

THE EFFECT OF THE OPINION OF THE FINANCIAL AUDIT INSTITUTION ON THE LEVEL OF PUBLIC TRUST IN LOCAL GOVERNMENT

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A B S T R A C T

An unqualified opinion from the BPK is often considered an indicator of good regional financial management. However, in South Buton Regency, despite receiving an unqualified opinion, the public still voices dissatisfaction with public services and budget transparency. This raises the question of whether the audit opinion truly reflects the government's performance in the eyes of the public. Further study is needed to examine the relationship between the BPK opinion and the level of public trust. This study aims to evaluate how BPK's opinion influences the public's trust in the management of regional finances in South Buton Regency. This study applies a quantitative approach using purposive sampling technique, involving 100 individuals concerned with the issue of regional financial management. The research sample was selected using purposive sampling. Data was collected through the distribution of questionnaires and then analyzed using regression with SPSS software. The findings reveal that BPK's opinion significantly impacts public trust; a positive opinion enhances trust, while a negative opinion tends to decrease public confidence in the management of regional finances. Based on these results, it can be concluded that BPK's opinion plays a crucial role in shaping the level of public trust. Therefore, local governments need to maintain the quality of financial reports to receive a favorable opinion from BPK.

INTRODUCTION

In order to realize effective governance, accountability, and transparency in financial management, the public has a very important role, especially in a system of government that prioritizes democracy and openness. As a fundamental right of every citizen, the public has the right to know the extent to which the government can be held accountable for the management of state finances. In this regard, the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK) plays a crucial role in independently auditing the financial reports of the central and regional governments to ensure that financial management complies with applicable regulations (Arianto, 2021).

One sector that has a major impact on economic development and community welfare is infrastructure. Adequate infrastructure not only plays a role in improving logistics efficiency and reducing transportation costs, but also contributes to the advancement of other sectors such as business, trade, and tourism (Rahma, 2025).

The BPK evaluates government financial statements to ensure compliance with Government Accounting Standards (SAP) and the accuracy of recorded financial conditions. The Unqualified Opinion (WTP), Qualified Opinion (WDP), and Adverse Opinion (TW) given by the BPK indicate the level of compliance of financial statements with established standards. The opinions issued by the BPK, such as Unqualified Opinion (WTP), Qualified Opinion (WDP), and Adverse Opinion (TW), have a strategic function as an external control tool for budget utilization and as a parameter for the public to evaluate the performance of local governments (Mardiasmo, 2019).

Although an Unqualified Opinion is often considered an indicator of good financial management, the reality on the ground shows a discrepancy between this opinion and the actual situation. Several regions that have repeatedly received WTP opinions still face criticism from the public regarding development inequality, corruption, budget inefficiency, and poor public services. This has created doubt among the public regarding the meaning of the BPK opinion, resulting in a discrepancy between public perception and existing administrative reports (Yuliati, 2020).

In addition, even though the WTP opinion was accepted, it did not necessarily increase public trust. In several regions that received consecutive WTP opinions, the public still expressed

disappointment regarding allegations of fund misuse, inefficient programs, and non-transparent budget management. This phenomenon indicates a gap between the quality of administration as reflected in the BPK opinion and the public's perception of government performance (Amalia, 2022).

Public trust in the government is a major factor in maintaining a democratic system of government. In this case, financial management that is free from corruption and conducted transparently greatly influences the formation of such trust (Sudarman et al., 2022). Even though a positive opinion from the BPK is accepted, it is often not in line with the public's assessment, which is based more on their direct experience with the quality of public services rather than just financial reports (Rahayu, 2021).

Public trust plays an important role in creating social stability and successful regional development. Communities that trust their government tend to be more compliant with regulations, more active in development programs, and supportive of government policies. Conversely, low levels of trust can lead to apathy, social protests, and even political instability (Arsyad, 2021).

Several previous studies have shown a positive relationship between BPK opinions and public trust levels, although this relationship is not always consistent across all regions. Some regions that have received WTP opinions still face public dissatisfaction related to development inequality and high levels of corruption. According to Dwiyanto (2019), BPK opinions without concrete evidence related to government performance are not sufficient to build public trust.

Various studies have discussed the audit opinions given by the BPK, but most of them focus more on the internal aspects of regional government, especially the factors that influence the issuance of audit opinions. Research analyzing financial ratios and internal control systems in determining BPK opinions is indeed important, but the relationship between BPK opinions and public perceptions of regional financial management is still rarely discussed. Several studies also show how auditor professionalism affects public perception, but the impact of the type of auditor opinion on public trust needs to be further researched (Maharini et al., 2019).

As a new autonomous region in Southeast Sulawesi Province, South Buton Regency continues to strive to improve governance, particularly in regional financial management. Based on data compiled by the Southeast Sulawesi Provincial Representative Office of the Supreme Audit Agency (BPK), in recent years, South Buton Regency's financial reports have received an unqualified opinion, indicating that the financial reports comply with Government Accounting Standards (SAP) and that the internal control system used is functioning properly (Southeast Sulawesi Provincial Representative Office of BPK, 2024).

Although the South Buton Regency Government has received an unqualified opinion, criticism from the public continues to arise regarding the quality of public services and regional financial management. Some of the main issues of concern are the transparency of budget use, the distribution of social assistance, the management of school operational funds (BOS), and the discipline of the civil service (ASN). This criticism shows that even though the BPK's opinion is positive administratively, it does not fully reflect the public's perception of the quality of regional financial management. Based on this, further research is needed to examine whether the WTP opinion given by the BPK can increase public trust in South Buton Regency, as well as the extent to which the public understands the meaning of this opinion in the context of the public services they receive.

Based on this background, this study is titled "The Effect of BPK Opinions on the Level of Public Trust in Local Government (A Case Study of the South Buton Regency Financial Agency)".

METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with an associative research type that aims to measure the effect between the BPK Opinion (X) variable on Public Trust (Y). A quantitative approach was chosen because this study collects numerical data that can be analyzed statistically to determine the relationship between the two variables (Sugiyono, 2022).

This research was conducted at the South Buton Regency Financial Management Agency, with subjects who were aware of the BPK's opinion on regional financial reports. This research was planned to take place between June and July 2025. The respondents involved were 100 individuals

who were concerned about regional financial management. The sample was selected using purposive sampling, where respondents were selected based on criteria relevant to the research objectives.

Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to the community of South Buton Regency who met the sample criteria, then analyzed using SPSS software for regression and hypothesis testing. The variables measured in this study are the opinion of the BPK (X), which consists of indicators of compliance with Government Accounting Standards (SAP), the effectiveness of the Internal Control System (SPI), and compliance with laws and regulations, as well as public trust (Y), which is measured through indicators of participation, law enforcement, transparency, and accountability.

RESULTS & DISCUSSION

Research Results

Validity and Reliability Tests

The validity of the research instrument was tested using the criterion $r\text{-count} > r\text{-table}$ (0.195 at $\alpha = 0.05$, $df = 98$). The validity test results showed that all items in the BPK Opinion (X) and Public Trust (Y) variables met these criteria, making this instrument suitable for use in data collection. This validity indicates that each item in the questionnaire consistently measures the intended variable. Table 1. Instrument Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	r-Cuont	r-Table	Description
BPK Opinion (X)	X.1-X6	0,395-0,647	0,195	Valid
public trust (Y)	Y.1- Y7	0,582-0,627	0,195	Valid

Sumber: DataOlahan2025

Based on the available table, it can be concluded that the question is considered valid if the calculated r value is greater than the table r value, and conversely, if the calculated r value is smaller than the table r value, the question cannot measure the variable in question. All items related to BPK Opinion (X) and Public Trust (Y) meet the validity criteria, so they are acceptable and can be analyzed further, according to the results of the table analysis.

Reliability Test

The reliability test measures the internal consistency of the instrument using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. The reliability test results show that the BPK Opinion variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.617 and the Public Trust variable has a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.623. Both values are greater than 0.60, indicating that this instrument has good internal consistency and can be trusted to measure both variables.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Respondent Characteristics Based on Education			
Research Variables	Alphacronbach's	Criticalvalue	conclusion
Opini BPK (X)	0,617	0,600	Reliable
Kepercayaan Publik(Y)	0,623	0,600	Reliable

Source: Processed data 2025

If the questionnaire reliability coefficient reaches a minimum value of 0.60, the questionnaire is considered valid. The reliability test results show that each variable has a coefficient exceeding 0.60, indicating that this questionnaire meets the required validity standards. The test table also shows that a question can be considered valid if the calculated r value is greater than the table r value, and conversely, if the calculated r value is lower than the table r value, then the question cannot accurately measure the variable in question. Therefore, it can be concluded from the current analysis results that all items related to BPK Opinion (X) and Public Trust (Y) meet the validity criteria set and are ready for further analysis.

This finding is in line with the research by Khairunnisa & Nugroho (2022), which states that valid and reliable instruments are a key requirement for producing credible analysis in public accountability studies.

Classical Assumption Test

The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test results show a significance value of 0.200 (>0.05), indicating that the data is normally distributed. The multicollinearity test produces a tolerance value of 0.990 (>0.10) and a VIF of 1.000 (<10), indicating that there is no high correlation between the independent variables. The heteroscedasticity test is indicated by a scatterplot with random points distributed above and below the zero line, indicating no evidence of heteroscedasticity.

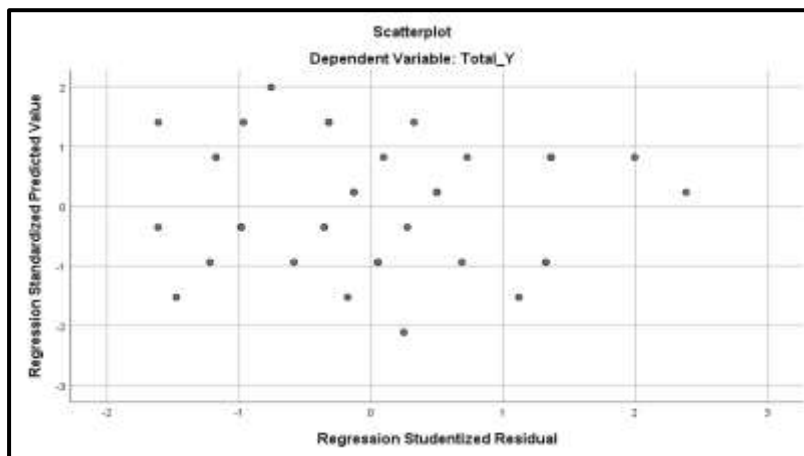


Figure 4. 2 Scatterplot Results of Heteroscedasticity Test

Based on the results of the heteroscedasticity test shown in the graph, the results of the heteroscedasticity analysis show that the data points are scattered randomly around the value of 0 on the Y-axis, both above and below it. The unstructured distribution pattern of the points indicates that this regression model does not have a problem with heteroscedasticity. As a result, it can be concluded that this regression model has met the necessary classical assumptions. Thus, this regression model can be used to conduct valid hypothesis testing.

Simple Linear Regression Analysis and t-Test

Simple linear regression is used to determine the extent of the influence of the independent variable (BPK Opinion) on the dependent variable (Public Trust). After the analysis was conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics 26, a simple linear regression model was found, which produced the following results:

Table 3. Simple Linear Regression Analysis Test Results

		Coefficients^a			T	Sig.
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	16.967	5.091		3.333	.002
	Variable X	.536	.198	.438	2.714	.011

Source: Data processed by SPSS 2025

The positive regression coefficient indicates that every one-unit increase in BPK opinion increases public trust by 0.536 points. The t-test shows that the t-count (2.714) > t-table (1.695) and Sig. 0.011 < 0.05, so the hypothesis is accepted: BPK opinion has a significant effect on public trust.

Correlation Analysis

Correlation analysis is used to determine the strength and direction of the relationship between two variables, as well as the effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable. The Pearson correlation coefficient, which ranges from -1 to +1, indicates the extent to which the two variables are related.

A higher correlation coefficient value indicates a stronger relationship. Based on the correlation value, the relationship between variables can be categorized as very weak, weak, moderate, strong, or very strong. In correlation, the relationship between variables can be positive, negative, or even non-existent.

Table 4.12
Correlations

		Variabel X	Variabel Y	Total
Pearson Correlation		1	.438*	.813**
Variabel_X	Sig. (2-tailed)		.011	.000
N		98	98	98
Pearson Correlation		.438*	1	.880**
Variabel_Y	Sig. (2-tailed)	.011		.000
N		98	98	98
Pearson Correlation		.813**	.880**	1
Total	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	.000	
N		98	98	98

Source: Data processed by SPSS 2025

Based on the 2-tailed significance value (sig), it is known that the sig value between the BPK opinion (X) and public trust (Y) is 0.000, which is less than 0.05, indicating a significant correlation. The Pearson correlation coefficient of 0.813 shows a strong relationship between the BPK opinion and public trust.

Discussion

Using Cronbach's Alpha coefficient, a reliability test was conducted to evaluate the internal consistency of the instrument. The results show that the BPK Opinion variable received a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.617 and the Public Trust variable received a value of 0.623. These values exceed the minimum threshold of 0.60, indicating that the instrument has a strong level of internal consistency and can be trusted to accurately measure both variables.

This finding is in line with Public Accountability Theory, which asserts that the government has an obligation to be accountable for its actions and policies, particularly in financial management (Mardiasmo, 2019). The Unqualified Opinion (WTP) received by South Buton Regency indicates that the financial statements fully comply with government accounting regulations and that the existing internal control system works well to ensure that financial management remains transparent and accountable. Normatively, this achievement should increase the legitimacy of the government in the eyes of the public, as audit opinions are considered a measure of success in regional financial management.

This study also shows that the BPK opinion is not the only factor that determines the level of public trust. Public perception is often more influenced by direct experience in accessing public services. Public criticism regarding budget transparency, distribution of social assistance, management of BOS funds, and the discipline of the civil service (ASN) shows that the BPK opinion does not fully reflect public satisfaction with the performance of the local government. This is in line with the research by Yuliati (2020) and Amalia (2022), which emphasizes that audit opinions have limitations in shaping public perception if they are not accompanied by real improvements in public services.

Research conducted by Maharani et al. (2019) emphasizes that the level of public trust is greatly influenced by the professionalism of supervisory institutions and the transparency of the government in handling audit recommendations. Thus, audit opinions will only be substantively meaningful if local governments are able to communicate the audit results to the public, explain the importance of WTP opinions, and demonstrate follow-up actions that have a real impact. Meanwhile, research by Setiawan et al. (2021) adds that an unqualified opinion can strengthen the political legitimacy of local governments, but public trust will not grow if the opinion is not accompanied by consistent transparency practices and adequate public services.

Based on previous research, it can be concluded that BPK opinions have a significant effect on the level of public trust, but this effect is not absolute. Audit opinions serve as a symbol of accountability, but stronger legitimacy will only be achieved if local governments actively improve budget transparency, improve the quality of public services, and follow up on BPK recommendations openly. With these steps, BPK opinions can become a strategic instrument in strengthening public trust in local government in South Buton Regency.

CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the analysis conducted using SPSS, this study confirms that the BPK's opinion has a significant effect on public trust in South Buton Regency. The better the opinion received by the local government, the higher the level of public trust in regional financial management, which reflects the importance of the BPK's opinion in improving public perception of accountability and transparency in financial management.

This study has limitations in terms of its limited coverage to South Buton Regency and the use of only one independent variable. Further research is recommended to develop a model by adding other variables such as budget transparency, public accountability, or community participation to enrich the findings. Nevertheless, the results of this study make a positive contribution both academically and practically and can be used as a reference for local governments in improving financial management and gaining greater public trust.

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