

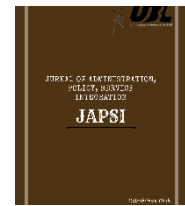
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Strategies to Improve Employee Professionalism in the Protocol and Leadership Communication Section Regional Secretariat of the City of Bandar Lampung

Mardiana Ligawa¹, Rahmawati², Iskandar Ali Alam³, Defrizal⁴, Malik⁵

^{1,2}Pelaksana pada Bagian Protokol dan Komunikasi Pimpinan Setda Kota Bandar Lampung

^{3,4,5}Universitas Bandar Lampung

E-mail: mardiana.ligawa@gmail.com

Abstract

This study aims to analyze strategies for improving employee professionalism in the Protocol and Communication Section of the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City. In the context of bureaucratic reform and regional autonomy, the effectiveness of government personnel plays a crucial role in enhancing public service quality. Using a descriptive qualitative approach, this study collects data through observation, interviews, and documentation. The findings reveal that low employee professionalism stems from limited participation in protocol training, weak work discipline, and ineffective communication in coordinating official events. To address these challenges, several strategic measures are proposed, including competency-based recruitment, continuous training programs, a performance-based reward system, and the enforcement of work discipline through an E-Kinerja-based evaluation policy. These findings have significant implications for enhancing public service effectiveness within local government institutions. By prioritizing investment in human resource development, local governments can foster a more professional and accountable governance system.

Keywords: Employee Professionalism, Improvement Strategy, Bureaucratic Reform, Public Service, Human Resource Management.

Introduction

Bureaucratic reform has been a key driver in transforming governance, particularly in the implementation of regional autonomy (Rohayati et al., 2022). This aligns with the provisions of Law Number 9 of 2015, which serves as the second amendment to Law Number 23 of 2014 on Regional Government. This law emphasizes that regional governance is carried out by local governments and the Regional House of Representatives based on the principles of autonomy and co-administration tasks. Furthermore, it upholds the broadest possible autonomy within the framework of the system and principles of the Unitary State of the Republic of Indonesia, as mandated by the 1945 Constitution.

To enhance organizational performance and the effectiveness of government officials, a strategic approach is required. This improvement can be achieved through strong leadership from direct superiors and the optimization of task execution by employees within their

*) Mardiana Ligawa: mardiana.ligawa@gmail.com

respective units (Cai, 2023). Consequently, the negative impacts of government administration can be minimized, while its positive outcomes can be maximized (Mahrani & Soewarno, 2018). In line with the evolving dynamics of the current governmental system, a paradigm shift is necessary in all aspects of governance, particularly in the implementation of administrative and bureaucratic protocols (Janowski et al., 2018). In this regard, governmental protocols play a crucial role in fostering the principles of good governance, which emphasize organizational performance improvement through effective supervision, continuous management monitoring, and the enforcement of accountability to various stakeholders (Koeswayo et al., 2024). These efforts must be carried out within the framework of existing regulations to ensure transparency and enhance the overall quality of governance (Pangaribuan, 2020).

Based on the available data regarding the performance of the Protocol and Communication Division of the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City, it is evident that the existing work plan remains limited and does not fully align with the ideal operational needs. This issue warrants particular attention given the division's strategic role in facilitating protocol services for the Mayor and Deputy Mayor within the city government. Therefore, this data serves as a valuable foundation for further discussions on the professionalism and effectiveness of the division's employees. A thorough evaluation of their performance will be essential in formulating strategies to enhance service quality in the future.

Table 1. Job Completion in the Protocol and Leadership Communication Section of the Bandar Lampung City Secretariat

No	Month	Total Work	Completed on time	Completed not on time
1	August	140	131	9
2	September	143	132	11
3	October	152	128	24

Source: Protocol and Communication Section of the Bandar Lampung City Secretariat

Table 1 indicates that over the past three months, there has been an increase in the number of tasks that were not completed on time and did not align with the initial work plan in the Protocol and Communication Division of the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City. This issue is closely related to the level of professionalism among employees, which is influenced by several factors. One of the primary concerns is the lack of employee participation in protocol training programs, which are essential for enhancing their core duties and responsibilities. Consequently, the limited training opportunities have led to gaps in employees' skills and knowledge in protocol management, ultimately affecting work efficiency and the overall quality of services provided. The following data presents employee participation in protocol training programs organized by the central government. These programs aim to enhance employees' competence and professionalism, ensuring they can effectively perform protocol duties in accordance with established standards.

Table 2. Participation in protocol training for employees of the Protocol and Communication Section of the Bandar Lampung City Secretariat.

No	Year	Protocol Training		Total	Total Staff	%
		Follow	Not Follow			
1.	2020	10	30	40	40	25,00
2.	2021	15	25	40	40	37,00
3.	2022	1	32	33	33	03,03
4.	2023	7	14	21	21	33,03

Source: Protocol and Communication Section of the Bandar Lampung City Secretariat

The data reveal a year-on-year decline in the number of employees in the Protocol and Communication Division of the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City. Additionally, employee participation in protocol education and training programs remains highly limited, exacerbating the growing competency gap in this field. Another critical issue is the low level of employee discipline in adhering to established working hours. Some employees frequently arrive late and fail to follow the designated schedules. This lack of discipline not only affects individual performance but also contributes to misperceptions and misinformation within the department. Furthermore, ineffective communication between the protocol team and event organizers worsens the situation, leading to suboptimal, inefficient protocol operations that may hinder the smooth execution of official events.

Based on the three identified issues, there is an initial indication that the Protocol and Communication Division of the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City faces challenges that contribute to the low level of professionalism among employees in carrying out their duties and functions as Civil Servants. This situation has significant implications for the effectiveness of bureaucratic performance and the quality of public services provided. Therefore, a more in-depth study is required to explore appropriate strategies for enhancing employee professionalism within this unit. By doing so, the government administration can be optimized and aligned with the principles of good governance.

1. Literature review

Organisational Behaviour

The study of organizational behavior focuses on an in-depth analysis of how individuals, groups, and intergroup dynamics influence various behavioral manifestations within an organization (Maamari et al., 2022). The primary objective of this field is to optimize organizational effectiveness by understanding patterns of interaction and responses that emerge in the workplace (Widianto et al., 2021). Fundamentally, every individual exhibits consistent behavioral patterns that do not arise randomly but can be analyzed, predicted, and modified based on their unique characteristics and traits. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of organizational behavior enables the development of more adaptive and responsive managerial strategies that align with the internal dynamics of the organization (Hanelt et al., 2021).

The foundational theory underpinning this research is the general theory of organizational behavior, as proposed by (Robbins & Judge, 2015). This theory consists of three

key components: inputs, processes, and outcomes. Inputs encompass the initial conditions and contextual factors that shape the organizational environment, serving as the foundation upon which all subsequent processes are built. These elements are established before formal working relationships are formed. Processes involve the actions, decisions, and interactions of individuals, groups, and the organization as a whole in response to these inputs, ultimately shaping the trajectory of organizational dynamics. Outcomes represent the final results derived from these processes, influenced by various interconnected variables. This theoretical framework offers a holistic understanding of how organizational behavior develops over time and affects overall performance.

Strategy

A strategy is a comprehensive and integrated plan developed by an institution or organization to achieve its predetermined objectives (Farida et al., 2018). It not only involves the formulation of organizational tasks, goals, and targets but also includes key policies and programs essential for their realization. Furthermore, a strategy encompasses the methods and mechanisms required to ensure that each planned step is effectively implemented, ultimately enabling the organization to achieve its final objectives in an optimal manner (Barusman & Virgawenda, 2019).

The Human Resource Development Strategy is a large-scale, forward-looking plan designed to navigate competitive dynamics and optimize existing potential to achieve predetermined objectives (Kareem & Hussein, 2019). Meanwhile, development is a comprehensive transformation process that encompasses various aspects of the social system, including politics, economy, infrastructure, defense, education, technology, institutions, and culture (Kadarisman, 2019). This transformation aims to foster sustainable progress and enhance the overall quality of life within society sustainable progress and enhance the overall quality of life within society (Patterson et al., 2017).

Professionalism

Professionalism refers to an individual's ability to perform tasks competently within their area of expertise. A professional not only possesses relevant technical skills but also adheres to established industry standards to ensure optimal work quality (Riau & Harta, 2022). Moreover, professionalism requires strict compliance with ethical codes, ensuring that every task performed reflects integrity, responsibility, and a strong commitment to ethical principles within the profession (Rekawani et al., 2020).

Professionalism reflects a combination of individual responsibility and adherence to legal norms and regulations within society (Macheridis & Paulsson, 2019). According to (Aschhoff & Vogel, 2019), professionalism is an inherent expertise possessed by an individual, encompassing mastery of knowledge and specialized skills relevant to their field. This expertise requires not only technical competence but also a strong commitment to work ethics and established professional standards.

Employee Performance

The term performance originates from the concepts of job performance or actual performance, referring to an individual's tangible achievements in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities (Barusman & Habiburrahman, 2022). Performance can reflect both individual and group effectiveness within an organization or institution. In general, performance

encompasses task execution and continuous improvement efforts to ensure that work is completed optimally and aligns with established objectives (Gautama So et al., 2018). This definition highlights that performance is not solely about the final outcome but also about the ongoing process of evaluation and refinement, aimed at enhancing overall efficiency and effectiveness (Faisal et al., 2021).

Employee performance can be defined as the extent to which an individual applies their specific skills in carrying out assigned tasks and responsibilities (Nalim et al., 2020). It plays a crucial role in assessing an employee's competence and effectiveness in completing their duties. Through performance evaluation, organizations can determine the level of proficiency and productivity of their workforce (Diamantidis & Chatzoglou, 2019). Therefore, it is essential to establish clear, measurable, and mutually agreed-upon criteria as a reference standard to assess and continuously improve performance quality (Soomro & Shah, 2019).

Research Framework

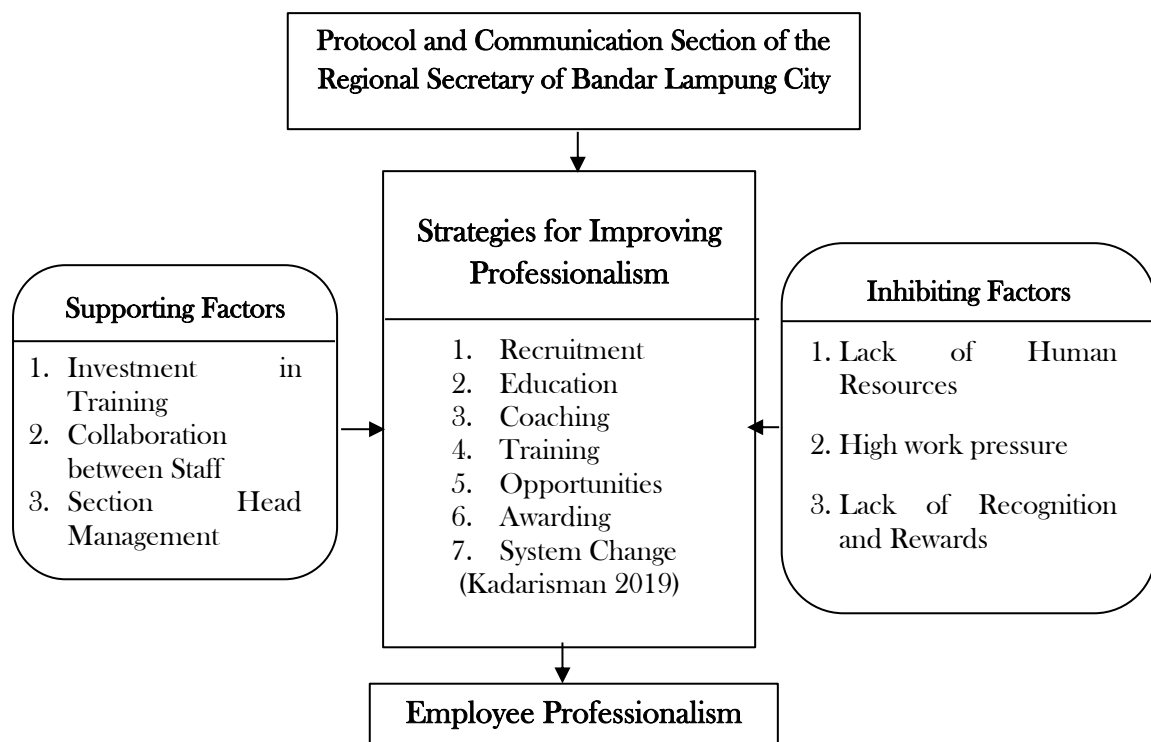


Figure 1. Framework

2. Methodology

The qualitative research method is an approach grounded in the philosophy of positivism or interpretivism and is used to explore the natural conditions of an object (Gichuru, 2017). In this method, the researcher serves as the primary instrument, while data collection is conducted using triangulation techniques, including observation, interviews, and documentation (Abdalla et al., 2018). The data obtained is qualitative in nature and analyzed inductively or through qualitative-descriptive methods. The primary objective is to comprehend meaning, uncover uniqueness, construct interpretations of phenomena, and formulate hypotheses (Barusman et al., 2024). This study is conducted within the

governmental environment of Bandar Lampung City, specifically in the Protocol and Communication Division of the Regional Secretariat.

Based on the research background and objectives, this study adopts a qualitative research approach utilizing a descriptive analysis method. This approach is employed to explore and comprehensively describe the professionalism strategies of employees in the Protocol and Communication Division of the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City. Data is directly collected from informants in the field through structured interviews and observations, ensuring alignment with the study's objectives. The study involves six participants, comprising leadership figures, employees, and community members. Specifically, the leadership category includes one Head of Division and one Head of Sub-Division, while the employee category consists of two staff members from the Protocol and Communication Division. Additionally, two community members are included to provide external perspectives. The researcher applies a non-probability sampling technique, meaning that not all individuals in the population have an equal opportunity to be selected as participants. To enhance the credibility and reliability of the findings, multiple data collection methods are employed, including observations, interviews, documentation, and data validation techniques.

Research Results and Discussion

Strategies for Improving Employee Professionalism

The strategy to enhance the professionalism of employees in the protocol and leadership communication division at the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City is a crucial initiative aimed at implementing local government policies effectively. This strategy seeks to strengthen the role of the protocol institution as the frontline in executing and supporting policies established by the Mayor and Deputy Mayor, thereby ensuring optimal contributions to the success of various government programs. In public sector organizations, human resources (HR) play a vital role as the most valuable asset, making continuous development efforts essential to improve employees' competencies, skills, and expertise for more effective and efficient job performance. According to (Kadarisman, 2019), enhancing employee professionalism involves several interconnected stages, including recruitment to select qualified individuals who meet organizational needs, continuous coaching to enhance employees' capabilities, and educational programs to expand their knowledge and expertise. Additionally, training initiatives provide technical and non-technical skills necessary for fulfilling job responsibilities, while opportunities for career advancement, special assignments, and job rotations facilitate professional growth. Furthermore, performance-based recognition serves as a motivation booster, while system reforms such as policy evaluations and structural adjustments promote a more adaptive, transparent, and productive work environment. By implementing this comprehensive strategy, employees in the protocol and leadership communication division are expected to work more professionally and effectively fulfill their strategic role in supporting government policies and development programs.

One of the most dominant strategies for enhancing employee professionalism is through coaching and development, which serves as a fundamental pillar in fostering optimal competency and qualification growth. Coaching is not merely a developmental process but also a foundational mechanism that ensures each employee possesses the necessary skills and understanding to perform their duties professionally. The existence of a structured coaching program is crucial, as it significantly impacts various aspects, including individual performance,

the quality of public services, institutional reputation, and the overall effectiveness of government policies. Through continuous coaching, employees can improve their work quality, strengthen professionalism, instill discipline and ethics, and develop both technical skills and overall performance. In its implementation, responsible institutions must adopt a comprehensive approach that includes the formulation of technical policies, ongoing coaching initiatives, cross-sectoral coordination, systematic policy execution, and effective control mechanisms to ensure that all aspects of employee coaching and supervision function in an integrated and sustainable manner.

Coaching and development programs are essential in improving the quality of public service delivery, as they directly impact an institution's reputation and public satisfaction. A highly professional workforce not only enhances service quality but also strengthens institutional performance and operational efficiency. To achieve this, organizations must implement well-structured and strategic coaching initiatives that prioritize the development of human resources with strong work ethics, high levels of loyalty, and a commitment to excellence. By cultivating a culture of professionalism, institutions can ensure that employees acquire the necessary qualifications and competencies to effectively achieve organizational objectives. This approach is supported by the findings of (Barusman et al., 2024), whose research underscores the significant impact of coaching on employee professionalism, particularly in improving work quality, discipline, ethics, career progression, and overall service excellence.

Furthermore, providing opportunities and recognition plays a crucial role in enhancing employee professionalism. The findings of this study align with research conducted by (Ali et al., 2023) which demonstrated that opportunities have a positive and significant impact on employee performance at Nanga Pinoh Regional General Hospital, Melawi Regency. This study is further supported by research from (Ndukw & Ofondu, 2018), which found that recognition positively influences employee performance. This implies that salaries, bonuses, attention, and praise can serve as effective tools for managers to motivate employees, ultimately improving work efficiency and effectiveness. Additionally, the study is reinforced by the findings of Edirisooriya (2014), who revealed that both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards have a positive impact on employee performance.

Strategic Factors for Improving Employee Professionalism

The strategy for enhancing professionalism is fundamentally shaped by four key elements. First, ensuring an adequate number of human resources to meet organizational demands. Second, improving the capacity and quality of human resources through continuous development initiatives. Third, implementing E-Performance as a structured approach to monitoring and evaluating employee productivity. Fourth, enforcing disciplinary measures to uphold organizational standards and accountability. These four components are interconnected and complement each other in creating a comprehensive professionalism enhancement strategy. However, the most critical and dominant factor is human resources, as their competency and effectiveness ultimately influence the successful implementation of the other strategic elements.

Among the four factors, the implementation of E-Performance stands out as the most effective in fostering professional motivation. This system offers a structured and accessible framework for career advancement, making promotions and rank increases more attainable.

By integrating all essential processes into a single digital platform, E-Kinerja optimizes administrative procedures, allowing employees to efficiently compile and submit the required documentation for career progression. This streamlined approach not only reduces bureaucratic complexity but also enhances transparency and fairness in the promotion process. As a result, employees are more motivated to improve their performance, fostering a culture of continuous professional growth and development.

Supporting and inhibiting factors in implementing strategies to improve employee professionalism

There are three key factors that play a crucial role in enhancing employee professionalism: investment in education and training, collaboration among employees, and the effectiveness of section head management. Research findings indicate that these factors significantly contribute to improving employee professionalism. Investment in training not only strengthens employees' competencies in performing their duties but also deepens their understanding of workplace dynamics. Meanwhile, employee collaboration fosters a harmonious work environment and promotes effective teamwork. Furthermore, leadership policies that provide employees with opportunities for growth and innovation further reinforce their professionalism, ultimately facilitating individual development that contributes to overall organizational performance.

Several factors that could hinder the improvement of professionalism, such as limited human resources, high work pressure, and a lack of recognition and appreciation, do not significantly impact employees' professional growth. This is because various supporting factors effectively mitigate these challenges. Organizational leadership plays a crucial role by prioritizing human resource management, not only in terms of quantity but also in employee development, thereby fostering professionalism. Furthermore, the work environment is carefully structured to minimize excessive pressure, and a systematic reward system is implemented regularly to ensure continuous recognition of employees' contributions.

Various types of awards can be given to employees as a form of appreciation for their contributions and achievements in the workplace. Individual performance awards recognize employees who demonstrate exceptional personal performance, while team performance awards are granted to workgroups that successfully achieve collective goals, fostering collaboration and teamwork effectiveness. Additionally, innovation awards are presented to employees who contribute creative ideas, process improvements, or innovative solutions that benefit the organization. Employees who provide outstanding service or receive customer appreciation are honored with customer service awards, reflecting their commitment to delivering positive experiences and enhancing customer satisfaction. Meanwhile, leadership awards acknowledge individuals who exhibit strong leadership qualities by guiding, motivating, and inspiring others to achieve optimal results. On the other hand, loyalty awards are given to employees who have made significant contributions and demonstrated long-term dedication to the organization.

These awards can take various forms, including certificates, trophies, medals, financial incentives, or non-monetary rewards such as incentive trips, advanced training, career development opportunities, or promotions. Establishing a positive recognition culture in the workplace is crucial for boosting motivation, driving optimal performance, and reinforcing employee professionalism.

5. Conclusions and Implication

Conclusion

Based on the interviews and discussions presented in the previous chapter, it can be concluded that the strategies for enhancing employee professionalism in the Protocol and Leadership Communication Division of the Regional Secretariat of Bandar Lampung City encompass education and training, recruitment and development, as well as the provision of opportunities and recognition for employees. This professional development is implemented through four key measures: fulfilling the required number of human resources, improving the capacity and quality of personnel, adopting the E-Performance system, and enforcing disciplinary sanctions. Several factors support the enhancement of employee professionalism, including investment in education and training, collaboration among employees, and effective management by the division head. However, certain challenges persist, such as limited human resources, high work pressure, and insufficient recognition and appreciation.

Implication

The implications of a study reflect the direct impact or consequences that arise from its findings. In the context of this research, the theoretical implications contribute to the development of organizational behavior theory, particularly in understanding the dynamics of interaction, motivation, and individual performance in the workplace. Furthermore, this study deepens the understanding of the strategic role of education and training programs, as well as reward systems, in enhancing employee effectiveness and productivity within organizations. Moreover, the findings emphasize the critical importance of improving human resource quality as a key factor in strengthening organizational capacity, particularly in the public sector, to achieve more professional and competitive governance.

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