

The Role of Competency and Intrinsic Motivation in Improving Human Resource (HR) Performance

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the effect of competence and intrinsic motivation on the performance of human resources (HR) at PT Tanto Intim Line Makassar Branch. Furthermore, this research also examines the mediating role of intrinsic motivation in the relationship between competence and HR performance. The research approach used is quantitative with explanatory research type. Data were collected through questionnaires distributed to the entire population consisting of 75 employees, using a census technique. Data analysis was carried out using validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, multiple linear regression analysis, and mediation testing with the Baron & Kenny approach. The results of the study indicate that competence has a positive and significant effect on HR performance. Intrinsic motivation also has a positive and significant effect on HR performance. Additionally, competence significantly influences intrinsic motivation. The mediation test shows that intrinsic motivation significantly mediates the relationship between competence and HR performance. The implication of this research is the importance for organizations to improve employee competence while creating a work environment that supports intrinsic motivation to optimally enhance performance. This research is expected to be a reference for both companies and academics in designing effective human resource development strategies.*

Keywords: Competence; HR Performance; Intrinsic Motivation; Mediation.

1. Introduction

In today's era of globalization and digital transformation, human resource (HR) performance is a crucial indicator of organizational success and sustainability. Optimal HR performance not only reflects individual achievement in completing their tasks and responsibilities but also serves as a key driver of organizational effectiveness in achieving its goals. According to Mangkunegara (2020), employee performance is the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out their assigned tasks and responsibilities.

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As demands for professionalism and efficiency increase, organizations need to recognize that achieving high performance is not solely determined by established work systems, but also influenced by individual qualities, including competence and intrinsic motivation. Employees with superior competence and strong intrinsic motivation will be better prepared to face work challenges and demonstrate loyalty and consistently high work performance.

Competence refers to the set of knowledge, skills, and attitudes required by an individual to perform their job effectively. High competence enables an employee to comprehensively understand tasks, make informed decisions, and establish healthy working relationships. Wibowo (2022) states that competence is the primary foundation for achieving individual performance because it encompasses both technical and non-technical abilities, including interpersonal skills and critical thinking skills.

Research by Rachmawati & Sulaiman (2021) shows that competency has a positive and significant impact on employee performance in the manufacturing sector in West Java. This finding aligns with a study by Aminah et al. (2023), which found that employees with high work competency tend to demonstrate consistency in work performance, are able to complete tasks efficiently, and make significant contributions to the team and organization. However, high competency does not guarantee optimal performance without adequate intrinsic motivation.

Intrinsic motivation is an internal drive that arises from within an individual, such as the desire for growth, personal satisfaction, and meaning in the work they do (Deci & Ryan, 2020). This motivation drives individuals to work not solely for external rewards, but because they enjoy the process of work itself and find it meaningful.

Research by Putri & Nugroho (2020) found that intrinsic motivation has a positive relationship with employee performance in the service sector. Employees who feel internally motivated tend to demonstrate high initiative, strong sense of responsibility, and are more proactive in completing tasks. This finding is supported by a study by Wijayanti et al. (2022), which found that employees with high intrinsic motivation demonstrate better performance even under stressful work conditions.

Although various organizations have implemented training programs to improve competency and create a work environment that supports intrinsic motivation, field observations indicate that improvements in these two factors are not always followed by

significant improvements in employee performance. For example, research by Fitriani et al. (2023) in a logistics company showed that even though employees possessed adequate technical competency, some still showed stagnant or even declining performance due to a lack of intrinsic drive to develop. Conversely, in another case in the public service sector, it was found that despite employees having high motivation, limited technical competency resulted in low achievement of work targets (Handayani & Yusuf, 2021). This condition reflects a gap phenomenon, where high intrinsic competency and motivation do not automatically result in optimal performance, as the relationship between the two is likely not mutually exclusive.

Based on the literature review, many studies have examined the influence of competence on performance (Sari & Firmansyah, 2020) and motivation on performance (Prasetyo et al., 2021) separately, but not many have specifically examined the simultaneous influence of competence and intrinsic motivation on HR performance in an integrated and in-depth manner.

Research by Lestari & Hakim (2023) suggests that the combination of competence and motivation has an interactive effect on performance, but their research is still limited to the higher education sector. This indicates a research gap, namely the need for broader, cross-sectoral empirical studies to examine how the synergy between competence and intrinsic motivation can improve human resource performance, as well as other variables that may play a mediating or moderating role.

Theoretically, the theology of this research gap confirms that competence and intrinsic motivation are indeed recognized as key internal factors in shaping performance, but their relationship has not been fully explained. Several previous studies have produced inconsistent findings, both regarding the strength and direction of each variable's influence. Therefore, this study not only re-examines the direct influence of competence and intrinsic motivation on performance but also presents a new perspective by positioning intrinsic motivation as a mediating variable. Thus, this study provides a theoretical contribution in deepening the understanding of the mechanisms by which competence can be transformed into performance through intrinsic motivation, while also providing practical contributions for organizations, particularly in the logistics sector, in formulating more comprehensive HR development strategies.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research approach. This approach was chosen because the study aims to explain the relationship between variables that influence employee performance, namely competence and intrinsic motivation. According to Sugiyono (2013), explanatory quantitative research aims to explain the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables studied through hypothesis testing. Additionally, Creswell (2014) stated that in quantitative research using an explanatory approach, the focus is on testing hypotheses based on theory or previous research. This

research will collect numerical data for statistical testing, with the goal of obtaining results that can be generalized to a wider population.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Respondents' Responses Regarding Competence

Based on respondents' responses to the Competency variable, it was found that all indicators received average scores in the high category. The highest average score was obtained by the "Job Knowledge" indicator, at 3.77, indicating that the majority of employees felt they had a good understanding of their field of work.

Meanwhile, the lowest average score was found in the "Understanding of Duties and Responsibilities" indicator, at 3.61. However, this score is still within the high category.

Overall, the average score for the Competence variable reached 3.67, which is categorized as high based on the interval score classification. These results indicate that employee competency at PT Tanto Intim Line Makassar Branch was assessed as good by respondents, covering aspects of knowledge, technical skills, problem-solving abilities, and professional attitudes.

3.1.1. Respondents' Responses on Intrinsic Motivation

Respondent responses to the Intrinsic Motivation variable indicate that all indicators achieved average scores in the moderate category. The highest score was found for the "Motivated without additional rewards" indicator at 3.63, followed by "Task Satisfaction" at 3.60. Meanwhile, the lowest average score was found for the "Task Commitment" indicator at 3.45, which is still in the moderate category.

The overall average value of the Intrinsic Motivation variable is 3.54, which is included in the moderate category. This finding indicates that the internal motivation of employees at PT Tanto Intim Line, Makassar Branch, is quite good, although it still needs to be improved, especially in the aspects of commitment and personal satisfaction with the work they do.

3.1.2. Respondents' Responses on HR Performance

Based on the results of respondents' responses to the HR Performance variable, it is known that all indicators obtained average scores in the medium category. The indicator with the highest score was "Timeliness in completing tasks" at 3.60, followed by "Quality of work results" at 3.55, and "Daily work productivity" at 3.54. Meanwhile, the indicators with the lowest average scores were "Efficient use of resources" at 3.47, and "Contribution to achieving organizational goals" at 3.49.

Overall, the average score for the HR Performance variable was 3.53, which falls into the moderate category. This finding indicates that the majority of employees assess their performance as quite good, particularly in terms of punctuality, work quality, and productivity. However, there is room for improvement in strategic contribution to organizational goals and efficient use of resources.

3.1.3. Questionnaire Validity Test

Validity testing was conducted to ensure that each item on the questionnaire actually measured what it was supposed to. The method used was the Pearson Product Moment correlation between item scores and the total score.

Questionnaire Validity Test Results

Variables	Item Code	r count	Sig. (2-tailed)	Information
Competence (X_1)	KMP01	0.797	< 0.001	Valid
	KMP02	0.884	< 0.001	Valid
	KMP03	0.790	< 0.001	Valid
	KMP04	0.825	< 0.001	Valid
	KMP05	0.775	< 0.001	Valid
Intrinsic Motivation (X_2)	MOT01	0.827	< 0.001	Valid
	MOT02	0.860	< 0.001	Valid
	MOT03	0.895	< 0.001	Valid
	MOT04	0.849	< 0.001	Valid
	MOT05	0.896	< 0.001	Valid
HR Performance (Y)	SDM01	0.840	< 0.001	Valid
	SDM02	0.858	< 0.001	Valid
	SDM03	0.864	< 0.001	Valid
	SDM04	0.823	< 0.001	Valid
	SDM05	0.866	< 0.001	Valid

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on the Pearson correlation results, all items in the three variables (Competence, Intrinsic Motivation, and HR Performance) showed a calculated r value > 0.30 and a significance < 0.05 . Therefore, all questionnaire items were declared valid and suitable for use in the research data measurement process.

3.1.4. Questionnaire Reliability Test

Reliability testing is used to determine the extent to which an instrument can produce consistent results when remeasured under the same conditions. Reliability testing in this study used the Cronbach's Alpha method. A construct is considered reliable if its Cronbach's Alpha value is ≥ 0.70 , indicating that the items within a variable have good internal consistency. The following are the results of the reliability test in this study:

Questionnaire Reliability Test Results

Variables	Number of Items	Cronbach's Alpha	Information
Competence (X_1)	5	0.872	Reliable
Intrinsic Motivation (X_2)	5	0.916	Reliable
HR Performance (Y)	5	0.903	Reliable

Source: Processed primary data, 2025

Based on the results of the reliability test using the Cronbach's Alpha technique, it was found that all variables in this study had alpha values above 0.70, which means all measurement instruments were declared reliable. The Competence variable (X_1) showed a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.872, which is included in the highly reliable category. This

means that the statement items regarding competence have high internal consistency and are trustworthy.

Furthermore, the Intrinsic Motivation variable (X_2) obtained a value of 0.916, which is included in the very reliable category, indicating that all statement items regarding intrinsic motivation are consistent in measuring this construct.

The HR Performance variable (Y) has a value of 0.903, which is also categorized as highly reliable. This indicates that all statement items regarding HR performance have good internal consistency.

Thus, all instruments in this study are suitable for use in further analysis.

3.2. The Influence of Competence on HR Performance (Y)

Based on the results of the t-test, the regression coefficient value was 0.108, the calculated t value was 2.241, and the significance value was 0.028. These results indicate that the Competence variable (X_1) has a positive and significant effect on HR Performance (Y) at PT Tanto Intim Line, Makassar Branch. This means that the higher the competency possessed by employees, the better the performance produced.

This finding aligns with the theory proposed by Robbins and Judge (2017), which states that competency is a combination of individual knowledge, skills, and abilities that plays a significant role in increasing productivity and work outcomes. Employees with high competency tend to be faster, more effective, and more accurate in completing work according to company standards.

Furthermore, these results support research by Rachmawati and Sulaiman (2021), which states that competence has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. In the context of PT Tanto Intim Line, Makassar Branch, improving competence is crucial given the dynamics of the shipping and logistics business, which demands speed, punctuality, and high procedural compliance.

Thus, companies need to continue conducting training, workshops, and job skills development so that employee competencies remain relevant to industry developments and are able to drive optimal HR performance.

3.2.1. The Influence of Intrinsic Motivation (X_2) on HR Performance (Y)

The t-test results show that Intrinsic Motivation (X_2) has a positive and significant effect on HR Performance (Y) with a regression coefficient value of 0.879, a calculated t of 21.294, and a significance level of 0.000. These results prove that partially, Intrinsic Motivation has a positive and significant effect on HR Performance at PT Tanto Intim Line Makassar Branch. This means that the greater the motivation from within the employee, the better the performance achieved.

This finding is in line with the opinion of Robbins and Judge (2017) who stated that intrinsic motivation is an internal drive within a person that influences work behavior, such as satisfaction with work, pride in work results, and the desire to achieve.

These results also align with research by Yunita & Sari (2020), which found that intrinsic motivation significantly contributes to employee performance. In PT Tanto Intim Line, intrinsic motivation is crucial for coping with routine work situations, target pressures, and strict operational procedures, ensuring employees remain productive and results-oriented.

Therefore, companies should design non-material reward programs, achievement recognition, and a supportive work environment to maintain and increase employee intrinsic motivation.

3.2.2. The Simultaneous Effect of Competence (X_1) and Intrinsic Motivation (X_2) on HR Performance (Y)

The results of the F test show that the variables Competence (X_1) and Intrinsic Motivation (X_2) simultaneously have a significant effect on HR Performance (Y), with a calculated F value of 359.510 and a significance of 0.000. In addition, the coefficient of determination (R^2) value of 0.909 indicates that 90.9% of the HR Performance variable can be explained by Competence and Intrinsic Motivation, while the rest is influenced by other factors outside this study.

Although both variables are partially significant, their simultaneous effect is stronger because they complement each other. This aligns with Sugiyono's (2019) opinion that two independent variables that are individually significant can have a stronger effect when tested simultaneously.

This very high R-square value indicates that PT Tanto Intim Line's human resource performance is strongly influenced by the level of competence and intrinsic motivation of its employees. This means that competent and intrinsically motivated employees will more easily adapt to the demands of fast-paced and dynamic logistics and shipping operations.

Thus, companies need to balance competency development and increasing employee motivation, both intrinsically and extrinsically, to create high-performing human resources.

3.2.3. Hypothesis 4: Mediation of Intrinsic Motivation on the Influence of Competence on HR Performance

The fourth hypothesis states that Intrinsic Motivation (X_2) mediates the influence of Competence (X_1) on HR Performance (Y). Based on the mediation test using the Baron and Kenny (1986) approach, the following results were obtained:

- a) Path $X_1 \rightarrow Y$ (c) is significant ($p = 0.000$)
- b) Path $X_1 \rightarrow X_2$ (a) is significant ($p = 0.000$)
- c) Path $X_2 \rightarrow Y$ (b) is significant ($p = 0.000$)
- d) The path $X_1 \rightarrow Y$ (c') decreased to 0.108, but remained significant ($t=2.241$, $p = 0.028$)

This result meets the requirements for partial mediation because the influence of Competence on HR Performance remains significant after including Intrinsic Motivation as a mediator, although the value decreases. Furthermore, the results of the Sobel Test calculation show a Z value = 5.33, which is greater than the critical value of 1.96 (5%) and a p-value = 0.0000001, so the mediation effect is statistically significant.

These findings indicate that intrinsic motivation partially mediates the relationship between HR competency and performance at PT Tanto Intim Line, Makassar Branch. This means that high competency not only directly influences performance but also increases employee intrinsic motivation.

These results align with Robbins & Judge's (2017) theoretical concept that strong competencies will increase individual self-confidence and motivation, ultimately positively impacting work performance. Therefore, companies need to encourage HR competency development that focuses not only on technical skills but also on building an internally motivating work environment to optimally improve employee performance.

4. Conclusion

Based on the results of the data analysis and discussion that have been carried out in the previous chapter, the following research results can be concluded, in accordance with the formulation of the problems that have been determined: 1. The influence of competence on human resource performance: The research results show that competence has a positive and significant impact on human resource performance. This means that the higher the level of competence an employee possesses, the better their performance will be. 2. The influence of intrinsic motivation on human resource performance: This study found that intrinsic motivation has a positive and significant impact on human resource performance. This means that employees who are intrinsically motivated to perform optimally tend to produce better performance. 3. The simultaneous influence of competence and intrinsic motivation on human resource performance: The results of the simultaneous test indicate that competence and intrinsic motivation simultaneously have a significant influence on human resource performance. Both variables play a crucial role in determining the quality and productivity of employee work at PT Tanto Intim Line, Makassar Branch. 4. The role of intrinsic motivation in mediating the relationship between human resource competence and performance: The results of mediation tests using the Baron & Kenny and Sobel approaches indicate that intrinsic motivation significantly mediates the relationship between competence and human resource performance. This means that competence not only directly impacts performance but also indirectly through increased employee intrinsic motivation.

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