

THE CONTRIBUTION OF COMPETENCE AND CAREER DEVELOPMENT TO IMPROVING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE AT THE WEST JAVA PROVINCIAL WATER RESOURCES SERVICE (DINAS SUMBER DAYA AIR PROVINSI JAWA BARAT)

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ABSTRACT

This research aims to examine the contribution of competency and career development to improving employee performance at Dinas Sumber Daya Air Provinsi Jawa Barat (West Java Provincial Water Resources Office). The background of this study is based on employee performance data for the period 2021–2024, which shows significant fluctuations in the distribution of performance ratings. The decrease in the number of employees with Very Good ratings in 2022 and 2023 indicates the need to evaluate the factors influencing performance, including competency and career development. This study uses a descriptive quantitative approach with a survey method. A total of 73 respondents, employees of the Water Resources Office, served as the sample. The data were collected through a questionnaire that used a 4-point rating scale, and the responses were analyzed using multiple linear regression techniques. The results of the study indicate that competency and career development have a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Competence, encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes, has been shown to support professional task performance, while career development, encompassing education, training, transfers, promotions, and tenure, boosts motivation and work productivity. Although employee performance is generally considered quite high, work quality remains a concern. This study underscores the importance of comprehensive and sustainable human resource management to achieve optimal performance in the government sector.

Key words: Career Development, Competency, Employee Performance

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance plays a crucial role in determining the success of an organization, especially in the public sector, which is responsible for providing direct services to the community. In an era of globalization filled with dynamics and challenges, government organizations are required to be more adaptive, responsive, and professional. However, many public sector organizations in Indonesia still face serious obstacles in maintaining and improving employee performance. Issues such as low work productivity, employee dissatisfaction, and high turnover rates become real challenges that can disrupt the public service process (Dewi & Rahmawati, 2021).

Human Resource Management (HRM) holds a strategic role in shaping superior and sustainable employee performance. HRM not only deals with administrative aspects of employees but also encompasses comprehensive processes such as recruitment, development, maintenance, and performance evaluation. In the context of modern organizations, effective HRM is expected to optimize individual potential and create a work environment that supports the achievement of organizational goals (Laily & Sari, 2023). Successful organizations are generally supported by HR management that aligns organizational needs with employees' personal development.

In management literature, it is widely explained that employee performance does not stand alone but is influenced by various interrelated factors. Gibson et al. in Silaen et al. (2021) classify these factors into three major categories: individual factors, psychological factors, and organizational factors. Individual factors include personal characteristics such as ability, skills, education, and work experience. Psychological factors include motivation, perception, and work attitude, while organizational factors cover work structure, reward systems, managerial support, and the overall work environment.

Employee competence, as part of individual factors, is one of the key elements in shaping superior performance. Competence does not only involve technical skills but also includes critical thinking, adaptability, and effective communication. Competent employees are more capable of understanding and completing tasks, collaborating with teams, and adapting to changes within the organization. Competence serves as the foundation for building integrity, professionalism, and accountability in performing government duties.

In addition to competence, career development is an important dimension in fostering employee motivation and loyalty. When employees feel that the organization provides opportunities for growth — through training, promotions, job transfers, or further education — their enthusiasm and commitment to the institution tend to increase. Planned career development also helps organizations prepare high-quality leadership cadres and ensures

continuity in program implementation (Ulyanah et al., 2021). Therefore, a clear and fair career system is a vital instrument in long-term performance management.

Based on data collected from the West Java Provincial Water Resources Office during the 2021–2024 period, there were fluctuations in employee performance distribution. The decline in the number of employees rated “Very Good” in 2022 and 2023 compared to the previous year, alongside an increase in “Good” and “Fair” categories, indicates potential issues in the competency and career development systems that require immediate attention. These fluctuations reflect the organizational dynamics that need to be examined scientifically and systematically.

Although employee discipline and performance achievements in 2024 still show a positive trend—with most employees meeting attendance and work target standards—a small portion still experience a decline in performance. If not promptly addressed, this could affect the organization’s overall productivity. Therefore, an in-depth evaluation of the HR management system, particularly in competency and career development management, is necessary.

This study aims to analyze the extent of the influence of competency and career development on employee performance at the West Java Provincial Water Resources Office. Academically, the study is expected to contribute significantly to the development of human resource management knowledge, particularly in examining factors that influence performance in the public sector. Practically, the findings are expected to serve as a reference for the management of the West Java Provincial Water Resources Office in formulating more adaptive, results-oriented HR development strategies. Thus, employee performance can be improved comprehensively, sustainably, and in alignment with organizational goals.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative approach with descriptive and verification methods. The study population consisted of all employees of the West Java Provincial Water Resources Service. A sample was determined using the Slovin formula to ensure representativeness. Data collection techniques included questionnaires distributed to employees, which measured three main variables:

1. Competence (X_1) – knowledge, skills, and abilities related to job performance.
2. Career Development (X_2) – education, training, promotion, and job rotation.
3. Employee Performance (Y) – work quality, quantity, and timeliness.

All items were measured using a Likert scale. The collected data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis, along with correlation tests, coefficient of determination, and t-test and F-test to determine both partial and simultaneous effects. Statistical analysis was performed using SPSS software.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results show that both competence and career development significantly influence employee performance.

1. Effect of Competence on Employee Performance

The analysis reveals that competence has a positive and significant effect on performance. Employees with high levels of competence—especially in terms of technical skills, problem-solving ability, and communication—are more productive and deliver better results. These findings are consistent with Sutrisno (2019), who stated that competence is the main determinant of employee effectiveness and work output.

2. Effect of Career Development on Employee Performance

Career development also shows a strong and positive influence on performance. Employees who receive adequate training, clear promotion paths, and job rotation opportunities tend to demonstrate higher motivation and commitment. This aligns with the study of Ulyanah et al. (2021), which emphasized that fair and transparent career systems enhance job satisfaction and performance.

3. Simultaneous Effect of Competence and Career Development

The simultaneous test (F-test) indicates that competence and career development together have a significant effect on employee performance. The coefficient of determination shows that these two variables collectively contribute substantially to performance improvement, while other factors such as motivation, leadership, and work environment account for the remaining variation.

These findings suggest that developing both competence and career pathways is crucial for improving public service quality. When employees feel capable and valued, they tend to show greater initiative, discipline, and productivity, which ultimately contributes to organizational effectiveness.

CONCLUSION

The results of this study conclude that competence has a significant positive effect on employee performance, and career development also has a significant positive effect on employee performance. Furthermore, competence and career development simultaneously contribute significantly to improving employee performance at the West Java Provincial Water Resources Service. Therefore, it is recommended that the institution strengthen employee

development programs through continuous training, fair promotion systems, and structured career planning, as these efforts will enhance not only individual performance but also overall organizational productivity.

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