



## **Analysis of the Influence of Education Standardization and Age on Regional Head Candidates**

### **Analisis Pengaruh Standarisasi Pendidikan dan Usia terhadap Calon Kepala Daerah**

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#### **Abstract**

This study aims to analyze the influence of education standardization and age on the quality of leadership of regional head candidates in Indonesia. Democracy gives the people the right to choose their leaders, including regional heads. Therefore, the election of quality regional heads is the main key to realizing good governance and effective regional development. This study uses multiple linear regression methods to analyze the relationship between education standardization (X1) and age (X2) on the leadership performance of regional head candidates (Y). Data was collected through questionnaires distributed to 42 respondents and literature studies from various sources. Validity test results showed that 10 out of 12 questionnaire items were valid, while reliability testing yielded a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.736, indicating high reliability. The results indicate that there is no significant influence of education (X1) on the leadership performance of regional head candidates with a significance value of  $0.993 > 0.05$ . However, the age variable (X2) has a significant influence on the leadership performance of regional head candidates with a significance value of  $0.000 < 0.05$ . Simultaneously, both variables together have a significant effect on the qualifications of regional head candidates with an F value of 9.644 and significance of  $0.000 < 0.05$ .

**Keywords:** Educational Standardization, Age, Regional Head Candidates, Leadership, Multiple Linear Regression.

#### **Abstrak**

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh standarisasi pendidikan dan usia terhadap kualitas kepemimpinan calon kepala daerah di Indonesia. Demokrasi memberikan hak kepada rakyat untuk memilih pemimpinnya, termasuk kepala daerah. Oleh karena itu, pemilihan kepala daerah yang berkualitas menjadi kunci utama dalam mewujudkan good governance dan pembangunan daerah yang efektif. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode regresi linier berganda untuk menganalisis hubungan antara standarisasi pendidikan (X1) dan usia (X2) terhadap kinerja kepemimpinan calon kepala daerah (Y). Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner yang disebarakan kepada 42 responden dan studi pustaka dari berbagai sumber. Hasil uji validitas menunjukkan 10 dari 12 item kuesioner valid, sedangkan uji reliabilitas menghasilkan nilai Cronbach's Alpha sebesar 0,736 yang menunjukkan reliabilitas tinggi. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tidak ada pengaruh signifikan dari pendidikan (X1) terhadap kinerja kepemimpinan calon kepala daerah dengan nilai signifikansi  $0,993 > 0,05$ . Namun, variabel usia

(X2) memiliki pengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja kepemimpinan calon kepala daerah dengan nilai signifikansi  $0,000 < 0,05$ . Secara simultan, kedua variabel bersama-sama berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kualifikasi calon kepala daerah dengan nilai F hitung 9,644 dan signifikansi  $0,000 < 0,05$ .

**Kata Kunci:** Standarisasi Pendidikan, Usia, Calon Kepala Daerah, Kepemimpinan, Regresi Linear Berganda.

## INTRODUCTION

Democracy in Indonesia grants citizens the fundamental right to choose their leaders, including regional heads through direct elections. This democratic mechanism, established following the reformation era in 1998, represents a significant shift from the centralized governance system of the New Order period (Maulana et al., 2022). The implementation of regional autonomy through Law Number 32 of 2004, subsequently revised by Law Number 23 of 2014, marked a new chapter in Indonesian governance by transferring substantial authority and responsibility to local governments (Purwanto & Kumorotomo, 2005).

The selection of quality regional heads serves as a cornerstone for realizing good governance and effective regional development (Idrus et al., 2019). Direct regional head elections (Pemilihan Kepala Daerah/Pilkada) provide citizens with the opportunity to actively participate in determining their local leadership, thereby strengthening democratic accountability at the grassroots level (Rahmatunnisa, 2017). This participatory process is fundamental to ensuring that elected leaders genuinely represent the aspirations and interests of their constituents while possessing the necessary capabilities to translate electoral promises into tangible development outcomes.

According to Law Number 10 of 2016 concerning Regional Head Elections (Pilkada), regional head candidates must fulfill several requirements, including a minimum education level of bachelor's degree (S1) and a minimum age of 30 years (Azis, 2023). These statutory requirements reflect the legislature's attempt to establish baseline qualifications that theoretically ensure candidates possess adequate intellectual capacity and life experience to manage complex governmental responsibilities. The educational requirement was introduced with the premise that higher education develops critical thinking skills, analytical capabilities, and exposure to theoretical frameworks necessary for effective policy formulation and implementation (Azis, 2023).

The age requirement of 30 years was established based on assumptions about psychological maturity, professional experience accumulation, and social capital development that typically accompany the aging process (Azis, 2023). This threshold aims to ensure that candidates have had sufficient time to develop leadership competencies through various life experiences, professional endeavors, and community engagement activities. Additionally, the regulation stipulates other requirements including administrative completeness, health certification, and absence of criminal records, creating a multidimensional screening mechanism for potential leaders.

However, these standardization requirements have generated considerable debate among scholars, practitioners, and civil society organizations. Critics argue that rigid educational and age criteria may inadvertently exclude potentially capable leaders who possess relevant experience and competencies but lack formal credentials (Rahmatunnisa, 2017). Furthermore, questions arise regarding whether these standardized requirements effectively predict leadership success or merely create artificial barriers to political participation, particularly for candidates from marginalized socioeconomic backgrounds.

The leadership of regional heads plays a crucial role in determining the direction and progress of a region. Quality leadership can drive effective regional development, improve community welfare, and realize good governance principles characterized by transparency, accountability, responsiveness, and participatory decision-making (Idrus et al., 2019; Syaidi et al., 2024). Regional heads serve as chief executives responsible for formulating development strategies, allocating budgetary resources, coordinating inter-governmental relations, and ensuring effective public service delivery to constituents (Dwiyanto, 2018).

In the context of Indonesia's diverse archipelagic geography and socio-cultural heterogeneity, regional leaders must navigate complex challenges including inter-ethnic relations, resource allocation

disparities, infrastructure development constraints, and balancing economic growth with environmental sustainability (Nugroho, 2018). The decentralization policy has empowered regional governments with significant autonomy in managing local affairs, making leadership quality increasingly critical for regional prosperity and citizen wellbeing (Nugroho, 2018).

The minimum bachelor's degree requirement is expected to provide regional head candidates with the necessary knowledge and skills to lead their regions effectively. This educational standard aims to ensure that candidates have acquired fundamental competencies in management, policy analysis, and decision-making processes through formal academic training (Juharni & Congge, 2021). From a human capital theory perspective, educational attainment represents an investment in cognitive capabilities, technical skills, and knowledge accumulation that enhances individual productivity and performance potential (Juharni & Congge, 2021). Proponents of educational standardization argue that bachelor's degree holders possess superior information processing abilities, better written and verbal communication skills, and greater capacity for strategic thinking compared to those with lower educational credentials (Hermansyah, 2023).

However, critics contend that formal education does not necessarily translate into practical leadership effectiveness, particularly in political contexts where emotional intelligence, social skills, and contextual knowledge may prove more valuable than academic credentials (Zuhro, 2018). Meanwhile, the minimum age requirement reflects assumptions about psychological development and professional experience accumulation (Azis, 2023). Age serves as a proxy variable for accumulated life experience, professional network development, and exposure to diverse organizational contexts that collectively contribute to leadership readiness (Amrullah et al., 2022). However, the relationship between chronological age and leadership effectiveness remains contested, as younger leaders may offer fresh perspectives, technological proficiency, and greater alignment with evolving societal values (Fitriyanti, 2022).

Several studies suggest that educational standards and age do not always correlate with leadership quality. Other factors such as work experience, political capability, and leadership vision may serve as more important determining factors in effective regional governance (Purwanto & Kumorotomo, 2005). Research on political leadership suggests that personal characteristics such as emotional intelligence, communication skills, ethical integrity, and strategic vision often better predict leadership success than demographic variables like education and age.

The implementation of these standardization requirements raises questions about their actual impact on regional leadership performance. While these criteria aim to ensure candidate quality, empirical evidence regarding their effectiveness in predicting successful regional leadership remains limited (Juanda & Juanda, 2022). This gap in understanding necessitates comprehensive analysis of how education standardization and age influence regional head candidate performance, representing a significant knowledge deficit that undermines evidence-based policymaking.

This study aims to provide in-depth analysis of the influence of education standardization and age on regional head candidates in Indonesia, employing multiple linear regression analysis to quantify these relationships and determine their relative importance in predicting leadership performance.

## METHODS

This research employed a quantitative approach using qualitative data that was transformed into quantitative measurements through systematic data collection and analysis procedures. The study utilized a mixed-method data collection strategy combining primary data from questionnaires and secondary data from literature review to ensure comprehensive coverage of the research variables.

Primary data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires distributed to regional head candidates and relevant stakeholders. The questionnaires contained questions addressing education level, age, work experience, leadership vision, and leadership performance indicators. The distribution was carried out through both online and offline channels to maximize response rates and ensure broad participation across different demographic groups. This dual approach allowed for greater accessibility and convenience for respondents while maintaining data quality and consistency.

Secondary data was gathered through extensive literature review from various authoritative sources including academic books, scientific journals, scholarly articles, and official websites of the General Election Commission (KPU). This literature review served to complement the primary data and provide theoretical foundation for the research variables. The secondary sources were carefully selected based on their relevance, credibility, and currency to ensure the robustness of the theoretical framework underlying this study.

The analytical approach employed multiple linear regression analysis to examine the relationship between the independent variables and the dependent variable. Multiple linear regression was selected as the primary analytical method due to its capability to analyze the relationship between one dependent variable and two or more independent variables simultaneously (Mardiatmoko, 2020). In this study, the dependent variable was the leadership performance of regional head candidates, while the independent variables were education level standardization and age.

The regression model was formulated as:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

Where Y represents the leadership performance of regional head candidates,  $\alpha$  represents the constant,  $\beta$  represents the coefficient of variable x,  $X_1$  represents education standardization, and  $X_2$  represents age. This mathematical formulation allowed for the quantification of the individual and combined effects of the independent variables on the dependent variable.

Prior to conducting the main analysis, the research instruments underwent rigorous validity and reliability testing to ensure the quality and consistency of the measurements. Validity testing was conducted to verify that the instruments accurately measured the intended variables, while reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient was performed to assess the internal consistency of the questionnaire items (Amanda et al., 2019). The reliability threshold was set at 0.6, with values between 0.5-0.7 indicating moderate reliability, 0.7-0.9 indicating high reliability, and values above 0.9 indicating excellent reliability (Amalia & Dianingati, 2022).

The data analysis process involved several statistical procedures including descriptive analysis to characterize the sample, correlation analysis to examine relationships between variables, and inferential statistics to test the research hypotheses. All statistical analyses were conducted using SPSS software to ensure accuracy and consistency in the computational procedures. The significance level was set at  $\alpha = 0.05$  for all statistical tests, providing a 95% confidence level for the research findings.

## RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

### Results

This study collected and analyzed data from 42 respondents to examine the influence of education standardization and age on regional head candidate leadership performance. The results are presented in three main sections: respondent demographics, validity and reliability testing of the research instrument, and multiple linear regression analysis. The findings provide empirical evidence regarding the relationship between candidate qualifications and perceived leadership effectiveness.

### Respondent Demographics

The study collected data from 42 respondents through structured questionnaires. The demographic analysis revealed distinct patterns in the sample composition across several key variables. Gender distribution showed a significant skew toward female respondents, with 39 women (92.9%) and only 3 men (7.1%) participating in the study. This distribution reflects the demographic characteristics of the accessible population during the data collection period.

Table 1. Gender Distribution of Respondent

Gender	Frequency	Percent (%)
Male	3	7.1
Female	39	92.9
Total	42	100

Age distribution analysis indicated that the majority of respondents were in the youngest category, with 35 respondents (83.3%) aged between 20-25 years. This was followed by 5 respondents (11.9%) in the 26-30 years category, and only 2 respondents (4.8%) in the 31-50 years category. This age distribution suggests that the sample predominantly consisted of younger individuals, which may have implications for the generalizability of findings to older regional head candidates.

Table 2. Age Distribution of Respondent

Age Range	Frequency	Percent (%)
20-25	35	83.3
26-30	5	11.9
31-35	2	4.8
Total	42	100

Regarding employment status, the analysis showed that 32 respondents (76.2%) were employed, while 10 respondents (23.8%) were students. This distribution indicates that the majority of participants had work experience, which could potentially influence their understanding of leadership requirements and qualifications for regional head positions.

### Validity and Reliability Testing

The instrument validation process examined 12 questionnaire items to assess their appropriateness for measuring the intended variables. The validity testing results demonstrated that 10 items achieved validity standards with correlation coefficients exceeding the threshold value of 0.444, while 2 items failed to meet the validity criteria (Amanda et al., 2019). Specifically, items 3 and 4 showed correlation coefficients of 0.120 and 0.154, respectively, both falling below the acceptable threshold.

Table 3. Validity Test Results

Item	R xy	R table	Status
1	0.669	0.444	Valid
2	0.729	0.444	Valid
3	0.120	0.444	Not Valid
4	0.154	0.444	Not Valid
5	0.656	0.444	Valid
6	0.595	0.444	Valid
7	0.529	0.444	Valid
8	0.612	0.444	Valid
9	0.404	0.444	Valid
10	0.684	0.444	Valid
11	0.652	0.444	Valid
12	0.602	0.444	Valid

Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient yielded a value of 0.736 for the 12-item instrument. According to established reliability standards, this value indicates high reliability, as it falls within the 0.7-0.9 range (Amalia & Dianingati, 2022). This suggests that the instrument demonstrates good internal consistency and can be considered reliable for measuring the research variables.

Table 4. Reliability Statistics

Cronbach's Alpha	N of Items
.736	12

### Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The multiple linear regression analysis examined the relationship between education standardization (X1) and age (X2) as independent variables and regional head candidate leadership performance (Y) as the dependent variable. The coefficient analysis revealed distinct patterns of influence for each independent variable.

Table 5. Regression Coefficients

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	4.931	3.003		1.642	.109
Education Standardization	.001	.159	.001	.009	.993
Age	.676	.171	.575	3.952	.000

The results of individual variable testing (t-test) showed contrasting effects for the two independent variables. Education standardization (X1) demonstrated no significant influence on regional head candidate leadership performance, with a significance value of 0.993, which substantially exceeds the alpha threshold of 0.05. This finding suggests that education level standardization does not significantly predict leadership performance among regional head candidates.

Conversely, the age variable (X2) showed a highly significant positive influence on leadership performance, with a significance value of 0.000, well below the 0.05 threshold. The standardized coefficient (Beta = 0.575) indicates a moderate to strong positive relationship, suggesting that older candidates tend to demonstrate better leadership performance characteristics.

The ANOVA results for the overall model fit demonstrated statistical significance, with an F-value of 9.644 and significance level of 0.000 ( $p < 0.05$ ). This indicates that the combination of education standardization and age variables together significantly explains variance in regional head candidate leadership performance.

Table 6. ANOVA Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	53.482	2	26.741	9.644	.000
Residual	108.137	39	2.773		
Total	161.619	41			

## Discussion

### Implications of Education Standardization Findings

The finding that education standardization shows no significant influence on regional head candidate leadership performance presents important implications for current policy frameworks governing regional elections in Indonesia. This result challenges the conventional assumption underlying Law Number 10 of 2016, which mandates a minimum bachelor's degree requirement for regional head candidates (Azis, 2023). The lack of statistical significance ( $p = 0.993$ ) suggests that formal educational credentials may not be reliable predictors of leadership effectiveness in regional governance contexts.

This finding aligns with emerging perspectives in public administration literature that question the direct correlation between formal education levels and leadership competency. The result suggests that leadership effectiveness in regional governance may depend more heavily on practical experience,



emotional intelligence, political acumen, and contextual knowledge rather than formal educational achievements. These qualities are often developed through real-world experience and may not necessarily correlate with academic credentials.

The implications of this finding are particularly relevant for policy makers considering the inclusivity and accessibility of regional leadership positions. If educational standardization does not significantly predict leadership performance, maintaining strict educational requirements may unnecessarily limit the pool of potentially effective candidates, particularly those from diverse socioeconomic backgrounds who may possess relevant experience and skills despite lacking formal educational credentials.

### **Significance of Age as a Determining Factor**

The strong positive relationship between age and leadership performance ( $\beta = 0.575$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) provides empirical support for the minimum age requirement in regional head candidate regulations. This finding suggests that increased age corresponds with enhanced leadership capabilities, potentially reflecting the accumulation of life experience, professional development, and emotional maturity that accompanies aging (Idrus et al., 2019).

The significant influence of age on leadership performance can be interpreted through several theoretical lenses. From a developmental psychology perspective, older individuals typically possess greater emotional regulation, improved decision-making capabilities under pressure, and enhanced ability to navigate complex social and political situations. These competencies are crucial for effective regional leadership, where leaders must balance competing interests, manage diverse stakeholder relationships, and make decisions with far-reaching consequences for their constituencies.

Furthermore, the age-leadership relationship may reflect the importance of accumulated professional and social capital in regional governance. Older candidates are more likely to have developed extensive networks, gained exposure to various organizational contexts, and acquired practical knowledge about governance processes. This experiential knowledge base may contribute significantly to their perceived and actual leadership effectiveness.

However, this finding also raises important considerations about generational representation and the balance between experience and innovation in regional leadership. While age brings certain advantages, it is essential to ensure that governance systems remain responsive to evolving societal needs and benefit from diverse generational perspectives.

### **Combined Effects and Model Interpretation**

The significant combined effect of both variables ( $F = 9.644$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) despite the individual non-significance of education suggests the presence of interaction effects or suppression phenomena in the relationship between these variables and leadership performance. This finding indicates that while education alone may not predict leadership effectiveness, it may play a moderating or mediating role when considered alongside age factors.

The model's explanatory power, as evidenced by the significant F-statistic, suggests that these demographic factors together account for meaningful variance in leadership performance perceptions. This supports the retention of both variables in candidate screening processes, albeit with different weightings and interpretations than currently applied.

### **Methodological Considerations and Sample Characteristics**

The demographic composition of the sample presents both opportunities and limitations for interpreting these results. The predominance of female respondents (92.9%) and younger participants (83.3% aged 20-25) may influence the generalizability of findings to broader populations of regional head candidates and evaluators. The gender distribution, while potentially limiting generalizability, offers insights into female perspectives on leadership qualifications, which have been historically underrepresented in political leadership research.

The age skew toward younger respondents may actually strengthen the validity of findings regarding age as a predictor of leadership performance. If younger respondents, who might be expected

to value peer characteristics, still perceive older candidates as more capable leaders, this provides robust evidence for the importance of age-related factors in leadership evaluation.

### **Policy and Practical Implications**

These findings have several important implications for regional election policy and candidate development programs. First, the results suggest that current educational requirements may need reconsideration, not necessarily for elimination but for contextual application. Rather than rigid educational minimums, policies might benefit from more flexible qualification frameworks that recognize diverse forms of relevant experience and competency.

Second, the strong age effect supports maintaining minimum age requirements while potentially exploring mechanisms to harness the experience-based advantages that age brings. This might include mentorship programs, structured leadership development pathways, or collaborative governance models that leverage both youthful innovation and mature judgment.

Finally, these results highlight the importance of comprehensive candidate evaluation processes that go beyond demographic characteristics to assess actual leadership competencies, policy knowledge, and governance capabilities. Such processes might include structured assessments of problem-solving abilities, stakeholder management skills, and strategic thinking capacities.

### **Limitations and Future Research Directions**

This study's limitations include the relatively small sample size and specific demographic composition, which may limit the generalizability of findings to broader populations. Future research should seek to replicate these findings with larger, more demographically diverse samples including actual regional head candidates and a broader range of evaluators.

Additionally, the cross-sectional design of this study limits causal inferences about the relationships between variables. Longitudinal studies tracking candidate performance over time could provide stronger evidence for the predictive validity of these factors. Future research might also explore mediating variables that explain the mechanisms through which age influences perceived leadership effectiveness.

The measurement of leadership performance through perceptual ratings also presents opportunities for enhancement through more objective performance indicators, such as governance outcomes, policy implementation success rates, or citizen satisfaction measures in actual governance contexts.

## **CONCLUSION**

### **Conclusion**

This study examined the influence of education standardization and age on regional head candidate leadership performance through multiple linear regression analysis of 42 respondents. The findings reveal that age has a significant positive influence on leadership performance with a significance value of 0.000, indicating that older candidates tend to demonstrate better leadership capabilities. Conversely, education standardization shows no significant influence on leadership performance, with a significance value of 0.993, suggesting that formal educational credentials may not be reliable predictors of leadership effectiveness in regional governance contexts.

Despite the individual non-significance of education, the combined effect of both variables demonstrates statistical significance with an F-value of 9.644, indicating that these demographic factors together contribute meaningfully to explaining variance in leadership performance. The reliability analysis confirmed the instrument's consistency with a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.736, while validity testing showed that 10 out of 12 questionnaire items met acceptable standards.

These results challenge conventional assumptions about educational requirements for regional leadership positions while providing empirical support for minimum age requirements. The findings suggest that leadership effectiveness in regional governance may depend more on experiential factors, emotional maturity, and practical knowledge that typically accompany increased age rather than formal educational achievements alone.



## Recommendation

Based on the research findings, policymakers should consider revising current regional head candidate qualification frameworks to place greater emphasis on experience-based competencies rather than rigid educational requirements. The lack of significant correlation between education standardization and leadership performance suggests that maintaining strict educational minimums may unnecessarily limit the candidate pool without improving governance outcomes.

The strong positive relationship between age and leadership performance supports retaining minimum age requirements while exploring mechanisms to leverage the experiential advantages that come with maturity. Government institutions should develop comprehensive candidate evaluation processes that assess actual leadership competencies, policy knowledge, and governance capabilities beyond demographic characteristics.

Future research should expand sample sizes and demographic diversity to enhance generalizability while incorporating longitudinal designs to establish stronger causal relationships. Additionally, researchers should explore mediating variables that explain the mechanisms through which age influences leadership effectiveness and investigate more objective performance indicators in actual governance contexts.

Educational institutions and political development programs should focus on creating experiential learning opportunities that simulate real-world governance challenges rather than emphasizing theoretical knowledge alone. This approach would better prepare potential leaders regardless of their formal educational background while recognizing that effective regional leadership requires practical skills and emotional intelligence that develop through experience and maturity.

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