COMPETENCE OF VILLAGE APPARATUS: IS IT TRAINING MATERS?

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Abstract
The training that has been attended by village officials so far has not yielded optimal results. Meanwhile, training from various overseeing organizations is conducted annually. This study aims to investigate the role of motivation and perceived organizational support in mediating and moderating the impact of training on competence. The unit of analysis for this research is the village officials serving in all villages in Central Java Province, with a sample of 468 village officials determined using the Slovin method. Questionnaires were distributed based on the area random sampling method, and the data collected were analyzed using the SEM-PLS method with the WARP-PLS model. The results of the study show that both motivation and perceived organizational support mediate and moderate the impact of training on competence. Relevant organizations, including village governments, village empowerment services, and the Ministry of Villages, need to develop sustainable training policies and programs for village officials that are evaluated periodically.

Keywords: Competence, Motivation, Perceived Organizational Support, Village Apparatus

INTRODUCTION

The central government has granted authority to village governments to regulate and manage their own affairs, as stipulated in Law No. 3 of 2024 on village governance. This provides an opportunity for village governments to develop their regions according to their abilities, needs, and prioritized aspects of each area (Ali & Saputra, 2020). Therefore, one of the important factors in enhancing national competitiveness and development is the quality of development of village officials. The role of village officials is increasingly important in achieving successful development, as they are the main executors of village governance (Kusuma, 2020; Raharja et al., 2020; Suwarni, 2021; Nirmala, Zurweni, & Hamidah, 2023; Socrates et al., 2023). Village officials should be considered assets, as employees are the most valuable asset for any organization in building or destroying its reputation and profitability (Elnaga & Imran, 2013).

Competent village officials will be committed to the institutions where they work (Yurindra et al., 2021). In practice, many village officials neglect competence in carrying out their duties, with

stereotypical views of their involvement in collusion, corruption, and nepotism (Saputra & Fitriwati, 2023), which severely hinders and disadvantages village development. Thus, competence reflects the skills and knowledge characterized by professionalism in specific fields, which is crucial for driving holistic progress and village development (Indarti, 2018). Competence enhancement is generally influenced by the quality and experience of training received by village officials (Yustikasari et al., 2022).

In line with the Theory of Action and Job Performance, training is the most fundamental function of human resource management to enhance knowledge, abilities, and skills, as well as to improve employee performance (Boyatzis, 2008; Armstrong, 2020). Training aims to develop employees' intellectual and personality capabilities (Hughes et al., 2019). Therefore, it is crucial for village governments, village community empowerment services, and the Ministry of Villages to pay close attention to the training of village officials to optimize their competencies. Training is one of the most effective tools to enhance employee performance and achieve organizational goals efficiently and effectively (Afroz, 2018; Garavan et al., 2020; Sari, Omeiza, & Mwakifuna, 2023). It is a primary strategy for achieving institutional goals and helping to improve employee competencies and performance (Khan et al., 2011; Ruttledge & Cathcart, 2019).

However, not all research shows that training has a significant impact on competence. Some training conducted by government agencies, healthcare, and police institutions has not been effective in enhancing employee competencies (Wittorski, 2012; Labrecque & Viglione, 2020; Gabe et al., 2023; Fitriana & Waswa, 2024). Additionally, some studies indicate that the impact of Recognition of Prior Learning (RPL) on competence tends to be low or not high (Deswira & Johanes, 2023; Firda Sari et al., 2023). Therefore, it is important to uncover variables that can mediate or strengthen the relationship between training and employee competence.

Employee motivation to participate in training is often considered a strong trigger for competence development (Habibi, Jiyane, & Ozsen, 2023; Pham, 2023; Yohanie et al., 2023; Wirana et al., 2024). Employee motivation is a crucial determinant in creating competence during the training process (Blaskova et al., 2015; Sugiharjo, 2019). Quality training can also enhance employee motivation, leading to increased competence. Additionally, perceived organizational support is a significant factor in improving competence (Kim et al., 2016; Kao et al., 2023; Saputro et al., 2023; Zakiyah, Boonma, & Collado, 2024). High organizational support perceived by employees during training can strengthen the impact of training on competence (Ompok & Teo, 2021). Organizational support is essential for creating a positive psychological environment, thereby boosting employees' confidence in achieving optimal work competence (Arnéguy et al., 2020).

This research aims to investigate the variables of perceived organizational support and motivation in mediating and moderating the impact of training on the competence of village officials. This research is urgent to elaborate on in-depth, as most empirical studies on the impact of training on employee competence focus on the private sector and profit-oriented companies abroad. Therefore, studies conducted in local governments, particularly in village governance, are still limited. On the other hand, many local government institutions have low availability of training (Anam et al., 2013; Yimam, 2022), making further investigation necessary. This research provides theoretical and practical knowledge insights, including (1) offering a theoretical study on the role of employee motivation and perceived organizational support in moderating the impact of training on employee competence; (2) providing policy recommendations to central and local governments regarding the enhancement of effective training quality to improve the competence of village officials.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Training is considered a fundamental tool in building organizational capacity to improve performance and achieve its goals (Sasidaran, 2018). Training is a strategic organizational instrument to enhance employee performance by acquiring and equipping employees with up-to-date skills, knowledge, and the appropriate organizational attitudes through best practices to perform their tasks in line with planned objectives (Afroz, 2018). Training is a primary pillar that significantly enhances employees' abilities, capacities, competencies, and recognition of their jobs and tasks (Kenny & Nnamdi, 2019). Training has a significant effect on motivation and leads to a positive impact on task performance, and along with supervisory mentoring, interpersonal assistance has a moderating effect on task performance (Luo et al., 2021). Training is the process of teaching the basic skills required by employees, useful in performing their jobs, and the effectiveness of training is reflected in the aspects of

instructors, participants, materials, methods, objectives, and training outcome evaluation (Dessler, 2017). This perspective indicates that with organizational support in the form of training, employees gain new knowledge and skills. Several previous studies have proven that training is a motivation for employees to further enhance their competencies (Chahar et al., 2021; Momanyi et al., 2016). Thus, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H1: Training impacts positively on the competence of village officials.

H2: Training impacts positively on the motivation of village officials.

H3: Motivation impacts positively on the competence the competence of village officials.

H4: Motivation significantly mediates the impact of training on the competence of village officials.

Perceived organizational support (POS) is highly valuable for employees undergoing training programs. Optimal support tends to increase commitment to training, leading to improved competencies (Kao et al., 2023). According to organizational support theory, high POS tends to enhance competencies because these beneficial effects stem from the process of social exchange (Ompok & Teo, 2021). With adequate training, resources, and support from management, members are more likely to desire the success of their organization and be better able to help their organization succeed (Putri & Kusuma, 2022). Organizational support for employees will encourage them to take training seriously, thereby enhancing their achieved competencies (Altamimi & Hilmi, 2023). The more positive the employees' perception of organizational support, the more diligently they will work to improve their competencies (Choi et al., 2020). Thus, the following hypotheses can be formulated:

H5: POS impacts positively on the competence of village officials.

H6: POS significantly strengthens impacts training and the competence of village officials.

The structural relationship between the variables of training, motivation, perceived organizational support, and competence is illustrated as follows.
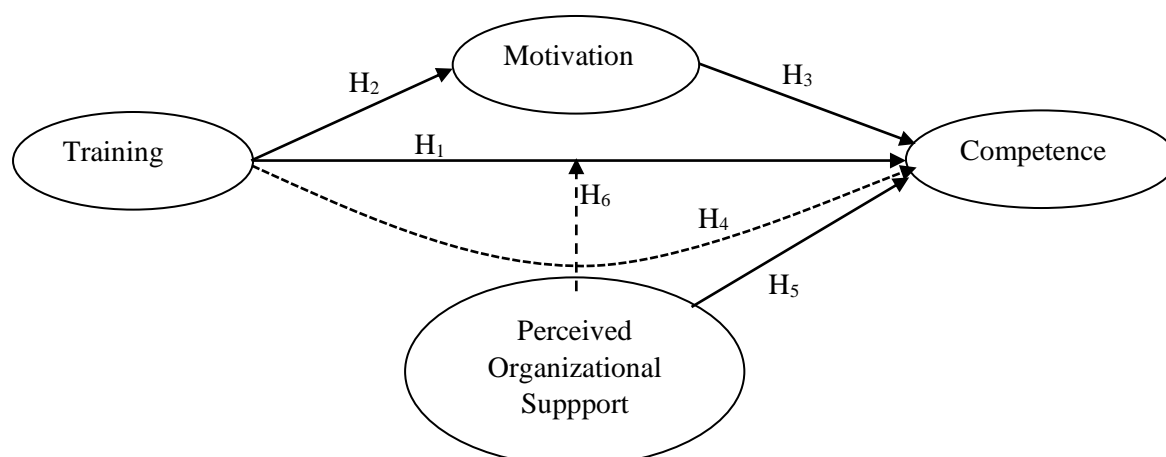

Figure 2. Hipotetic Research Model

RESEARCH METHOD

The research design used a quantitative approach with a survey-based causal method. The study population consisted of all village officials in Central Java Province, totaling 1,298 active village officials. From this population, a sample size of 468 was drawn using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error. The sample was proportionally distributed across 29 regencies in Central Java. Quantitative data were collected from primary sources by sending questionnaires to the 468 village officials across the 29 regencies. The number of questionnaires returned, completed, and analyzable was 442 respondents.

The variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly agree to strongly disagree. The measurement of village officials' job competence was adapted from the Career Competencies Questionnaire (CCQ) by Akkermans et al. (2013), comprising 21 items across six main dimensions: motivation, self-profiling, work exploration, quality reflection, networking, and career control. Training measurement utilized 20 items adopted from Omer (2021), covering dimensions such as training needs, training design, trainer performance, trainee performance, and training effectiveness. To measure Perceived Organizational Support, we adapted the scale from Eisenberger et al. (1997),

which included 8 items, asking village officials to assess the extent of organizational support they perceived. Motivation was measured using a scale developed from Brislin et al. (2005), Mahaney & Lederer (2006), and Ertan (2008), which comprised 16 items covering intrinsic and extrinsic motivation dimensions.

The data analysis technique employed the WARP PLS-SEM program, which consists of three components: the structural model or inner model, the measurement model or outer model, and the weighting scheme. The analysis involved the following steps: (a) creating a path diagram or model conceptualization; (b) testing the outer model; (c) testing the inner model using linear resampling techniques; (d) testing the significance of the moderated structural model with t-statistics; (e) interpreting the research findings (Kock, 2019).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Description

The characteristics of respondents discussed in this study are categorized based on position, gender, education level, and length of service. Respondents by gender show that 68% are male and 32% are female, indicating that the majority of village officials are male. Respondents by age are predominantly over 50 years old, which contributes to suboptimal competence as most of them are older. Respondents by education level reveal that the highest number of respondents have a high school education, accounting for 30%. This suggests that village officials primarily have a high school education, making formal education at the high school level the most common among them. Respondents by length of service indicate that the highest number of respondents, 45%, have worked for 10-20 years, showing that the majority of village officials have been working for between 10 and 20 years. Following this, 40% have been working for more than 20 years, indicating that the workforce of village officials is dominated by older employees with long tenure.

Table 1. Sample characterization

Variables	Categories	N	%
Gender	Female	156	32%
	Male	330	68%
Age groups	20–35 years	73	15%
	36–50 years	170	35%
	> 50 years	243	50%
Education	Primary education	112	23%
	Secondary education	141	29%
	High school	146	30%
	Diploma's degree	58	12%
	Bachelor's degree	29	6%
Length of Working	< 10 years	73	15%
	10 – 20 years	219	45%
	> 20 years	194	40%

Convergent Validity and Internal Consistency Analysis

The measurement model evaluates the contribution of each item in representing the related construct and measures how well the set of items represents that construct (Hair et al., 2019). The evaluation of the measurement model involves determining the reliability and validity of the measurements, including individual item reliability, internal consistency reliability, convergent validity, and discriminant validity (Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2014). The internal consistency reliability of a construct can be assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), PLSc Dijkstra reliability, and true composite reliability (Peterson & Kim, 2013). In this study, the cutoff values for Cronbach's Alpha (CA), composite reliability (CR), PLSc Dijkstra reliability, and true composite reliability are in accordance with those suggested by Hair et al. (2019), which recommend that the CR value should be at least 0.70.

Table 2. Assessment of measurement model and internal consistency

Variable/Item	Loading Factor	AVE	Cronbach's alpha	Composite Reliability	Dijkstra's PLSc reliability	True composite reliability
Competence (21 item)	0.688-0.879	0.601 (no item removed)	0.835	0.835	0.787	0.812
Training (20 item)	0.389-0.798	0.525 (2 item removed)	0.806	0.856	0.808	0.847
Perceived Organizational Support (8 item)	0.611-0.897	0.589 (no item removed)	0.937	0.937	0.814	0.911
Motivation (16 item)	0.711 - 0.836	0.635 (no item removed)	0.935	0.935	0.897	0.913

Table 2 shows that all four assessments exceed the minimum acceptable level of 0.70, indicating satisfactory internal consistency reliability of the measurements used. Furthermore, the AVE (Average Variance Extracted) values illustrate the average variance shared between a construct and its related indicators. Generally, if the AVE value is 0.5 or higher, it indicates adequate convergent validity (Fornell & Larcker, 1981). Table 2 shows that the AVE values range from 0.525 to 0.635, indicating that all constructs have a satisfactory level of convergent validity. However, some items had to be eliminated; for the training variable, two items were removed, whereas for the competence of village officials, perceived organizational support, and motivation, no items were removed as the AVE values already met the criteria.

Discriminant Validity Analysis

The next analysis is discriminant validity, which is the criterion for evaluating the extent to which a construct differs from other constructs (Hair et al., 2019). Discriminant validity can also be seen as the extent to which a variable differs from other variables (Duarte & Raposo, 2010). In this study, discriminant validity was ensured using the square root of the AVE of the variables, loadings and cross-loadings (Fornell & Larcker, 1981), as well as the heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) (Henseler et al., 2014), as shown in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant Validity Statistics (Fornell–Larcker and HTMT)

Validity Fornell Leaker				
	1	2	3	4
1. Competence	0.789			
2. Training	0.177	0.749		
3. Perceived Organizational Support	-0.174	0.487	0.798	
4. Motivation	-0.154	0.417	0.175	0.761
HTMT Ratio				
	1	2	3	4
1. Competence				
2. Training	0.911			
3. Perceived Organizational Support	0.287	0.907		
4. Motivation	0.257	0.497	0.924	

Table 3 shows that the square root of the AVE (bold values) is greater than the correlations between constructs, indicating adequate discriminant validity. Additionally, the results of discriminant validity evaluation using the HTMT ratio were also examined, as suggested by previous research (Ali et al., 2018; Hair et al., 2019; Henseler et al., 2014). In this study, as shown in Table 3, the highest correlation falls within the conventional benchmark of 0.85 or 0.90 (Henseler et al., 2014); therefore,

the HTMT criteria indicate adequate discriminant validity. The results of the measurement model in this study demonstrate that all reliability and construct validity have reached satisfactory levels. Therefore, this reinforces further analysis of the structural (inner) model to test the relationships between the variables under investigation.

Table 4. Model Fit and Quality Indices

Model fit dan quality indices	Criteria Fit	Analysis	Note
R-squared	Strong >= 0.67, Moderate >=0.33 Weak>= 0.19	0.699	Strong
Adjusted R-squared	Strong >= 0.67, Moderate >=0.33 Weak>= 0.19	0.672	Strong
Q-square predictive relevance	Low >= 0.02; medium >= 0.15; High >= 0.35	0.502	High
Average path coefficient (APC)	$p < 0.05$	0.242, P<0.001	Accepted
Average R-squared (ARS)	$p < 0.05$	0.556, P<0.001	Accepted
Average adjusted R-squared (AARS)	$p < 0.05$	0.556, P<0.001	Accepted
Average block VIF (AVIF)	Accepted if <= 5, ideal if <= 3.3	2.778	Accepted
Average full collinearity VIF (AFVIF)	Accepted if <= 5, ideal if <= 3.3	3.114	Accepted
Tenenhaus GoF (GoF)	Low >= 0.1; medium >= 0.25; High >= 0.36	0.604	High
Sympson's paradox ratio (SPR)	>= 0.25, large >= 0.36 Accepted if >= 0.7, ideal if = 1	0.871	Accepted
R-squared contribution ratio (RSCR)	Accepted if >= 0.9, ideal if = 1	0.914	Accepted
Statistical suppression ratio (SSR)	Accepted if >= 0.7	1.000	Accepted
Nonlinear bivariate causality direction ratio (NLBCDR)	Accepted if >= 0.7	0.914	Accepted

After verifying that the measurement model has adequate convergent and discriminant validity, evaluations were conducted to test hypotheses. We focused on the model's ability to predict and explain the impacts of exogenous variables on the dependent endogenous variables. Several criteria were examined to ensure that the model fits adequately (GoF). Hair et al. (2019) recommend an R-squared value of at least 0.10 for the model to fit the data well. As a result, the endogenous variables of structural empowerment and innovative performance had R-squared values of 0.697 each, indicating that the proposed model fits the data.

Furthermore, the Stone-Geisser Q2 criteria showed values higher than zero, indicating predictive power that can be accepted from the proposed model (Henseler et al., 2015). Additionally, additional measures such as Average Path Coefficient (APC), Average R-squared (ARS), Average Adjusted R-squared (AARS), Average Block VIF (AVIF), Average Full Collinearity VIF (AFVIF), Tenenhaus GoF (GoF), Sympson's Paradox Ratio (SPR), R-squared Contribution Ratio (RSCR), Statistical Suppression Ratio (SSR), and Nonlinear Bivariate Causality Direction Ratio (NLBCDR) were consistent with Kock's recommendations (2020). Based on the inner model test, all indices were accepted and high. Therefore, hypothesis testing can proceed. The results of the hypothesis testing are as follows table 5.

<div align="center">Table 5. Results of Hypothesis Testing</div>

	Hypothesis (Direct Effects)	Coefficient	P-value	Remark
H1	Training → Competence	0.247	<0,001	Accepted
H2	Training → Motivation	0.247	<0,001	Accepted
H3	Training → Competence	0.165	0.017	Accepted
H4	Perceived Organizational Support → Competence	0.211	0.005	Accepted
	Hypothesis (Mediation Effects)	**Coefficient**	**P-value**	**Remark**
H5	Training → Motivation → Competence	0.213	<0,001	Accepted
	Hypothesis (Moderation Effects)	**Coefficient**	**P-value**	**Remark**
H6	Perceived Organizational Support * Pelatihan → Competence	0.181	0.009	Accepted

Based on the test results in Table 5, it is shown that the p-values above 0.05 are for H1, H2, H3, H4 for hypotheses with direct regression. Meanwhile, the rejected hypothesis in the mediation hypothesis testing is H5, which is accepted because it has a p-value above 0.05. In testing the moderation hypothesis on H6, it was proven to be significant because it has a p-value below 0.05.

This study specifically explores the impact of training on village officials' job competence, mediated by motivation and moderated by Perceived Organizational Support. The research findings indicate that training significantly impacts the competence of village officials. This suggests that better training leads to higher job competence among village officials. The study also demonstrates a positive impact on motivation, indicating that higher training quality enhances motivation. It is important to note that previous research consistently shows that training enhances competence (Gabe et al., 2023). Consistent with other researchers, the study underscores the crucial impact of training quality on job competence (Ali & Saputra, 2020; Dewi & Sudiana, 2022; Puspa & Prasetyo, 2020). Aligning with the findings of Ompok and Teo (2021) and Kim et al. (2016), active training significantly enhances job competence, optimizing the services they provide. Training serves as a continuous learning instrument supporting individual career development (Deswira & Johanes, 2023). Training needs to focus on identifying key factors that support individual success in the workplace (Lambert et al., 2014). Thus, village official training not only has theoretical concepts but also effectively integrates theoretical knowledge with practical implementation in enhancing competence in local government services.

This study confirms that motivation significantly impacts village officials' competence, suggesting that higher motivation leads to higher competence levels. Furthermore, the study proves that motivation significantly mediates the effect of training on village officials' competence, implying that higher motivation enhances the influence of training on village officials' competence. It should be understood that not all public organizations pay attention to personal competence, such as motives and individual characteristics (Blaskova et al., 2015). Through village training, competence can be concretely measured, leaving subjective elements that also play a crucial role in the success of the village officials (Wirana et al., 2024). Training emphasizes experience as a significant factor in competence development, bridging the gap between theory and practice in enhancing village officials' competence. Training implementation should involve more than just acquiring necessary knowledge and skills. Thus, training processes always provide encouragement and motivation for village officials to enhance their knowledge and skills (Jumawan, 2023). Therefore, learning in this training emphasizes a holistic approach to developing knowledge, skills, and abilities that encompass intrinsic aspects of village officials' duties and functions.

Training can significantly impact individual knowledge, attitudes, and skills, thereby building mature work competence or profession as learning outcomes (Pham, 2023). Based on Boyatzis' action and job performance theory (1982), training that integrates learning within a framework aligns action with job performance to enhance motivation. The motivation behind this training is expected to boost competence development, enabling training participants to assess and utilize their previous learning for professionalism in their work (Indarti, 2018). Training is a holistic implementation effort for more effective and relevant competence development in preparing individuals to meet the demands of a changing work environment.

This study shows that Perceived Organizational Support (POS) has a positive and significant influence on village officials' competence. This means that higher organizational support results in

better competence demonstrated by village officials. POS also strengthens the effect of training on village officials' competence, indicating that strong organizational support can enhance competence through effective training. These findings are consistent with Kao et al. (2023), stating that employees who perceive organizational support tend to be more engaged in their work, thereby enhancing individual competence. Choi et al. (2020) also found that perceptions of organizational support reflect employee competence, where employees who feel supported by the organization tend to improve their competence (Kurniawan, 2022). Optimal support, such as training and adequate resources from management, can drive employee competence improvement (Ompok & Teo, 2021). This study also reveals that POS moderates the impact of competence on village officials' competence. Organizational support makes employees feel valued and treated as valuable assets by the company, thereby enhancing their competence (Eisenberger et al., 1997). Exceptional support from the organization not only enhances employee competence but also provides significant benefits to the organization (Santoso et al., 2022). Employees with high POS are more committed to the organization and more satisfied with their jobs (Altamimi & Hilmi, 2023). Moreover, older and more experienced respondents feel that organizational support is more meaningful in enhancing their competence (Choi et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study confirms that the impact of training on the competence of village officials, with motivation as a mediator and Perceived Organizational Support (POS) as a moderator, shows optimal significance in enhancing village officials' competence; the better the training, the higher their competence. The research underscores that training can have optimal impact if it fosters motivation among employees. However, it also requires support from relevant organizations, in this case, village government organizations, village empowerment service organizations, and the Ministry of Villages, to build quality training that drives optimal competence achievement. These findings reinforce the role of the Theory of Action and Job Performance (Boyatzis, 2008) that demonstrating competence requires action both from the organization and internal stakeholders of the village officials, thereby aligning behavior with organizational goals.

The study also emphasizes that not all public organizations prioritize individual competence, making it crucial for village governments, village empowerment service organizations, and the Ministry of Villages to have sustainable training policies and programs aligned with the needs of village officials. Furthermore, support from these institutions needs to go beyond mandatory participation in training programs; it should include welfare support during training and continuous monitoring and evaluation involving all stakeholders. This study is limited to the locus confined to Central Java Province, suggesting future research should expand the research area.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

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CONFLICTS OF INTEREST

The author(s) declare no conflict of interest.

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