

## ENHANCING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH WORK CULTURE AND COMPETENCY DEVELOPMENT: A CASE STUDY OF THE WELFARE SECTION IN SOUTH LAMPUNG REGENCY

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### ABSTRACT

*This study investigates the barriers to enhancing employee performance in the Welfare Section of the Secretariat of South Lampung Regency, focusing on work culture and competency development. Utilizing a qualitative approach, the research identifies key challenges such as inadequate training, frequent employee rotations, skill gaps, and weak collaboration. To address these issues, the study proposes strategies for work culture development, including consistent disciplinary measures, enhanced performance monitoring, employee motivation, and effective communication systems. Additionally, competency development initiatives are recommended, encompassing improved education and training, certification programs, and performance evaluations. The findings suggest that addressing these barriers can significantly improve productivity and foster a harmonious work environment. This research provides valuable insights for policymakers aiming to enhance public sector performance through strategic cultural and competency enhancements.*

**Keywords:** *Employee Performance, Work Culture, Competency Development, Public Sector, Organizational Efficiency*

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### Introduction

In today's competitive organizational environment, employee performance is widely recognized as a critical determinant of institutional success and sustainability. As organizations strive to achieve their strategic objectives, the role of effective work culture and competency development becomes increasingly significant (Barth & de Beer, 2018; Chauke et al., 2022; Herman et al., 2020). The Welfare Section of the Secretariat of South Lampung Regency, an essential governmental body responsible for ensuring community well-being, has been grappling with persistent performance issues that hinder its operational efficacy and service delivery (Wicaksono, 2021; Wijaya et al., 2021; Wilona & Defrizal, 2024).

This study aims to explore the barriers to enhancing employee performance within this section, focusing on the development of work culture and competencies. While the existing literature extensively discusses organizational performance, there is a notable gap in understanding the specific challenges faced by public sector entities in developing regions, particularly in Indonesia (Choi & Yi, 2016; Nugroho et al., 2023; Pratama et al., 2015; Raras et al., 2024; Rumambi et al., 2022). Public sector organizations often encounter unique obstacles, such as bureaucratic inertia, limited resources, and socio-cultural factors that can impede the implementation of effective performance enhancement strategies (Azikin & Barusman, 2021; Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2013; Koike, 2013; Xavier, 2014).

The current research seeks to fill this gap by identifying the distinct challenges that the Welfare Section faces and proposing tailored strategies to address them (Alam et al., 2019; Rhee & Rha, 2009; Riccucci & Lurie, 2001; Singh, 2009). This study's significance lies in its potential to contribute to the broader discourse on public sector performance enhancement by offering insights into how work culture and competency development can be leveraged to improve employee performance in similar contexts. By examining the specific dynamics of the Welfare Section in South Lampung Regency, this research aims to provide actionable recommendations that can inform policy and practice in other public sector organizations facing comparable challenges.

## **Methodology**

This study employs a qualitative research approach, which is well-suited for exploring complex social phenomena such as organizational culture and employee competencies (Barusman & Habiburrahman, 2022; Kang, 2021; Rice, 1980). Data were collected through semi-structured interviews with employees and management within the Welfare Section, as well as through direct observations and document analysis. The qualitative approach allows for an in-depth understanding of the contextual factors influencing employee performance (Halim, 2023; Thaden et al., 2010). The selection of participants was purposive, targeting individuals with varied roles and experiences to ensure a comprehensive perspective. Data analysis involved thematic coding to identify recurring patterns and themes related to work culture and competency development (Juhdi et al., 2015; Nam & Park, 2019; Pulakos et al., 2015). This method provides a robust framework for evaluating the validity and reliability of the findings, offering insights into the underlying issues affecting performance.

## **Result and Discussion**

### **Results**

The study identified several significant barriers to enhancing employee performance. A primary issue is the inadequacy of training programs, which are frequently misaligned with the actual needs of employees. This misalignment leads to a skills gap that hinders effective job performance. Furthermore, frequent employee rotations exacerbate this issue by disrupting continuity and preventing the development of specialized expertise. As employees are moved from one position to another, the lack of consistent training and development opportunities limits their ability to acquire and refine the necessary skills for each role.

In addition to training challenges, the existing work culture is characterized by weak collaboration and ineffective communication, both of which undermine team cohesion and productivity. Employees often struggle to work together efficiently due to unclear communication channels and a lack of trust among team members. This situation is compounded by the absence of a supportive and motivating work environment, which leads to low employee morale and engagement. As a result, the overall performance of employees is negatively impacted, as they are less likely to be motivated to contribute fully to their roles.

### **Discussion**

Addressing the barriers to employee performance requires strategic interventions aimed at cultivating a positive work culture and enhancing employee competencies, as highlighted by Barth & de Beer (2018) and Chauke et al. (2022). One key strategy is the implementation of consistent disciplinary measures and improved performance monitoring, which are crucial for establishing accountability and encouraging adherence to organizational standards. These measures ensure that employees understand their responsibilities and are motivated to meet performance expectations (Wicaksono, 2021).

Creating a motivating work environment through recognition and rewards can significantly boost employee morale (Choi & Yi, 2016). When employees feel valued and appreciated for their contributions, they are more likely to be engaged and committed to their work. Additionally, effective communication systems are essential for facilitating information flow and collaboration among employees. By promoting open and transparent communication, organizations can foster trust and improve team dynamics (Brinkerhoff & Wetterberg, 2013).

Leadership plays a critical role in shaping the work environment, as suggested by Koike (2013) and Xavier (2014). By modeling ideal leadership practices, leaders can create a safe and comfortable work environment that encourages innovation and collaboration. Aligning the organization's vision and mission with daily operations helps employees understand their roles and contributions to the overall objectives, enhancing their sense of purpose and commitment (Nugroho et al., 2023).

Competency development is another critical area for improvement, as discussed by Rumambi et al. (2022) and Riccucci & Lurie (2001). The study recommends enhancing educational and training opportunities to ensure they are relevant and tailored to the specific needs of employees. Implementing certification programs can provide employees with formal recognition of their skills, motivating them to pursue further development. Regular participation in training programs, coupled with periodic evaluations, can help identify areas for improvement and guide future training initiatives (Rhee & Rha, 2009).

Strategic employee rotation, based on expertise, can optimize resource allocation and foster a dynamic work environment (Pratama et al., 2015). This approach allows employees to develop a broad range of skills while maintaining a focus on areas where they excel. Active performance monitoring and guidance from leadership are

essential for continuous improvement and skill enhancement, as they provide employees with the feedback and support needed to grow professionally (Singh, 2009).

Overall, the findings underscore the importance of addressing both cultural and competency-related barriers to improve employee performance. By implementing the proposed strategies, the Welfare Section can enhance its operational efficiency and service delivery (Wijaya et al., 2021). This study contributes to a broader understanding of public sector performance challenges, offering practical solutions that can be adapted to similar contexts.

## Conclusion

This research highlights the critical role of work culture and competency development in enhancing employee performance within the Welfare Section of South Lampung Regency. By identifying and addressing the specific barriers faced by this organization, the study provides valuable insights into the dynamics of public sector performance improvement. The proposed strategies offer a roadmap for creating a supportive and productive work environment, ultimately contributing to the achievement of organizational goals.

The implications of this study extend beyond the immediate context, offering lessons for other public sector entities facing similar challenges. Future research could explore the long-term impact of these strategies on organizational performance and employee satisfaction, as well as their applicability in different cultural and institutional settings. By advancing the understanding of performance enhancement in the public sector, this study contributes to the ongoing efforts to improve service delivery and organizational effectiveness.

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