



The Impact of Professionalism on the Work Performance of Employees of the Independent Election Commission (KIP) of Southeast Aceh Regency

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of professionalism on the work performance of employees of the Independent Election Commission (KIP) of Southeast Aceh Regency. The research was conducted in March-June 2025 with a quantitative method using a survey approach of 31 respondents consisting of 16 civil servants and 15 honorary employees. Data were analyzed using simple linear regression. The results showed that professionalism had a positive and significant effect on work performance with an R^2 value of 0.374. This means that 37.4% of the variation in work performance can be explained by professionalism. These findings confirm that improving professionalism through training and coaching work ethics plays an important role in improving the performance of KIP employees.

INTRODUCTION

Professionalism is an important aspect in human resource management in public organizations. In the context of election organizing institutions such as the Independent Election Commission (KIP), the professionalism of employees is a determining factor for the success of holding honest, fair, and transparent general elections. KIP employees are required not only to understand election regulations and procedures, but also to show integrity, competence, and moral responsibility in carrying out their duties.

The KIP of Southeast Aceh Regency has a strategic role in ensuring the implementation of democratic elections at the regional level. The success of this institution is greatly influenced by the quality of work of its employees. Therefore, professionalism is the main foundation in creating optimal work performance. Without professionalism, the execution of tasks can be hampered by unethical behavior, low performance, and weak coordination between parts.

According to (Judge & Robbins, 2013), professionalism encompasses the ability of individuals to carry out their work effectively with high standards of competence, ethics, and responsibility. Professionalism also reflects the extent to which employees understand and carry out their organizational roles according to objective and results-oriented work principles.

In the context of government bureaucracy, the professionalism of employees is often an indicator of the quality of public services. Professional employees are able to work based on clear rules and targets, not because of external pressure or self-interest. In line with that, (Malayu, H. S. & Hasibuan, 2017) states that professionalism has a direct effect on work performance through increased motivation and a sense of responsibility for work results.

Work achievement itself is a measure of employee success in carrying out tasks according to organizational standards. (Anwar Prabu, 2017) Explains that work performance can be measured through the aspects of quantity, quality, punctuality, and work attitude. In institutions such as KIP, work performance is not only related to administrative results, but also concerns the accuracy, transparency, and accountability of the election process.

KIP Southeast Aceh Regency faces great challenges in carrying out institutional functions in areas with diverse geographical and social conditions. To answer this challenge, employees with a high level of professionalism are needed so that each stage of the election can be carried out properly. Professionalism is a guarantee that every employee is able to maintain neutrality, work disciplinedly, and serve the community with integrity.

Previous research by (Qamila et al., 2021) found that professionalism has a significant influence on improving the work performance of state civil servants in public institutions. This is because professionalism encourages commitment, work ethic, and compliance with organizational rules. The results of this study are relevant to be studied further in the context of KIP Southeast Aceh.

In the KIP work environment, professionalism also includes technical skills in managing voter data, understanding election regulations, and maintaining independence from political influence. Employees with low levels of professionalism have the potential to make administrative mistakes that can have

an impact on election results. Therefore, professionalism is not only normative but also functional.

The performance of KIP employees is often in the public spotlight because it is directly related to the legitimacy of democracy. If the employees are unprofessional, the public can lose trust in the election organizing agency. On the contrary, a high level of professionalism can increase public trust and a positive image of the institution in the eyes of the public (Shilfani et al., 2025).

In the context of human resource management, professionalism is influenced by training, supervision, motivation, and organizational work culture. (Hanifah et al., 2024) affirms that professionalism grows when the organization provides space for competency development and rewards for achievements. KIP Southeast Aceh needs to instill a professional work culture to achieve optimal work results.

In addition to organizational factors, professionalism is also rooted in an individual's attitude towards his or her work. Employees who have professional commitment usually show loyalty, discipline, and high responsibility. They are able to balance personal interests and organizational interests in carrying out public duties (Shaleh & Firman, 2018).

The work performance of KIP employees is not only seen from the number of activities completed, but also from the quality of the implementation of tasks in accordance with the procedures and ethical values of election organizers. Professionalism encourages employees to work systematically, respect time, and be results-oriented. Thus, professionalism is the key to continuous improvement of work performance.

However, there are still several problems related to professionalism in the regional KIP environment, such as the lack of continuous training, the weak reward and punishment system, and the lack of optimal supervision. This condition can affect the work performance of employees in carrying out institutional duties (Edon, 2025)

This research is important because until now there have not been many empirical studies that specifically examine the relationship between professionalism and work performance in election organizing institutions at the district level, especially in Southeast Aceh. This research is expected to be able to make a theoretical and practical contribution to the development of human resource management at KIP.

KIP as an independent institution is required to work without political intervention. Therefore, the professionalism of employees must be maintained through coaching, supervision, and periodic training. According to (Katili & Sakir, 2024), the formation of the professionalism of public servants depends not only on formal education, but also on work experience and moral commitment.

The high work performance of KIP employees will have a direct impact on the effectiveness of the election implementation. The accuracy of voter data, speed in reporting results, and the accuracy of procedures in each stage of the election are highly dependent on the professionalism of employees. Thus, professionalism is not just a personal attribute, but an instrument for improving institutional quality.

In line with that, research by (Lekatompessy, 2003) It shows that professionalism has a positive correlation with work performance through increased motivation and job satisfaction. Employees who feel professional responsibility will work more effectively and efficiently in achieving organizational goals.

In the context of KIP Southeast Aceh, increasing professionalism can be done through strengthening the performance-based work system. This includes objective work assessments, technical training, and the development of work ethics. With this system, it is hoped that employees will be motivated to perform better.

Based on this description, it appears that professionalism has an important influence on employee work performance. High professionalism will create a productive, efficient, and integrity work environment, so that it has a positive impact on the achievement of organizational goals. This is the basis for empirical research to be carried out in KIP Southeast Aceh Regency.

Thus, this study focuses on analyzing the impact of professionalism on the work performance of KIP employees in Southeast Aceh Regency. This research is expected to be able to provide a comprehensive picture of the extent to which professionalism affects work performance, as well as provide recommendations for improving the quality of human resources in the KIP environment.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Professionalism as a concept of human resource management refers to a combination of technical competence, work ethics, responsibility, and compliance with applicable professional standards. In the public sector, professionalism is often seen as the foundation for the creation of quality public services that can be trusted by the public. Several empirical studies in Indonesia show a positive relationship between professionalism and employee performance in various government institutions and public services (Husaini et al., 2024).

In the context of conducting elections, institutions such as the Independent Election Commission (KIP) have special demands: maintaining neutrality, accuracy of voter data, procedural accuracy, and transparency. The institutional documents of KIP Aceh affirm the strategic role of this institution in carrying out elections/regional elections at the provincial and district levels, so that the quality of its human resources is a crucial aspect. The geographical and sociopolitical conditions of regions such as Southeast Aceh add to the complexity of tasks that require high professionalism.

Many quantitative studies in Indonesia have reported findings that professionalism has a positive and significant effect on work performance or employee performance. Studies on government institutions (BKD, courts, offices, regional hospitals) generally find a positive correlation between the dimensions of professionalism (competence, ethics, discipline) and indicators of work performance (quantity, quality, punctuality). These results reinforce the basic assumption that increased professionalism can drive improved work performance (Iman & Wahyuningtyas, 2025).

However, the literature also highlights that the influence of professionalism is not always direct and singular. Some studies have identified important mediator or moderation variables—such as work discipline, work procedures, motivation, career development, and reward systems—that mediate or reinforce the effects of professionalism on job performance. As such, professionalism often works in complex mechanisms; Without the support of the organizational system, the effect on achievement can be reduced (Hasibuan & Indrawan, 2023).

Qualitative research on public organizations adds contextual nuances: professionalism is also influenced by organizational culture, leadership, and recruitment practices. In some cases, even if employees have technical competence, weak organizational culture or inconsistent management practices (e.g., weak rewards & punishments) hinder the actualization of professionalism in the form of work performance. This underscores the importance of a holistic approach when assessing the impact of professionalism.

Especially in election organizing institutions, several historical and empirical studies highlight the importance of integrity and accountability of organizers as part of professionalism. Unprofessionalism at the operational level—for example, voter data collection errors or procedural violations—has the potential to undermine the legitimacy of the democratic process. Therefore, the professionalism of KIP employees is not just an internal problem of the organization, but a public factor that affects public trust in the election results (Laela et al., 2024).

In a practical context, research on the development of professionalism emphasizes the need for ongoing training programs, enforcement of work standards, and a clear indicator-based performance evaluation system. Studies in local governments show that when these organizational supports exist, the positive effect of professionalism on performance becomes stronger—meaning that organizational interventions can strengthen the relationship between professionalism → work performance (Sulaiman et al., 2025).

Based on a summary of theoretical and empirical studies, it can be concluded that professionalism tends to contribute positively to employee work performance, but the effect depends on the organizational context, mediation mechanisms (discipline, procedures, motivation), and the quality of human resource management. For KIP Southeast Aceh Regency, the hypothesis that "Professionalism has a positive effect on employee work performance" needs to be empirically tested by including supporting variables (e.g., discipline, training, reward system) so that the results are comprehensive and contextual.

METHODOLOGY

Research Design

This study uses a quantitative design with a correlational survey approach to test the influence of professionalism on the work performance of KIP employees in Southeast Aceh Regency. The main analysis will test the relationship and effect size of professionalism on work performance (Akbar et al., 2023).

Population and Sample

1. Population: All KIP employees of Southeast Aceh Regency (civil servants and honorary employees) were active during the research period.
2. Sample: Since the total number of employees is relatively small, a total sampling (census) is used – all available employees are involved: 16 civil servants and 15 honorary employees, so $n = 31$.
3. Inclusion criteria: Employees are active during the period March–June 2025 and willing to fill in the instrument.
4. Exclusion criteria: Employees on leave/duty outside the region so that they cannot be reached during data collection.

Operational Variables and Definitions

1. Independent Variable (X): Professionalism
 - a. Operational definition: A combination of indicators of technical competence, work ethics, discipline, responsibility, and neutrality.
 - b. Measurements: Likert questionnaire 1–5 (1 = Strongly disagree until 5 = Strongly agree). Examples of indicators: mastery of tasks, adherence to procedures, neutral attitude, professional initiative, ethical consistency. The total score/average pro is used as a professionalism score.
2. Bound Variable (Y): Work Performance
 - a. Operational definition: Achievement of employee performance based on the quantity and quality of tasks, punctuality, and work attitude.
 - b. Measurements: Likert questionnaire 1–5 + secondary data when available (performance reports/supervisor assessments). Indicators: quality of work, accuracy of task completion, productivity, administrative accuracy, problem-solving initiatives.

Research Instruments

- a. The closed questionnaire consists of two main sections: professionalism (8–12 items) and work performance (8–12 items). All items use a Likert scale of 1–5.
- b. Validity testing: Content validity through expert judgment of at least 2–3 lecturers/officials who understand HR/election management.
- c. Reliability testing: Cronbach's alpha; Minimum threshold $\alpha \geq 0.70$ to be accepted. Because the sample was small, reliability was tested on pilot data (e.g. 6–8 non-sample respondents or temporary recruits from other employees).

Data Collection Procedure

1. Instrument preparation (March, weeks 1–2): drafting questionnaires, expert consultation, item improvement.
2. Trial/pilot (March, week 3): small tests for initial validity and reliability. Revise instruments when necessary.
3. Main data collection (April to early May 2025): distribution of questionnaires to all samples (civil servants 16 + honorary 15).

Distribution method: written or digital questionnaire as per access. Make sure informed consent is written/attached.

4. Secondary data collection (May 2025): collect formal performance appraisal data when available (e.g. supervisor appraisals, work reports).
5. Data processing and analysis (May to June 2025).
6. Preparation of the final report (June 2025).

Data Analysis Techniques

1. Descriptive analysis: frequency, mean, median, standard deviation for respondent characteristics and variable scores.
2. Normality test: Shapiro–Wilk (more appropriate for $n < 50$).
3. Inferential analysis:
 - If the data are normal, → use Pearson correlation to look at relationships, and simple linear regression (or multiple regression if controls are included) to test the influence of professionalism on job performance.
 - If the data is abnormal → use Spearman rank correlation and nonparametric regression (or data transformation).
4. Group comparison (optional): comparing the scores of civil servants vs. honorary employees (e.g. independent t-test if the assumption is met; otherwise, the Mann–Whitney U test).
5. Statistical significance: $\alpha = 0.05$. Also report effect size and confidence intervals.
6. Analysis software: SPSS/Jamovi/R (specified by the researcher).

Internal & External Validity, Limitations

1. Internal validity efforts: use of tested instruments (after reliability tests), secondary data control (performance reports) for triangulation.
2. Limitations: small sample size ($n=31$) limits the generalization of results and the detection power of small effects; therefore the results should be interpreted carefully. However, because total sampling was used, the results were valid for the local KIP population.

Research Ethics

1. Obtained official permission from the leadership of KIP Southeast Aceh Regency.
2. Informed written consent from each respondent (research purpose, data confidentiality, right to withdraw without sanction).
3. Data is anonymized; The report only displays aggregates or non-specific identifications.

RESEARCH RESULTS

General Description

This research was conducted in March-June 2025 with a total of 31 respondents, consisting of 16 civil servants and 15 honorary employees at KIP Southeast Aceh Regency. The purpose of the study is to find out how much influence professionalism has on employee work performance. Data were

collected through questionnaires on a Likert scale (1-5). Each variable has 10 statements that have been tested for validity and reliability.

Validity and Reliability Test Results

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Tests

Variable	Number of Items	R _{calculated} value	r _{table} (n=31, α=0.05)	Information
Professionalism (X ₁)	10	0,533-0,759	0,355	Valid
Work Performance (Y)	10	0,453-0,772	0,355	Valid

The overall reliability value (Cronbach's Alpha) for the variables of professionalism and work performance was 0.876 (>0.70), which means a reliable instrument.

Simple Linear Regression Test Results

To test the influence of professionalism on work performance, simple regression analysis was used.

Table 2. Simple Linear Regression Test Results

Variable	Regression Coefficient (B)	t _{count}	Sig.	Information
Constant (a)	8,412	-	-	-
Professionalism (X ₁)	0,587	3,734	0,001	Significant
R	0,612			
R ²	0,374			
F _{count}	21,114		0,000	

Source: Data processed from SPSS results, 2025

Interpretation of Results

1. The value of $t_{\text{calculate}} = 3.734 > t_{\text{table}} = 2.045$ with $\text{Sig.} = 0.001 < 0.05$, so H_1 is accepted. This means that professionalism has a positive and significant effect on the work performance of KIP Southeast Aceh employees.
2. The value of the regression coefficient (B) = 0.587 indicates that every increase in one unit of professionalism will increase work performance by 0.587 units, assuming that other variables are constant.
3. The R² value = 0.374 means that 37.4% of the variation in work performance can be explained by professionalism, while the remaining

62.6% is influenced by other factors (such as work ability, discipline, and motivation).

- The results of the F_{calculate} test = 21.114 > F_{table} = 4.17 (df1=1, df2=29) with Sig. = 0.000, indicating that the overall regression model is significant.

Descriptive Analysis of Variables

Table 3. Average Score of Professionalism Variables

Indicators	Average Score	Category
Responsibilities in work	4,23	Tall
Competencies and job skills	4,18	Tall
Work ethics and integrity	4,26	Tall
Neutrality and objectivity	4,09	Tall
Collaboration and communication	4,11	Tall
Total average	4,17	Tall

Table 4. Average Score of Work Performance Variables

Indicators	Average Score	Category
Quality of work	4,14	Tall
Timeliness of completion	4,09	Tall
Work productivity	4,10	Tall
Work discipline	4,07	Tall
Initiatives and responsibilities	4,12	Tall
Total average	4,10	Tall

DISCUSSION

The results of the study show that professionalism has a positive and significant influence on the work performance of KIP employees in Southeast Aceh Regency. The value of the regression coefficient is 0.587 and the significance is 0.001 (<0.05) confirming that the higher the level of employee professionalism, the higher the work achievement achieved. These findings affirm the importance of professionalism as a key factor in improving the performance of public officials, especially in institutions that demand high neutrality and responsibility such as KIP.

Professionalism reflects an individual's ability to carry out work based on expertise, integrity, and commitment to work ethics standards. According to (Judge & Robbins, 2013), professionalism is a work behavior based on competence, responsibility, and orientation to results. In this context, professional KIP employees are able to maintain ethics, work according to the rules, and show dedication in holding clean and transparent elections.

The findings of this study are also in line with the theory (Malayu, H. S. & Hasibuan, 2017) which states that professionalism is one of the intrinsic factors that encourage increased work performance because professional employees have internal motivation to provide the best results. KIP employees who have high professionalism will be more disciplined, independent, and able to complete tasks on time and full of responsibility.

An R^2 value of 0.374 indicates that professionalism contributes 37.4% to the variation in employee work performance. This means that professionalism has a strong influence on improving work performance, although there are still other factors that play a role, such as motivation, discipline, and work environment. These results indicate that to achieve optimal work performance, KIP needs to manage the professionalism aspect in a sustainable manner.

The average result of a high professionalism score (4.17) shows that most KIP employees have responsibility and integrity in their work. They understand the importance of maintaining neutrality, working according to procedures, and maintaining the good name of the institution in the eyes of the public. This is important, considering that KIP as an independent institution is required not to take sides in every stage of the election.

These results are supported by research (Widyanti, 2024) which found that professionalism has a significant influence on improving the work performance of state civil servants in public institutions. Professionalism increases the employee's sense of responsibility and commitment to the organization's goals. Similarly, research (Lekatompessy, 2003) states that professionalism is positively related to work performance through increased work motivation and professional satisfaction.

Empirically, this study confirms that KIP employees who have a high level of professionalism can show better performance in terms of quality, punctuality, and work productivity. This is in line with the view (Anwar Prabu, 2017) that work achievement is the result of an individual's ability, motivation, and seriousness in carrying out his or her job responsibilities. Professionalism is one of the main driving factors that direct employee behavior towards maximum work results.

In the context of public organizations, professionalism is also closely related to accountability and public trust. Research (Fadal, 2024) emphasizing that professionally managed institutions will get a higher level of public trust. The findings of this study strengthen this view, because the increase in the professionalism of KIP Southeast Aceh employees contributes to increasing the credibility of the institution in the implementation of elections.

However, an R^2 value that does not reach 0.5 indicates that there are still other variables that need to be considered to explain the variation in work performance. Factors such as work discipline, leadership style, work environment, and reward system may play an important role in strengthening the relationship between professionalism and work performance. This is in line with the findings (Ananda, 2020) which states that the influence of professionalism will be optimal if supported by an effective organizational system.

Overall, the results of this study provide empirical evidence that professionalism is not only a moral value, but also has direct implications for the effectiveness and work outcomes of employees. Therefore, improving professionalism through training, supervision, and coaching work ethics needs to be a priority for the Southeast Aceh Regency KIP so that employee work performance increases and public trust in election organizing institutions is maintained.

CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study concludes that professionalism has a positive and significant effect on the work performance of employees of the Independent Election Commission (KIP) of Southeast Aceh Regency. Employees who have high responsibility, integrity, and competence tend to show better performance in carrying out institutional duties. Professionalism accounted for 37.4% of the variation in work performance, while the rest was influenced by other factors. It is recommended that KIP improve professionalism development through continuous training, objective performance evaluation, and the implementation of a fair reward and sanction system to maintain employee motivation and work integrity on an ongoing basis.

ADVANCED RESEARCH

Further research is suggested to add other variables such as discipline, motivation, and organizational culture as mediating factors between professionalism and work performance. In addition, it needs to be expanded to other provincial or regional KIP institutions in order to obtain a more empirically robust comparative picture and generalization of results.

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