: data reduction, data presentation, and drawing/verifying conclusions. Data reduction is done by selecting the most relevant information to the focus of the research, presenting data in the form of analytical narratives, and drawing conclusions through consistent thematic pattern tracing. To ensure the credibility and validity of the data, this study adopts the trustworthiness criteria proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985), which include aspects of credibility, transferability, dependability, and confirmability. Documentation of the research process and reflection are arranged systematically to support the traceability and reliability of the research process.

With this methodological basis, this study is expected to be able to provide a significant contribution to the development of women's leadership studies in the realm of human resource management, especially in the non-formal education sector which has not received much attention in gender-based leadership literature in Indonesia.

Results and Discussion

This study aims to deeply reveal how the female leadership style applied by the leaders of LKP Mayang Sari in Bengkulu City contributes to improving employee performance. The findings show that female leadership in the context of this non-formal educational institution manifests three main roles as stated by Mintzberg (1973), namely interpersonal, informational, and decision-making roles. These three roles are carried out adaptively, contextually, and integrated in the dynamics of an organization consisting of twenty employees with heterogeneous social and educational backgrounds.

In carrying out interpersonal roles, the leader of the institution shows leadership characteristics that are communicative, empathetic, and able to be a consistent role model in terms of discipline and work ethic. He actively builds humanistic and equal relationships with employees, both in formal spaces such as work briefings and in informal contexts such as attendance at employee family events. This approach creates a harmonious work climate and increases a sense of belonging to the institution. The exemplary behavior shown by leaders in complying with work time regulations, attending invitations from external institutions, and commitment to work quality are important factors that encourage employees to adjust their work behavior to the expected standards.

In addition, women's leadership style in this context also stands out in terms of providing motivation and rewards. Leaders actively provide verbal reinforcement, moral support, and training opportunities to employees who demonstrate superior performance. For example, providing rewards in the form of work training outside the institution is a form of non-material incentive that significantly increases employee motivation and loyalty. At the same time, leaders are also fair in dealing with employees who experience a decline in performance, by providing space for dialogue, direction, and a constructive corrective approach.

However, in the role of decision-maker, more complex dynamics were found. Leaders demonstrate initiative capacity in designing internal policies and determining the strategic direction of the institution. However, several informants indicated that in certain situations, decisions made by leaders are more influenced by feelings or affective considerations than by objective rationality. This has the potential to create inconsistencies in the application of sanctions and the allocation of work responsibilities. However, these decisions still reflect a leadership orientation that emphasizes humanity and inclusiveness.

In the informational role, leaders have succeeded in carrying out their function as the main source of information for employees. They routinely convey information related to work targets, the institution's agenda, and evaluation results through internal meetings and online communication. The ability to convey information clearly and transparently increases mutual understanding and strengthens coordination between sections. Not only that, the leadership also plays a role as a spokesperson for the institution in establishing external partnerships. This activity has positive implications for the institutional reputation and public trust in the professionalism of LKP Mayang Sari. In terms of employee performance, the implementation of the female leadership style shows a real influence. All employees are required to complete a minimum of 30 pieces of clothing each month with certain quality standards. Through an internal evaluation system and a supportive leadership approach, the achievement of work targets has increased significantly. Informants stated that the leadership style that prioritizes dialogue, non-repressive supervision, and personal involvement makes them feel appreciated and motivated to work more

optimally. Work discipline, punctuality, and awareness of work responsibilities have increased consistently in the last two years of this female leadership. This study also examines external and internal perceptions of women as leaders. Several employees said that there are still gender stereotypes from outside the institution that doubt women's capacity to lead effectively. However, through proven performance, a solid institutional image, and an increasingly positive reputation among external partners, these negative assumptions have begun to be replaced by recognition of professional and innovative leadership

Discussion

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion, it can be concluded that the development of the Bukit Kandis tourist attraction has made a positive contribution to the social and economic dynamics of the Durian Demang Village community, but has not fully met the principles of sustainable tourism development. There have been significant achievements in terms of increasing local economic activity, community participation, and the formation of Pokdarwis institutions as a driving force for community initiatives. However, this success is still partial and has not been supported by a planned, structured, and cross-sector management system. The research findings show that female leadership at LKP Mayang Sari has a significant role in driving organizational performance and increasing employee productivity. This is in line with Mintzberg's theory (1973) which classifies the role of leaders into three main dimensions: interpersonal, informational, and decision-making. These three roles have been proven to be carried out by institutional leaders with a distinctive approach, namely based on empathy, discipline, and commitment to human resource development. In the context of interpersonal roles, the leadership style shown by female leaders illustrates the characteristics of transformational leadership put forward by Bass and Avolio (1994), namely the ability of leaders to be role models, provide inspiration, and create internal motivation for their subordinates. The exemplary behavior shown in terms of discipline, consistency in attending official activities, and concern for employees' personal conditions shows that a humanistic leadership approach can create high loyalty and emotional involvement from employees. Another important aspect is the leader's ability to create open and equal two-way communication. This supports Helgesen's view (2010), which states that female leaders tend to adopt horizontal communication patterns, strengthen relationships between individuals in the organization, and minimize the structural distance usually found in conventional hierarchical leadership styles. This communication style provides space for employees to actively participate, feel appreciated, and participate in achieving common goals. However, in terms of decision-making, interesting dynamics are found for further analysis. On the one hand, female leaders show high initiative and courage in taking strategic steps, such as sending employees to external training and formulating performance targets based on production quantity. However, there is a tendency that some operational decisions are more based on affective considerations or personal intuition. This finding is in line with the study by Eagly, Karau, and Makhijani (1995) which indicates that female leaders are often more responsive to the affective needs of their subordinates, which can be both a strength and a challenge depending on the decision-making context.

In an informational role, leaders not only act as internal information disseminators but also as external representatives of the institution. Her role as a spokesperson has made LKP Mayang Sari better known locally, while increasing the trust of partners and stakeholders. This strengthens Robbins' argument (2009) that one of the strategic functions of leadership is to build a positive image of the institution through an active and constructive communication role. Female leadership also contributes directly to measurable improvements in employee performance, both in terms of productivity and work attitude. Work targets such as completing a minimum of 30 pieces of

qualities. Overall, the results of this study confirm that the leadership style of women applied at LKP Mayang Sari reflects a combination of transformational and transactional leadership, with an emphasis on the values of empathy, communication, and empowerment. The leaders succeeded in creating a productive, fair, and adaptive work climate for change, while also showing that leadership effectiveness is not determined by gender, but by managerial capacity, personal values, and interpersonal competencies.

clothing per month are consistently achieved thanks to a structured work monitoring system and strong motivational support from leaders. This finding is in line with the concept of performance put forward by Rivai and Basri (2005), which emphasizes the importance of leadership style in influencing work behavior and achieving organizational results.

Non-material factors such as symbolic rewards, training opportunities, and personal involvement in employees' work lives have been shown to be important elements in creating sustainable work morale. This kind of leadership reflects a transactional approach in the form of contingent rewards, but with a touch of affection and relational values that are typical of female leadership (Bass & Riggio, 2006). On the other hand, social perceptions of women as leaders are still a cultural challenge that needs to be overcome. Although the success of the institution in building a reputation has broken some stereotypes, informants stated that there are still minor views that question the capacity of women to lead. This is an important reminder that structural changes must be accompanied by cultural changes and public perceptions of gender equality in. The absence of institutional support from the local government in terms of infrastructure planning and investment has caused development to be slow and unintegrated. This has reduced the quality of the destination and limited the competitiveness of the area as a leading regional tourist attraction. In socio-economic terms, the impact of development is quite significant in creating business opportunities, increasing community income, and strengthening the participation of previously marginalized groups, such as women and youth. However, the absence of a fair benefit distribution mechanism has created the potential for social exclusion and internal inequality that need to be responded to immediately through inclusive and accountable institutional governance. In terms of sustainability, it was found that environmental management is still weak, both in terms of community ecological awareness and support for conservation systems. The potential for pressure on the environment due to increased visits has not been balanced with community-based mitigation strategies. Meanwhile, cultural aspects have not been optimally integrated into tourism activities, even though local values can be symbolic and differentiating capital in the development of identity-based tourism. Overall, the development of Bukit Kandis is still in the early stages which requires strengthening institutional foundations, policy support, and integration between physical, social, cultural, and environmental dimensions in order to develop as an inclusive and sustainable village tourism destination.

Conclusions and Recommendations

Based on the findings and discussions that have been described, it can be concluded that the female leadership style applied by the leaders of LKP Mayang Sari, Bengkulu City, contributes significantly to improving employee performance and overall organizational effectiveness. This leadership not only reflects managerial ability in carrying out formal tasks, but also shows strength in interpersonal aspects, such as empathy, communication, motivation, and role modeling. The participatory, humanistic, and communicative female leadership style has been proven to be able to create a supportive and collaborative work environment. This encourages the formation of a positive work climate, which is characterized by increased discipline, work productivity, and employee loyalty to the institution. Leaders not only carry out

administrative roles, but also appear as inspirers, coaches, and facilitators in the process of human resource growth. In carrying out their duties, the leaders of LKP Mayang Sari carry out three main leadership roles as stated by Mintzberg, namely interpersonal, informational, and decision-making roles. These three roles are carried out simultaneously and contextually, although in the aspect of decision-making there is a tendency to use affective considerations which in some cases cause policy inconsistencies. However, this does not reduce the essence of inclusive and solution-oriented leadership. In general, women's leadership at LKP Mayang Sari has not only succeeded in answering organizational challenges, but also becomes a real representation of the effectiveness of gender-based leadership in non-formal educational institutions. This study confirms that gender is not a determinant indicator of leadership quality, but rather competence, integrity, and interpersonal skills are the main foundations for leading effectively and efficiently. Thus, the model of women's leadership as implemented at LKP Mayang Sari is worthy of being an example of good practice in developing institutional governance based on gender justice values, empowering human resources, and creating productive, inclusive, and responsive organizations to today's social and professional dynamics.

Based on the research results and conclusions that have been presented, there are several strategic suggestions that can be put forward both for the development of leadership practices at the organizational level, improving the quality of human resources, and contributing to the development of public administration science, especially in the perspective of gender-based leadership.

First, for the leaders of LKP Mayang Sari, it is recommended to maintain and develop a leadership style that is communicative, inspiring, and humanistic, which has been proven effective in building employee performance and loyalty. However, it is necessary to strengthen the decision-making aspect so that it remains based on the principles of objectivity and rationality, without ignoring the affective dimension which is the distinctive strength of female leadership.

Second, it is necessary to develop a more systematic and measurable performance evaluation system, with indicators that are compiled in a participatory manner with employees. This is important to ensure the consistency of internal policies and create a sense of justice and transparency in the managerial process.

Third, for other institutions or agencies, especially non-formal educational institutions, the findings of this study can be used as a reference to provide a wider leadership space for women. The implementation of affirmative policies, gender-based leadership training, and women's empowerment in strategic decision-making need to continue to be encouraged to create an equal and adaptive organizational structure. Fourth, for policy makers, especially local governments and educational institutions, it is important to provide leadership training programs specifically designed for women in the public and non-formal sectors. These programs not only aim to improve technical capacity, but also to strengthen women's confidence and bargaining power in managerial positions. Finally, for academic development, this study opens up space for more comprehensive follow-up studies related to the dynamics of women's leadership in various sectors, both public and private, with a multidisciplinary approach. Quantitative and

comparative research across institutions can be conducted to more broadly test the impact of gender-based leadership styles on organizational effectiveness in the Indonesian context.

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