Role of Auditor Objectivity and Experience in Shaping Audit Quality at West Sulawesi Inspectorate

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Abstract. The purpose of this study is to find, test, and statistically evaluate, at the West Sulawesi Provincial Inspectorate Office, auditor objectivity and work experience's effects on audit quality. This study gathered primary data using quantitative research techniques by means of questionnaires sent straight to every auditor at the Regional Inspectorate Office of West Sulawesi Province, therefore numbering 41 individuals. While the auditor work experience variable indicates a positive and substantial influence on the quality of audit results, the outcomes of the research show that the objectivity variable has a non-significant negative affect.

Keywords: Objectivity, Work experience, Audit Quality

1. INTRODUCTION

Supervision by the government's internal supervisory apparatus is a crucial aspect in the implementation of government affairs. The main objective is to evaluate the performance of government agencies in implementing programs, ensuring that their duties are aligned with their mission and functions while still complying with established regulations. As the demand for transparent, fair, and accountable government grows, there is a growing need to meet people's expectations. This requires strong internal oversight and effective financial management to ensure the responsible use of public funds in government operations [1].

The Government Intermediate Supervisor monitors the administration of government as an early warning system for fraud and as a coaching function for each work unit in a Government Agency. Audit is the function of supervising the implementation of other management functions such as: planning, organizing, and directing. Audit is a critical process that helps identify existing vulnerabilities and unmet development opportunities [2].

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Internal government supervision is an effort to prevent misappropriation and abuse of state wealth. To carry out effective and efficient government internal supervision, the presence of elements of the Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP) must be supported. Therefore, it is necessary to have a government internal supervisory institution (APIP) that has the capacity and expertise to prevent incidents that cause losses in the government environment.

Audit quality is a crucial element in maintaining public trust and ensuring the transparency of governmental financial reporting. In the Inspectorate of West Sulawesi, audit quality is essential to uphold accountability and prevent errors or irregularities in financial management. However, achieving high-quality audits depends on various factors, including the objectivity and experience of the auditors involved. Objectivity ensures that auditors can perform evaluations without bias, while experience provides them with the practical knowledge needed to recognize and address potential issues effectively [3].

The importance of auditor objectivity and experience has grown in determining the trustworthiness and correctness of audit results. Objectivity enables auditors to maintain independence and resist extraneous influences, while a robust foundation of expertise equips them to manage intricate audit scenarios and render informed conclusions. This study investigates the impact of two factors on audit quality at the West Sulawesi Inspectorate, aiming to elucidate the essential conditions for effective audits, thereby enhancing public sector governance and fostering trust in governmental financial operations.

The quality of the audit is an important aspect to present the audit report because a good audit will reflect good financial management [3]. To achieve optimal government financial management, the existence of competent auditors is very important. Good audit quality is very necessary because if the auditor is less qualified, the possibility of errors and fraud in the audit of financial statements becomes higher. When the auditor finds an error in presentation or fraud in the financial statements, the auditor who conducts the audit is obliged to report based on the existing facts.

Experts expressed different views regarding audit quality. Basically, the quality of an audit is highly dependent on the level of professionalism, so if the auditor performs his or her duties professionally, the quality of the audit is guaranteed. This is due to high-quality audits that present trustworthy financial statements, which provide a foothold for reliable decisions. Prevention of official errors in carrying out systems or procedures, prevention of errors in the implementation of the authority of SKPD officials, and prevention of embezzlement and corruption. Second, the audit is a systematic process in collecting evidence related to transactions and evaluating the conformity of the transaction with the standards or regulations that have been set. In carrying out its audit function, the internal auditor must identify all material errors that occur in the implementation of regional finances. Third, coaching, namely the provision of technical guidance on financial management in accordance with existing regulatory provisions, in line with the principles of accountability and transparency.

The Government Internal Supervisory Apparatus (APIP), comprising the Inspectorate of Ministries/Practices, Provincial Inspectorates, and Regency/City Inspectorates, performs the supervisory role in government agencies. Regarding the authority and duties of the Provincial, Regency/City Inspectorate, Government Regulation Number 72 of 2019, which is an amendment to Government Regulation Number 18 of 2016 concerning Regional Apparatus Organizations, regulates this. Article 11 of PP 72 of 2019 states that the Provincial Inspectorate is tasked with compiling technical guidelines in terms of supervision and supporting supervision. Its duties include internal supervision related to performance and finance through audit, review, evaluation, monitoring, and other forms of supervision. In the process of making a decision, the auditor is obliged to process all data or documents comprehensively and in detail based on reality, while maintaining an attitude of independence and objectivity.

Auditors must be impartial in performing their responsibilities so that they may behave honestly and their conclusions are not swayed by pressure factors or demands from any party interested in the audit outcomes [4]. It is also influenced by the competence or skills to perform the task. Previous research has shown that excessive alignment with audit objectives can result in a decrease in auditor independence. Of course, various possibilities are offered in testing objectivity during assignment that can affect the objectivity of the auditor, but the auditor should always prioritize his integrity and objectivity in conveying the actual facts.

An auditor's work experience also influences every decision made during the audit process, so it is important to make the right decisions at every stage of the audit. This means that the longer an auditor works, the higher the likelihood of audit quality [5]. As an internal auditor of the government, APIP is tasked with doing three things. First, supervision in the form of prevention of reporting errors and accountability, the Regional Inspectorate of West Sulawesi Province is part of the administrative structure of the West Sulawesi Provincial Government and has the same position as other agencies or institutions within the scope of the West Sulawesi Provincial Government. As an internal auditor, the results of the examination by the supervisory apparatus are only in the form of recommendations such as sanctions, mutations, and dismissals of regional officials and law enforcement officials. The implementation of these proposals is the responsibility of local governments and law enforcement officials. In carrying out its duties as an internal auditor of the West Sulawesi Provincial Government, the Agency still has many weaknesses and shortcomings, both in the audit process and in the preparation of audit reports. The number of supervisory officials involved in audits is still large and limited, especially in terms of objectivity, professional experience, and integrity, which ultimately results in audit reports remaining ordinary, unclear, and inaccurate.

As seen by the numerous corruption cases that continue to this day that also involve regional government officials, the oversight provided by the West Sulawesi Provincial Regional Inspectorate, or APIP, is still insufficient. In light of this circumstance, the author contends that it is critical to investigate how auditor objectivity and job experience affect audit quality. The results of the study by Panggabean & Pangathousands [6] found that objectivity had no effect on the quality of audit results, but research by Sukriah et.al showed the opposite result, namely objectivity affecting audit quality [7] In addition, the findings from Adisti & Setyohadi [8] and Amran and Selvia[9] The findings of Ayuningtias et al., who assert that work experience has no impact on audit quality, are inconsistent with the findings of the aforementioned study, which demonstrate that work experience has a positive impact on audit quality. [10] The inconsistent findings of previous studies have made it increasingly intriguing to reevaluate audit quality research, particularly in the context of the impact of objectivity and work experience on the quality of audit reports at the West Sulawesi Provincial Inspectorate.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Objectivity

Objektivitas merupakan perilaku yang wajib dipelihara oleh setiap auditor internal in carrying out their duties. When conducting an audit, the auditor must not base all of his or her considerations on the results of other people's considerations to avoid situations that may affect the ability to carry out professional and objective judgments . The principle of objectivity is to remain neutral or not engage in certain activities to ensure balanced justice. The internal auditor must maintain his professional independence by not accepting any influence that may affect his or her objective assessment, and must disclose all known material facts.

Work Experience

Work experience has an important role in effective performance. The wider work experience, the more a person masters his work, and the better his mindset and attitude in achieving certain goals [7]. For an internal auditor, experience is a valuable learning opportunity to understand audit techniques. The more experienced an auditor is, the more skilled and competent he is in handling audit tasks and activities. With the experience possessed, an auditor can face and resolve obstacles and problems that arise during his duties, as well as manage emotions in interacting with the audited party. The experience of an auditor in carrying out his duties also makes a great contribution in improving his abilities.

Audit Quality

According to DeAngelo [6], audit quality is defined as the possibility that the auditor is able to adequately and accurately detect material errors, misstatements, or significant omissions in the client's financial statements. In 1986, the Government Accountability Office defined audit quality as compliance with professional standards and contractual requirements that consider the ability of a supervisory tool to detect fraud or fraud depending on its ability or expertise, while its ability to disclose and report its findings depends on its independence. The quality of government auditors plays an important role in achieving high-quality regulatory audit results to reduce the possibility of violations/fraud by government officials.

3. RESEARCH METHOD

The research was conducted at the Regional Inspectorate Office of West Sulawesi Province, with a population of Civil Servants (PNS) working there. The sample was selected through the purposive sampling method, namely West Sulawesi civil servants who served as auditors, with a total of 41 people.

This study uses a research method through a quantitative approach in analyzing the influence of independent variables (X) consisting of objectivity and work experience on dependent variables (Y), namely audit quality.

The method applied in data collection is research through the distribution of pre-designed questionnaires in a structured and systematic way to respondents to be filled out and returned. To evaluate this study, a questionnaire was prepared so that respondents could give responses according to their opinions.

4 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

In order to find out whether the statement questionnaire that has been distributed to the respondents, the content of the content in the statement is valid and realistic, it is necessary to test each of the variable statements first.

1. Validity test

The objective is to evaluate the degree to which the instrument (questionnaire) effectively measures the intended concept during data collection. The validity test determines if the items in the questionnaire accurately represent the research topic. The validity test was conducted utilizing SPSS version 26 software, assessing Pearson's bivariate correlation on the findings of each questionnaire statement, where the "r" value was computed and compared against the "r" value in the designated table. The questionnaire item was deemed valid if the calculated "r" value exceeded the tabulated "r" value. To calculate the "r" value of the table, one must determine the degree of freedom (df). This value is then presented in the table "r". The formula for degrees of freedom (df) is df = n - 2. The responder population consists of 41 individuals, resulting in a degrees of freedom (df) value of 39 (41 - 2). The df value is utilized in the table "r" based on the test criterion, namely $\alpha = 0.05$ (5%). The value of "r" for the research variable was determined to be 0.316.

a. Objectivity

   For the independent variable X1, namely Objectivity, the data processed from SPSS regarding the results of the validity test on the questionnaire statement can be seen in the following table:

b. Top of Form

c. Bottom of Form

Table 1 X1 validity testing (Objectivity)

Statement	R Count
1.	0.759
2.	0.417
3.	0.518
4.	0.694
5.	0.771
6.	0.917
7.	0.755
8.	0.694

According to the data in Table 1, it can be inferred that the independent variable X1, which pertains to objectivity, contains 8 (eight) statements deemed valid, as the computed value of "r" exceeds the tabulated value of "r" (0.316).

b. Work Experience

In the independent variable X2, namely work experience, the results of data processing from SPSS on the results of the validity test on the statement questionnaire can be seen in the table below:

Table 2. X2 validity testing (Work Experience)

Statement	R Count
1.	0.759
2.	0.417
3.	0.518
4.	0.694
5.	0.771
6.	0.917
7.	0.755
8.	0.694

From the information in the table: 2 above, the independent variable X2, namely work experience, there are 9 (nine) statements declared valid because the value of "r" is calculated > "r" table (0.316).

c. Audit Quality

The results of data processing from SPSS on the validity test of the statement questionnaire for the dependent variable Y, specifically audit quality, are presented in the table below:

Table 3. Y variable validity test results (Audit Quality)

Statement	r count
1	0.637
2	0.723

3	0.776
4	0.722
5	0.880
6	0.758
7	0.780
8	0.747
9	0.722
10	0.902

Source: Output SPSS (2024)

From the information listed in table 3 above, it is concluded that the dependent variable Y, namely Audit Quality, out of 10 (ten) statements is considered valid because the value of "r" > the value of "r" of the table (0.316).

2. Reality Test

The aim is to ensure whether the indicators used are consistent, meaning whether the indicators give uniform results when used repeatedly at different times using the Cronbach alpha method. Instruments that have a reliability coefficient or Cronbach's alpha above 0.50 are considered reliable (Arikunto, 1998). The results of SPSS data analysis were obtained as follows:

Table 4. Reality test of research variables

Research Variables.	*Cronbach's alpha*
1. Objectivity	0,849
2. Work Experience	0,708
3. Audit Quality	0,814

Source: Output SPSS (2024)

According to Table 4 above, all assertions inside each variable are deemed credible. The Cronbach alpha value exceeding 0.60

indicates this finding. Additionally, the independent variable can be elucidated as follows: Objectivity (X1) is deemed dependable once the Cronbach alpha value attains 0.849. The job experience variable (X2) was deemed reliable, as shown by a Cronbach alpha score of 0.708. Concurrently, the dependent variable, audit quality (Y), was deemed reliable as the Cronbach alpha value was 0.814. Consequently, it was determined that all statement items within the examined research variables were deemed reliable, since the aggregate Cronbach alpha value exceeded 0.60.

B. Multiple Regression Analysis.

The hypothesis was evaluated by multiple regression analysis. Ghozali asserted that regression analysis extends beyond merely quantifying the strength of the association among two or more variables; it also determines the significance of the relationship between dependent and independent variables [11].

Multiple linear regression seeks to ascertain the impact of objectivity and professional experience on audit quality. The examination of data processed with the SPSS program yields the following results:

Table 5. Linear Regresi Analysis

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.679	1.595		1.680	.096
	Objektivitas	.115	.083	.125	1.395	.166
	Pengalaman Kerja	.563	.082	.554	.6.851	.000

Dependent Variable : Audit Quality

Source: SPSS Data Processing, 2024

In table 5 in the Coefficients column, the model of the multiple linear regression equation can be described as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + b1\ X1 + b2\ X2 + e$$

$Y = 2.679 + 0.115\ X_1 + 0.563\ X_2 + e$
Known:
Y (audit quality); α (Constant); b1 and b2 (Regression Coefficient); X1: (objectivity); X2 (work experience); and e (error).

Based on the equation above, it can be described as If objectivity and work experience equal 0, then audit quality is 2.679 units. The coefficient of X1 is 0.115, signifying that a 1-unit change in X1 results in a 0.115-unit increase in audit quality. The coefficient of X2 is 0.563, indicating that a 1-unit change in X2 leads to a 0.563-unit increase in audit quality.

Hypothesis Testing

Some of the testing methods for testing research hypotheses include:
Partial Test (T-Test)
To evaluate the impact of each independent variable on the dependent variable. A probabilistic technique was employed, wherein a significance value (sig.) < 0.05 denotes a significant effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable, whereas a sig. value > 0.05 signifies an inconsequential effect. This study used the T test to assess if the independent variable, specifically objectivity and work experience, exerts a significant partial effect on the dependent variable, audit quality.

The following are the results of data analysis managed using the SPSS program:

Table 6. Uji T
Coefficients[a]

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients	t .	Sig.
Model		B	Std Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	2.679	1.595		1.680	.096

	Objectivity	.115	.083	.125	1.395	.166
	Work Experience	.563	.082	.554	6.851	.000

Dependent Variable: Audit quality

From table 5, it can be described:

Objectivity to audit quality.

In the significance test of T concerning objectivity and audit quality, the value of ρ is 0.166, the calculated t is 1.395, the table t is 2.022, and the significance value is 0.166. Objectivity does not significantly affect audit quality, as the calculated "t" value of 1.395 is less than the "t" table value of 2.022, and the significance value of 0.166 exceeds 0.05.

Work Experience on audit quality

The T test findings for the connection between work experience and audit quality reveal a p-value of 0.000, a computed t-value of 6.851, a crucial t-value of 2.022, and a significance level of 0.000. Job experience substantially influences audit quality, since the computed "t" value of 6.851 surpasses the "t" table value of 2.022, and the significance value of 0.000 is below 0.05.

Beta Testing

To determine the independent variable (X) that has the most significant influence on the dependent variable (Y), it is necessary to conduct a beta test to see which variable has the highest standardized beta coefficient.

Table 7. Beta Testing

Coefficients[a]

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Unstandardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std Error	Beta..		
1	(Constant)	2.679	1.595		1.680	.096

Objectivity	.115	.083	.125	1.395	.166
Work Experience	.563	.082	.554	6.851	.000

a. Variable Dependency: Audit quality

From Table 6, it can be seen that the standardized beta coefficient of the work experience variable X2 is the highest, which is 0.554, compared to the objectivity variable X1 which has a coefficient of 0.125. From there, it can be concluded that the X2 work experience variable has a greater effect on audit quality.

The results of the partial test of each independent variable against the dependent variable can be described as follows:

The effect of objectivity on audit quality in the West Sulawesi Provincial Inspectorate

The independent variable of objectivity (X1) was tested, and the p-value

The findings indicated that objectivity significantly influences audit quality at the West Sulawesi Inspectorate. Auditors that uphold an impartial stance during the audit process are likely to generate more precise and insightful findings. High audit quality is defined by impartial and transparent evaluations, free from influence or coercion by any interested parties, whether internal or external.

This discovery validates the necessity of enacting procedures that protect auditor independence and objectivity within the Inspectorate of West Sulawesi Province. Enhancing methods that foster objectivity, including professional ethics training and mentoring, is anticipated to further elevate audit quality. Achieving clean and responsible governance is crucial for enhancing public confidence in the audit reports generated by the Inspectorate..

The results of this study are consistent with previous research conducted by Lubis (2020), which concluded that objectivity has no influence on audit quality. This is also supported by the research of Elen and Mayangsari (2013), which states that objectivity does not have an impact on the quality of audits.

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The effect of work experience on audit quality at the West

Sulawesi Provincial Inspectorate

This indicates that the majority of auditors in the West Sulawesi Provincial Inspectorate are of the opinion that their work experience there has a substantial impact on the quality of their audits. These results also verify that enhanced work experience is a factor in the enhancement of audit quality. Conversely, the quality of the audit is likely to decline as the work experience decreases. This finding substantiates the notion that the audit results are significantly influenced by the auditor's level of experience in conducting an audit.

Professional experience substantially influences the quality of audits. Auditors with extensive experience exhibit a propensity for more thoroughness, efficiency, and diligence in the execution of their responsibilities. Ample experience enables auditors to comprehend the dynamics of various examined organizations, encompassing differences in accounting systems, work environments, and any anomalies that must be recognized. The quality of audits conducted by seasoned auditors is typically superior due to their ability to render accurate and precise judgments informed by their practical expertise.

The study revealed that job experience aids auditors in managing problems and pressures encountered during the audit process. Experienced auditors possess more sophisticated techniques and methodologies for addressing challenging situations or conflicts, including data uncertainty or pressure from stakeholders. Maintaining auditor independence is crucial to ensure that the reports generated are both accurate and objective, hence instilling trust among users of audit reports. This finding is in line with previous research by Adisti & Setyohadi (2019) and Amran & Selvia (2019), which showed that work experience had a positive effect on the quality of audit results.

Variables that have a greater influence on audit quality in the West Sulawesi Provincial Inspectorate

It is imperative to evaluate the beta coefficient's value in order to identify the variables that have the most significant impact on audit quality, as indicated by the results. The objectivity and work experience of the auditor are the two independent variables that were determined in this study. The results indicated that work experience (X 2) had the greatest beta coefficient value of 0.554 among the two variables. In contrast, objectivity (X 1), an additional independent variable, has a value of only 0.125.

The work experience variable (X2) has the greatest or dominant influence on audit quality, as indicated by the dominance test. Consequently, work experience is a critical factor that significantly influences the ability to conduct quality audits.
This discovery has significant ramifications for measures aimed at enhancing audit quality at the Inspectorate of West Sulawesi Province. Additional investment in professional development programs that enhance auditor expertise, including specialized training, mentoring, and exposure to diverse audit responsibilities, is necessary. This approach enhances auditors' technical skills while fostering sensitivity and acumen in the thorough study of intricate audit subjects.
This study's findings affirm that prioritizing sufficient work experience is essential for enhancing audit quality within the Inspectorate. The amalgamation of substantial job experience and an impartial disposition can yield dependable auditors and generate believable audit reports. The outcomes of quality audits enhance internal accountability and bolster public trust in the audit results produced by the Inspectorate of West Sulawesi Province.

5 CONCLUSION

This study concludes that work experience significantly impacts audit quality at the Inspectorate of West Sulawesi Province more than auditor objectivity does. The analytical results indicate that the auditor's work experience substantially enhances their thoroughness, efficiency, and accuracy during the audit process, hence positively influencing the quality of the audit outcome. Conversely, objectivity exhibited no substantial impact on audit quality.

Professional expertise enables auditors to comprehend the intricacies of the audited entity, navigate obstacles, and maintain objectivity in decision-making, all of which are essential for generating precise and dependable audit reports. Although objectivity is vital for preserving auditor integrity, our research underscores that job experience is a more critical determinant of high-quality audits.

This research highlights the necessity for augmented professional development programs aimed at improving auditors' expertise and competencies. Investing in specialized training, mentoring, and diverse audit assignments would enhance audit quality at the West Sulawesi Inspectorate.

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