

Model for Improving Employee Performance through Education Level and Work Motivation.

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengembangkan dan menganalisis model peningkatan prestasi pegawai melalui peran tingkat pendidikan dan motivasi kerja sebagai dua faktor utama yang memengaruhi kinerja individu dalam organisasi. Prestasi pegawai merupakan indikator penting dalam menentukan efektivitas organisasi dalam mencapai tujuan strategisnya. Namun, variasi prestasi antarpegawai sering kali dipengaruhi oleh perbedaan latar belakang pendidikan dan tingkat motivasi kerja. Metode penelitian yang digunakan adalah pendekatan kuantitatif dengan teknik survei, melibatkan pegawai dari berbagai unit kerja dalam organisasi. Data dianalisis menggunakan regresi berganda untuk mengetahui besarnya pengaruh parsial dan simultan kedua variabel independen terhadap prestasi pegawai. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa tingkat pendidikan memiliki pengaruh positif terhadap prestasi pegawai melalui peningkatan kapasitas kognitif dan kompetensi teknis. Motivasi kerja juga ditemukan berpengaruh signifikan sebagai pendorong internal yang meningkatkan komitmen, ketekunan, dan produktivitas individu. Temuan ini menegaskan bahwa pengembangan pegawai tidak dapat hanya bertumpu pada peningkatan kualifikasi pendidikan, tetapi juga harus disertai dengan strategi peningkatan motivasi yang sistematis. Model yang dihasilkan memberikan kontribusi praktis bagi organisasi dalam merancang kebijakan pengembangan sumber daya manusia yang lebih efektif dan berorientasi pada peningkatan kinerja.

Kata kunci: tingkat pendidikan, motivasi kerja, prestasi pegawai, model kinerja, sumber daya manusia.

Abstract

This study aims to develop and analyze a model for improving employee performance through the roles of educational level and work motivation as two primary factors influencing individual performance within organizations. Employee performance is a crucial indicator of organizational effectiveness in achieving strategic goals. However, variations in performance among employees are often shaped by differences in educational backgrounds and levels of work motivation. A quantitative research approach with a survey method was applied, involving employees from various organizational units. Data were analyzed using multiple regression to determine the partial and simultaneous effects of the independent variables on employee performance. The findings show that educational level positively influences employee performance by enhancing cognitive capacity and technical competence. Work motivation also has a significant effect as an internal driving force that strengthens commitment, perseverance, and individual productivity. These results emphasize that employee development cannot rely solely on improving educational qualifications, but must also be accompanied by structured motivational strategies. The proposed model provides practical implications for organizations in designing more effective human resource development policies aimed at improving overall performance.

Keywords: educational level, work motivation, employee performance, performance model, human resources..

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PENDAHULUAN

Employee performance is one of the most important indicators in assessing an organization's success in achieving operational and strategic goals. In the context of human resource management, employee performance is defined as the work results, both quantitatively and qualitatively, achieved by an individual during a specific period, according to the standards set by the organization. Optimal performance reflects not only an employee's technical abilities but also the effectiveness of the organization's system in empowering human resources through education, training, motivation, and a supportive work environment. Therefore, a comprehensive understanding of the factors contributing to employee performance is crucial to ensuring sustainable organizational productivity.

One of the key factors considered to influence employee performance is education level. Education, both formal and informal, provides a theoretical foundation and practical skills that enable employees to more effectively understand work procedures, technology, and organizational dynamics. Human capital theory explains that education is a form of investment that will increase individual productivity. Therefore, organizations with employees with higher levels of education tend to have better work capacity. In the Indonesian context, data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS) shows that the composition of the workforce based on education continues to change. The August 2024 National Labor Force Survey (Sakernas) report shows that the proportion of workers with secondary education (SMA/SMK) dominates the national workforce structure, while the number of workers with higher education continues to increase annually as access to education expands. This trend demonstrates that improving education is a strategic pillar in strengthening the quality of Indonesia's human resources.

However, education level alone does not always guarantee high work performance. Many organizations face the phenomenon of employees who possess good educational qualifications but fail to achieve optimal performance due to low work motivation. This demonstrates that education and work motivation cannot be separated in employee performance analysis. Work motivation, both intrinsic, such as the need for achievement, and extrinsic, such as compensation and rewards, is a psychological factor that drives employees to perform effectively. Recent studies have shown that motivation has a strong positive relationship with employee performance. A meta-analysis by Huang and Li (2023), for example, found that work motivation significantly contributes to increased productivity across various organizational sectors, with effect sizes ranging from moderate to high. These findings emphasize that efforts to improve employee performance must combine a competency-based approach with strategies to strengthen work motivation. Furthermore, the increasingly competitive dynamics of the modern work environment require employees to possess not only a higher education but also adaptability, flexibility, and a strong internal drive. Studies conducted between 2023 and 2025 indicate that formal education needs to be complemented by training, workshops, competency certification, and career development programs to optimally impact performance. For example, research by Rahmadani and Kartika (2024) found that employees who participated in regular training programs demonstrated greater performance improvements than those who relied solely on formal education. This underscores the need for organizations to develop employee performance improvement models that incorporate both continuing education and motivational development.

Furthermore, the contribution of education level to employee performance is often moderated by work motivation. Employees with a high level of education but low motivation

will not be able to maximize their competency potential. Conversely, highly motivated employees are able to demonstrate superior performance even with moderate levels of education. The combination of these two variables is crucial for organizations to understand when developing effective and applicable employee performance improvement models. In the concept of organizational behavior, motivation acts as a driving force, while education acts as a capacity. These two elements complement each other so that an imbalance in either factor can hamper overall performance.

In addition to empirical findings, international macroeconomic data also demonstrates the importance of integrating education and motivation in the context of increasing Indonesian labor productivity. The World Bank (2023) reports that the majority of Indonesia's workforce is at the secondary level of education. This situation indicates the need for organizational and government strategies to not only encourage educational advancement but also strengthen motivation through employment policies, reward systems, welfare improvements, and the creation of a healthy work culture. Without strong motivational support, educational advancement will not generate significant productivity gains. From an organizational perspective, low employee performance can impact the quality of public services, lower company productivity, increase operational costs, and reduce competitiveness. Therefore, research examining a model for improving employee performance based on education level and work motivation has high relevance both theoretically and practically. Theoretically, this research will enrich the literature on the determinants of employee performance, particularly in the context of Indonesian organizations, which have unique characteristics in terms of work culture, bureaucratic structure, and education level. Meanwhile, practically, this research provides input for organizational management in designing more targeted, measurable, and tailored human resource development strategies.

The research problem formulation in this study focuses on three main issues. First, to what extent does education level influence employee performance? Second, how does work motivation influence employee performance? Third, how can we formulate a model for improving employee performance that effectively integrates these two variables? The ultimate goal is to produce a model that not only explains the causal relationship between education, motivation, and performance but also provides implementable recommendations for organizations.

Thus, it can be emphasized that improving employee performance cannot be achieved through a single approach. A model is needed that combines the basic capacities developed through education with motivational reinforcement that encourages employees to utilize these capacities optimally. This research is expected to make an important contribution to understanding how these two factors can be designed into a comprehensive strategy for improving employee performance in various types of organizations in Indonesia.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management (HRM) is derived from the words "management" and "human resources." The term "management" is defined as the management or procedures for managing something to achieve predetermined goals. Human resources, on the other hand, are every person who works and plays a role in an organization or company (Yusuf and Maliki, 2020).

Furthermore, according to (Kasmir, 2016), simply put, human resource management is the process of managing, training, development, compensation, career development, safety and health, and maintaining industrial relations until termination of employment, in order to achieve company goals and improve stakeholder welfare.

Education Level

According to Andrew E. Sikula (in Mangkunegara, 2016), education level is a long-term process using systematic and organized procedures in which managerial employees learn conceptual and theoretical knowledge for general purposes.

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Work Motivation

According to Anoraga (in Sinambela, 2019), work motivation is an employee's desire to work that arises from an internal desire to work, resulting from the integration of all personal needs, physical environmental influences, and social influences. The strength of this integration depends on this integration process.

Meanwhile, Robbins (in Sinambela, 2019) defines work motivation as the willingness to exert high levels of effort toward organizational goals, driven by the ability to fulfill individual needs. Berelson and Steiner (in Sinambela, 2019) argue that work motivation is a psychological state and mental attitude that energizes, drives, or motivates activities, directs, and channels behavior toward achieving needs that satisfy or reduce imbalances.

Goal Setting Theory

The theory underlying this research is goal setting theory, originally introduced by Edwin Locke, which states the relationship between set goals and work performance. Goal setting theory is a form of motivation theory. The basic concept of this theory is that a person's understanding of goals (what the organization expects of them) will influence their work behavior (Huda, 2016). Goal setting theory suggests that an individual is committed to goals.

Hypothesis:

1. Education level has a significant positive effect on employee performance at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province.
2. Work motivation has a significant positive effect on employee performance at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a quantitative research approach with quantitative deductive logic/reasoning. According to (Sugiyono, 2017), quantitative methods are used to examine a specific population or sample. Sampling techniques are typically random, data collection utilizes research instruments, and data analysis is statistical in nature, with the aim of describing and testing predetermined hypotheses.

This research was conducted at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province, located at Jalan A.P. Pettarani, No. 90, Panakkukang, Makassar City. The estimated time for completion of the research is one month.

According to (Sugiyono, 2017), a population is a generalized area consisting of subjects with certain qualities and behaviors predetermined by the researcher for future observation and subsequent conclusions. In this study, the researcher sampled all 569 employees working at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province, including 250 permanent civil servants at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department. This population served as the sample.

The sampling method used in this study was simple random sampling. According to Sugiyono (2017), simple random sampling is a simple technique because it randomly selects sample members from the population without considering similarities or averages within the population. Therefore, 71 respondents (employees) were selected using the Slovin formula.

Descriptive statistical analysis and multiple linear regression are two types of data analysis used in this study. Descriptive statistical analysis provides a description of data, based on the mean, standard deviation, maximum, minimum, sum, median, kurtosis, and skewness (distribution skewness). Descriptive statistics describe data into clearer and more

easily understood information (Sugiyono, 2017). Researchers used multiple linear regression analysis, an analysis used to determine the extent of the influence of education level and work motivation as independent variables on employee performance as the dependent variable. This analysis was conducted to determine whether the dependent variable is positive or negative and to estimate the value of the dependent variable if the value of the dependent variable increases. The multiple linear regression equation is as follows:

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

Description:

Y: Work Performance

α : Constant

X1: Education Level

e: Confounding Variable (Standard Error)

X2: Work Motivation

β : Regression Coefficient (Parameter)

RESEARCH RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Normality Test

The following table shows the results of the normality test:

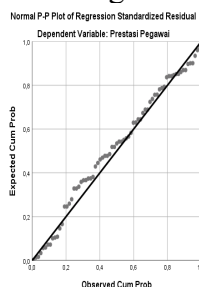
**Table 1: Normality Test Results
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test**

		Unstandardized Residual
N		71
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	,0000000
	Std. Deviation	1,67173409
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	,087
	Positive	,054
	Negative	-,087
Test Statistic		,087
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		,200 ^{c,d}

Based on Table 1, the results of the normality test above show that the test statistic value is $0.087 > 0.05$ and the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value is $0.200 > 0.05$, thus concluding that the tested data is normally distributed.

Furthermore, to test the normality of the data, a P-P plot approach was used between the expected cumulative probability and the observed cumulative probability, as shown in the figure below:

Figure 1. Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residual



Based on the Normal P-P Plot of Regression Standardized Residuals, the results provide an explanation that there are no issues with the normality test. This means that the data

distribution is reflected in the figure with dots indicating that the data originates from a normal distribution. This demonstrates that the normality criteria are met and can be used for subsequent statistical testing, as the data is spread around the diagonal line.

Multicollinearity Test

The following table shows the results of the multicollinearity test:

Table 2. Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients ^a		
Model	Collinearity Statistics	
	Tolerance	VIF
Education Level	,997	1,003
Work Motivation	,997	1,003

a. Dependent Variable: Prestasi Pegawai

Table 2 shows that the tolerance value for the education level and work motivation variables is $0.997 > 0.10$, and the VIF for the education level and work motivation variables is $1.003 < 10.00$. Therefore, it can be concluded that there are no symptoms of multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity Test

The following table shows the results of the heteroscedasticity test.

Table 3. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Coefficients ^a					
Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	-,005	1,819		-,003	,998
Education Level	,027	,055	,060	,494	,623
Work Motivation	,039	,065	,072	,596	,553

Based on Table 3, the results of the Glacier test above indicate that the significance value for the education level variable is $0.623 > 0.05$, and for the work motivation variable is $0.553 > 0.05$. Therefore, the heteroscedasticity test results indicate that there is no data heterogeneity.

DISCUSSION

Descriptive Analysis

The descriptive analysis results table is as follows:

Table 4. Descriptive Analysis Results

Descriptive Statistics					
	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Education Level	71	7	15	11,75	2,260
Work Motivation	71	18	28	25,31	1,909
Employee Performance	71	7	20	13,92	3,143
Valid N (listwise)	71				

Sumber : Data diolah tahun 2023

In this study, a sample size (N) of 71 respondents was used. The descriptive statistical analysis of each independent and dependent variable included the minimum, maximum, mean, and standard deviation values.

- The education level variable (X1) had a minimum value of 7, a maximum value of 15, a mean value of 11.75, and a standard deviation value of 2.260. This higher mean value

indicates a good descriptive result for the variable data used.

- b. The work motivation variable (X2) had a minimum value of 18, a maximum value of 28, and a mean value of 25.31, based on a standard deviation of 1.909. This higher mean value indicates a good descriptive result for the variable data used.
- c. The employee achievement variable (Y) had a minimum value of 7, a maximum value of 20, and a mean value of 13.92, with a standard deviation of 3.143. This higher mean value indicates that the descriptive results of the variable data used are good.

Multiple Regression Analysis

To examine the effect of education level and work motivation on employee performance at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province, multiple regression analysis was used. The summation was performed using SPSS version 26 for Windows, yielding the following results:

Table 5. Results of Multiple Regression Analysis
Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1,893	2,954		,641	,524
Education Level	1,173	,090	,843	13,053	,000
Work Motivation	-,069	,106	-,042	-,652	,516

From the table above, the following equation is obtained:

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

$$Y = 1,893 \text{ (Konstanta)} + 1,173(X_1) - 0,069(X_2) + 2,954(e)$$

Based on the regression equation above, it can be seen that:

- 1) The constant value of 1.893 indicates that if education level (X1) and work motivation (X2) are both equal, then employee performance (Y) will be equal to 1.893.
- 2) The coefficient of education level (X1) of 1.173 indicates that a 1% increase in education level (X1) will increase employee performance (Y) by 1.173, while other variables remain unchanged (constant).
- 3) The coefficient of work motivation (X2) of -0.069 indicates that a 1% increase in work motivation (X2) will decrease employee performance (Y) by -0.069, while other variables remain unchanged (constant).

Analisis Koefisien Determinasi (R^2)

The data processing results show the following coefficient of determination:

Table 6. Results of the Coefficient of Determination
Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	,847 ^a	,717	,709	1,696

The results in Table 6 indicate that the coefficient of determination (R) is 0.847, or 84.7%. Based on this value, it can be concluded that the relationship between the independent variables, namely education level (X1) and work motivation (X2), and employee performance (Y) is categorized as very strong.

The coefficient of determination (R^2) is 0.717, or 71.7%, indicating that the independent variables, namely education level (X1) and work motivation (X2), influence the dependent variable, namely employee performance (Y). Therefore, it can be explained that employee performance (Y) can be influenced by education level (X1) and work

motivation (X2), while the remaining 28.3% is influenced by other factors not explained in this research model, such as training, rewards, and selection.

Hypothesis Test Results

T-Test Results

The results of the t-test are as follows:

Coefficients^a

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	1,893	2,954		,641	,524
Education Level	1,173	,090	,843	13,053	,000
Work Motivation	-,069	,106	-,042	-,652	,516

Based on the test results above, the following can be explained:

The Effect of Education Level (X1) on Employee Performance (Y) at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province.

The table above shows the standard t-test. The calculated t-value is 13.053, the p-value is 0.000, less than 0.05, and the degrees of freedom are 71. This results in a t-table of 1.9939. Therefore, the calculated t-value is greater than the t-table ($13.053 > 1.9939$), and the significance value is less than the p-value of 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). Therefore, H1 is accepted and H0 is rejected. This means that education level (X1) has a positive and significant effect on employee performance (Y) at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province.

The Effect of Work Motivation (X2) on Employee Performance (Y) at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province.

Based on the table above, the standard t-test results show a calculated t-value of -0.652, a p-value of 0.516, greater than 0.05, and a degree of freedom of 71. The t-table value is 1.9939. Therefore, the calculated t-value is less than the t-table value ($0.652 < 1.9939$), and the significance value is greater than the p-value of 0.05, or $0.516 > 0.05$. Therefore, it can be concluded that H0 is accepted and H2 is rejected. This means that work motivation (X2) has a negative effect on employee performance (Y) at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province.

Interpretation of Research Results

The Effect of Education Level (X1) on Employee Performance

The results of the Student's Test above indicate that the calculated t-value is greater than the t-table ($13.053 > 1.9939$) and the significance value is less than the p-value of 0.05 or $0.000 < 0.05$, indicating that education level has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Based on the frequency analysis of the education level variable (X1), the highest average score was the competency indicator, at 3.88. This is due to employees' knowledge of their work. Meanwhile, the lowest average score was the education level indicator, at 3.82. This is due to employees' ability to apply their education to their work. The average score for the education level variable was 3.86.

This is influenced by the large number of respondents who agreed with the competency indicator, which stated that employees possess knowledge of their respective jobs. This means that employees of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province possess competencies appropriate to their respective fields, enabling them to improve their work performance.

This further aligns with Ranupan's (Ariono, 2017) statement that education is an activity to increase a person's general knowledge, including improving theoretical mastery and decision-making skills regarding issues related to activities to achieve goals. Therefore, efforts are needed from agencies to pay greater attention to educational level during employee selection, as adequate education can support employees' ability to serve customer needs and respond to tasks assigned by superiors, thus creating work effectiveness that impacts optimizing employee performance.

The results of this study are in line with research conducted by (Sarah & Nilam, 2020) which shows that the level of education has an effect on work performance, the same thing was also conveyed by researchers (Maringan et al., 2016), (Sinaga, 2020), and researchers (Ariono, 2017), but according to researchers (Gunawan & Riza, 2019) the results of their research show that the level of education does not have a significant effect on employee work performance.

The Influence of Work Motivation (X2) on Employee Performance (Y)

The results of the Student Test above indicate that the calculated t-value is less than the t-table ($0.652 < 1.9939$) and the significance value is greater than the p-value of 0.05, or $0.516 > 0.05$, indicating that work motivation negatively influences employee performance.

Based on the frequency analysis of the work motivation variable (X2), the highest average score was the remuneration indicator, at 4.40. This is due to the rewards (salary, bonuses, and allowances) provided by the company/agency, which encourage employees to perform well. The lowest average score was the working conditions indicator, at 4.06. This is due to the agency's provision of a comfortable work environment for each employee. The average score for the work motivation variable was 4.19.

This is due to indications that employees perceive the motivation they receive as having no impact on their performance, meaning that the working conditions of the Public Works and Spatial Planning Department of South Sulawesi Province are deemed insufficient to motivate employees to achieve maximum performance. Furthermore, the impact of low levels of employee motivation significantly impacts the sustainability of a company or agency. As is well known, motivation plays a significant role in shaping a person's identity in carrying out their duties. If the motivation provided is deemed inadequate or ineffective, this will also impact the decline in employee performance. Therefore, it is essential to continuously conduct work evaluations on a regular basis to assess employee effectiveness. The results of this study are in line with research conducted by (Khafidz, 2020) which shows that work motivation variables do not have a partial effect on work performance, but differ from the results of research conducted by (Sarah & Nilam, 2020), (Rahayu, Sri SE., 2019), (Victoria Pattynama et al., 2016), (Sinaga, 2020), and researchers (Ariono, 2017) which show that work motivation variables have a significant positive effect on employee performance.

Conclusion

Based on the research results and discussion presented by the author, the conclusions of this study are as follows:

Education level has been shown to significantly contribute to improving employee performance at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency of South Sulawesi Province. This is because a high level of education can assist employees in carrying out their duties and responsibilities in accordance with their respective soft skills acquired through their education. Work motivation has a negative effect, contributing significantly to the decline in performance at the Public Works and Spatial Planning Agency of South Sulawesi Province. This demonstrates that providing high motivation, if not balanced with employee self-awareness, will further decrease employee performance.

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