

The Influence of Professionalism and Competence on Employee Performance at the Food Security and Agriculture Service of Kuningan Regency

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ARTICLE INFO

Received: 18 Dec 2024

Revised: 10 Feb 2025

Accepted: 28 Feb 2025

ABSTRACT

This research is based on the emerging issue of suboptimal performance among the staff of the Food Security and Agriculture Office in Kuningan Regency. The problem identified above is suspected to be caused by the lack of optimal implementation of professionalism and employee competence. Therefore, this study aims to measure the extent to which professionalism and competence affect the performance of employees at the Food Security and Agriculture Office in Kuningan Regency. The research employs a quantitative approach, using an explanatory survey method. Data collection techniques include observation, questionnaires, and interviews, while data analysis is performed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM), which is substantively aimed at testing the research hypothesis. SEM has advantages that are not possessed by other multivariate statistical techniques, particularly its ability to estimate relationships between variables under study. The findings indicate that professionalism has a significant and substantial impact on employee performance when considered in isolation. This implies that professionalism plays a crucial role in improving the performance of employees within the Food Security and Agriculture Office in Kuningan Regency. The dimension with the greatest influence is maintaining good relationships with clients (the public), while the dimension with the least influence is the ability to demonstrate oneself as a professional. The novel concept in this perspective includes work experience, work motivation, and work culture. On the other hand, employee competence has a relatively small and less significant effect on performance. This suggests that employee competence is considered less dominant and less decisive in improving the performance of employees at the Food Security and Agriculture Office in Kuningan Regency. The dimension with the greatest influence on employee performance is self-concept, while the dimension with the least influence is skill characteristics. The novel concept in this perspective is work compliance. When considered simultaneously, professionalism and employee competence have a very significant and substantial impact on the performance of employees at the Food Security and Agriculture Office in Kuningan Regency. This indicates that both professionalism and employee competence are highly dominant in influencing employee performance.

Keywords: Professionalism, Employee Competence, Employee Performance.

INTRODUCTION

Law No. 22 of 2014 on Regional Government serves as one of the legal foundations for the development of regional autonomy in Indonesia. This law states that the development of autonomy at the regency and city levels is carried out by considering the principles of democracy, public participation, equity, and justice, while also taking into account the potential and diversity of each region. The autonomy granted to regencies and cities is implemented by providing broad, tangible, and responsible authority to local governments in a proportional manner. This means that the delegation of responsibility will be accompanied by a fair distribution, management, and utilization of national resources, as well as a balance between central and regional finances.

In line with the above context, Rasyid (2010:2) states that “Granting autonomy to the government is essential in democratic politics because it provides broader opportunities for citizens to engage in the political process, make decisions based on regional needs, educate the public on democracy, develop political leadership, and facilitate the delivery of services.” This statement implies that local governments face the challenge of being able to manage governmental affairs and development more actively and innovatively, with the right, obligation, and authority to manage their own affairs to improve the quality of public services.

The increasing public demand for optimal public services cannot be avoided, as advancements in science and technology require fast and timely public services. Therefore, public demands have shifted to become a necessity for the government to provide the best services for the public. Consequently, government officials are required to enhance their professionalism so that they can respond to societal dynamics and needs. This aligns with Rasyid’s (2010) view that: “Improving the professionalism of bureaucrats is a necessity. After all, the government’s ability to respond to various changes and new demands continually emerging in society can only be maintained if its officials possess a high level of professionalism.”

In addition to enhancing professionalism, improving the competence of government officials is also a crucial factor in supporting the improvement of service quality provided to the public. Thus, government officials are expected to carry out their duties and functions as public servants and demonstrate high performance. In line with this, Ruky (2003:110) suggests that employee competence is referred to as “core competencies,” which are groups of competencies that must be possessed by everyone in an organization. Furthermore, Ruky (2003:111) states, “These employee competencies must be possessed by every employee, and they include integrity, leadership, planning and organizing, teamwork, and flexibility.” This implies that employee competence plays a critical role in determining their performance in achieving success.

Research by Jefri Iswanto (2017) found that employee competence and professionalism simultaneously have a significant impact on employee performance at BPJS Employment in Pekanbaru City. These findings suggest that improving employee or official performance is empirically influenced by competence and professionalism. Professionalism is reflected in officials' ability to provide services to the public and is supported by adequate expertise in performing their duties and responsibilities. This attitude also reflects the high performance of officials in carrying out their tasks. Support for this statement can be seen from the research by Alamsyah et al. (2013), which shows that bureaucratic professionalism and motivation empirically contribute to employee performance at the Department of Fisheries and Marine Affairs in West Java Province. Further reinforcement of this finding is provided by Andi Nur Calla (2023), who explained that competence and professionalism of officials have a positive and significant effect on their performance at the Regional Secretariat of Pangkajene and Kepulauan Regency.

Observations made at the Food Security and Agriculture Office in Kuningan Regency show that the performance of officials in carrying out their duties and responsibilities is still not optimal. This can be seen from several indicators as follows: First, in terms of timeliness in performing their duties, officials are considered not yet fully able to utilize their working hours effectively. This is evident from the relatively high rate of absenteeism among employees. Second, in terms of adhering to proper work standards by following rules and guidelines, some employees still “dare” to violate the regulations established by the institution. This is seen during working and break hours, as some officials are still late returning to work, and many employees seem to “drag out” their break times, disregarding the institution’s designated break time from 12:00 to 13:00.

Support for the emergence of various indications of the above problems can be seen in the table below:

Table 1: Employee Performance at the Food Security and Agriculture Office in Kuningan Regency

No	Task Description	Target	Realization	Remarks
1	Financial reporting in the Sub-Substance of Finance	No later than the 5th of the following month	Work completed on the 10th	Delayed by 5 working days
2	Timeliness of work in the Subdivision of General Affairs and Personnel	Work must be completed by the 27th of the	Completed on the 29th	Delayed by 2 working days

		following month		
3	Employee initiative in the Junior Expert Food Security Analyst	Preparation of technical policy materials	Work completed in 1 month (30 days)	Delayed by 1 week
4	Work communication in the Subdivision of General Affairs and Personnel	A solid work team	Lack of harmony in communication between employees	Work neglected
5	Employee discipline level at the Food Security and Agriculture Office	Attendance level: 4 working days per week	2% of employee attendance target not achieved	Disrupts public services
6	Statistical data reporting at the Food Security and Agriculture Office	Data collection conducted quarterly	Data collection delayed by an average of 5 days	Statistical data reporting delayed
7	Monitoring and evaluation of development plans in Food Security and Agriculture	M&E should be conducted quarterly	M&E often carried out in the second semester	M&E control not as expected

Source: Food Security and Agriculture Office of Kuningan Regency, 2023

These various problem indicators are suspected to be caused by the lack of optimal implementation of professionalism and competence among the employees of the Food Security and Agriculture Office of Kuningan Regency.

LITERATURE REVIEW

A professional individual should be able to bear the responsibilities entrusted to them, whether personal, social, intellectual, or moral. In the work environment, professionalism serves as a benchmark to determine whether an employee falls into the professional category or not. In line with this, Rasyid (2010) states: "Improving the quality of bureaucratic professionalism is a necessity. After all, the government's ability to respond to various changes and emerging demands in society can only be maintained if its officials possess a high level of professionalism."

The above perspective implies that professionalism is a required attitude for employees in achieving organizational goals in accordance with the established vision and mission. In this context, Rasyid (2010) also asserts that: "A professional and responsive civil servant cannot be evaluated from a single aspect but must be assessed from various perspectives. In addition to their expertise and skills, their mentality also needs to be considered." This view clearly shows that a professional individual essentially possesses expertise, skills, and commendable mental attitudes. Furthermore, professionalism guarantees that their actions and work are in the best condition from the perspective of all stakeholders.

In line with the above context, Setiono (2004:35) explains that to encourage the professional attitude of officials, at least two values need to be developed: first, their duties and roles must always aim to serve the public interest; second, the professionalism of officials must be based on education and rational specialization. Similar sentiments are expressed by Maister in Sobandi (2002:64), who states: "Professionalism is a matter of attitude, not a set of competencies. A true professional is a technician who cares." Furthermore, Sobandi (2002:64) identifies six characteristics of bureaucratic professionalism, which are:

1. Expertise: Employees must master their work, understand their tasks, and have a thorough comprehension of the problems they face.
2. Autonomy: Employees should be independent, without any dependencies, have their own stance, and be capable of standing on their own.
3. Responsibility for their work: Employees should be earnest in their work, apply their full capabilities, and take responsibility for all outcomes.

4. Ability to demonstrate professionalism: Employees should have discipline, skills, and competence in their work.
5. Adherence to professional ethics: Employees should exhibit honesty in their work, prioritize the institution's interests, and be consistent in their duties.
6. Maintaining good relationships with others (the community): Employees should be responsible for their duties, foster interaction, and collaborate with fellow employees.

Professionalism in a bureaucrat when carrying out duties and responsibilities is one of the key factors in improving the performance of personnel within an organization. The relationship between professionalism and employee performance is highlighted by Sobandi (2002:64), who asserts that: "Bureaucratic professionalism is a behavior, a goal, or a set of qualities that characterize or describe the nature of a profession held by bureaucrats in performing their work."

In addition to a professional attitude, strengthening the performance of personnel also requires competence. In line with this, Shadily (2000:26) defines competence as "ability or skill." Similarly, Usmara (2002:152) states that "competence is a basic characteristic consisting of skills, knowledge, and other personal attributes that can differentiate between those who perform and those who do not." These views emphasize that the core of any competency system or model is to serve as a tool to predict an individual's success in the position they hold.

In the same context, Harits (2002:110) explains that competence is built upon six elements, which are:

1. Skills: The abilities that enable employees to perform their work well.
2. Knowledge: The level of understanding employees have about specific subjects or tasks.
3. Social Role: The image or role presented by the employee in front of the community.
4. Personal Image: The individual's perception of personal values and beliefs.
5. Traits: The inherent characteristics that employees have developed over time.
6. Motives: The subconscious thoughts and preferences that drive an individual's behavior.

However, it must be understood that each organization has different applications of competence. This variation is due to the absence of standard requirements for occupying certain positions and determining appropriate training for personnel according to their talents and abilities. In line with this context, the employee (personnel) competence, which is one of the variables examined in this research, is based on the competency parameters as described by Spencer in Moeheriono (2009:16), who explains five characteristics of employee competence as follows:

1. Motives (motif), something that is continuously thought of or consistently desired by a person, thus becoming a reason for acting, moving, directing, and choosing behavior towards actions or goals and others.
2. Trait (sifat), a character that makes a person behave or how someone responds to something in a certain way.
3. Self-concept (konsep diri), the attitudes and values that a person possesses, assessed and measured through tests on someone to know the values that a person has to do something.
4. Knowledge (pengetahuan), the information possessed by a person in a specific field, in other words, knowledge is what someone can do, not what they will do.
5. Skill (keterampilan), the ability to perform certain physical or mental tasks that include analytical thinking (processing knowledge and data, determining cause and effect, organizing data, and planning something) and conceptual thinking.

Through these characteristics of employee competencies, it is hoped that government apparatus can carry out various activities within their organization and work in a focused manner, thereby optimizing the implementation of their duties and functions. The relationship between employee competence and employee performance is explained by Munandar (2002:45), who states that "employee competence individually indicates the individual's role in relation to employee performance." Based on this explanation, it is evident that employee competence plays a crucial role in developing and executing the organization's objectives optimally.

On the other hand, employee performance refers to an employee's ability to carry out tasks and responsibilities within the organization/agency optimally. In other words, employee performance is the capacity of individuals or groups/employees within the organization to carry out their work according to the expected or planned goals and objectives. In this context, Sedarmayanti (2007:52) states that "employee performance is work

achievement, work execution, work accomplishment, or work results for work/display performance.” Thus, performance encompasses what achievements employees have attained, how they perform their tasks, what they have achieved, and what they have produced.

The above opinion can be assumed that employee performance, often referred to as job performance, is a realization of planned results. Therefore, ideal performance is manifested when predetermined plans can be executed effectively and efficiently, achieving the established work results. In this regard, employee performance is essentially measured according to the organization’s interests. In this context, Wilson (2012:234) presents several dimensions that can measure an employee's performance, including:

1. The quantity of work in this dimension indicates the amount of work produced by an individual or group as a requirement that serves as the standard for the job.
2. The quality of work for each employee in the company must meet certain requirements in order to produce work that meets the quality demanded by a particular job.
3. Timeliness for each job has different characteristics; certain types of work must be completed on time, as they depend on other jobs.
4. Attendance for a particular type of job requires employees to be present to complete it within the specified time.
5. The ability to cooperate: not all work can be completed by a single employee alone. For certain types of work, it may need to be accomplished by two or more employees, making cooperation among employees essential.

The above perspective reflects that employee performance is ideally realized when the plans or predetermined arrangements can operate effectively and efficiently in achieving the previously established results. In this regard, Mangkunegara (2000:67) states that what is referred to as performance (work achievement) is “the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties according to the responsibilities assigned to them.”

In line with the research context, which positions employee performance as one of the variables studied, employee performance in this research is measured based on Mitchell's views as stated in Sedarmayanti (2017:51), which outlines the principles of employee performance as follows:

1. *Quality of Work* (Kualitas Kerja)
2. *Promptness* (Ketepatan Waktu)
3. *Initiative* (Inisiatif)
4. *Capability* (Kemampuan)
5. *Communication* (Komunikasi)

The relationship between the concepts of professionalism, competence, and employee performance is explained by the research findings of Wyan (2018), which state: “There is a significant and positive influence of human resource competence and professionalism on performance.” This research finding is in line with the study conducted by Oktriwani (2017), which found “a significant relationship between professionalism and human resource competence on employee performance.”

To illustrate the relationship among the various variables studied in this research, the researcher can explain the research framework as shown in the image below:

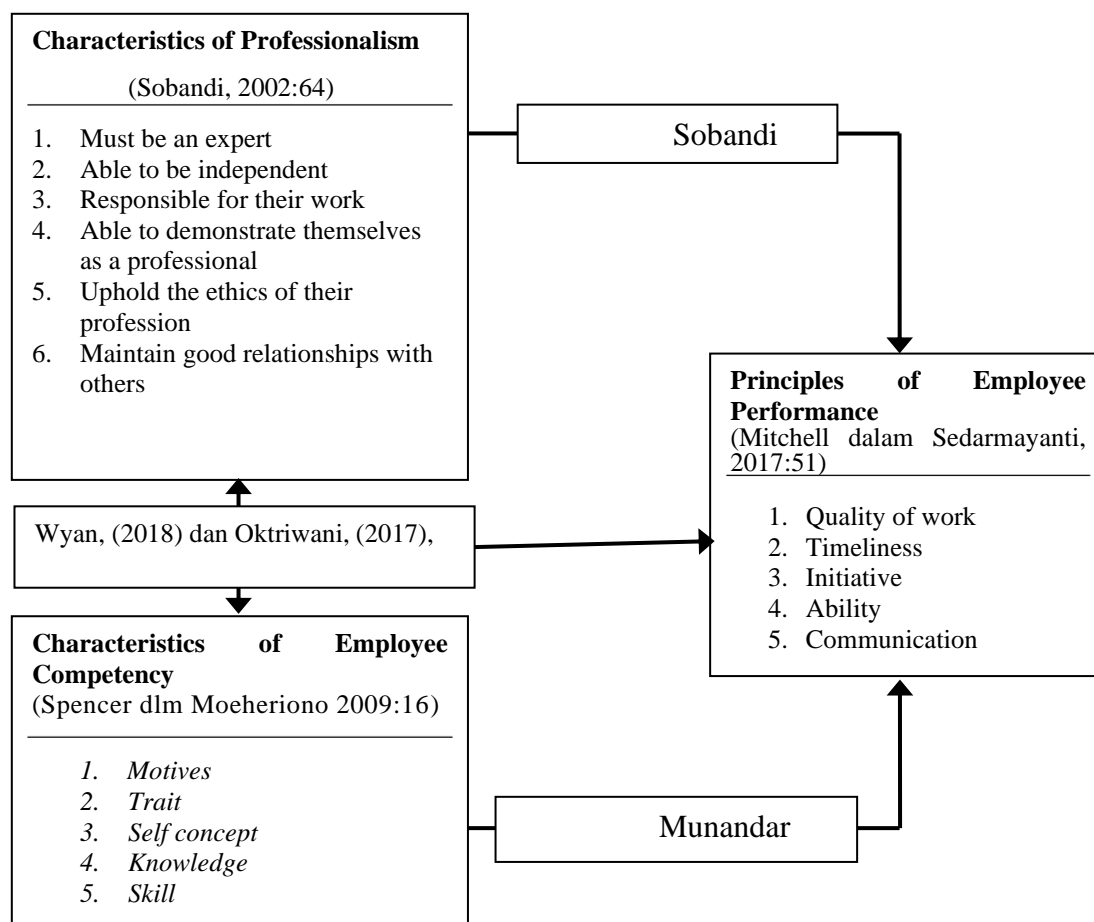


Figure 1 Research Framework

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The variables studied in this research include three variables, namely the variables of professionalism and employee competence as independent variables, and employee performance as a dependent variable. In this study, the unit of analysis consists of all the personnel in the environment of the Department of Food Security and Agriculture of Kuningan Regency, with a total number of respondents amounting to 259 individuals.

RESULTS OF VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY TESTING OF DATA

Testing of the question items can be conducted by correlating each item with the total score of the factor. The results of the validity test for the professionalism variable (X_1) can be seen in the table below:

Table 2 Results of Validity Test for Professionalism Variable (X_1)

Item	R	r table	Decision
1	0,671	0.157	Valid
2	0,655	0.157	Valid
3	0,577	0.157	Valid
4	0,486	0.157	Valid
5	0,615	0.157	Valid
6	0,470	0.157	Valid
7	0,640	0.157	Valid
8	0,501	0.157	Valid
9	0,484	0.157	Valid
10	0,649	0.157	Valid

11	0,617	0.157	Valid
12	0,598	0.157	Valid
13	0,674	0.157	Valid
14	0,548	0.157	Valid
15	0,629	0.157	Valid
16	0,604	0.157	Valid
17	0,528	0.157	Valid
18	0,473	0.157	Valid

Source: Data Processing Results, 2024

Based on the table above, it can be seen that the instrument test for the professionalism variable identified that all statements were deemed valid, allowing all data to proceed to the next analysis. Next, the validity test for the employee competence variable (X_2) can be seen in the table below:

Table 3 Validity Test Results for Employee Competence Variable (X_2)

Item	R	r table	Decision
19	0,706	0.157	Valid
20	0,687	0.157	Valid
21	0,552	0.157	Valid
22	0,688	0.157	Valid
23	0,773	0.157	Valid
24	0,730	0.157	Valid
25	0,846	0.157	Valid
26	0,793	0.157	Valid
27	0,781	0.157	Valid
28	0,686	0.157	Valid
29	0,822	0.157	Valid
30	0,778	0.157	Valid
31	0,668	0.157	Valid
32	0,626	0.157	Valid
33	0,805	0.157	Valid

Source: Data Processing Results, 2024

The validity test for the employee performance variable, which consists of 15 statement items, indicates that all statement items are considered valid. The results of the validity test calculations can be explained in the table below:

Table 4 Validity Test Results for Variable Y (Employee Performance)

Item	R	r table	Decision
34	0,768	0.157	Valid
35	0,718	0.157	Valid
36	0,776	0.157	Valid
37	0,738	0.157	Valid
38	0,539	0.157	Valid
39	0,641	0.157	Valid
40	0,758	0.157	Valid
41	0,696	0.157	Valid
42	0,283	0.157	Valid
43	0,725	0.157	Valid
44	0,656	0.157	Valid
45	0,767	0.157	Valid
46	0,658	0.157	Valid
47	0,746	0.157	Valid
48	0,668	0.157	Valid

Source: Data Processing Results, 2024

An item is said to be valid if the r value or the correlation value between the item score and its total shows a significant coefficient. It is considered significant if the r_{tabel} value of the item is smaller than the r_{hitung} value, using the product moment correlation table and taking $\alpha = 0.05$ and $n = 259$. Based on these calculations, the r_{tabel} value obtained is 0.157. If there are any item statements that are invalid, then the data obtained cannot be used for further analysis.

RELIABILITY TEST OF THE QUESTIONNAIRE

The results of the research depend on the quality of the data analyzed and the instruments used to collect research data. The research instrument in this study is a questionnaire, so the data obtained from respondents will be tested for quality using validity and reliability tests. The purpose of the reliability test is to indicate the extent to which a measurement result is relatively consistent when the measurement is repeated two times or more. In other words, reliability is an index that indicates how trustworthy or dependable a measuring tool is when it is used two times or more to measure the same phenomenon, and the resulting characteristics obtained are relatively consistent.

Based on the data calculation results, the reliability coefficient decisions for each variable are as follows:

Table 5 Results of Reliability Test of Research Instruments

No	Research Variable	Reliability	*) Reference	Decision
1	Professionalism (X_1)	0.864	+0.85 – 0.88	Highly Reliable
2	Employee Competence (X_2)	0.936	+0.90 - +1.00	Highly Reliable
3	Employee Performance (Y)	0.900	+0.90 - +1.00	Reliable

Source: Data Processing Results 2024

In accordance with the above context, Balian (1988) in Soehartono (2004: 85) proposed guidelines for interpreting values based on reliability coefficients, as follows:

+0.90 - +1.00	:	extraordinary good / extraordinarily reliable
+0.85 - +0.88	:	very good / very reliable
+0.80 - +0.84	:	good / reliable
+0.70 - +0.79	:	fairly reliable
Less than 0.70	:	less reliable

The discussion of the results of this research is directed at explaining the influence of professionalism and competence on employee performance in the environment of the Food Security and Agriculture Office of Kuningan Regency. Therefore, the main structure in the paradigm of this research is to what extent the variables of professionalism and employee competence influence the variable of employee performance. The analysis method used in the hypothesis discussion is the Structural Equation Model (SEM). The results of the Structural Equation Model (SEM) in the structural path coefficients can be seen in the image below:

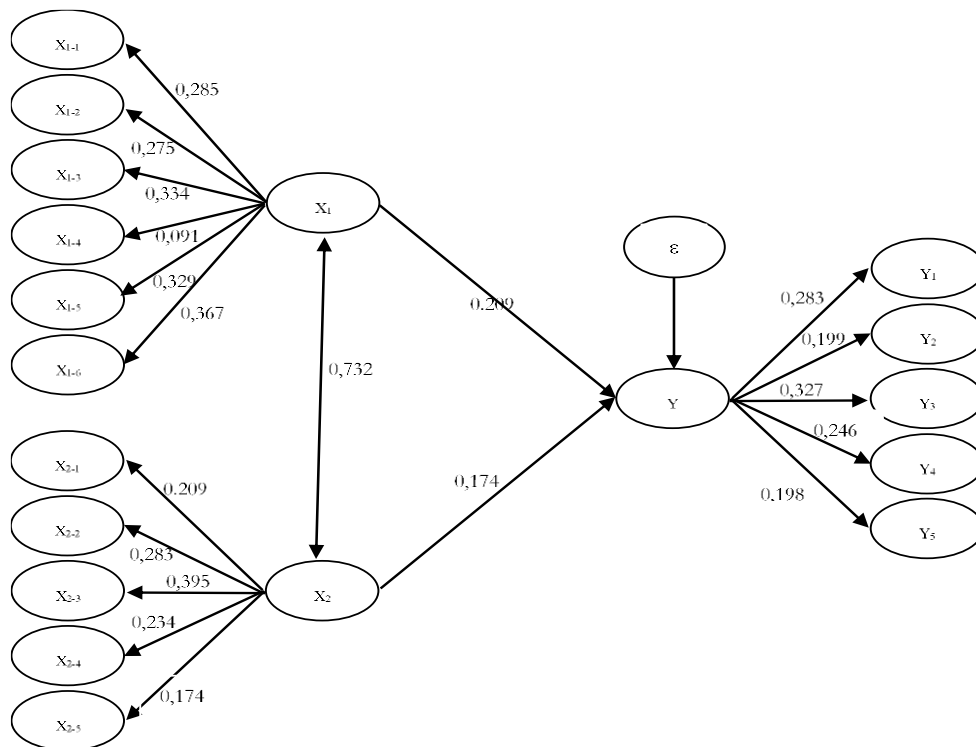


Figure 1 Complete SEM Diagram

Based on the Complete SEM diagram, the magnitude of the path coefficients of professionalism (X_1) and employee competence (X_2) towards employee performance (Y) can be written as a structural equation, namely:

$$Y = 0,720X_1 + 0,604 X_2 + \varepsilon$$

where:

- X_1 = Professionalism
 X_2 = Employee Competence
 Y = Employee Performance
 ε = Epsilon

Based on the structural model above, it can be observed that the path coefficients from the exogenous latent variables to the endogenous latent variable are positive. A positive coefficient indicates that the professionalism variables will partially enhance employee performance. In the structural model of employee performance, if professionalism increases by one unit, it will increase employee performance by 0.720 units. Similarly, employee competence will increase employee performance by 0.604 units.

The magnitude of the influence of these two variables can be more clearly seen in the following figure:

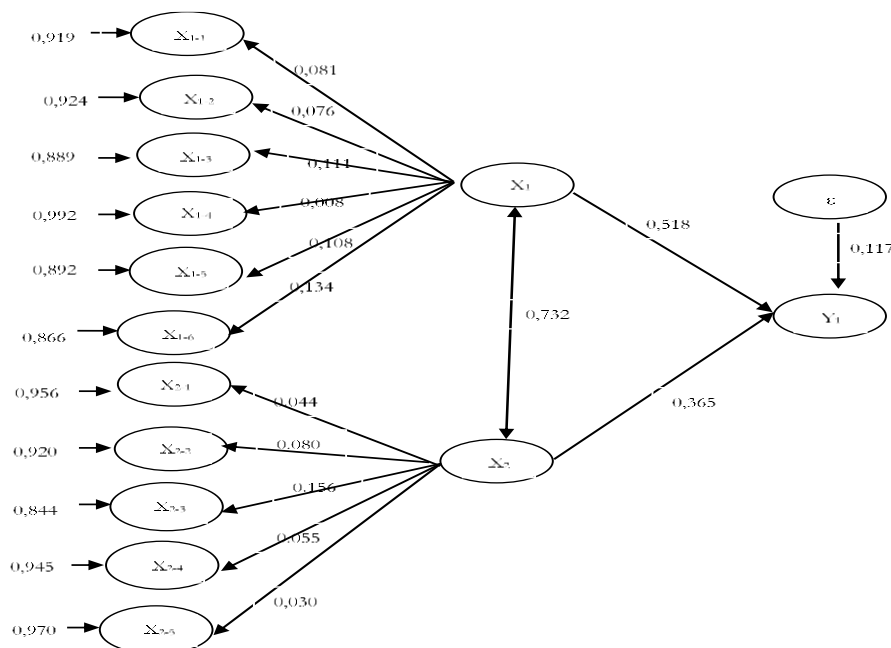


Figure 2 Structural Model of the Influence of Professionalism Variable X_1 and Employee Competence X_2 on Employee Performance (Y)

Based on the influence structural model above, it can be seen that the professionalism variable has an impact on employee performance of 51.8%, while the competency variable has an impact on employee performance of 36.5%. Thus, the total effect of both variables becomes 0.883 or 88.3%. Therefore, the error for this model is 0.117 or 11.7%, caused by variables outside the study.

The research results reveal that professionalism is an individual's ability and skills in performing tasks according to their respective fields and levels. This statement implies that a professional attitude is reflected in the abilities, expertise, skills, and mindset possessed, ensuring that each job produced truly displays optimal performance. In terms of improving employee performance, a professional attitude is clearly necessary to support the acceleration of that performance enhancement. Statistical tests indicate that professionalism has empirically provided a significant effect on the performance of employees at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office, amounting to 0.518 or 51.8%. This effect means that the research hypothesis stating: "professionalism measured through dimensions such as expertise, independence, accountability for work, ability to demonstrate oneself as a professional, adherence to professional ethics, and maintaining good relations with others significantly impacts the performance of employees at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office" can be accepted empirically.

Additionally, this study also found that based on the results of statistical hypothesis testing, there is a significant effect of 0.365 or 36.5%. The research hypothesis stating "employee competency measured through characteristics of motives, traits, self-concept, knowledge, and skills has a significant impact on the performance of employees at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office" can be accepted. This reflects that empirically, these variables have provided a significant or meaningful effect on employee performance.

The research results also found that simultaneously, professionalism and employee competency have significantly impacted employee performance by 0.883 or 88.3% at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office. This finding implies that the better the professionalism and competency of employees at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office, the better the employee performance. In other words, performance success is significantly influenced by the professionalism and competency of employees. The research results also indicate that besides the variables of professionalism and employee competency, employee performance is also affected by other factors or variables, methodologically referred to as (epsilon), amounting to 0.0117 or 11.7%. This result reflects that the level of employee performance at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office is not only influenced by professionalism and employee competency but also by other variables such as work experience, work culture, work compliance, and motivation.

On another note, the research findings also indicate that besides professionalism and employee competency, employee performance at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office is also influenced by work environment conditions, which subsequently impact changes in employee performance. This shows that good employee performance is reflected in their service delivery to the public. A professional and competent attitude will be personified in the capacities of individuals, which include skills, knowledge, and behavior. Therefore, the professionalism and competency of employees at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office are required to enhance their capacities, manifested through mastery of various skills, knowledge, and behaviors to support the performance improvement of the employees. Thus, the professionalism and competency of these employees are expected to improve their performance in accordance with their main duties and functions.

The research results also reveal that the success of an organization in achieving optimal performance heavily relies on the professionalism and competency of employees in creating a conducive work climate. This attitude will help foster a supportive work environment and maximize employees' abilities to achieve organizational goals. The professionalism and competency of employees institutionally need to adapt to various changes, both domestic and global, in response to the evolving dynamics of society.

Legally, the impact of professionalism and employee competency on performance at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office cannot be separated from Law No. 20 of 2023 concerning Civil Service Apparatus, which replaces Law No. 5 of 2014. According to this law, Civil Service Apparatus (ASN) is defined as a profession for civil servants and government employees with work agreements who work in government agencies. According to this law, the policies and management of Civil Service Apparatus (ASN) must be based on the principles of professionalism and employee competency. Articles 10 and 11 explain that the duties of Civil Service Apparatus include implementing public policies set by Personnel Development Officials in accordance with statutory regulations, providing professional and quality public services, and strengthening the unity and integrity of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia.

The professionalism and competency of employees in the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office have empirically shown a significant impact on the performance of the apparatus. In this context, professional employees are those who personally possess certain competencies that form the basis of their performance. The competencies referred to encompass three main categories: First, Technical Competence, which is measured by the level and specialization of education, technical functional training, and relevant work experience in technical fields. Second, Managerial Competence, which is measured based on education level, managerial or structural training, and leadership experience. Third, Socio-Cultural Competence, which is measured by work experience related to diverse communities in terms of religion, ethnicity, and culture, enabling employees to possess a good sense of nationalism.

Moreover, the research findings reveal that professional employees can understand and execute their tasks and responsibilities to complete them on time, build effective relationships and connections, and remain focused and consistent in their work. Being a professional employee is not only about the work performed but also about how it is executed with integrity, dedication, and high enthusiasm. Professionalism encompasses each employee's ability to carry out tasks responsibly and effectively, adhering to values of integrity, both within and outside the work environment. While every individual may face personal issues, employees are expected to maintain their work quality so that their performance is not hindered by such problems.

Employees with a professional attitude can systematically complete tasks, carry out work responsibly, and do not merely wait for orders from superiors or work according to set targets but also undertake additional tasks assigned. Employees with high levels of professionalism are expected to make significant contributions to achieving organizational goals. Therefore, increasing professionalism will help align the achievement of organizational goals with personal objectives. Consequently, professionalism represents the ability and authority to implement activities as part of government administration with full responsibility. An apparatus must demonstrate their ability through competence in executing their professional authority.

Research results from PERC (Political and Economic Risk Consultancy), as a comparative study, conclude that Indonesia is one of the worst countries in the world regarding bureaucracy, scoring 8.0 on a scale where the best is 10 and the worst is 0. The still low performance of the bureaucracy or ASN employees results in poor public service quality, causing service users to incur high costs, leading to a high-cost economy. The poor state of bureaucracy or low ASN employee performance is attributed to the lack of competence among some structural officials and staff within the state apparatus. To achieve a professional and competent Human Resource or employee, the importance of career development for employees must be based on a blend of performance and career systems.

Based on the research findings and discussions outlined above, the researcher critiques the theories developed concerning the professionalism concept by Sobandi (2002) and the employee competency concept by Spencer in Moehariono (2009) within the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office. In general, it can be stated that although both theories are still considered sufficiently current and relevant substantively, there are still several characteristics in the empirical field that have not significantly contributed to performance enhancement at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office, such as the characteristic of demonstrating oneself as a professional in the context of professionalism and the Skill characteristic in the context of employee competency.

CONCLUSION

Partially, the professionalism variable measured through characteristics such as expertise, autonomy, accountability for work, the ability to demonstrate oneself as a professional, adherence to professional ethics, and maintaining good relationships with clients (the public) has a very large and significant influence on employee performance. This means that professionalism is a crucial determinant in improving employee performance within the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office. The characteristic with the greatest influence is maintaining good relationships with clients (the public), while the characteristic with the least influence is the ability to demonstrate oneself as a professional. The research findings include work experience, work motivation, and work culture.

Partially, employee competency measured through characteristics such as motives, traits, self-concept, knowledge, and skills has a very small but significant influence on employee performance. This means that employee competency is assessed as less dominant and less determining in improving employee performance at the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office. The characteristic with the greatest influence on employee performance is self-concept, while the least influential characteristic is skill. The research findings also include work compliance.

Simultaneously, professionalism and employee competency have had a very large and significant influence on employee performance. This means that professionalism and employee competency are considered very dominant in influencing employee performance. The influence of other variables (epsilon) is assessed as having a relatively small effect on employee performance within the Kuningan Regency Food Security and Agriculture Office.

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