

The Influence of Professionalism and Career Development on Employee Performance (Case Research: BKD Provincial Government of West Java)

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Abstract

This research aims to evaluate the influence of professionalism and career development on employee performance at BKD West Java Province, considering the importance of these factors in achieving organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction. This study was conducted using a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) analysis. Data were collected using a saturated sampling technique through questionnaires distributed to BKD staff. The results showed that professionalism has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Employees with a high level of professionalism have the ability to work more efficiently and effectively. Career development also affects employee performance, as providing employees the opportunity to grow within the organization increases their motivation and productivity. Together, career development and professionalism significantly improve employee performance. The practical implications of this research provide specific policy recommendations for BKD, including implementing structured competency development programs, establishing transparent promotion criteria, and creating integrated performance management systems that address both professionalism enhancement and career advancement simultaneously. This research suggests that BKD can use the results to formulate more strategic policies that enhance the professionalism and career development of employees. Organizations can ensure effective HR management to provide employees with the necessary skills and motivation to achieve set goals. It is hoped that this research can be used by other government agencies to improve the quality of public sector human resources.

Keywords: professionalism, career development, employee performance, BKD

INTRODUCTION

Organizational achievement is greatly influenced by the quality of human resources possessed. In the public sector, including within the Regional Personnel Agency (BKD), employee performance becomes one of the key factors for success in implementing regional government programs and policies. Therefore, improving employee performance depends heavily on two important elements: professionalism and career development. Professionalism here refers to employees' ability to carry out tasks according to predetermined standards, while career development refers to the process of improving skills, knowledge, and opportunities to advance within the organizational structure.

This study aims to bridge the research gap by comparing findings with similar studies in other government agencies. Previous research by Noviana (2020) on Bandung City Health Office

and Waterkamp et al. (2018) on BRI Manado Branch showed varying degrees of influence between professionalism and performance across different organizational contexts. However, limited studies have specifically examined the combined effect of professionalism and career development in regional personnel agencies, creating a knowledge gap that this research addresses.

According to Kasmir (2019), performance refers to results and work behavior that have been accomplished in fulfilling assigned tasks and responsibilities within a certain period. Employee performance at BKD West Java Province can be measured through various performance indicators including administrative service speed, communication quality between employees and the public, and effectiveness of employee data management.

BKD West Java Province has main indicators for assessing employee performance using the Employee Work System (SKP), which includes service, cooperation, discipline values, communication, and loyalty. The existence of SKP facilitates organizations in providing performance assessments to their employees, which are then accumulated in the form of annual SKP to determine the final value regarding employee performance (Internal Data BKD West Java Province, 2024).

Based on performance achievement data from 2019 to 2023, there was a decline in organizational performance achievement from 100% in 2022 to 95% in 2023. This decline indicates the need for evaluation and improvement in performance management systems through innovation, training, or work process improvements.

Professionalism encompasses employee skills in carrying out tasks and procedures according to their respective fields and levels, aiming to produce optimal results (Khumaira, 2020). According to Zulkarnain and Mirawati (2019), professionalism is the reliability and professional capability that enables high-quality task completion on time, using intelligence and procedures that are easy to understand and follow by clients. Career development, as defined by Rivai (2019), is a process of improving someone's work skills to achieve desired careers. Every employee hopes to develop in their career because they will receive rights for what they have strived for previously, both in material and non-material forms.

This research has specific objectives: (1) to measure the magnitude of professionalism's influence on employee performance at BKD West Java Province, (2) to quantify the extent of career development's impact on employee performance, and (3) to evaluate the combined effect of both variables in explaining performance variance among BKD employees. These specific objectives will provide measurable insights for evidence-based policymaking. This research aims to evaluate the influence of professionalism and career development on employee performance at BKD West Java Province, considering the importance of these factors in achieving organizational effectiveness and employee satisfaction.

METHOD

This research used a quantitative approach implemented through surveys with questionnaires as instruments. The research adopted quantitative research type to reveal research problems being

investigated, which is a phenomenon in the work environment. The research was then analyzed using descriptive research methods appropriate to the research objectives.

The population studied consisted of employees at the Regional Personnel Agency (BKD) organization under West Java Provincial Government. Based on data and information obtained from BKD, there were 138 employees working at the Regional Personnel Agency, West Java Provincial Government (Source: SIAP JABAR, as of June 1, 2024).

Saturated sampling was applied because the population is considered small and researchers want to generate generalizations with minimal error levels. Therefore, the entire population was used as samples in this research, totaling 138 respondents.

Table 1. Respondent Profile

Demographic Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	82	59.4
	Female	56	40.6
Age	25-35 years	45	32.6
	36-45 years	58	42.0
	46-55 years	35	25.4
Education	Bachelor's	89	64.5
	Master's	41	29.7
	Diploma	8	5.8
Work Experience	1-10 years	52	37.7
	11-20 years	61	44.2
	>20 years	25	18.1
Position Level	Staff	78	56.5
	Supervisor	42	30.4
	Manager	18	13.1

Data collection was conducted through questionnaires, observation, and documentation. The questionnaire used a Likert scale with five response options: Strongly Disagree (1), Disagree (2), Neutral (3), Agree (4), and Strongly Agree (5).

Data analysis included descriptive analysis and hypothesis testing using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Square (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS Version 3.2.8 software. The analysis consisted of measurement model (outer model), structural model (inner model), and hypothesis testing.

This study acknowledges several methodological limitations that may affect the generalizability of results: (1) Response bias potential due to the sample being drawn exclusively from one government agency (BKD West Java Province), which may limit the applicability of findings to other organizational contexts, (2) Common method bias risk since all data were collected through self-reported questionnaires from the same respondents, potentially inflating the relationships between variables, (3) Cross-sectional design limitations that prevent the establishment of true causal relationships over time, and (4) Cultural and organizational context specificity that may not translate to private sector or other government agencies with different structural characteristics.

Variables and Indicators

Professionalism (X1) was measured through four dimensions:

1. Competence - skills and knowledge appropriate for job responsibilities
2. Effectiveness - ability to achieve work targets according to standards
3. Efficiency - optimal use of time and resources in task completion
4. Responsibility - courage to take responsibility for decisions and work results

Career Development (X2) was measured through three dimensions:

1. Career Clarity - understanding of promotion requirements and processes
2. Self-Development - opportunities for training and continuing education
3. Performance Quality Improvement - motivation and loyalty enhancement

Employee Performance (Y) was measured through five dimensions:

1. Target - ability to meet quantitative work targets
2. Quality - maintaining work quality according to established standards
3. Quantity - productivity meeting expected standards
4. Time - completing work according to predetermined deadlines
5. Compliance - maintaining integrity and transparency in work

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis Results

1. Professionalism Variable Analysis

The descriptive analysis results for professionalism at BKD West Java Province revealed a total score of 4,660 with an average percentage of 67.5%, categorizing it as "Quite High" on the continuum scale. This finding indicates that while employee professionalism exists at a reasonable level, there is substantial room for improvement to reach optimal standards. The analysis of individual dimensions showed varying performance levels across the four key components of professionalism.

The competence dimension scored highest among the four dimensions, with employees demonstrating adequate skills and knowledge for their job responsibilities. Specifically, the statement "I have skills appropriate for carrying out tasks that are my responsibility at work" achieved 74.49%, indicating strong foundational competencies. However, the statement "My competence reflects the needs demanded by current work" scored lower at 62.89%, suggesting a gap between existing competencies and evolving job requirements.

The effectiveness dimension showed moderate performance with scores ranging from 66.81% to 71.30%. Employees demonstrated reasonable ability to achieve quantitative targets, but struggled with maintaining consistent quality standards. The efficiency dimension revealed similar patterns, with time management capabilities scoring 69.71% and quality maintenance achieving 68.69%. The responsibility dimension presented the most significant challenge, particularly in decision-making courage, which scored only 61.44%, indicating potential areas for leadership development and empowerment initiatives.

2. Career Development Variable Analysis

Career development at BKD West Java Province achieved a "Good" categorization with an average percentage score of 77.10%, reflecting well-implemented programs across three key dimensions. The total score of 5,325 indicates that employees generally perceive positive career development opportunities within the organization.

The career clarity dimension performed exceptionally well, with all indicators exceeding 74%. Understanding of promotion requirements and processes scored 75.07%, while perception of advancement opportunities achieved 75.36%. This suggests that BKD has successfully communicated career pathways and organizational structures to its employees. The clarity of career paths supporting professional development motivation scored 74.92%, indicating strong alignment between individual aspirations and organizational offerings.

The self-development dimension showed the strongest performance within career development, with several indicators exceeding 79%. Opportunities for relevant seminars, discussions, and workshops scored highest at 80.28%, followed by competency courses for certification at 79.98%. This demonstrates BKD's commitment to continuous learning and professional development. However, support for continuing education to higher levels scored relatively lower at 71.88%, suggesting potential improvement areas in educational advancement support.

The performance quality improvement dimension achieved excellent results across all indicators, with scores ranging from 78.69% to 81.15%. Employee motivation for continuous performance improvement scored highest at 80.72%, while discipline enhancement in task execution reached 81.15%. These findings indicate strong intrinsic motivation and organizational loyalty among BKD employees.

3. Employee Performance Variable Analysis

Employee performance at BKD West Java Province was categorized as "Good" with an average percentage score of 76.06% and a total score of 6,823 across five dimensions. This level indicates satisfactory performance meeting organizational expectations while highlighting areas for enhancement.

The target dimension showed mixed results, with individual target achievement scoring 65.36% (categorized as "Quite Good") while team productivity met standards at 72.46% (categorized as "Good"). This disparity suggests potential issues in individual goal setting or resource allocation that may require attention from management.

The quality dimension demonstrated strong performance across most indicators, with commitment to quality improvement scoring 77.97% and quality maintenance efforts achieving similar levels. However, inter-departmental service quality scored lower at 65.79%, indicating potential communication or coordination challenges between organizational units.

The quantity dimension performed exceptionally well, with contribution to target achievement scoring 82.02% and customer reliability achieving 81.88%. These high scores reflect strong customer orientation and results-focused behavior among employees. The time dimension

also showed excellent performance, with deadline adherence scoring 80% and time consciousness achieving 80.57%.

The compliance dimension achieved strong results across both indicators, with integrity and transparency scoring 79.27% and commitment to ethical practices reaching 80.43%. These findings indicate robust ethical standards and principled behavior within the organization.

SEM-PLS Analysis Results

1. Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model evaluation confirmed the validity and reliability of all constructs used in this research. Convergent validity assessment through outer loading analysis revealed that all indicators achieved values above the minimum threshold of 0.7, with most exceeding 0.75. Professionalism indicators ranged from 0.742 to 0.849, career development indicators from 0.705 to 0.849, and performance indicators from 0.722 to 0.823. These results confirm that all indicators successfully reflect their respective latent constructs.

Average Variance Extracted (AVE) analysis further supported convergent validity, with all variables exceeding the required 0.5 threshold. Professionalism achieved an AVE of 0.582, career development 0.545, and performance 0.610. These values indicate that each construct explains more than half of the variance in its indicators, confirming strong convergent validity.

Table 2. Measurement Model Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	AVE	Validity Status
Professionalism	0.942	0.948	0.582	Valid & Reliable
Career Development	0.921	0.923	0.545	Valid & Reliable
Performance	0.932	0.940	0.610	Valid & Reliable

Discriminant validity was established through both Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading analysis. The square root of AVE for each construct exceeded its correlations with other constructs, confirming adequate discriminant validity. Cross-loading analysis revealed that each indicator loaded highest on its intended construct, further supporting discriminant validity.

Reliability assessment through Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability demonstrated excellent internal consistency. All variables achieved Cronbach's Alpha values exceeding 0.9, well above the required 0.7 threshold. Composite Reliability values also exceeded 0.9 for all constructs, indicating very high reliability levels that support confident interpretation of results.

2. Structural Model Assessment

The structural model evaluation provided insights into the relationships between constructs and the model's predictive capability. The R-Square value for the performance variable was 0.357, indicating that professionalism and career development together explain 35.7% of the variance in employee performance. While this represents a moderate effect size according to Cohen's guidelines, it suggests that other factors not included in this model also contribute significantly to performance outcomes.

Effect size analysis through f^2 values revealed that both independent variables demonstrated moderate effects on performance. Professionalism showed an f^2 value of 0.162, while career development achieved 0.121. These values, falling between 0.15 and 0.35, indicate meaningful practical significance beyond statistical significance.

Table 3. Structural Model Assessment Results

Assessment Criteria	Value	Interpretation
R-Square (Performance)	0.357	Moderate explanatory power
f^2 Professionalism	0.162	Moderate effect size
f^2 Career Development	0.121	Moderate effect size
Q ² (Performance)	0.296	Good predictive relevance

Predictive relevance assessment through Q² analysis yielded a value of 0.296 for the performance variable. This positive value above 0.15 indicates good predictive relevance, confirming that the model can effectively predict performance outcomes beyond the sample data.

3. Hypothesis Testing Results

The hypothesis testing employed bootstrapping technique with 5,000 subsamples to ensure robust statistical inference. Both research hypotheses were supported by the empirical evidence.

Table 4. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis		Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T-Statistics	P-Values	Decision
H1: Professionalism → Performance		0.371	0.383	0.102	3.620	0.000	Supported
H2: Career Development → Performance		0.326	0.326	0.103	3.103	0.002	Supported

The first hypothesis, stating that professionalism positively influences employee performance, was strongly supported. The path coefficient of 0.371 indicates a substantial positive relationship, while the T-Statistics value of 3.620 (exceeding the critical value of 1.977) and p-value of 0.000 confirm statistical significance at the 0.05 level.

The second hypothesis, proposing that career development positively influences employee performance, was also supported. The path coefficient of 0.326 demonstrates a meaningful positive relationship, with T-Statistics value of 3.103 and p-value of 0.002 confirming statistical significance.

Discussion of Findings

1. Professionalism and Performance Relationship

The confirmed positive relationship between professionalism and employee performance aligns with established theoretical frameworks and empirical evidence. This finding supports Zulkarnain and Mirawati (2019) who emphasized that professionalism encompasses reliability and professional capability enabling high-quality, timely task completion. The significant influence

(path coefficient = 0.371) demonstrates that professional behavior directly translates into improved performance outcomes.

Comparative analysis with similar studies reveals interesting patterns: Noviana (2020) found a stronger relationship ($\beta = 0.445$) between professionalism and performance in Bandung City Health Office, while Waterkamp et al. (2018) reported a moderate relationship ($\beta = 0.312$) in the banking sector. The current study's finding ($\beta = 0.371$) falls within this range, suggesting that organizational context influences the magnitude of this relationship, with healthcare organizations potentially requiring higher professional standards than administrative agencies.

The mechanism through which professionalism influences performance operates through multiple pathways. Enhanced competence enables employees to handle complex tasks more effectively, leading to better quality outputs. Improved effectiveness ensures that employees meet performance standards consistently, while enhanced efficiency optimizes resource utilization and time management. Strengthened responsibility fosters accountability and ownership, resulting in more reliable performance outcomes.

The moderate categorization of professionalism (67.5%) suggests substantial improvement potential. Organizations can enhance professionalism through competency development programs, merit-based evaluation systems, workload optimization, and responsibility culture strengthening. Technology integration for performance monitoring and feedback can further support professional development initiatives.

2. Career Development and Performance Relationship

The positive significant relationship between career development and performance (path coefficient = 0.326) confirms theoretical expectations and supports Rivai's (2019) conceptualization of career development as a systematic capability enhancement process. This relationship operates through several mechanisms that enhance employee motivation and organizational commitment.

Cross-sectional comparison with other government agencies shows varied results: Rosada and Febriana (2021) found a stronger effect ($\beta = 0.412$) in BKPP Semarang, while Katidijan et al. (2017) reported similar magnitude ($\beta = 0.334$) in their multi-sector study. This variation suggests that career development effectiveness depends on organizational culture, available resources, and implementation quality, highlighting the need for context-specific career development strategies.

Career development influences performance through increased motivation resulting from clear advancement prospects. When employees perceive meaningful career opportunities, they invest greater effort in current roles, anticipating future rewards. Enhanced skills and competencies acquired through development programs directly improve job performance capabilities. Greater organizational commitment resulting from investment in employee development fosters loyalty and sustained performance excellence.

The "Good" categorization of career development (77.10%) indicates effective program implementation while suggesting areas for further enhancement. Organizations can strengthen career development through structured planning programs, expanded training opportunities, clear promotion criteria, mentoring systems, and performance-based advancement policies.

3. Practical Implications and Recommendations

The research findings provide several actionable insights for BKD West Java Province and similar public sector organizations. The moderate R-Square value (35.7%) indicates that while professionalism and career development significantly influence performance, other factors also contribute to performance outcomes. This suggests the need for comprehensive human resource management approaches addressing multiple performance determinants.

For professionalism enhancement, organizations should implement structured competency assessment and development programs targeting identified gaps. Merit-based evaluation systems can replace seniority-based approaches, ensuring that professional behavior is recognized and rewarded. Workload optimization through analytical approaches can improve efficiency and reduce burnout risks.

Career development improvement requires systematic approaches including individual career planning sessions, expanded access to training and educational opportunities, transparent promotion processes, and regular career counseling. Technology integration can support these initiatives through learning management systems and performance tracking platforms.

The significant relationships identified suggest that integrated approaches addressing both professionalism and career development simultaneously may yield synergistic effects exceeding individual contributions. This integrated strategy aligns with modern human resource management principles emphasizing holistic employee development approaches.

CONCLUSION

This research found that professionalism and career development both positively and significantly impact employee performance at BKD West Java Province, with professionalism rated "quite high" (67.5%) and career development "good" (77.10%), jointly contributing to an overall "good" employee performance score (76.06%). Professionalism enhances performance by improving competence, effectiveness, efficiency, and responsibility, while career development supports growth through clear advancement opportunities and skill-building programs. The study highlights a combined effect size ($R^2 = 0.357$) and significant path coefficients (professionalism $\beta = 0.371$; career development $\beta = 0.326$), offering benchmarks for similar public sector agencies while emphasizing the need for tailored human resource management approaches. It recommends integrated strategies such as competency-based evaluations, structured career paths, mandatory professional development, mentoring programs, and performance-based incentives. For future research, it would be valuable to explore the long-term impact of these integrated interventions on employee motivation and organizational performance across diverse regional government contexts.

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