
Strategy to Increase Merit System Index Value in The Management of State Civil Apparatus in Witness and Victim Protection Agency

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ABSTRACT

This study was conducted to find factors that influence the Merit System Index Value in State Civil Apparatus Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), and to find strategies to increase the Merit System Index Value in State Civil Apparatus Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency. The research methodology used is descriptive qualitative. Data were obtained from in-depth interviews with key informants, books, journals, laws and regulations, and other related documents. The results of the study are that the factors that influence the Merit System Index Value in State Civil Apparatus Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency include laws and regulations, leadership, diversity, digital transformation, organizational culture, and politics. Therefore, the strategies that need to be carried out by the Witness and Victim Protection Agency to be able to increase the Merit System Index Value in State Civil Apparatus Management include 1) short-term strategies include aspects of socialization and training, determination of policies and regulations, appointment of a Merit System Index improvement work team, development of the Personnel Information System; 2) medium-term strategies include aspects of Merit System evaluation, Talent Management, transparency and accountability, and awards; and 3) long-term strategies include aspects of bureaucratic cultural transformation, career development programs, collaboration, and sustainable innovation.

Keywords: Merit System Index, Strategy, Management of State Civil Apparatus, LPSK

INTRODUCTION

The government system in Indonesia consists of various government agencies that are given the authority to carry out government functions in various fields based on the provisions of laws and regulations. Government agencies are currently transforming into several types, including Ministries, Non-Ministerial Government Institutions (LPNK), State Institutions, Non-Structural Institutions (LNS), and other Government Institutions. In government organizations, there is one of the most important elements in its management, namely the Human Resources (HR) element.

Human Resources (HR) are important in all aspects of life, from the smallest, family, to the largest, in this case the State. Sunahwati (2019) stated that good Human Resources are the key to achieving organizational goals. On the government side, Maryono (2022) stated

that Human Resources (HR) are all State Civil Apparatus (ASN) who work in government agencies and are paid based on the APBN/APBD.

Based on the direction of the President of the Republic of Indonesia, there are 5 (five) work priorities of President Joko Widodo's government, namely Human Resource Development, Infrastructure Development, Regulatory Simplification, Bureaucratic Simplification, and Economic Transformation. The priority of Human Resource Development work must be supported by good ASN management in accordance with the provisions of laws and regulations that we know as the Merit System. Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning the State Civil Apparatus, which in the general provisions of Article 1 number 15, explains that the Merit System is the implementation of the ASN Management system in accordance with the principle of

meritocracy. The Merit System is currently also seen as a basic need for modern society (Demirbilek, 2023).

The principle of meritocracy based on this law is the principle of human resource management based on qualifications, competence, potential, and performance, as well as integrity and morality which are implemented fairly and fairly without distinguishing ethnic background, race, skin color, religion, origin, gender, marital status, age, or special needs. The frequent occurrence of spoil system practices in ASN management has caused the quality of the Indonesian State Civil Apparatus to decline (Ohoiwutun, 2023). Political interests that dominate the bureaucracy are the cause. Bureaucratic performance is vulnerable to deviations due to the relationship between administrative actors and political interests. One of the factors that causes high levels of corruption among politicians and State Civil Apparatus is the increase in spoil system practices. Based on data from the 2023 Corruption Perceptions Index issued by Transparency International, it can be seen that at the ASEAN level, Indonesia still ranks 6th with an index score of 34. Relevant to this, the key to Lee Kuan Yew's success in pulling Singapore out of the crisis and achieving good governance lies in his very strong commitment to implementing a merit system in all aspects, from government, politics, economics, to education (Quah, 2015). Therefore, it is very important for the government to encourage the implementation of a Merit System that ensures that the implementation of the bureaucracy is carried out properly. The implementation of the Merit System can result in better decision-making, improved public services, increased economic growth, and reduced corruption (Malik et al., 2023). Various strategic policies in the field of bureaucratic reform and State Civil Apparatus Management (ASN) must be implemented sustainably, massively, and simultaneously at all levels of government, both central and regional.

In line with the above, in order to guarantee the implementation of the merit system in government agencies, the State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN) has stipulated the State Civil Apparatus Commission Regulation Number 9 of 2019 concerning Procedures for Independent Assessment of the Merit System in State Civil Apparatus Management in Government Agencies. Referring to this regulation, KASN conducts an assessment of the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management. The results of this assessment can be input for government agencies in making policies related to the development of Human Resources for the State Apparatus. Based on data processed from Meritopedia KASN, KASN has conducted a population mapping of the implementation of the Merit System in 701 (seven hundred and one) government agencies, both central and regional, in 2023.

Furthermore, the Merit System Index is a measuring tool to assess the level of implementation of the merit system in an agency. The Merit System Index measures various aspects, such as recruitment, promotion, transfer, competency development, performance assessment, and awards. The results of the achievement of the Merit System index for agencies in 2023 based on processed data from the KASN Meritopedia are that there are 79 (seventy-nine) agencies rated "Very Good", 216 (two hundred and sixteen) agencies rated "Good", 83 (eighty-three) agencies rated "less", 189 (one hundred and eighty-nine) agencies rated "Poor", and 34 (thirty-four) agencies have not been assessed.

The assessment of the implementation of the Merit System has mostly been carried out at the Ministry/Institution level and regional agencies. Increasing the Merit System Index is an important step to realize a high-performance bureaucracy. However, there are still few Non-Structural Institutions (LNS) that carry out assessments of the implementation of the Merit System in their agencies. Nevertheless, various efforts have been made by LNS to catch up in implementing the Merit System.

This is because currently the Merit System is the face of the agency and is one of the components in the implementation of Bureaucratic Reform. In the Bureaucratic Reform Evaluation Worksheet (LKE), the Bureaucratic Reform Index (RB) consists of General RB and Thematic RB. The General RB component consists of the General RB Implementation Strategy and Policy Implementation Achievements (hard elements and soft elements). The Merit System Index is part of the soft element that must be achieved by each agency in implementing the Bureaucratic Reform policy. So it is very important for each LNS to be able to fulfill every aspect in the assessment of the implementation of the Merit System in LNS.

Because the higher the results of the Merit System Index assessment, the greater the increase in the Bureaucratic Reform Index assessment.

Based on the 2023 Merit System Implementation Population Data, it is known that out of 83 (eighty-three) Non-Structural Institutions (LNS), only 7 (seven) LNS have conducted an assessment of the implementation of the Merit System and have obtained the Merit System Assessment Determination. The results of the Merit System Assessment Determination at LNS were that 4 (four) LNS received a "Very Good" rating, 2 (two) LNS received a "Good" rating and 1 (one) LNS received a "Poor" rating (see Table 1).

Table 1. Determination of Merit System Assessment in Non-Structural Institutions (LNS) in 2023

No	Nama	Nilai Penetapan Sistem Merit Tahun 2023	Kategori Penilaian
1	Ombudsman of the Republic of Indonesia (ORI)	342.5	Very Good
2	Secretariat General of the Corruption Eradication Commission (KPK)	329	Very Good
3	Financial Transaction Reports and Analysis Center (PPATK)	327	Very Good
4	State Civil Apparatus Commission (KASN)	326.5	Very Good
5	Secretariat General of the National Human Rights Commission (KOMNAS HAM)	283.5	Good
6	Batam Free Trade Zone and Free Port Authority	278	Good
7	Secretariat General of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK)	242	Poor

Source: Processed data from Meritopedia KASN

Based on the table above, it can be seen that among the Non-Structural Institutions (LNS) there are still LNS with a Merit System Index assessment result of "Less", namely the Secretariat General of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency. This is the background for the researcher to want to review in more depth matters relating to the Implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus at the Witness and Victim Protection

Agency (LPSK). LPSK based on Law Number 31 of 2014 concerning Amendments to Law Number 13 of 2006, is an institution that is tasked and authorized to provide protection and other rights to Witnesses and/or Victims as regulated in the law. Over time, the institutional strengthening of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) has been carried out with the stipulation of Presidential Regulation Number 60 of 2016 concerning the Secretariat

General of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency as amended by Presidential Regulation Number 87 of 2019 concerning Amendments to Presidential Regulation Number 60 of 2016 concerning the Secretariat General of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency. The Secretariat General is led by the Secretary General who in carrying out his duties and functions is responsible to the LPSK Leadership. The LPSK Secretariat General has the task of organizing the provision of administrative and substantive support to LPSK. One of the functions carried out is related to the development and provision of administrative support for personnel and membership. In addition, the Secretary General

is the Personnel Development Officer within the Secretariat General and LPSK Representatives.

In accordance with the Minutes of Verification of the Results of the Independent Assessment of the Implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus within the Witness and Victim Protection Agency Number: BA.XX/PMPSM/SM2.KASN/XI/2023 dated November 13, 2023, it can be seen that the condition of the implementation of the Merit System at LPSK requires many improvements and improvements in HR management services in the future (see Table 2).

Table 2. Independent Assessment of the Implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus within the Witness and Victim Protection Agency in 2023

No	Aspects	Value	Maximum Value
1	Requirements Planning	37,5	40
2	Procurement	34	40
3	Career Development	40	120
4	Promotion and Transfer	17,5	40
5	Performance Management	57,5	80
6	Payroll, Rewards, Discipline	27,5	40
7	Protection and Service	8	16
8	Information System	20	24
Total		242	

Source: Minutes of Verification of Independent Assessment Results of the Implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus within the Witness and Victim Protection Agency Number: BA.XX/PMPSM/SM2.KASN/XI/2023 dated November 13, 2023.

The LPSK Merit System Index Value in 2023 with a score of 242 (two hundred and forty-two) is equivalent to an index score of 2.36 (two point thirty-six) from the highest index score of 4 (four). The higher the Merit System Index score, the more it will contribute to helping increase the index score in RB General with the final outcome of the Assessment Results of the Implementation of Bureaucratic Reform within the LPSK environment.

In the Results of the Implementation of Bureaucratic Reform within the LPSK environment in 2022, the LPSK Bureaucratic Reform Index in 2022 only touched 64.48 (sixty-four point forty-eight). This then has an impact on the percentage of the amount of the LPSK performance allowance which is still at

60% (sixty percent). The low value of performance allowances in the LPSK environment is one of the factors causing the lack of welfare of LPSK ASN which is still far below other Ministries and Institutions.

Based on the above, the results of the evaluation of the Implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management show the level of implementation of the merit system in each government institution and suggestions for improving aspects of ASN management that have not optimally met the merit principle. In addition, the Merit System Index is also an important indicator in the assessment of the General Bureaucratic Reform (RB) of government agencies. So it is also very important to increase the value of the Merit

System Index for LPSK by preparing strategic steps to overcome various problems that arise in the implementation of the Merit System in LPSK. After analyzing these things, the author is interested in studying in depth the factors that influence the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management in LPSK and the strategies needed to increase the value of the Merit System index in ASN Management in LPSK.

METHOD

The method used in this study will use a qualitative descriptive approach by looking at the phenomena and realities in natural conditions experienced by researchers and informants directly related to the Merit System Index assessment process in ASN Management. This study will create a strategy by looking at aspects of employee placement including types, factors, and criteria for employee placement based on the merit system. According to Pugu (2024), the data analysis process is carried out inductively, and the data sources in this study are descriptive. The informants involved in the research were employees of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK) and the State Civil Service Commission (KASN) consisting of the Secretary General of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency, Head of the General and Personnel Bureau of the Secretariat General of the Witness and Victim Protection Agency, Human Resource Management and Development Team at the General and Personnel Bureau, Secretariat General of LPSK, Organization and Implementation Team at the Bureau of Law, Cooperation, and Public Relations, Secretariat General of LPSK, and Employees at the Assistant for Supervision of the Implementation of the Merit System Region 2, State Civil Service Commission (KASN), who can later provide information to answer the research questions.

RESULT and DISCUSSION

1. Factors Affecting the Merit System Index Value in State Civil Apparatus Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency

The Merit System is a fundamental pillar in realizing a clean, professional, and service-oriented bureaucracy. The implementation of the Merit System in State Civil Apparatus Management can guarantee the quality and competence of ASN, because the Merit System ensures that the ASN recruitment process is carried out transparently and objectively, based on measurable qualifications, competencies, and performance. This ensures that the selected ASN are individuals who have the best abilities to carry out their duties. In addition, the Merit System encourages the development of ASN competencies in a sustainable manner through training and development. Thus, ASN can improve the quality of public services and keep up with the times.

The implementation of the Merit System allows government organizations to be more flexible in dealing with change. With a job rotation and promotion system based on performance, organizations can be more adaptive to new challenges. By optimizing ASN performance, organizations can achieve better results at lower costs. The implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management is the key to building a professional, effective, and efficient bureaucracy. This is what prompted LPSK to start assessing the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management in 2023. By consistently implementing the Merit System, LPSK hopes to improve the quality of public services in protecting witnesses and victims, preventing the occurrence of KKN practices, and realizing the ideals of a good and prosperous country.

Based on the Verification Results of the Merit System Index Assessment Aspects in ASN Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency in 2023, it can be seen that the State Civil Service Commission (KASN) provides

notes on all aspects of the Merit System Index assessment. Therefore, it is very important for LPSK to determine the best strategy to be able to follow up on these notes in order to increase the Merit System Index Value at LPSK. LPSK then slowly tried to realize this through the Merit System Index Assessment in ASN Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency in 2024 based on the

Decree of the State Civil Service Commission Number: 02/KEP.KASN/C/IV/2024 concerning the Determination of Categories, Assessments, and Indexes for the Implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus within the Witness and Victim Protection Agency with the following recommendations:

Table 3. Independent Assessment of the Implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus within the Witness and Victim Protection Agency in 2024

No	Aspects	Value	Maximum Value
1	Requirements Planning	40	40
2	Procurement	34	40
3	Career Development	50	120
4	Promotion and Transfer	20	40
5	Performance Management	62,5	80
6	Payroll, Rewards, Discipline	27,5	40
7	Protection and Service	8	16
8	Information System	20	24
Total		262	

Source: Decree of the State Civil Service Commission Number: 02/KEP.KASN/C/IV/2024 concerning the Determination of Categories, Assessments, and Indexes for the Implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus within the Witness and Victim Protection Agency, 2024.

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there has been an increase in the Merit System Index Value in ASN Management at LPSK from previously in 2023 with a value of 242 (two hundred and forty-two) Category II (Poor), to a value of 262 (two hundred and sixty-two) Category III (Good) in 2024. However, the increase in the LPSK Merit System Index value still leaves a lot of homework, because LPSK achieved a value of 262 (two hundred and sixty-two) from the highest score of the Merit System Index value of 400 (four hundred). In order to move up from Category III (Good) to Category IV (Very Good), LPSK still has to achieve a score of 325 (three hundred and twenty five) or still has to meet 63 (sixty three) points from the current Merit System Index score. Therefore, to improve the quality of the Implementation of the Merit

System in ASN Management at LPSK, the State Civil Service Commission (KASN) provides notes and recommendations for improvement and increase in the LPSK Merit System Index score in order to achieve Category IV (Very Good) in the future.

The problems found in the assessment of the Merit System Index in State Civil Service Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency can be seen through research on the factors that influence the Merit System Index Score in ASN Management using the theories of Gary Dessler, Byars and Rue, as well as research by Sandinirwan et al., including regulations, leadership, diversity, digital transformation, organizational culture, and politics. For this reason, the researcher will describe the results of interviews and document

reviews that have been obtained from field research.

In addition to the interview results, researchers also conducted document reviews and triangulation in research interviews and confirmed information from one informant to another, so that the information obtained was accurate and up-to-date. After collecting all the qualitative data, it was concluded that the basic question in this study was what factors influence the Merit System Index Value in ASN Management at LPSK as follows:

a) Legislative Regulations

The implementation of the Merit System in Indonesia is greatly influenced by existing regulations, which aim to create a fair, transparent, and non-discriminatory work environment. Therefore, organizations must integrate these regulations into their Human Resources policies to achieve optimal results and to comply with applicable laws. The influence of statutory regulations on the implementation of the Merit System is very significant. These regulations ensure that the Human Resources Management process is carried out fairly and transparently, reducing discrimination, and encouraging the competencies needed in the organization. Therefore, organizations need to always pay attention to and comply with applicable regulations to optimize the implementation of the Merit System in the context of a healthy and productive work environment.

Researchers found a clear discrepancy between the implementation of the Merit System and other related laws and regulations. Gary Dessler (2017) said that statutory regulations

should establish a legal framework for organizations in implementing the Merit System. Primarily to protect employee rights and promote justice. However, in reality, the implementation of this Merit System in terms of protection aspects for ASN has not been supported by laws and regulations, which comprehensively regulate additional protection guarantees for ASN in government agencies.

In addition, the dissolution of the State Civil Service Commission (KASN) as stipulated in Law Number 20 of 2023 concerning State Civil Apparatus, according to researchers, also has several impacts on the implementation of the Merit System in government agencies. KASN, which previously functioned as an independent supervisory institution that ensured the implementation of the merit system in ASN management. With its dissolution, supervision may be less effective, which can affect objectivity and accountability in the recruitment and management of ASN. Furthermore, there is a risk of increased political intervention in decisions related to ASN Management, such as the appointment and placement of employees which should be based on achievement and competence rather than political affiliation.

b) Leadership

Effective leadership can facilitate the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management in government agencies. According to the principles stated by Dessler, leadership plays a key role in the successful implementation of the Merit System. By ensuring that the organizational structure supports fair and transparent assessments,

and that employees are supported and motivated, leaders can foster a productive and fair work environment.

Although commitments and programs have been made and implemented by LPSK, a periodic monitoring and evaluation system is still needed to assess the effectiveness of the implementation of the Merit System in LPSK and make improvements if necessary. The commitment of the LPSK Leadership will later be seen in the initiative to improve weaknesses found during the evaluation. In addition, the implementation of the Merit System in LPSK requires transparency in the decision-making process related to Human Resources, as well as accountability from the LPSK leadership to maintain employee and public trust. Encouraging active participation from all employees in the policy-making process related to the implementation of the Merit System also shows the commitment of the LPSK Leadership to the success of this system. With a strong commitment from the LPSK Leadership, the implementation of the merit system in LPSK can run effectively and sustainably, encourage professionalism, and improve the performance and quality of public services.

Regarding the less than optimal implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management in LPSK, which has caused the low Merit System Index Value in LPSK from the LPSK Leadership side, LPSK must formulate strategic steps to improve the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management in LPSK to increase the LPSK Merit System

Index Value. The policies and full commitment of the LPSK Leadership greatly determine the strategic policies and strengthening of the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management in LPSK. In addition, the participatory and transformational leadership style applied by the team leader in the LPSK environment is quite effective in supporting the implementation of the Merit System, because it has an approach that supports and strengthens the principles of meritocracy. Participatory leaders involve employees in the decision-making process, which creates a sense of ownership and increases commitment to results. Transformational leaders have a clear vision and are able to inspire employees to achieve greater organizational goals, in line with improving individual performance.

c) iversity

Diversity can enrich the work environment and strengthen the implementation of the Merit System as long as the organization has the right mechanism to assess performance objectively and fairly. The combination of diversity and meritocracy, if managed well, can provide significant competitive advantages for the organization. Byars and Rue (Byars et al., 2011) stated that diversity can affect the implementation of the Merit System in terms of equal opportunities, reduced bias, improved performance and innovation, implementation challenges, and inclusive leadership.

LPSK has established objective and transparent criteria in the selection of training participants and ensures that all employees

have equal opportunities based on performance, potential, and competency development needs, not based on favoritism or non-professional factors. In addition, efforts to ensure that information and access to training opportunities are evenly distributed to all employees have been made, so that no one is left behind simply because of a lack of information or administrative constraints. The implementation of individual training needs analysis has been prepared by LPSK to help identify the development areas needed for each employee, ensuring that everyone can take part in training that is relevant to their duties and responsibilities.

In addition, the diversity factor also influences the understanding of ASN in LPSK regarding the importance of the Merit System to be implemented in ASN Management in LPSK. The understanding of ASN LPSK regarding the implementation of the Merit System varies widely. Some consider it important, while many do not understand the essence of implementing the Merit System. Then, the low understanding of ASN in LPSK regarding the importance of implementing the Merit System and its benefits for the agency causes efforts to strengthen the implementation of the Merit System in LPSK to be less than optimal. The heavy workload with high job risks causes ASN LPSK to only concentrate on carrying out work as a routine that must be carried out so that they have not been able to understand the role of the Merit System in carrying out tasks and positions.

d) Digital Transformation

Digital transformation is the key to realizing a more transparent, efficient, and accountable Merit System in Indonesia. By utilizing technology, the government can create a modern and performance-oriented ASN management system. Sandinirwan et al. (Sandinirwan et al., 2022) reviewed the importance of the Personnel Information System as a form of digital transformation in personnel services. This system plays an important role in increasing efficiency, transparency, and accuracy in Human Resource Management, especially in the context of implementing the Merit System at LPSK.

LPSK has utilized the Personnel Information System which helps in centralized and integrated employee data management. Digital data storage reduces bureaucracy and manual errors that often occur in conventional data management. With more accurate and easily accessible data, decision-making at LPSK regarding career development, performance appraisals, and promotions can be carried out based on reliable and relevant information. This system allows more transparent access to personnel information. Employees can see their own data, performance appraisals, and other related information, which increases trust in HR management policies and practices. The digital system also facilitates various administrative services for personnel, from submitting leave to evaluating performance, more quickly and responsively.

The obstacles that arise in the implementation of the digital

transformation actually come from the use of applications issued by related agencies, such as in this case several applications issued by BKN such as SIMPEGNAS (National Personnel Information System), SIAN (State Civil Apparatus Information System) and e-Kinerja. Bugs and errors often appear in the use of these applications, plus there are often updates to the type of service which then results in LPSK being unable to access several other services. Not to mention the problem of features that cannot be used yet, for one reason or another. This certainly greatly hinders personnel data management services based on digital information technology.

e) Organizational Culture

Organizational culture has a significant influence on the implementation of the Merit System in Indonesia. The Merit System, which is based on the principles of performance and competency assessment, requires support from a harmonious organizational culture to be implemented effectively. To implement the Merit System effectively, organizations in Indonesia need to consciously develop a culture that supports merit-based performance assessment. This can involve training, policy changes, and adaptation of communication strategies to ensure that all members of the organization understand and support the Merit System. Thus, organizational culture serves as a strong foundation for maximizing the benefits of this Merit System in the workplace. Sandinirwan et al. (Sandinirwan et al., 2022) reviewed that organizational culture has a

significant influence on the implementation of the Merit System in government organizations.

The role of LPSK leadership in instilling a culture that supports the Merit System is quite visible. LPSK leaders are required to practice performance and competency-based evaluations by providing real examples for other employees. An organizational culture that supports open communication will be better able to implement the Merit System effectively. A clear and transparent explanation of how the system works helps overcome miscommunication and suspicion. A culture that supports collaboration and cooperation between employees can strengthen the implementation of the Merit System, where individual success also contributes to team success and vice versa.

The success of the implementation of the Merit System is highly dependent on how well the LPSK organizational culture supports the principle of fair and competency-based performance appraisal. It is expected that through a good organizational culture, the implementation of the Merit System will also be good. The implementation of a good Merit System will clearly have an impact on the LPSK Merit System Index value which also has an impact on the amount of performance allowances for ASN in the LPSK environment. This is because the Merit System Index is an assessment indicator in the sub-component of the Achievement of the Implementation of Bureaucratic Reform Policies in the RB General component. The results of the

Bureaucratic Reform assessment are used as one of the indicators to determine the amount of performance allowances in government agencies. Thus, by developing a culture that is consistent with meritocratic values, the organization can strengthen its commitment to objective assessments and improve employee motivation and performance as a whole.

f) Politics

The implementation of the Merit System in the Management of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) in Indonesia is closely related to various political dynamics. Although the Merit System is a principle that prioritizes professionalism, competence, and qualifications in the recruitment and management of ASN, its implementation can still be influenced by politics. In bureaucratic practice, the placement and appointment of high-ranking officials are often influenced by political affiliation. Although the Merit System emphasizes objective assessment based on ability, placement decisions can be colored by political interests, where individuals with certain political affiliations or support gain advantages.

The implementation of the Merit System is often part of a broader bureaucratic reform effort. The government can encourage this reform to increase efficiency and transparency. However, politics plays an important role, because reform requires support from various parties, including parliament, which has its own political interests. Without adequate political support, reform can be hampered. Sandinirwan et al.

(Sandinirwan et al., 2022) also reviewed that politics can also facilitate the practice of corruption and nepotism, which is very contrary to the principle of meritocracy.

In facing the challenges in implementing the Merit System, LPSK needs to implement specific steps to encourage the implementation of an effective Merit System in LPSK, such as strengthening internal regulations that support meritocracy, increasing transparency and accountability, and ensuring the existence of a supervisory mechanism that is free from political influence. In addition, it is necessary to increase awareness and education regarding the importance of the Merit System at all levels of stakeholders in LPSK can also help strengthen the implementation of the Merit System in LPSK.

Based on all the explanations regarding the factors that influence the Merit System Index Value in the Management of State Civil Apparatus in the Witness and Victim Protection Agency, the researcher concluded that all factors ranging from regulations, leadership, diversity, digital transformation, organizational culture, and politics have a crucial role in increasing the Merit System Index Value in LPSK.

2. Strategy to Increase the Merit System Index Value in State Civil Apparatus Management at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency

Based on the description of the discussion of factors that can influence the increase in the Merit System Index Value in ASN Management at LPSK, in general there are several strategies that can be considered by LPSK in order to increase

the Merit System Index Value in ASN Management, including the following:

- a. Development of Clear and Transparent Policies. Formulate and implement ASN management policies that are clear, transparent, and oriented towards performance and competence. This policy must cover the entire process from recruitment, promotion, to career development.
- b. Strengthening the Recruitment and Selection System. Ensure that recruitment and selection are carried out objectively and transparently through competency and achievement-based mechanisms. This process must also be free from non-professional intervention to ensure equal opportunity.
- c. Objective Performance Assessment. Develop and implement a performance assessment system based on measurable indicators that are relevant to the duties and functions of each employee. Constructive and ongoing feedback must be part of this assessment.
- d. Continuous Development and Training Program. Provide access to relevant training and competency development programs for all levels of employees, to continuously improve their skills and potential.
- e. Strengthening Accountability and Integrity. Building a culture of accountability and integrity at every level of the organization. Employees must be responsible for their work and monitoring measures to ensure integrity are necessary for the merit system to run effectively.
- f. Performance-Based Rewards and Performance Allowances. Implementing a fair performance reward and allowance system based on employee performance and contribution to achieving organizational goals.
- g. Improving Managerial Capability. Training all elements of LPSK personnel to apply the principles of the merit system properly, including providing guidance, support, and fair assessments to their employees.
- h. Periodic Monitoring and Evaluation. Conducting periodic monitoring and evaluation of the implementation of the merit system. The results of this evaluation can be used to make improvements and adjustments to the strategies implemented.
- i. Building an Inclusive and Collaborative Culture. Creating an inclusive work environment, where differences are valued and every employee feels they have an equal opportunity to contribute.
- j. Effective and Participatory Communication. Encourage open communication between management and employees regarding strategies, goals, and progress in implementing the merit system.

However, if we explicitly examine the results of the analysis of the Merit System Index assessment in ASN Management at LPSK and the review of strategy theory in the previous chapter, what is really needed is an applicable and technical strategy so that it can be implemented actually and comprehensively. Therefore, the researcher proposes an applicable strategy that can be directly executed by relevant stakeholders at LPSK so that the Merit System Index Value in ASN LPSK Management can increase. This strategy is divided into 3 (three) time periods, namely short term, medium term, and long term. The division of this strategy based on this time period allows the organization and related stakeholders to gradually increase the Merit System Index Value in an effective and efficient manner. This is also to ensure that each step is implemented at the right time with the

appropriate allocation of resources and budget capabilities, so as to produce maximum and sustainable impact.

1. Short-Term Strategy

a. Socialization and Training:

- 1) Comprehensive socialization to all ASN LPSK employees regarding the concept and benefits of implementing the Merit System in ASN Management at LPSK.
- 2) Structured training for ASN to be able to improve their competence according to the Job Competency Standards.
- 3) Educational materials in the form of guides, videos, and seminars on the Implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management at LPSK.

b. Determination of Policies and Regulations:

- 1) Recommendations for proposed policies to strengthen the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management at LPSK in a comprehensive manner are submitted to the Ministry of PAN and RB and BKN.
- 2) Determination of internal regulations for the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management at LPSK.

c. Appointment of the Merit System Index Improvement Working Team:

Formation of a special competent working team to improve the Merit System Index in ASN Management at LPSK.

d. Development of the Personnel Information System:

- 1) Development of the SIMPELKAN LPSK application to accommodate performance history;

- 2) Recommendations for proposed updates to service features in the SIMPEGNAS and SIASN BKN applications are submitted to BKN.

2. Medium-Term Strategy

a. Merit System Evaluation:

- 1) Routine evaluation of the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management at LPSK.
- 2) Surveys and interviews with ASN employees to obtain direct feedback on the implementation of the Merit System in ASN Management at LPSK.

b. Talent Management:

- 1) Talent Management Program and digitalized talent pool to map 9 (Nine) talent boxes of ASN employees.
- 2) Promotion of Learning Culture, Smart ASN LPSK.

c. Transparency and Accountability:

- 1) Publication of performance assessment results transparently to all ASN LPSK employees.
- 2) Employee Consultation Services are accessed by all ASN LPSK employees.

d. Awards:

- 1) The LPSK Paritrana Award is implemented.
- 2) Monthly and Annual Exemplary Employees who excel, become good role models, and provide excellent public services.

3. Long-Term Strategy

a. Bureaucratic Culture Transformation:

Promotion of Meritocracy for Superior LPSK ASN

b. Career Development Program:

LPSK Individual Development Plan (IDP) accommodates coaching mentoring process

c. Collaboration:

- 1) Cooperation with Educational Institutions for the implementation of Study Assignments;
- 2) Benchmark or study tour to Ministries/Institutions with Merit System Index Value of "Very Good".

d. Continuous Innovation:

Online learning technology for competency development for ASN employees within LPSK.

The strategy presented above can be implemented by the LPSK Leadership as policy makers, the work teams involved in the Merit System Index assessment, and implemented by LPSK ASN employees who are the main subjects of the Merit System Index assessment. By implementing the strategy gradually and continuously, it is hoped that the Merit System Index assessment in ASN Management at LPSK can increase, thereby improving the quality of public services, creating a fairer and more productive work environment, and improving the welfare of ASN at LPSK.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of observations, interviews, and documents on the assessment of the Merit System Index in the Management of State Civil Apparatus (ASN) at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency (LPSK), it can be concluded that increasing the Merit System Index Value in ASN Management at LPSK still faces a number of challenges that require improvement and enhancement in the future. Although efforts have been made to implement the policy of increasing the Merit System Index Value, there are several key variables that affect its smoothness and success. In facing this challenge, a joint effort is needed between various related stakeholders to make the necessary improvements and adjustments to

ensure that the Merit System Index in ASN Management at LPSK obtains a high score and provides maximum benefits for the LPSK organization.

Based on the explanation of each variable in the previous chapter, the researcher concluded that the cause of the Low Merit System Index Value in the Management of State Civil Apparatus at the Witness and Victim Protection Agency was influenced by regulatory factors, leadership, diversity, digital transformation, organizational culture, and politics.

Furthermore, based on the results of the analysis of the causes of the low Merit System Index Value in ASN Management at LPSK, various strategies have been formulated in 3 (three) different time periods. Short-term strategies include socialization and training, policy and regulation determination, appointment of a Merit System Index improvement work team, and development of the Personnel Information System. Medium-term strategies include evaluation of the Merit System, Talent Management, transparency and accountability, and awards. Then long-term strategies include bureaucratic culture transformation, career development programs, collaboration, and continuous innovation.

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