
The Relationship of Work Ethic and Professionalism to Service Employee Performance

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Abstract: Work ethic and professionalism are two critical factors often considered to influence employee performance in public service institutions, including the police sector. However, empirical evidence regarding their effects remains limited, particularly within the context of police service units. This study was conducted to assess the relationship between work ethic and professionalism on the performance of service employees at the Medan City Police Headquarters. A quantitative approach with an associative method was employed, involving a sample of 50 respondents selected through purposive sampling. Data were collected using questionnaires developed based on research variable indicators and analyzed using multiple linear regression, Pearson correlation, classical assumption tests, and hypothesis testing. The results showed that work ethic did not have a significant effect on employee performance, whereas professionalism had a positive and significant effect. Furthermore, work ethic and professionalism simultaneously demonstrated a significant influence on service employee performance. These findings confirm that enhancing professionalism—including technical competence, analytical skills, and communication skills—is a key strategy to improve service performance. This study provides an empirical foundation for public sector human resource management development, particularly within the context of police institutions.

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INTRODUCTION

The performance of state apparatus is the foundation for developing efficient and effective public services that prioritize public needs. Alongside rising public expectations regarding transparency, accountability, and service quality, every government institution is required to continuously improve its human resource performance. This aligns with Article 28D paragraph (1) of the 1945 Constitution of the Republic of Indonesia, which guarantees every individual's right to fair legal protection. Therefore, legal certainty for the community, including business actors, is a fundamental obligation that must be guaranteed by the state to create a just social order (Rakhma & Roziqin, 2025). Improving state apparatus performance is an absolute prerequisite for quality and equitable public services.

The phenomenon at the Medan Police Headquarters shows high community service activity, particularly in the Integrated Complaint Service Department (SPKT) and



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the issuance of Police Records Certificates (SKCK). The SPKT receives various reports and complaints, while SKCK applications are also high as this document is required for job applications and continuing education. This high volume of service utilization increases work activities for service employees, requiring a strong work ethic and high professionalism to ensure services are delivered smoothly, accurately, and in compliance with applicable norms.

In public service institutions, employee performance is influenced by structural aspects, institutional policies, as well as ethical values and professionalism embedded within each employee. Work ethic is a set of moral values guiding employee behavior with honesty, discipline, responsibility, and integrity. Purwantoro et al. (2025) confirm that work ethic grounded in moral and religious values significantly impacts employee work behavior and task execution quality in public organizations.

Professionalism also plays a crucial role in improving public service employee performance, reflecting competence, expertise, and adherence to operational standards and professional ethics. Lase (2021) provides evidence that professionalism contributes significantly to work productivity and efficiency through technical skills and behavioral commitment.

In police institutions, particularly within the environment of the Medan City Police Headquarters (Polrestabes), in accordance with Law Number 2 of 2002, one of the main responsibilities of the Indonesian National Police is to serve the community (Rijal, 2021). Service employees at the Police Headquarters act as the frontline in direct interaction with the public, so their performance directly represents the image, professionalism, and credibility of the police institution in the eyes of the public.

Although much research on work ethic and professionalism has been conducted, most of these studies focus on general government institutions such as local governments and educational institutions. There remains a scarcity of research that specifically examines these two factors among service professionals in police institutions. In fact, police duties involving legal authority and high-intensity public interaction demand higher ethical standards and professionalism compared to other public sectors. Therefore, this study aims to fill this gap by investigating the relationship between work ethic and professionalism on service employee performance at the Medan Police Headquarters, thereby contributing original insights to human resource management development in law enforcement institutions.

Thus, this study aims to investigate the relationship between work ethic and professionalism on employee performance in the Medan Police Service Division using a quantitative method. The findings are expected to provide a theoretical contribution to the development of HRM studies in the public sector as well as practical recommendations for police institutions to improve the quality of community services.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This study employs organizational behavior theory, which explains how individual and group attitudes and actions influence work outcomes and organizational success. According to Syahraini et al. (2025), organizational behavior studies how individuals and groups behave in a work environment and how this impacts work performance and loyalty. Individual work behavior is shaped by values, attitudes, and abilities. Work values such as work ethic foster positive work behavior, while competencies and skills reflected in professionalism enhance task effectiveness. The combination of strong work ethic and high professionalism is expected to improve employee performance (Syahraini et al., 2025). Thus, work ethic and professionalism are crucial elements influencing employee performance. Work ethic reflects commitment, trustworthiness, and compliance, whereas professionalism reflects abilities, expertise, and work standards. In the police sector, both are essential as they affect the quality of community service.

Employee Performance

Employee performance is an indicator of how well individuals and organizations achieve their goals. Kyambade et al. (2025) define it as the quantity and quality of work completed according to assigned tasks. Sinambela (2021) adds that performance reflects the synergy between capabilities, motivation, and commitment in carrying out organizational mandates.

In police service units, employee performance is crucial for community guidance and protection. Given the legal authority and intensive public interaction, personnel must integrate technical competence with adherence to professional ethics. Professionalism and work discipline are fundamental to ensuring accountable and public-oriented law enforcement (Jubaidah & Rahmani, 2023).

This study measures performance using indicators from Kasmir (2023): (1) work quality, (2) work volume, (3) working time utilization, and (4) ability to work together. Cahyaningsih et al. (2025) and Kimotho & Okello (2025) confirm that work ethic, loyalty, work environment, and personal factors influence employee performance. These findings reinforce the importance of work ethic and professionalism in improving service employee performance, particularly in police institutions.

Work Ethic

Ethics is a set of moral standards and ideals that guide employees' actions as they perform their work and duties (Rizky et al., 2024). According to Kyambade et al. (2025), work ethic is the moral principles underlying a person's attitude in the workplace, demonstrated by honesty, responsibility, discipline, and respect for integrity. Work ethic serves as a guiding norm that helps employees act in alignment with organizational values and the public interest.

In government organizations, particularly the police, work ethic is very important because public officials are required to uphold honesty, fairness, and accountability when serving the community. Research by Hardjo & Aisyah (2024) shows that the implementation of the National Police Code of Ethics influences the attitudes and loyalty of officers. These results indicate that work ethic helps shape the professionalism of police officers, thereby improving the quality and effectiveness of police services.

The perspective of Himam (2024), adapted to the context of police services, includes: (1) Hard Work, referring to the seriousness and earnestness of employees when carrying out service duties in accordance with the authority granted; (2) Discipline, referring to employee adherence to working hours, organizational regulations, and applicable service procedures; (3) Honesty, referring to employee behavior that is honest, transparent, and accurate in the service process and reporting; (4) Responsibility, referring to the willingness of employees to complete service tasks properly and be accountable for the results of their work; (5) Politeness and Ethical Interaction, referring to friendly, courteous, respectful attitudes and maintaining the dignity of the community during the service process.

According to research by Marpaung et al. (2023), performance and work quality have significantly improved as a result of the application of work ethic. The findings of that study reveal that work ethic plays an important role in improving employee performance. Furthermore, Shehab (2025) affirms that the application of work ethic grounded in moral values can shape more responsible and professional employee behavior, thereby positively affecting organizational work outcomes. Thus, work ethic can be viewed as a very useful factor in improving employee performance in the service sector, especially in government institutions such as the police.

Professionalism

Professionalism refers to an individual's attitude, ability, and commitment when carrying out work in accordance with applicable professional standards and established codes of ethics. According to Syahraini et al. (2025), professionalism can be understood as the embodiment of the integration of competence and individual loyalty in executing assignments according to predetermined quality parameters. This understanding emphasizes the importance of consistency in work behavior that aligns with the code of ethics and professional standards, to ensure that every work outcome meets the criteria of organizational accountability. In line with this, Putri et al. (2024) emphasize that professionalism is demonstrated by mastery of specific skills, responsibility for work, and the ability to make independent decisions.

In the realm of public sector organizations, particularly police institutions, professionalism plays a strategic role given the characteristics of police duties that have a direct connection with legal authority and public service. Research conducted by Grace Sella T (2023) at the Traffic Unit of the Medan Police Headquarters showed that the professionalism of police officers is influenced by personality factors and work optimism, and contributes to improving officer performance. The results showed that professionalism plays an important role in supporting efficient and integrity-driven police task execution, making it relevant to be used as an independent variable in this study.

In this study, the indicators of professionalism refer to Syahraini et al. (2025) and include: (1) Technical Skills, namely the ability of employees to apply methods and work procedures in accordance with established standard procedures; (2) Interpersonal Skills, namely the ability of employees to build harmonious collaboration with colleagues and the community during the service process; (3) Conceptual Skills, namely the ability of employees to understand service problems comprehensively and formulate appropriate solutions; (4) Analytical Skills, namely the ability of employees to analyze alternative actions and make appropriate decisions; (5) Communication Skills, namely the ability of employees to convey information clearly, effectively, and politely during the service process.

Candana et al. (2024) state that professionalism contributes positively to improving employee productivity and work effectiveness. Professionalism demonstrated through competence and work responsibility has been proven to improve the quality of individual work outcomes. A similar point is made by Habibu (2025), who concluded that employee performance is strongly influenced by public sector professionalism. These findings support the view that professionalism is an important factor in improving the performance of public sector staff, particularly in law enforcement, where integrity, timely decision-making, and first-class public service are essential.

Conceptual Framework

A conceptual framework is a systematic illustration of the relationships between research variables as explained in the theoretical framework and previous studies. The conceptual framework serves as the researcher's line of reasoning in explaining the relationship between independent and dependent variables and serves as the basis for formulating research hypotheses (Sugiyono, 2022).

This study examines the relationship between work ethic (X1) and professionalism (X2) in relation to employee performance at the Medan City Police Department (Y). The relationship between these variables is presented in the following research framework:

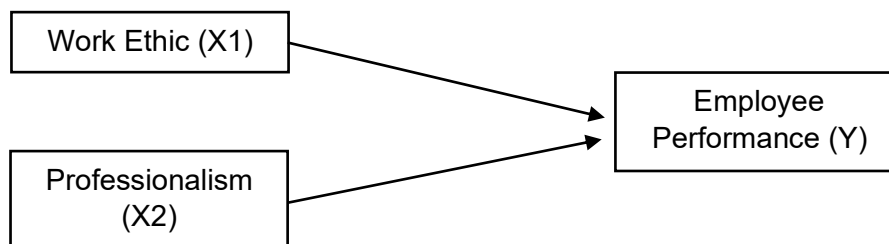


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Source: Researcher's own processing (2026)

The framework above shows that Work Ethic (X1) and Professionalism (X2) are hypothesized to influence Service Employee Performance (Y). The arrows indicate the direction of the hypothesized relationships, both partially and simultaneously.

The research hypotheses were formulated based on the theoretical framework, literature review, and conceptual framework described previously:

H1: Work ethic influences employee performance at the Medan Police Department.

H2: Professionalism influences employee performance at the Medan Police Department.

H3: Work ethic and professionalism simultaneously influence employee performance at the Medan Police Department.

METHODS

This study employs a quantitative approach with an associative design, which focuses on analyzing the relationships between variables. Specifically, this research examines the influence of professionalism and work ethic on employee performance in the service division of the Medan City Police. According to Sugiyono (2022), a quantitative approach is applied to objectively measure social phenomena by utilizing systematic and structured research instruments. Furthermore, the use of an associative design is intended to explore the relationships between variables, both within a correlational framework and to identify the magnitude of the contribution of independent variables in influencing the dependent variable. This procedure allows researchers to obtain measurable and statistically generalizable results.

This study was conducted at the Medan City Police Headquarters (Polrestabes Medan). The selection of the Medan Police Headquarters as the research subject was based on its position as a police institution that carries a broad and diverse mandate for community service. The characteristics of the Medan Police Headquarters, which has a strategic role in public service and deals directly with the community, were key considerations.

The population of this study consisted of 97 employees working in the Integrated Police Service Unit (SPKT) and intelligence units in Medan City. The population in this study integrates all personnel who have a role in public service functions, both through frontline interaction and operational support. Sample determination was carried out by applying a purposive sampling method, in which research subjects were selected based on specific inclusion criteria aligned with the urgency and objectives of the study. This approach aims to ensure that the data collected comes from informants who truly represent the service phenomenon at the research location (Sugiyono, 2022). The sample criteria in this study were: (1) Employees directly assigned to service units; (2) Minimum of one year of work experience; (3) Willing to participate in the research.

Based on these criteria, out of a total population of 97 employees, 50 employees met the criteria as research samples. Therefore, the sample size for this study consisted of 50 employees of the Medan Police Institution, who were considered representative of all relevant groups in relation to the research objectives. Data were collected using a questionnaire developed based on indicators for each variable and measured using a Likert scale.

This study uses quantitative data, namely numerical data that can be analyzed statistically (Damhuri & Kusmilawaty, 2024). The data sources include: (1) Primary Data: Data collected directly from respondents by administering questionnaires to employees of the Medan Police Department. (2) Secondary Data: Additional data in the form of supporting information from official documents, laws and regulations, books, journals, and other related literature.

The boundaries for the variables being studied, as well as the indicators used to measure them, are established by the operational definition of variables.

Table 1. Operational Variable

Variable	Indicators	Source	Scale
Work Ethic (X1)	1. Hard work 2. Discipline 3. Honesty 4. Responsibility 5. Politeness and ethical interaction	(Himam, 2024)	Likert 1–5
Professionalism (X2)	1. Technical skills 2. Interpersonal skills 3. Conceptual skills 4. Analytical skills 5. Communication skills	(Colquitt & Wesson, 2009)	Likert 1–5
Service Employee Performance (Y)	1. Work quality 2. Work quantity 3. Working time utilization 4. Ability to work together	(Kasmir, 2016)	Likert 1–5

Source: Processed by the Researcher (2026)

Data analysis was conducted systematically using SPSS version 26 software to ensure the objectivity of the analysis results. The series of statistical procedures began with an evaluation of instrument quality through validity and reliability tests. An instrument is categorized as valid if the correlation coefficient (*r*-count) exceeds the critical *r*-table value or has a significance level below 0.05, and is declared reliable if the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient is above the threshold of 0.60. Subsequently, classical assumption verification was performed, including multicollinearity testing (with criteria of tolerance > 0.10 and VIF < 10), heteroscedasticity detection using the Glejser method (significance > 0.05), and normality testing using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov instrument (significance > 0.05). All of these stages are prerequisites before conducting hypothesis testing.

Hypothesis testing was performed using multiple linear regression to determine the effect of work ethic (X1) and professionalism (X2) on employee performance (Y), with the following equation:

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

Where:

Y = Dependent Variable (Service Employee Performance)

a = Constant value

b1, b2 = Regression coefficients for each independent variable

X1 = Independent variable 1 (Work Ethic)

X2 = Independent variable 2 (Professionalism)

e = Error (residual)

Hypothesis testing in this study was conducted using the t-test to identify the partial effect of each variable, as well as the F-test to evaluate the collective simultaneous effect. Additionally, the coefficient of determination (R^2) analysis was used to measure the extent to which the independent variables are able to represent the variance in the dependent variable. All statistical testing procedures were performed by setting the significance threshold at the 0.05 level.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test

Table 2. Validity Test Results

Variable	Indicator	r-Count	r-Table	Significance	α	Description
Work Ethic (X1)	X1_1	,873**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_2	,844**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_3	,900**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_4	,891**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_5	,920**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_6	,811**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_7	,901**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_8	,932**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_9	,906**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X1_10	,817**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
Professionalism (X2)	X2_1	,887**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_2	,856**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_3	,830**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_4	,873**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_5	,805**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_6	,872**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_7	,853**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_8	,829**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_9	,873**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	X2_10	,874**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
Performance (Y)	Y_1	,894**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	Y_2	,635**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	Y_3	,918**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	Y_4	,784**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	Y_5	,899**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	Y_6	,906**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	Y_7	,867**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid
	Y_8	,788**	0,2787	0	0,05	Valid

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

The validity criteria were determined based on r-count > r-table (0.2787) and a significance value < 0.05. The validity test results showed that all question items had r-count > r-table or sig. < 0.05, so it can be concluded that all question items are valid.

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Standard	Description
Work Ethic (X1)	0,967	0,60	Reliabel
Professionalism (X2)	0,958	0,60	Reliabel
Service Employee Performance (Y)	0,937	0,60	Reliabel

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

The reliability test results showed that all variables had Cronbach's Alpha values > 0.60, so it can be concluded that all variables are reliable.

Normality Test

Table 4. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Residual
N		50
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	3,44285907
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,118
	Positive	,118
	Negative	-,111
Test Statistic		,118
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,079 ^c

a. Test distribution is Normal.

b. Calculated from data.

c. Lilliefors Significance Correction.

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

Based on the test results in the Normality Test table, the Kolmogorov-Smirnov significance value was 0.079 > 0.05, so it can be concluded that the data are normally distributed.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients ^a		
Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
1	X1	,112
	X2	,112

a. Dependent Variable: Service Employee Performance

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

The multicollinearity test results showed that the variables Work Ethic (X1) and Professionalism (X2) had a tolerance value of 0.112 (> 0.10) and a VIF value of 8.928 (< 10). Based on these criteria, the regression model was declared free from multicollinearity symptoms and satisfied the classical assumption.

Nevertheless, the VIF value approaching 10 and the relatively small tolerance value indicate a fairly strong relationship between the independent variables. This is reinforced by the Pearson correlation test results, which showed that the correlation between Work Ethic and Professionalism was 0.942, categorized as very strong. This condition indicates a conceptual proximity between the two variables. Although the

model is statistically declared free from multicollinearity, the interpretation of the regression results was carried out carefully by considering the possibility of construct overlap between variables.

Heteroscedasticity Test

Table 6. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Coefficients ^a		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	4,943	1,654		2,989	,004
	X1	,126	,109	,487	1,160	,252
	X2	-,184	,114	-,678	-1,616	,113

a. Dependent Variable: ABS_RES

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

Based on the heteroscedasticity test results, all variables had significance values > 0.05. Thus, it can be concluded that there were no symptoms of heteroscedasticity and the model passed the heteroscedasticity test.

Multiple Linear Regression

Table 7. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Coefficients ^a		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,430	2,657		2,044	,047
	X1	,003	,175	,004	,017	,986
	X2	,668	,183	,844	3,656	,001

a. Dependent Variable: Service Employee Performance

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

Based on the table above, the multiple linear regression equation can be formulated as follows:

$$Y = 5.430 + 0.003 X_1 + 0.668 X_2$$

The constant coefficient value of 5.430 indicates that if Work Ethic (X_1) and Professionalism (X_2) are zero, Service Employee Performance (Y) would be 5.430, meaning performance still has a baseline value even without the two independent variables. Work Ethic (X_1) has a regression coefficient of 0.003 with a significance of 0.986 (> 0.05), indicating a positive but non-significant effect on performance. Although the direction of the relationship shows that work ethic improves performance, the effect is very small and not yet a main determining factor. Professionalism (X_2) has a regression coefficient of 0.668 with a significance of 0.001 (< 0.05), indicating a positive and significant effect on performance. This means that for every one-unit increase in professionalism, performance increases by 0.668, implying that higher professionalism leads to higher service quality at the Medan Police Headquarters.

Hypothesis Test Results

Coefficient of Determination Test (R^2) Results

Table 8. Coefficient of Determination Test (R^2) Results

Model Summary				
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,848 ^a	,719	,707	3,515

a. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

The R Square value is 0.719 or 72%. This coefficient of determination value indicates that the variables Work Ethic (X_1) and Professionalism (X_2) are able to explain 72% of the variance in Service Employee Performance (Y), while the remaining 28% is explained by other variables.

t-Test (Partial Test)

Table 9. t-Test (Partial) Results

Coefficients ^a						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	5,430	2,657		2,044	,047
	X1	,003	,175	,004	,017	,986
	X2	,668	,183	,844	3,656	,001

a. Dependent Variable: Service Employee Performance

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

The partial test results show that Work Ethic (X_1) has a t-count of 0.017 ($<$ t-table 2.0106) with a significance of 0.986 $>$ 0.05. Thus, H_0 is accepted, concluding that Work Ethic does not have a significant effect on Service Employee Performance. This indicates that work ethic has not yet become a determining factor in improving service performance at the Medan Police Headquarters, although theoretically it can encourage responsibility, discipline, and service quality. In contrast, Professionalism (X_2) has a t-count of 3.656 ($>$ t-table 2.0106) with a significance of 0.001 $<$ 0.05. Thus, H_0 is rejected, concluding that Professionalism has a positive and significant effect on Service Employee Performance. This means that higher professionalism leads to higher service quality, as professionalism reflects competence, responsibility, and the ability to carry out tasks effectively and in accordance with applicable standards.

F-Test (Simultaneous Test)

Table 10. F-Test (Simultaneous) Results

ANOVA ^a						
Model		Sum Squares	ofdf	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	1488,009	2	744,005	60,206	,000 ^b
	Residual	580,811	47	12,358		
	Total	2068,820	49			

a. Dependent Variable: Service Employee Performance
b. Predictors: (Constant), X2, X1

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

The Sig. value is $0.000 < 0.05$ with an F-count value of $60.206 > F$ -table of 3.195. This indicates that the variables Work Ethic (X_1) and Professionalism (X_2) simultaneously have an effect. That is, Work Ethic and Professionalism together have a significant influence on Service Employee Performance.

Correlation Test

Table 11. Pearson Correlation Test Results

Correlations		X1	X2	Service Employee Performance
X1	Pearson Correlation	1	,942**	,800**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		,000	,000
	N	50	50	50
X2	Pearson Correlation	,942**	1	,848**
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000		,000
	N	50	50	50
Service Employee Performance	Pearson Correlation	,800**	,848**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	,000	,000	
	N	50	50	50

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

Source: Results Processed by SPSS (2026)

Based on the Pearson correlation test results, the relationship between Work Ethic (X_1) and Professionalism (X_2) is positive, very strong, and statistically significant ($r = 0.942$, $p < 0.01$), implying that higher work ethic is associated with higher professionalism. The relationship between Work Ethic (X_1) and Service Employee Performance (Y) is also positive and strong ($r = 0.800$, $p < 0.01$), meaning that an increase in work ethic correlates with an increase in performance. However, this strong correlation does not automatically indicate a significant causal effect in regression analysis, as correlation only shows the closeness of the relationship. Lastly, the relationship between Professionalism (X_2) and Service Employee Performance (Y) is positive, very strong, and significant ($r = 0.848$, $p < 0.01$), indicating that higher professionalism leads to higher service performance.

Overall, all variables have a positive and significant relationship at the 0.01 level. The strong relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable indicates a close association; however, to determine cause-and-effect relationships, regression analysis remains necessary, as has been conducted in this study.

The Effect of Work Ethic on Service Employee Performance

The t-test results show that work ethic does not have a significant effect on service employee performance at the Medan Police Headquarters (t -count = $0.017 < t$ -table 2.0106 ; Sig. = $0.986 > 0.05$). Although the regression coefficient is positive (0.003), the effect is very small and not statistically significant.

According to Kyambade et al. (2025), performance is influenced by ability and motivation. Work ethic, as part of attitudinal and motivational aspects, requires support from technical competence and task understanding to effectively contribute to performance. In the context of Medan Police Headquarters, performance is more determined by compliance with SOPs, service speed, and administrative accuracy. The structured and rule-based bureaucracy makes employee performance more influenced by supervision systems, task clarity, and organizational targets. Therefore, without balanced competence and system support, a good work ethic alone cannot significantly impact performance.

This finding supports Agustina & Daroini (2025) and Tuarita et al. (2025), who concluded that work ethic does not significantly affect employee performance unless accompanied by competence and technical skills, as professionalism and work competence are more dominant in explaining performance variations. Thus, work ethic functions more as a moral foundation rather than a main determinant of service employee performance at the Medan Police Headquarters.

The Effect of Professionalism on Service Employee Performance

The t-test results show that professionalism has a positive and significant effect on service employee performance at the Medan Police Headquarters (t-count = 3.656 > t-table 2.0106; Sig. = 0.001 < 0.05). The Beta value of 0.844 indicates that professionalism is the most dominant variable influencing performance.

This finding is consistent with Kyambade & Namatovu (2025), who state that a professional attitude leads to appropriate behavior and improved performance. According to Susanti et al. (2025), higher levels of professionalism—reflected in competence, responsibility, procedural accuracy, and integrity—result in better service performance, increased public satisfaction, and minimized obstacles in legal service processes.

The results also align with Khumaira (2020) and Lase (2021), who found that professionalism significantly affects employee performance, with expertise, integrity, and work discipline being dominant factors in improving service effectiveness. Thus, professionalism is an important factor and main determinant of employee performance, particularly in the public service sector.

The Effect of Work Ethic and Professionalism on Service Employee Performance

The F-test results show that work ethic and professionalism simultaneously have a significant effect on service employee performance (F-count = 60.206 > F-table 3.195; Sig. = 0.000 < 0.05). The coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.719 indicates that both variables explain 72% of the variance in employee performance, while the remaining 28% is influenced by other factors outside the model.

This finding aligns with Syahraini et al. (2025), who state that job performance is influenced by individual and organizational mechanisms, and with Kusumah et al. (2026), who affirm that strengthening work character and professional competence simultaneously improves organizational performance.

Previous research by Riwukore et al. (2022) and Ferawati et al. (2020) also found that work ethic and professionalism together significantly contribute to employee performance. Thus, while both variables simultaneously affect service employee performance at the Medan Police Headquarters, professionalism remains the most dominant factor when examined partially.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis and discussion of the research on the relationship between work ethic and professionalism on the performance of service employees at the Medan Police Headquarters, it can be concluded that work ethic does not have a significant effect on service employee performance, although correlationally it has a strong and positive relationship, indicating that work ethic plays more of a role as a moral foundation in working rather than a dominant factor in determining service performance improvement. Meanwhile, professionalism has a positive and significant effect on service employee performance, making it the most dominant variable in the research model. Simultaneously, work ethic and professionalism have a significant effect on service employee performance, with both variables being able to explain most of the variance in employee performance. Thus, professionalism is the main factor that needs

to be strengthened in efforts to improve service quality at the Medan Police Headquarters.

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