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## THE INFLUENCE OF LEADERSHIP STYLE, COMPETENCE, AND PROFESSIONALISM ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE COMMUNICATION AND INFORMATICS OFFICE OF INDRAMAYU REGENCY

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### Abstract

**Purpose:** This study aims to examine the influence of leadership style, competence, and professionalism on employee performance in the public sector, particularly at the Communication and Informatics Office (Diskominfo) of Indramayu Regency.

**Methodology:** This study employed a quantitative survey approach using a Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to all employees of Diskominfo Indramayu (N = 66). Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression with IBM SPSS Statistics 27. Instrument validity, reliability, and classical assumption tests were conducted prior to hypothesis testing.

**Findings:** The results show that leadership style ( $t = 4.381$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ) and competence ( $t = 2.152$ ;  $p = 0.035$ ) have a significant positive effect on employee performance, while professionalism does not show a significant effect ( $t = 0.059$ ;  $p = 0.953$ ). Simultaneously, the three variables significantly influence employee performance ( $F = 10.973$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ).

**Research implications:** The findings highlight the importance of leadership behavior and employee competence in improving performance within public sector institutions.

**Originality:** This study contributes empirical evidence on the combined influence of leadership style, competence, and professionalism within a regional government communication agency.

**Keywords:** leadership style; competence; professionalism; employee performance; public sector



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### 1. INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is widely recognized as a critical factor in determining whether an organization can achieve its strategic objectives. In the context of public sector institutions, employee performance not only reflects internal organizational effectiveness but also directly affects the quality of public services delivered to society. High-performing public employees

contribute to improved service delivery, administrative efficiency, and public trust in government institutions (Afandi, 2021). In public organizations, performance matters not only for internal efficiency, but also for the quality, speed, and reliability of public services delivered to citizens. Because of that, public agencies need employees who are adaptive, skilled, and able to work consistently under clear standards.

The Department of Communication and Informatics (Dinas Komunikasi dan Informatika/Diskominfo) of Indramayu Regency plays an important role as a hub for information dissemination and communication services for the local government. However, initial observations and a pre-survey indicate that employee performance in Diskominfo Indramayu is still considered low. A pre-survey involving 10 randomly selected employees suggests that leadership, competence, and work ability are among the most prominent factors linked to the performance issue, compared with other factors such as motivation, facilities, work culture, and discipline. When performance is not optimal, organizational performance is also harder to improve, and service delivery becomes less effective.

Leadership is frequently associated with how well an organization functions because a leader influences direction, coordination, and the working climate. Leadership can be understood as a leader's ability to influence, motivate, and facilitate people to contribute to organizational goals (Wibowo, 2018) and as an activity of guiding and influencing others to achieve expected results (Sutrisno, 2020). In the context of Diskominfo Indramayu, leadership practice is described as still limited in flexibility and improvisation, with decisions often strongly tied to existing rules. In addition, organizational data show that not all structural leaders have completed the required leadership training levels, which can reduce readiness to manage diverse subordinate characteristics and work situations. This situation can contribute to weaker delegation, limited consideration of subordinate input, and less effective decision-making processes.

Besides leadership, competence is closely linked to performance because competence reflects the knowledge, skills, and underlying characteristics that enable employees to perform tasks effectively. Competence is often described as a fundamental characteristic of an individual that is related to successful performance outcomes (Sutrisno, 2019; Spencer & Spencer, 1993). In Diskominfo Indramayu, the competence challenge is reflected in limited training participation and gaps in knowledge, skills, attitudes, and work interest that may disrupt the achievement of work targets. The agency's workforce composition (including civil servants, contract staff, and outsourced personnel) and varied educational backgrounds further highlight the need for structured competence development so employees can meet job demands more consistently.

Professionalism is another factor that can shape performance, especially in public service settings where integrity, accountability, and compliance with procedures are essential. Professionalism can be understood as the competence and commitment of professionals to perform tasks correctly and continuously improve expertise (Pane et al., 2021). In Diskominfo Indramayu, professionalism concerns are described in terms of limited role-fit and task alignment, incomplete competence certification and training coverage due to budget constraints, and work behavior that is not fully aligned with responsibility and service standards. These issues can reduce work quality and timeliness, and ultimately weaken performance outcomes at both employee and organizational levels.

Based on these practical conditions and the theoretical links between leadership, competence, professionalism, and performance, this study focuses on examining: (1) the effect of leadership style on employee performance, (2) the effect of competence on employee performance, (3) the effect of professionalism on employee performance, and (4) the simultaneous effect of leadership style, competence, and professionalism on employee performance in Diskominfo Indramayu. The findings are expected to provide evidence-based input for human resource management in public sector organizations, particularly in designing leadership development, competence-building programs, and professionalism strengthening to improve employee performance.

Despite the growing body of literature examining employee performance in public organizations, empirical studies integrating leadership style, competence, and professionalism simultaneously remain limited, particularly within regional government communication agencies. Previous studies often focus on leadership or competence individually, while professionalism is frequently treated as a complementary factor rather than a primary predictor. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by empirically examining the combined effects of leadership style, competence, and professionalism on employee performance within the institutional context of Diskominfo Indramayu.

## **2. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT**

### **2.1. Literature Review**

#### **2.1.1 Employee performance**

Employee performance (kinerja) is commonly framed as the execution of required job functions and the achievement of work results within a certain period. In this study context, performance is interpreted as (1) the level of achievement or work output produced by employees and (2) the observable work behaviors that support task completion and organizational goals (Whitmore, 1997; Kasmir, 2019; Busro, 2020).

Performance does not emerge in isolation. Organizational behavior literature emphasizes that employee performance is influenced by multiple drivers such as motivation, organizational culture, leadership style, work procedures, communication, education level, experience, compensation, training, career development, and the broader organizational climate (Duha, 2018). Similarly, HRM perspectives highlight that individual ability and competence, leadership, work facilities, and discipline can shape the extent to which employees can produce expected outputs (Afandi, 2021). Because the present research focuses on a public organization, performance also needs to be understood as the capacity of employees to deliver results responsibly, ethically, and legally, consistent with public service expectations (Busro, 2020).

#### **2.1.2 Leadership style**

Leadership can be defined as the process of influencing others to understand and agree on what needs to be done and how it can be done effectively (Yukl, 2013). In organizational settings, leadership style plays a significant role in shaping employee behavior, motivation, and performance outcomes. Transformational leadership, for instance, has been shown to positively influence employee performance by inspiring employees and fostering commitment to

organizational goals (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leadership is generally understood as an activity of directing, guiding, and influencing others so that they move toward targeted results. In this view, leadership is not only a position but also a set of behaviors that mobilize human resources to contribute optimally to organizational objectives (Wibowo, 2018; Sutrisno, 2020; Fahmi, 2021).

Leadership style refers to the behavioral pattern and strategy frequently applied by leaders in managing subordinates and organizational processes. In practice, the thesis frames leadership styles that may appear in public organizations—such as democratic, autocratic, charismatic, paternalistic, and laissez-faire—each with different implications for participation, decision control, and subordinate empowerment.

To operationalize leadership style, this study adopts indicators that emphasize functional leadership behavior: (1) decision-making ability, (2) motivating ability, (3) communication ability, (4) ability to control subordinates, and (5) emotional control (Sari & Putra, 2019). Conceptually, these indicators represent a mechanism through which leadership affects performance: better decisions and communication reduce ambiguity and rework; motivation strengthens effort; appropriate control ensures alignment; and emotional regulation supports consistent, fair leadership.

### 2.1.3 Competence

Competence is typically defined as a foundational individual characteristic—covering knowledge, skills, and underlying attributes—that is associated with effective performance in a job. Competence literature (McClelland; Boyatzis; Spencer & Spencer) emphasizes that competence is not only what employees know, but also what they can do consistently and how they demonstrate job-relevant attributes (Spencer & Spencer, 1993).

The study adopts the perspective that competence is a characteristic that supports employees in executing tasks according to their roles and adapting to changes and innovation demands. In Indonesia's public sector context, competence is also aligned with formal competency standards: it includes the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to carry out official job duties (Permenpan-RB No. 38/2017). In the thesis, competence indicators are linked to bureaucratic competency dimensions such as integrity, cooperation, results orientation, public service orientation, self-development (and developing others), change management, and decision making. These indicators are consistent with the expectation that higher competence improves the quality, timeliness, and accuracy of work outputs—key components of performance in government agencies.

### 2.1.4 Professionalism

Professionalism refers to the values and qualities that reflect a person's professional identity and the standard of conduct expected within a profession. In definitional terms, professionalism can be viewed as the "marks or qualities of a profession" (Hornby, 2005), and in applied public administration it is frequently interpreted as the capability to perform tasks correctly, responsibly, and with commitment to continuous improvement.

The thesis positions professionalism as the practical manifestation of competence in real work settings—how employees place themselves in the work environment, complete tasks with

responsibility, meet timelines, and uphold integrity. It also links professionalism to good governance, arguing that governance quality is strengthened when public servants are professional and accountable. Empirically, professionalism is often operationalized through indicators such as capability, quality orientation, adequacy of supporting facilities, and reliability in service delivery (Ferawati et al., 2020). In short, professionalism is expected to translate competence and leadership direction into consistent service-oriented performance.

### 2.1.5 Empirical evidence and research gap

Prior empirical studies summarized in the thesis generally support the notion that leadership style and competence can influence performance in public organizations, though findings may vary by context and additional variables. For example, Susanti et al. (2023) report that leadership style and competence positively and significantly affect ASN performance in a regional HR agency context. Purwanto (2023) similarly finds leadership style and competence positively associated with employee performance in a local government staffing agency.

However, evidence also shows inconsistency: Audina et al. (2023) report leadership style as negative and not significant in their setting, while discipline is positive and significant. This suggests that leadership effects may depend on contextual factors, leadership practices, and the organizational environment. Meanwhile, professionalism repeatedly appears as a relevant driver of performance in public sector-related studies—both as a direct predictor and when analyzed alongside competence (e.g., Rumimpunu et al., 2018).

Therefore, the research gap addressed here is the need to test an integrated model that simultaneously examines leadership style, competence, and professionalism in one institutional setting (Diskominfo Kabupaten Indramayu), where performance is critical for public information services and organizational credibility. This integrated approach is intended to clarify which factors matter most and whether professionalism adds explanatory power beyond leadership and competence.

## 2.2. Hypothesis Development

**H1 (Leadership style → performance).** Leadership style provides direction, motivation, and coordination mechanisms that shape employee behavior and effort. When leaders communicate effectively, make sound decisions, manage emotions, and guide subordinates appropriately, employees are more likely to execute tasks efficiently and achieve targeted outputs (Wibowo, 2018; Sutrisno, 2020).

**H1:** Leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

**H2 (Competence → performance).** Competence reflects the knowledge, skills, and behaviors required to complete tasks to standard. Employees with higher competence can solve work problems, perform accurately, and adapt to job demands, which increases output quality and work effectiveness (Spencer & Spencer, 1993; Permenpan-RB No. 38/2017).

**H2:** Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

**H3 (Professionalism → performance).** Professionalism reflects consistent responsibility, integrity, and commitment to quality service. Professional employees are more likely to meet deadlines, uphold standards, and sustain reliable performance (Hornby, 2005; Ferawati et al.,

2020).

**H3:** Professionalism has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

**H4 (Simultaneous effects).** Leadership style shapes work direction and climate; competence provides task capability; professionalism ensures consistent application of capability and values. Together, these factors are expected to jointly explain meaningful variation in employee performance.

**H4:** Leadership style, competence, and professionalism simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

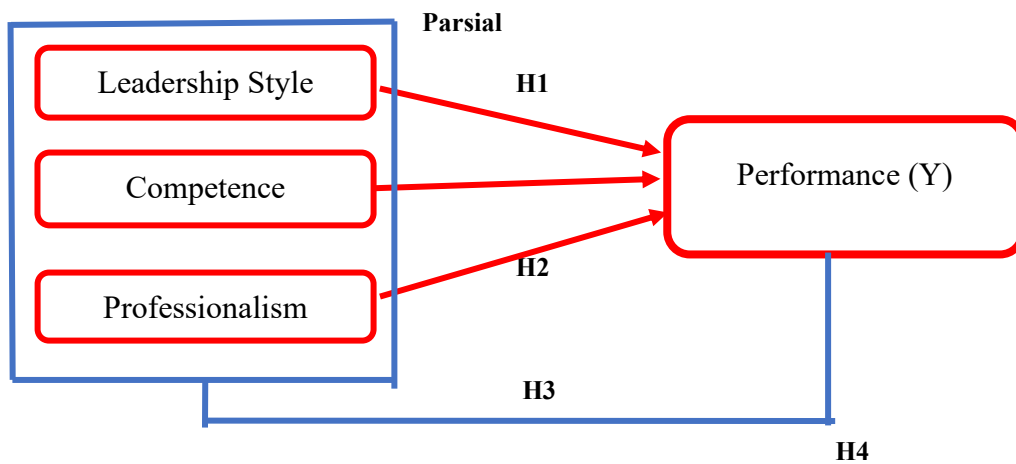


Figure 1. Research Framework

### 3. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1 Research Design and Approach

This study is a quantitative, survey-based research that applies a cross-sectional design to test hypotheses about the effects of leadership style, competence, and professionalism on employee performance. The study is hypothesis-testing in nature and uses statistical procedures to estimate relationships among variables.

#### 3.2 Study Area and Research Period

The research was conducted at the Department of Communication and Informatics (Diskominfo), Indramayu Regency, Indonesia. The planned research duration was approximately **six months** after the proposal seminar, with activities including questionnaire preparation, distribution, data processing, analysis, and thesis writing.

#### 3.3 Population, Sampling Technique, and Sample Size

The population of this study consisted of all employees of Diskominfo Indramayu. Because the population size is less than 100, the study applied a total sampling (census) approach, resulting in a final sample of 66 employees.

#### 3.4 Research Variables and Measurement

This study includes:

- Independent variables (X): Leadership Style (X1), Competence (X2), Professionalism (X3)
- Dependent variable (Y): Employee Performance

Conceptually, each construct follows the definitions provided in the study (e.g., performance, leadership style, competence, professionalism).

Variable	Indicator	Source
Leadership Style	decision making ability	Sari & Putra, 2019
Leadership Style	communication ability	Sari & Putra, 2019
Competence	knowledge	Spencer & Spencer, 1993
Competence	skills	Spencer & Spencer, 1993
Professionalism	responsibility	Ferawati et al. 2022
Employee Performance	quality of work	Afandi, 2021

### 3.5 Types and Sources of Data

This research used quantitative data from:

1. Primary data: collected via unstructured interviews and questionnaire distribution to employees.
2. Secondary data: collected through documentation (institutional profiles, books, and other supporting information).

### 3.6 Research Instrument: Questionnaire Design

The main instrument was a structured questionnaire using a Likert scale (1–5) with a checklist response format.

#### Item distribution (28 items total):

- Performance (Y): items 1–7
- Leadership Style (X1): items 8–14
- Competence (X2): items 15–21
- Professionalism (X3): items 22–28

#### Likert scoring:

1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree.

### 3.7 Data Collection Procedures

Data were gathered using four techniques:

1. **Interview** (unstructured)

2. **Observation**
3. **Questionnaire (survey)**
4. **Document study**

Practical replication steps under similar conditions:

- Obtain an updated roster of Diskominfo employees (N = 66).
- Distribute the same 28-item Likert questionnaire to all employees (total sampling).
- Collect completed questionnaires within the agreed time window.
- Conduct brief unstructured interviews (optional, as supporting primary data) and compile relevant institutional documents.

### 3.8 Data Processing and Coding

Data processing followed these stages:

- Editing (checking completeness and consistency)
- Coding/Scoring (converting responses into numeric values 1–5)
- Processing/Tabulating (data entry into statistical tables/software)
- Cleaning (final validation after entry)

### 3.9 Software and Hardware Used

- Software: Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS version 27 for Windows.
- Hardware (to be stated explicitly in the manuscript): the original text does not specify device brands/models. To meet the journal's requirement, include the actual device information used during analysis, for example:
  - Laptop/Desktop Brand & Model: [fill in]
  - Processor/RAM/Storage: [fill in]
  - Operating System: Windows [version]

### 3.10 Statistical Analysis Techniques

#### 3.10.1 Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondent and variable characteristics (minimum, maximum, mean, and total).

#### 3.10.2 Instrument Testing: Validity and Reliability

- 
- acceptable reliability.

#### 3.10.3 Classical Assumption Tests

To support regression analysis, the study assessed:

- Multicollinearity: using Tolerance ( $> 0.10$ ) and VIF ( $< 10$ ) criteria.
- Normality: using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test, with residuals considered normal when  $p > 0.05$ .

### 3.10.4 Multiple Linear Regression Model

Hypothesis testing used **multiple linear regression** to estimate the effects of X1, X2, and X3 on Y.

The regression form applied was:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

where Y = performance, X1 = leadership style, X2 = competence, X3 = professionalism, a = constant, and e = error term.

### 3.10.5 Hypothesis Testing and Significance Level

Model evaluation used:

- Coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ )
- t-test (partial effects; significance level 0.05)
- F-test (simultaneous effects; significance level 0.05)

### 3.11 Research Conditions and Key Assumptions

To enable replication, the study assumes:

- Respondents are active employees of Diskominfo Indramayu during the data collection period (N = 66) and complete the questionnaire independently.
- Likert-scale responses are scored 1–5 and processed consistently according to the stated coding/scoring procedure.
- Regression inference is supported by the reported multicollinearity and normality checks.

### 3.12 Replication Notes (Minimum Package)

A reader can reproduce the analysis under similar conditions by preparing:

1. the same 28-item questionnaire mapped to the four variables,
2. a respondent list of all Diskominfo employees (N = 66),
3. SPSS v27 for Windows and a documented data-cleaning log,
4. the analysis workflow: descriptive → validity/reliability → assumption tests → multiple regression → t/F/ $R^2$  decisions.

## 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

## 4.1. Results

### *Respondent profile and descriptive statistics.*

This study analyzed data from 66 employees at the Communication and Informatics Office (Diskominfo) of Indramayu Regency. Based on the respondent profile, most respondents were male (81.8%), aged mainly 41–60 years (dominant categories), and the largest education groups were D4/S1 (37.9%) and SMA (36.4%). Descriptively, the mean scores were: leadership style (M = 37.06), competence (M = 36.32), professionalism (M = 38.85), and employee performance (M = 37.79).

### *Instrument testing (validity and reliability).*

Item validity testing used  $r\text{-table} = 0.2423$  ( $df = 64$ ) as the benchmark; the thesis reports that all questionnaire items for the variables met the validity requirement ( $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ ). Reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha) indicates the instruments were reliable: Leadership style = 0.874, Competence = 0.935, Professionalism = 0.768, and Performance = 0.923.

### *Classical assumption tests.*

Multicollinearity diagnostics show Tolerance  $> 0.10$  and VIF  $< 10$  for all predictors (e.g., X1: tolerance 0.849, VIF 1.178; X2: tolerance 0.926, VIF 1.080; X3: tolerance 0.860, VIF 1.163), indicating no multicollinearity problem. Normality testing using Kolmogorov–Smirnov suggests residuals are normally distributed (Asymp. Sig. = 0.200; Monte Carlo Sig. = 0.437, both  $> 0.05$ ).

### *Multiple regression model and hypothesis testing.*

Based on the regression analysis, the estimated regression equation can be written as:

$$Y = 10.214 + 0.452X_1 + 0.210X_2 + 0.005X_3$$

Where:

Y = Employee performance

X1 = Leadership style

X2 = Competence

X3 = Professionalism

The regression coefficients (SPSS output) yield the model relationship between leadership style (X1), competence (X2), professionalism (X3), and performance (Y). The thesis presents the regression form and interpretation based on SPSS output. In the coefficients table, leadership style and competence are statistically significant, while professionalism is not:

- Leadership style (X1):  $t = 4.381$ , Sig. = 0.000
- Competence (X2):  $t = 2.152$ , Sig. = 0.035
- Professionalism (X3):  $t = 0.059$ , Sig. = 0.953

Model fit shows  $R = 0.589$ ,  $R^2 = 0.347$ , and Adjusted  $R^2 = 0.315$ , meaning the three predictors jointly explain about 34.7% of the variance in employee performance. The simultaneous significance test (ANOVA) indicates the regression model is significant ( $F = 10.973$ , Sig. = 0.000)

## 4.2 Discussions

### ***Leadership style significantly improves employee performance.***

The empirical results confirm that leadership style has a positive and statistically significant effect on employee performance ( $t = 4.381$ ;  $p < 0.001$ ). This supports the theoretical view that leadership is among the organizational factors that shape work outcomes and performance quality. In the thesis' theoretical foundation, performance determinants include leadership style among other drivers (e.g., motivation, organizational climate, communication, training, etc.). Practically, this means improvements in leadership behaviors—such as clearer direction, better coordination, and supportive supervision—are likely to translate into measurable performance gains, particularly in public-sector service settings (Fahmi, 2021; Wibowo, 2018). The results indicate that leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding is consistent with previous studies suggesting that effective leadership behavior enhances employee motivation, work coordination, and task clarity (Yukl, 2013; Susanti et al., 2023). In the context of Diskominfo Indramayu, leadership practices that emphasize clear communication, decision-making capability, and emotional control appear to contribute to improved employee performance.

### ***Competence significantly improves employee performance.***

Competence also shows a positive and significant influence on performance ( $t = 2.152$ ;  $p = 0.035$ ). This aligns with the conceptual definition used in the thesis that competence reflects underlying individual characteristics linked to job results—covering knowledge, skills, and work-related attributes. Therefore, strengthening competence through structured training, certification pathways, and role-relevant capability development should be expected to raise performance indicators (Sutrisno, 2019; Kasmir, 2019).

### ***Professionalism does not show a significant direct effect in this model.***

Professionalism is positive in coefficient direction but not statistically significant ( $t = 0.059$ ;  $p = 0.953$ ). Using the thesis' framing, professionalism is described as competence and commitment in carrying out professional tasks correctly while continuously improving expertise. A reasonable interpretation (within this study's context) is that professionalism may function more as a baseline requirement (relatively uniform across employees) or may influence performance indirectly (e.g., through discipline, accountability systems, work climate, or supervisory enforcement), rather than appearing as a strong direct predictor when leadership style and competence are already included. This is consistent with why prior studies often test professionalism alongside ethical climate, accountability, or work systems instead of as a standalone direct driver (Pane et al., 2021; Ferawati et al., 2020).

### ***Overall explanatory power and implications.***

With  $R^2 = 0.347$ , the model explains a meaningful but moderate portion of performance variance. This implies other factors—already acknowledged in the thesis' theoretical foundation (e.g., motivation, organizational culture, compensation, communication, training, etc.)—may account for the remaining variance. Managerially, Diskominfo can prioritize (1) leadership development interventions and (2) competence strengthening programs as the most evidence-

supported levers from this dataset, while placing professionalism improvement within a broader system (standards, evaluation, and continuous capability development).

### ***Practical Implications***

The findings suggest that local government institutions should prioritize leadership development programs and competency-based training to improve employee performance. Leadership training focusing on communication skills, decision-making, and employee empowerment may enhance organizational effectiveness. Additionally, structured competency development programs can help employees adapt to evolving digital communication demands within government institutions.

### ***Theoretical Implications***

This study contributes to the literature on public sector human resource management by empirically demonstrating the relative importance of leadership style and competence in predicting employee performance within a government communication agency.

## **5. CONCLUSION**

This study aimed to examine the partial and simultaneous effects of leadership style, competence, and professionalism on employee performance at the Communication and Informatics Office of Indramayu Regency. Based on multiple linear regression results, the objectives of the study were achieved through these main findings:

1. Leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ( $t = 4.381$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ).
2. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ( $t = 2.152$ ;  $p = 0.035$ ).
3. Professionalism shows a non-significant effect on employee performance ( $t = 0.059$ ;  $p = 0.953$ ).
4. Simultaneously, leadership style, competence, and professionalism have a significant joint effect on employee performance ( $F = 10.973$ ;  $p = 0.000$ ).

## **LIMITATION AND STUDY FORWARD**

### **Limitations**

- The study was limited to one institution and one context (Diskominfo Indramayu), with a total of 66 respondents, which may limit generalizability to other public organizations.
- The study used a survey questionnaire (Likert scale), so the results may be affected by self-report bias.
- The model only examined three independent variables, so other relevant predictors of performance were not included.

### **Study forward (future scope)**

- Future research is recommended to add other independent variables beyond leadership style, competence, and professionalism to better explain employee performance.
- Practically, the organization can focus on strengthening competence standards by job and ensuring professionalism through role-fit expertise and continuous training programs.

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