



Coordination and Cooperation between the Secretariat and Assistant Inspector at the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the extent to which coordination and cooperation between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector are functioning at the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office. The study used a qualitative descriptive approach with sixteen informants, which were traced through interviews, observations, and documentation. The results of the study indicate that vertical and horizontal coordination are generally well underway, reflected by almost all informants who acknowledged that both are ongoing and necessary, but cooperation between units still leaves gaps in aspects of fairness in the distribution of workloads, rewarding performance, and consistent attitudes of tolerance among members. The study recommends strengthening standard operating procedures regarding administrative channels between the Assistant Inspector and the Secretariat, along with a more transparent performance reward mechanism to support more equitable cooperation across work units.

INTRODUCTION

Article 18 paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia stipulates that the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia is divided into provincial, district and city regions, each of which has its own government to regulate and manage its affairs according to the principles of autonomy and assistance tasks. Paragraph (5) of the same article emphasizes that regional governments exercise the broadest possible autonomy, except for matters which are determined by law to be the authority of the central government. This constitutional mandate is then explained in Law Number 32 of 2004 concerning Regional Government, which defines regional autonomy as the rights, authorities and obligations of autonomous regions to regulate and manage their own government affairs and the interests of the local community in accordance with statutory regulations.

The broadest possible autonomy grants regions the authority to manage all government affairs excluding foreign policy, defense, security, monetary policy, justice, and religion, which remain the responsibility of the central government. This broad authority has consequences in the form of structural, functional, and cultural changes in the implementation of regional government, including the position and function of internal oversight institutions. The Regional Inspectorate is one of the regional apparatuses tasked with supervising the implementation of regional government affairs, fostering village governance, and managing the inspectorate secretariat, in accordance with the authority granted by laws and regulations.

As a regional apparatus, the Inspectorate carries out its duties through the delegation of authority from the regent and is directly responsible to him. The Inspectorate functions simultaneously as a supervisor and overseer of the implementation of programs stipulated in the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (Afni et al., 2012). In carrying out this function, the Regency Inspectorate conducts routine inspections of all regional apparatus work units, with the hope that government activities run according to plan and the potential for errors and criminal acts that harm the state can be suppressed. Good supervisory performance in turn improves the quality of audit results and confidence in the fairness of financial reports prepared by work units.

The implementation of this supervisory function relies on the smooth operation of two elements within the Inspectorate itself: the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector. The Secretariat carries out general administrative, financial, planning, and analysis and evaluation functions, while the Assistant Inspector leads the implementation of direct supervision in the field. The author's observations during his time at the Merauke Regency Inspectorate Office revealed a work pattern that did not always follow this path: some Assistant Inspectors submitted requests, whether concerning finances, official travel, or personnel, directly to the Inspector without going through the Secretariat, even though these matters fall under the Secretariat's primary duties and functions. This practice often led to the Inspector withholding approval because the request did not go through office procedures. On the other hand, the relationship between the Secretary and the Assistant Inspector who took this shortcut tended

to be strained, and ultimately, administrative and financial matters were not always completed on time.

This condition is the basis of this research, which carries the title "Coordination and Cooperation between the Secretariat and Assistant Inspectors at the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office". This research specifically seeks to answer how the coordination and cooperation of these two elements run in daily practice, as well as what factors support or hinder it, with the aim of providing input for optimizing the Secretariat's administrative services to Assistant Inspectors and for identifying factors supporting cooperation in the office environment. The benefits of this research are expected to be twofold: theoretically enriching public administration studies on coordination and cooperation in the government work environment, and practically providing input for the Merauke Regency Inspectorate in improving services and cooperation between units, as well as benchmarks for employees to work better in achieving organizational goals.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Coordination Concepts and Theories

Coordination in administrative studies is generally understood as an effort to align separate activities to move towards the same goal. Hasibuan (2006) defines it as the activity of directing, integrating, and coordinating management elements and the work of subordinates in achieving organizational goals, while Handoko (2003) emphasizes the aspect of integrating goals and activities in separate units, such as departments or functional areas, so that goals are achieved efficiently and effectively. Terry, as quoted by Hasibuan (2006), views coordination as a synchronized and orderly effort to provide the right amount and time and direct implementation so that the resulting actions are uniform and harmonious towards the determined target. A similar definition is provided by Nawawi, who interprets coordination as the activity of arranging personnel, methods, materials, and ideas in a harmonious work environment so that work is carried out effectively and directed towards a common goal, and Brech, as quoted by Handayani (2002), who defines coordination as an effort to balance and motivate a team by placing each member in the appropriate activity location so that work harmony is maintained.

Handayani (1985) emphasized that coordination cannot be separated from communication and leadership, because all three influence each other in maintaining the direction of group work. McFarland, as quoted by Handayani (1985), views coordination as the process by which leaders develop orderly patterns of group effort among subordinates while ensuring unity of action in achieving common goals. From a perspective that emphasizes the aspect of movement, Suharno (1981) and Sanjoto (1999) define coordination as the ability to connect or integrate various different movements into one effective and goal-aligned movement pattern, a concept that Phillips and Hornak (1979) associate with motor skills that require skill. Although originating from different fields of study, one common thread connecting all these definitions is that coordination is always related to the alignment of activities that were originally running separately into one harmonious direction.

Coordination is generally divided into two types. Vertical coordination occurs when a superior unites and directs the activities of work units directly under his authority and responsibility, a process that is relatively easy to carry out because the superior has the authority to impose sanctions on unruly subordinates. Horizontal coordination, on the other hand, occurs between units at the same level, and is further divided into interdisciplinary coordination, namely the unification of actions between units with the same task, and interrelated coordination, namely coordination between agencies with different but interdependent functions. Horizontal coordination is relatively more difficult to carry out because the coordinator does not have the authority to impose sanctions on parties at the same level (Hasibuan, 2006).

Effective coordination provides a number of benefits to an organization. Handoko (2003) states that good coordination avoids feelings of detachment between work units, prevents the perception that one unit is more important than another, reduces the potential for conflict between departments, closes gaps in activities, and fosters a sense of mutual assistance among employees. Hasibuan (2006) adds that coordination is important for preventing chaos, overlap, or gaps in work, aligning people and their work toward organizational goals, ensuring that facilities and infrastructure are utilized appropriately, and ensuring that all individual tasks and activities support the overall organizational goals.

Two factors are consistently cited as influencing the success of coordination. First, unity of action, namely the awareness of each member of the organization to adapt themselves and their tasks to other members so as not to work independently, which requires leaders to organize the efforts of each individual to be aligned in achieving results while ensuring that those efforts run according to the planned schedule. Second, communication, which Hasibuan (2006) considers inseparable from coordination because through communication each unit can be aligned and informed of its tasks. Communication in this context functions to collect and disseminate information about events in the work environment, interpret that information, and convey work values and norms from one party to another, ultimately helping to shape employee attitudes and work behavior.

The Concept of Cooperation

The Great Dictionary of the Indonesian Language (2008) defines cooperation as something handled jointly by several parties, an attitude of being willing to work together regardless of the background of the parties invited to collaborate to achieve a certain goal. Landsberger (2011) expands this understanding by calling cooperation a group process in which members support and rely on each other to reach a common agreement, while Thomas and Johnson (2014) view it more fundamentally as a form of grouping commonly found among living things in an effort to reach a consensus.

Good collaboration provides a number of benefits, including expanding opportunities for social interaction and development, preparing members to acquire knowledge from various sources, improving group work skills, fostering openness to differences, and encouraging active and creative attitudes in

analyzing problems (Saputra & Rudyanto, 2005). Objective-wise, collaboration is directed at developing higher-order thinking, communication skills, self-confidence, social awareness, and tolerance for individual differences (Maasawet, 2010), while maximizing the natural collaborative process, encouraging active participation, developing critical thinking, respecting the social context, and fostering a spirit of continuous learning (Funali, 2014). Damayanti and Modjiono (2009) more concisely define it as an effort to develop critical thinking in problem-solving, social skills, self-confidence, and mutual respect among members.

Saputra and Rudyanto (2005) detailed nine conditions that determine the success or failure of cooperation in a work group: common interests as a starting point for forming cooperation; fairness, namely rewards commensurate with the contribution of each party; mutual understanding of the interests of others; the same goal even though each member brings their own individual interests; willingness to help each other when needed; willingness to serve each other so that the distribution of activities is not unequal; responsibility of each member for their role; appreciation as a form of recognition for contributions, both in the form of respect and more tangible forms; and tolerance for differences in rhythm and work style between members. Setiyanti (2012) added that strong cooperation is also supported by members' awareness of each other's abilities, a shared understanding of the problems faced, smooth communication, understanding of the difficulties of others, solid arrangements or coordination, openness and trust, and the involvement of all group members.

Definitions of cooperation from administrative experts enrich this understanding from several angles. Hafsa views it as a strategy implemented by two or more parties over a certain period of time to achieve mutual benefits based on mutual need, Kusnadi emphasizes integrated activities directed at specific targets, and Zainudin highlights the element of concern reflected in mutually beneficial activities based on trust and agreed norms. Tangkilisan (2005) positions cooperation as the rights, obligations, and responsibilities of each party to achieve goals, while Thomson and Perry (2007) view it as a range of degrees, from coordination and cooperation to the higher level of collaboration, a relevant description for reading the relationship between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector, which ideally moves from mere coordination to more integrated cooperation.

Institutional Basis of the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate

Merauke Regent Regulation Number 101 of 2018 concerning the Organization and Work Procedures of the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate stipulates that the Regional Inspectorate is led by an Inspector who is positioned under and responsible to the Regent through the Regional Secretary, with the task of assisting the Regent in formulating, fostering, controlling, and coordinating technical supervisory policies based on the principles of autonomy and assistance tasks. In carrying out these tasks, as regulated in Article 232 paragraph (1) of Law Number 23 of 2014, the Inspectorate carries out the functions of formulating and implementing policies, evaluation

and reporting, service administration, and other functions assigned by the Regent according to the scope of his duties. The organizational structure of the Inspectorate consists of a Secretariat, five Assistant Inspectors, regional technical implementation units, and functional position groups.

The Secretariat, as regulated in Articles 4 and 5 of the same regulation, is positioned as an element assisting the leadership that is directly responsible to the Inspector, with the task of carrying out the review and formulation of policies, control, and guidance of technical administration in the areas of planning, analysis and evaluation, as well as general and financial administration. The four functions inherent in the Secretariat, namely the review of technical policy materials, review of work plans and programs, review of technical guidance materials, and administrative and technical control, place the Secretariat as a node that connects all Assistant Inspectors in matters of finance, official travel, and personnel. This position makes the smooth coordination between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspectors determine the efficiency of the Inspectorate's work as a whole, because almost all administrative processes of the Assistant Inspector, according to this regulation, should go through the Secretariat before reaching the Inspector's desk.

METHODOLOGY

This study uses a qualitative descriptive approach, chosen because its goal is to describe in depth, breadth, and detail how coordination and cooperation between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspectors operate at the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office, rather than statistically testing causal relationships between variables. This approach allows the author to uncover facts on the ground in greater depth through a combination of observation, interviews, and documentation.

The research was conducted at the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office, located on Jalan Marthadinata, Mandala Village, Merauke District. The location was chosen based on the author's position as an employee at the office, which allowed for direct observation of daily work interactions between units. Data collection lasted for two weeks, a period deemed sufficient to capture a representative picture of recurring patterns of coordination and cooperation in routine office activities.

Primary data were obtained directly from sixteen informants representing all levels of the Inspectorate structure: one Inspector, one Secretary, five Assistant Inspectors, three Sub-section Heads, three civil servant staff, and three honorary staff. Secondary data were collected from office documents, including laws and regulations governing the Inspectorate's organization and work procedures, reports, personnel files, and literature relevant to the concepts of coordination and cooperation.

Three techniques were used in data collection. Observations were conducted by directly observing the work interactions between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector in daily activities, including the pattern of administrative request submissions that became the background of this research. Interviews were conducted with sixteen informants with questions covering two main variables: coordination, which was traced through vertical and horizontal

coordination indicators, and cooperation, which was traced through nine indicators formulated by Saputra and Rudyanto (2005): common interests, justice, mutual understanding, common goals, mutual assistance, mutual service, responsibility, appreciation, and tolerance. Documentation included tracing regent regulations, regional regulations, and personnel data relevant to the structure and functional duties of the Inspectorate, following Sugiyono's (2018) definition of documentation as a way of obtaining data from archives, writings, and reports that support research.

The collected data were analyzed using qualitative descriptive techniques through three stages that occurred concurrently throughout the research process. Data reduction was carried out by grouping and filtering relevant information from observations and interviews, so that only authentic and accountable data were used. The data presentation was structured so that response patterns between informants could be easily compared, including through a recapitulation of responses for each coordination and cooperation indicator. Conclusions were drawn gradually by examining recurring patterns, themes, and tendencies in informants' responses, then linking them to the author's direct observations during his time at the office.

RESEARCH RESULTS

Profile of the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office

The Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office is located on Jalan Marthadinata, Mandala Village, Merauke District, Merauke Regency, South Papua Province, bordering the Office of Industry, Trade, and Cooperatives with SMEs to the north, the Social Service to the south, the Merauke Regency DPRD building to the east, and Jalan Poros Marthadinata to the west.

Based on personnel data, this office has 54 employees, consisting of 22 men and 32 women, so female employees dominate the composition of human resources in this office. In terms of employee status, 39 people are civil servants and 15 people are honorary, which means that almost a third of the office's workforce still relies on honorary workers to support daily operations. The distribution of classes among the 38 civil servants shows a composition of 6 people in class II, 24 people in class III, and 8 people in class IV, with no employees in class I.

The organizational structure of the Inspectorate refers to Government Regulation Number 18 of 2016 concerning Regional Apparatus, which among other things regulates the position of the Regional Inspectorate as one of the regional apparatuses together with regional hospitals, as mandated by Article 232 paragraph (1) of Law Number 23 of 2014 concerning Regional Government. The Merauke Regency Inspectorate carries out the functions of planning supervisory programs, formulating policies and supervisory facilities, inspections, investigations, testing, and assessments of supervisory tasks, with the main tasks including supervision of the implementation of government affairs, the economy, social welfare, finance and assets, as well as secretarial activities. In carrying out these tasks, the Inspectorate is willing to be evaluated by the Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus supervisory team, with the

rules for the main tasks and functions of the team being further regulated in the regent's decree.

The Inspectorate's strategic objectives include improving the quality and quantity of functional supervision, accelerating follow-up on findings, improving consultation and mentoring services, strengthening accountability in regional government administration, improving the competence of human resources within the supervisory apparatus, strengthening the regional supervisory system, and improving facilities, infrastructure, and financial management. Accompanying objectives include achieving regular and thematic audits and their follow-up, improving the government management and accountability system, creating a professional and qualified supervisory apparatus, improving coordination and synergy between supervisory units, and creating conducive working conditions through adequate office administration. This final objective directly relates to the focus of this research, as coordination and synergy between supervisory units are impossible to achieve without good cooperation between the Secretariat, which supports administration, and the Assistant Inspector, who carries out direct supervision.

Vertical and Horizontal Coordination Patterns

Interviews with sixteen informants showed that vertical coordination, namely the unification and direction carried out by superiors towards work units under their responsibility, was considered to be running well by fifteen informants, while one informant said it was running "sometimes." A similar, even more uniform pattern emerged on the question of the need for horizontal coordination between units at the same level, where all sixteen informants agreed that this type of coordination was very necessary in carrying out daily work.

This high level of agreement is consistent with Hasibuan's (2006) framework, which states that vertical coordination is relatively easier to implement because superiors have the authority to sanction unruly subordinates, so that compliance with superiors' directives tends to be maintained. However, one answer of "sometimes" to the vertical coordination question, although seemingly small in proportion, is in line with the observation in the background of this research, that some administrative requests from Assistant Inspectors do not always follow the formal channels that should go through the Secretariat before reaching the Inspector. This one answer indicates that uniformity in vertical coordination, although generally good, has not yet fully reached all points in the organizational structure.

Cooperation Pattern between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector

The nine indicators of cooperation examined showed varying patterns. Three indicators—shared interests, mutual understanding, and shared goals—were almost unanimously acknowledged by informants, with fifteen of the sixteen responding "yes" and only one responding "sometimes." Two other indicators—mutual assistance and responsibility—even achieved full agreement, with all sixteen informants stating that both occurred in their work environments.

A different pattern emerged in the other four indicators. Only eleven informants acknowledged fairness in the division of labor, while five responded "sometimes," indicating that the distribution of workload and rewards between units was not felt equally by all employees. Mutual service showed a similar pattern, with twelve informants responding "yes" and four responding "sometimes," indicating that some employees served their colleagues with varying degrees of sincerity. The two indicators that showed the most gaps were appreciation and tolerance: in both, only seven of the sixteen informants answered "yes," another seven answered "sometimes," and two informants even stated that it was unnecessary.

DISCUSSION

The gap between indicators that received high agreement, such as shared interests, mutual assistance, and responsibility, and indicators that received lower agreement, such as fairness, appreciation, and tolerance, indicates that cooperation in the Merauke Regency Inspectorate Office is stronger in aspects of daily operations than in aspects related to recognition and distribution of benefits. Employees appear to agree that they need to help each other and be responsible for their respective tasks in daily activities, a reasonable condition considering that the smooth running of supervisory tasks requires direct cooperation between units. However, when the question shifted to the fairness of the division of labor and recognition for contributions, agreement diminished, suggesting that the problem lies not in the willingness to cooperate per se, but in how the results of that cooperation are recognized and shared.

The author's direct observations in the field also indicate that rewards for high-performing employees have so far taken the form of verbal support or some form of verbal appreciation rather than material rewards or formal recognition, a practice consistent with the low level of agreement on reward indicators in the interview results. This condition is relevant to the view of Saputra and Rudyanto (2005) that rewards, whether in the form of respect or more tangible forms, are an important element in maintaining the desire of group members to mutually appreciate each other's contributions. When this element is weak, cooperation tends to remain at the functional level without developing into more integrated collaboration, as described by Thomson and Perry (2007) as the range from coordination to collaboration.

The findings on the tolerance indicator reinforce this picture. The low level of agreement on this indicator, with the proportion of responses exactly the same as the appreciation indicator, indicates that differences in work rhythms and styles between employees, as Saputra and Rudyanto (2005) mentioned as a requirement for cooperation, have not been fully accepted as normal by some employees. In the context of the relationship between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector, these differences in work rhythms may stem from the different nature of the tasks: the Assistant Inspector works with the demands of field inspections that require speed, while the Secretariat works with the demands of administrative procedures that require precision and sequence of processes, two work rhythms that are not always easy to harmonize without adequate tolerance from both parties.

When these findings are read back into the background of the research, the emerging pattern becomes clearer. The practice of some Assistant Inspectors submitting requests directly to the Inspector without going through the Secretariat is likely not a standalone procedural violation, but rather a consequence of a combination of two gaps identified in this research: an unequal division of labor and inconsistent tolerance between units. When an Assistant Inspector feels the process through the Secretariat is slower than that of other colleagues, or feels the Secretariat's work rhythm is not fully understood and accommodated, the shortcut directly to the Inspector becomes a rationally more efficient option for that individual, even though it ultimately slows down the overall process because requests that do not go through the procedure tend to be held up by the Inspector.

This interpretation aligns with Hasibuan's (2006) framework on the factors of unity of action and communication as determinants of coordination. Unity of action requires each unit to be aware of adapting to other units so as not to operate independently. While the findings of this study indicate that this awareness is strong enough at the level of shared interests and individual responsibilities, it is not yet strong enough to resist the temptation to take shortcuts when other units are perceived as not providing equal treatment. In other words, the problem of coordination and cooperation between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector at the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office lies not in the lack of a willingness to cooperate, but rather in the unequal distribution of a sense of justice, appreciation, and tolerance that support this willingness to remain consistently implemented through formal channels.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study found that vertical and horizontal coordination at the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office has generally been implemented and recognized as necessary by almost all informants, as reflected in the high proportion of responses stating that such coordination occurs in the implementation of daily work. Cooperation between the Secretariat and the Assistant Inspector also showed good achievements in operational indicators, such as shared interests, mutual understanding, common goals, mutual assistance, and responsibility, with a high to full level of agreement from all informants.

However, this study also found gaps in four indicators of cooperation, namely fairness in the division of labor, willingness to serve each other, giving rewards for performance, and tolerance among employees, all of which received lower levels of agreement than the other indicators, with rewards and tolerance showing the largest gaps. This gap is suspected to contribute to the communication pattern that bypasses formal channels between the Assistant Inspector and the Secretariat as observed in the research background, because the unequal sense of justice and recognition can encourage some employees to seek channels that are perceived as faster even though they deviate from applicable procedures.

Based on these findings, this study suggests four steps for the Merauke Regency Regional Inspectorate Office. First, the existing good coordination and cooperation need to be maintained and continuously improved, particularly in the aspects of unity of action and responsibility, which have been the main strengths of this office. Second, the coordination process between superiors and staff, including the administrative process between the Assistant Inspector and the Secretariat, needs to be expedited and not delayed to avoid encouraging employees to seek alternative channels outside of procedure. Third, coordination needs to be carried out according to the applicable levels within the Inspectorate's organizational structure, with reaffirmation that administrative requests from the Assistant Inspector should go through the Secretariat as stipulated in Merauke Regent Regulation Number 101 of 2018. Fourth, the coordination mechanism between the Assistant Inspector and the Secretariat needs to be made more selective and transparent, accompanied by strengthening a more tangible performance reward system and fostering an attitude of tolerance between units, so that differences of opinion between these two elements no longer become a source of obstacles in the office's administrative services.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

However, this study only investigated cooperation within the Merauke Inspectorate, which is difficult to generalize to collaboration in other regions and institutions. Therefore, future studies need to expand the research area and develop a broader concept of cooperation within public institution oversight mechanisms.

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