Exploring the Role of Competence and Training in Enhancing Employee Performance: The Mediating Effect of Job Satisfaction Among University Staff in Pekanbaru

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Abstract:

This study investigates the impact of competence and training on employee performance in higher education institutions in Pekanbaru, with a focus on job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Using a quantitative approach and data collected through structured surveys, the research examines the relationships among these variables. The findings reveal that both competence and training significantly influence employee performance, with job satisfaction playing a critical role in mediating these effects. The results indicate that as employees' competencies and training opportunities increase, so does their job satisfaction, which in turn enhances their overall performance. This research underscores the importance of implementing effective training programs and fostering employee competence to improve performance outcomes in higher education settings. The implications of these findings suggest that universities should prioritize employee development initiatives to achieve organizational goals and enhance the quality of education.

1. Introduction

In long-established organizations such as those in government, economy, and society, a dedicated unit for managing human resources is essential, as employee performance is a valuable asset to the organization (Hair et al., 2019). Effective performance provides clear direction for achieving organizational goals, and implementing the right strategies while analyzing factors influencing performance is key to enhancing employee output. Human resources drive organizational activities, and the success or failure of an organization depends on its workforce. Therefore, employees play a crucial role in the organization's success, with their ability to fulfill responsibilities serving as a benchmark for achieving objectives. An organization that meets its goals can be considered effective, underscoring the indispensable role of each employee in contributing to that success.

Universities are key institutions in higher education that play a vital role in enhancing the intellectual growth of a nation. As such, they hold significant responsibility for the advancement of a country, as a nation's progress is largely determined by the quality

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of its education system. Education serves as the foundation of a country's development. In Pekanbaru, several universities contribute to this mission by providing higher education opportunities to support the nation's progress.

Table 1. Accreditation Data of Universities in Pekanbaru City

No	University	Accreditation	SK Number
1	Islamic University of Riau	B	10/SK/BAN-PT/Ak-PPJ/PT/I/2021
2	Muhammadiyah University of Pekanbaru	B	11/SK/BAN-PT/Ak-PPJ/PT/I/2022
3	Abdurrab University	B	1143/SK/BAN-PT/Akred/PT/XII/2020

Source: https://www.banpt.or.id/direktori/institusi/pencarian_institusi.php

From the data above, it is evident that the majority of universities in Pekanbaru are accredited with a "B" rating. Accreditation is an evaluation of an institution's or study program's eligibility based on national higher education standards, encompassing curriculum, academic standards, facilities, faculty, and alumni. One key factor influencing accreditation is employee performance, which should ideally be optimal. However, in reality, high work demands have led to suboptimal employee performance, particularly in universities. This is reflected in inadequate services provided to students, as recent criticisms highlight poor performance, such as absenteeism among academic staff and lecturers, unwelcoming services, unsatisfactory learning facilities, a lack of qualified faculty, and internal discrimination within faculties.

Based on data from the universities involved in this study, employee training programs are selected based on the priority needs of each employee and are aligned with the available budget. A preliminary survey was conducted by the researcher across the universities, involving 15 employees, to assess the context of employee training.

Table 2. Pre-Survey Results on Employee Training at Universities in Pekanbaru City

No	Statement	SS	S	CS	TS	STS	%
1	Training enhances employees' insight and knowledge	4	4	3	2	2	68%
2	The trainer is able to develop the material effectively	3	3	3	4	2	61%
3	The training material aligns with the goals and objectives of training	3	4	3	2	3	63%
4	The methods used are appropriate for the type of training conducted	3	4	2	4	2	63%
5	Training helps employees improve their performance	3	4	3	2	3	59%

Source: Researcher processed results

Based on Table 2, it is evident that the implementation of employee training at universities in Pekanbaru has reached an average of 81.3%, which falls into the "fairly good" category but still falls short of the targets set by the universities. This presents a significant challenge for the institutions, as the training programs, which are intended to enhance employee competence and positively impact their performance, are only categorized as "adequate." This gap between expectations and outcomes highlights a critical issue that warrants further investigation into the effectiveness of training programs in improving employee performance.

Therefore, it is crucial to conduct research to analyze the factors that influence the performance levels of university employees in Pekanbaru. This study aims to examine two key factors, namely competence and training, and their impact on employee performance, with job satisfaction acting as a mediating variable.

2. Theoretical Background

Management is a unique process that involves planning, organizing, directing, and controlling actions aimed at achieving predetermined goals through the effective and efficient use of human and other resources. According to Hasibuan, management is both a science and an art, focusing on the process of utilizing resources to reach specific objectives (Jehanzeb & Bashir 2013). Veithzal Rivai adds that performance evaluation in companies serves two main purposes: providing objective assessments of past employee performance for future HR decisions and offering a tool to help employees improve, plan work, develop skills, and strengthen relationships with managers. In summary, management is the coordinated effort to achieve organizational goals by planning, organizing, directing, and supervising activities, effectively using resources and others to accomplish objectives efficiently (Zafar et al., 2017).

Competence

All aspects related to human resources ultimately influence the output of government organizations. Given its critical role, organizations must implement mechanisms for maintaining their workforce by focusing on employee competencies. Competency refers to an individual's ability to perform at a satisfactory level in the workplace, including the capacity to transfer and apply skills and knowledge to new situations while enhancing agreed-upon benefits (Miao & Cao 2019). It defines what individuals do in the workplace across different levels, specifying the standards and identifying the characteristics, knowledge, and skills needed to effectively fulfill responsibilities and achieve professional quality standards. Wibowo (2016) defines competency as the ability to perform tasks based on the required skills and knowledge, supported by the appropriate work attitude. Competency thus represents a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes that enable individuals to carry out their duties professionally, effectively, and efficiently.

Training

Gaps in performance arise when there is a mismatch between employees' knowledge and skills and the changing demands of the organizational environment. These gaps also occur when new employees join or when organizational changes, such as shifts in customer demands or technological advancements, take place. Training is a learning process aimed at acquiring skills, concepts, rules, or attitudes to enhance employee performance. Employee training and development are planned efforts to help employees or organizational members master skills, knowledge, and attitudes (Tian et al., 2016). In conclusion, training is a process designed to improve

competency and professionalism in performing tasks, as well as to enhance the quality of work outcomes.

Performance

Performance is a critical factor in achieving the goals of any company or organization. When employees exhibit exceptional performance, it empowers the organization to reach its desired objectives, as performance plays a central role in determining success and sustainability. Human resources are essential for maintaining the continuity of an organization, and performance is the outcome achieved by individuals when they complete tasks according to established standards and criteria. It encompasses the efforts workers put into accomplishing assigned tasks and is influenced by both their motivation and abilities. To perform tasks effectively, individuals must have the necessary skills and preparedness. According to various human resource management experts, performance includes both work outcomes and behaviors. When performance is measured by results, the focus is on the extent to which individuals can produce goods or services in terms of both quality and quantity.

Job Satisfaction

According to Robbins, job satisfaction refers to an individual's overall attitude towards their work. A person who feels highly satisfied with their job will display a positive attitude, whereas those who are dissatisfied tend to exhibit negative attitudes toward their work. This behavior arises when individuals feel engaged with the organization and are happy to make additional contributions. Such involvement and satisfaction only occur if employees have a positive view of the organization they work for. Job satisfaction is an emotional response to one's work as a whole, and when this response is positive, it indicates that the individual is satisfied with their job.
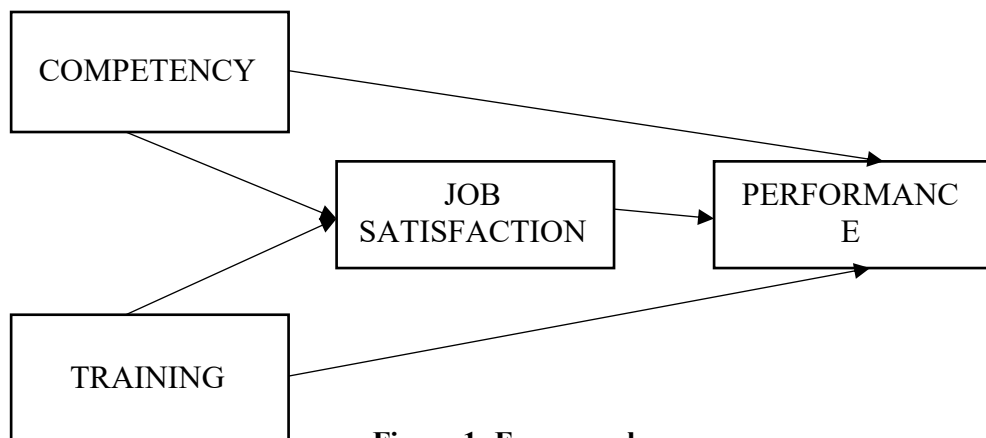

Figure 1: Framework

The hypotheses in this study are :

H1 : It is suspected that competence affects performance in higher education employees in Pekanbaru.

H2 : It is suspected that training affects the performance of higher education employees in Pekanbaru.

H3 : It is suspected that job satisfaction affects job satisfaction in higher education employees in Pekanbaru.

H4 : It is suspected that competence affects job satisfaction in higher education employees in Pekanbaru.

H5 : It is suspected that training affects job satisfaction in higher education employees in Pekanbaru.

H6 : It is suspected that competence affects performance through job satisfaction in higher education employees in Pekanbaru.

H7 : It is suspected that training affects performance through job satisfaction in higher education employees in Pekanbaru.

3. Methodology

This study employs a descriptive approach using quantitative methods. The quantitative method is used to explore specific aspects of the selected population and sample, typically gathered through random sampling. Data collection is conducted using appropriate research tools, and the data is analyzed through quantitative or statistical methods to test the formulated hypotheses. The variables in this study include employee performance, job satisfaction, training, and competence, each measured using a Likert scale. Performance is evaluated based on work quality, quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and independence. Job satisfaction encompasses dimensions such as job roles, wages, promotion, supervision, and co-worker relations. Training is assessed by training types, objectives, materials, methods, participant qualifications, and timing. Competence is measured by ideas, work experience, and educational background.

4. Empirical Findings/Result

The hypothesis testing in this study utilizes the Structural Equation Model (SEM) approach with Partial Least Square (PLS), a component-based variant of SEM. SEM is a branch of statistical analysis that allows for the simultaneous assessment of complex relationships that are difficult to measure. According to Ghozali, PLS-SEM represents a shift from covariance-based SEM to variance-based approaches. This study employs path analysis through SEM with PLS using the Smart PLS 3.3 software. The evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is conducted by assessing the reliability and validity of latent constructs using the Smart PLS 3.0 software. A path algorithm diagram of the study's analysis is included.

Instrument Test
Validity test
The convergent validity test aims to assess the validity of each relationship between indicators and their respective latent constructs. In this study, a loading factor threshold of 0.60 was used. The results in this study show that all constructs have an outer loading value greater than 0.60, which indicates that the indicators are valid and suitable for further analysis. This confirms that each indicator makes a significant contribution to the construction of their respective latent variables.

The discriminant validity test measures how different a construct is from other constructs based on empirical standards. The cross-loading values in the table show that each construct correlates more strongly with its own indicators than with other constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that all latent variables show strong discriminant validity, which means they are unique and represent different phenomena in the model. This ensures that each construct is valid in forming its respective variable.

Reliability Test
Based on the data from this study, it can be concluded that the constructs show good reliability, as the Cronbach's alpha value exceeds 0.75, meeting the minimum threshold. In addition, the rho_A value is above 0.70, indicating that all latent variables have met the required criteria. In addition, the composite reliability value also exceeds 0.70, which confirms that the questionnaire used is reliable with a high level of reliability coefficient. This shows that each variable has a high reliability coefficient, and each construct shows a strong correlation between the items in the reliable model test. Therefore, all constructs meet the reliability requirements.

Table 1. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Reliability Value	Standard	Information
Job Satisfaction	0,963		Reliable
Performance	0,958	0,6	Reliable
Competency	0,967		Reliable
Training	0,972		Reliable

Source: Data processing from SmartPLS 3.0 (2023)

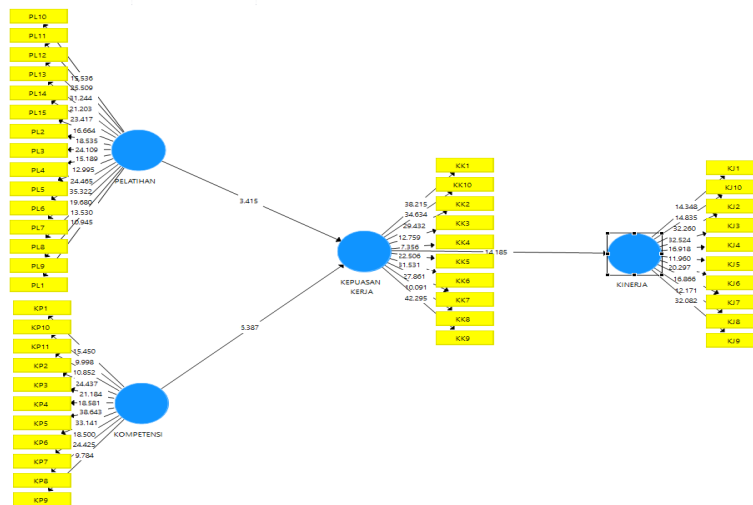## Hypothesis Testing Results

Figure 2. Bootsrapping

Direct Effect

Table 2. Direct effect

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Job Satisfaction -> Performanc	0,829	0,829	0,058	14,185	0,000
Competence -> Job Satisfaction	0,622	0,603	0,097	6,387	0,000
Competence -> Performance	0,516	0,500	0,090	5,761	0,000
Training -> Job Satisfaction	0,339	0,357	0,099	3,415	0,001
Training -> Performance	0,281	0,296	0,085	3,295	0,001

Based on the table, the following conclusions can be drawn regarding the hypotheses. First, regarding the effect of competence on performance, the t-value is 5.761, which is greater than the t-table value of 1.66 (5.761 > t-table 1.66). Additionally, the p-value is smaller than the alpha value (0.000 < 0.05). Therefore, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. The study results indicate that competence has a significant influence on performance.

Second, for the effect of training on performance, the t-value is 3.295, which is higher than the t-table value of 1.66 (3.295 > t-table 1.66). The p-value is also less than the alpha value (0.001 < 0.05), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). The findings demonstrate that training has a significant effect on performance.

Third, when examining the effect of job satisfaction on performance, the t-value is 14.185, which is much greater than the t-table value of 1.66 (14.185 > t-table 1.66). The p-value is smaller than the alpha value (0.000 < 0.05). Thus,

the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted. The results show that job satisfaction has a significant impact on performance.

Fourth, for the effect of competence on job satisfaction, the t-value is 6.387, exceeding the t-table value of 1.66 (6.387 > t-table 1.66). Additionally, the p-value is smaller than the alpha value (0.000 < 0.05), resulting in the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). The study shows that competence significantly influences job satisfaction.

Finally, regarding the effect of training on job satisfaction, the t-value is 3.415, which is higher than the t-table value of 1.66 (3.415 > t-table 1.66). The p-value is also less than the alpha value (0.001 < 0.05), leading to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) and the acceptance of the alternative hypothesis (Ha). The results indicate that training has a significant impact on job satisfaction.

The next step involves testing the hypothesis in an indirect relationship, which includes the mediation between the dependent and independent variables. This indirect effect (in-direct effect) analysis assesses how mediating variables influence the relationship between independent and dependent variables. By examining these mediated relationships, the study can determine whether the effect of the independent variables on the dependent variables is enhanced, diminished, or altered through the mediating variable. This allows for a deeper understanding of how various factors interact within the model.

Indirect Effect
Table 2. Indirect Effect

Hypothesis	Original Sample	Sample Mean	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Training -> Job Satisfaction -> Performance	0,516	0,500	0,090	5,761	0,000
Competence -> Job Satisfaction -> Performance	0,281	0,296	0,085	3,295	0,001

Based on the data analyzed using Smart PLS 3.0, two significant hypotheses regarding employee performance and its influencing factors were examined. The first hypothesis investigated the impact of competencies on employee performance through job satisfaction. The results indicated a t-value of 5.761, which exceeds the t-table value of 1.66, and a p-value of 0.000, which is less than the alpha level of 0.05. Consequently, the null hypothesis (H0) is rejected, and the alternative hypothesis (Ha) is accepted, confirming that competencies significantly influence employee performance via job satisfaction.

The second hypothesis explored the effect of training on employee performance through job satisfaction. The analysis revealed a t-value of 3.295, also higher than the t-table value of 1.66, with a p-value of 0.001, which is again less than the alpha level of 0.05. This result led to the rejection of the null hypothesis (H0) in favor of the alternative hypothesis (Ha), indicating that training significantly impacts employee performance through job satisfaction. Both findings underscore the importance of competencies and training as pivotal factors in enhancing employee performance within organizations.

5. Discussion

The research findings highlight several critical aspects regarding the influence of competencies, training, and job satisfaction on employee performance. Firstly, the study demonstrates a significant impact of competencies on performance, aligning with the theory that competencies are essential talents that enhance fundamental abilities for achieving higher performance levels. As employees' competencies increase, their performance also improves. This conclusion supports the findings of Nugroho and Paradifa (2020), who indicated that competencies significantly affect performance in their study titled "The Impact of Training, Motivation, and Competence on Human Resource Performance."

Secondly, the research indicates that training significantly influences employee performance. This supports the theory that training serves as a means to enhance employees' abilities, skills, and knowledge through the provision of new information, enabling them to perform their jobs efficiently. Improved efficiency consequently boosts overall performance. These findings resonate with the research conducted by Noviani Putri et al. (2022), which concluded that training has a significant effect on the performance of employees at PT. Indonesia Steel Tube Works Semarang.

Moreover, job satisfaction has been found to significantly affect employee performance. The results align with the theory that job satisfaction is a crucial factor in maximizing worker performance. To achieve this, companies should aim to provide competitive salaries and bonuses when employees meet their job requirements in terms of both quantity and quality. This finding corroborates the research by Widayanti and Widiastini (2021), which established a positive and significant relationship between job satisfaction and employee performance in their study on the influence of job satisfaction on employee performance through work discipline at PT. Adi Karya Graha Mulya.

Additionally, the study reveals a significant influence of competencies on job satisfaction. Employee job satisfaction is closely related to their positive feelings while performing their work. It is anticipated that fostering job satisfaction will help achieve the company's objectives. Job satisfaction reflects employees' emotional states during work, influenced by various factors such as evaluations, attitudes

towards work, salary, workplace relationships, work environment, and the nature of the job itself. This finding supports the research by Setiawan et al. (2021), which emphasized the significant effect of training on performance mediated by job satisfaction.

Furthermore, training also demonstrates a significant effect on job satisfaction. Similar to the previous findings, job satisfaction relates to employees' positive emotions while executing their responsibilities. Creating an environment that fosters job satisfaction is crucial for helping achieve organizational goals. The research indicates that job satisfaction is affected by evaluations and overall employee attitudes towards their jobs, which include aspects such as salary, social relationships at work, and the working environment. This finding is consistent with the research conducted by Setiawan et al. (2021), which again highlights the significant impact of training on performance through job satisfaction.

The research also shows that competencies have a significant impact on performance through job satisfaction. This reinforces the theory that competencies are the inherent capacities within individuals that enable them to meet job demands within an organization, ultimately leading to the desired organizational outcomes. This conclusion is in line with the findings of Hidayat et al. (2020), which indicated that competencies significantly affect performance through job satisfaction in their study on the influence of competencies on performance at the Social Services Office of Makassar.

Finally, the research confirms that training significantly influences performance through job satisfaction. Training is recognized as an integrated process that employers use to ensure that employees work effectively towards organizational goals. The significance of training in an organization cannot be overstated, as it serves as a critical component in achieving quality employee performance for the company's sustainability. Effective training enables organizations to place human resources in roles that match employees' skills. This conclusion supports the findings of Setiawan et al. (2021), which affirmed that training significantly impacts performance through job satisfaction.

6. Conclusions

The research highlights the significant influence of competence and training on employee performance in higher education institutions in Pekanbaru, with job satisfaction serving as a crucial mediating variable. The findings demonstrate that higher levels of competence and effective training positively impact both job satisfaction and performance, underscoring their essential roles in enhancing employee output. Additionally, the study reveals that job satisfaction is significantly affected by both competencies and training, further reinforcing the idea that satisfied employees are more likely to perform effectively. Overall, the results underscore the need for universities to

prioritize competence development and training programs to improve employee performance and, consequently, institutional effectiveness.

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