



The Influence of Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems on Educational Staff Performance, with Work Motivation as a Mediating Variable: An Empirical Study at Public Universities in Southeast Sulawesi

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to examine the influence of Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems on the Performance of Educational Staff, with Work Motivation as a mediating variable in Public Universities in Southeast Sulawesi. The research adopts a quantitative approach using primary data collected through questionnaires distributed to educational staff working at public universities in Southeast Sulawesi. The total sample consisted of 230 respondents, selected using a proportional random sampling technique to ensure representative and balanced data across institutions. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to evaluate both the measurement model and the structural model, as well as to test the direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results indicate that Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems each have a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation. Furthermore, Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems also have a positive and significant direct effect on Educational Staff Performance. Work Motivation is found to have a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance. The mediation analysis demonstrates that Work Motivation significantly mediates the relationship between Training, Career Development, Reward Systems, and Educational Staff Performance. The model shows strong explanatory power in explaining variations in both Work Motivation and Educational Staff Performance. These findings emphasize the importance of strengthening training programs, improving career development opportunities, and implementing effective reward systems to enhance work motivation and ultimately improve the performance of educational staff in public universities.

Keywords: Career Development, Educational Staff Performance, Training, Reward Systems, Work Motivation.

I. INTRODUCTION

The performance of educational staff is a strategic factor in supporting the quality of academic and administrative services in public universities in Indonesia, including in Southeast Sulawesi. In the context of increasing demands for higher education quality, accountability, and institutional competitiveness, human resource management plays a central role in improving organizational effectiveness. According to Stephen P. Robbins (2005), employee performance is influenced by individual characteristics, organizational systems, and work environment factors. Therefore, structured human resource practices are essential to enhance performance outcomes.

Training is one of the most important human resource development strategies. According to Gary Dessler (2020), training improves employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities, enabling them to perform tasks more effectively and efficiently. Furthermore, Noe (2017) explains that systematic training programs contribute significantly to competency development and performance improvement. Well-designed training initiatives are therefore expected to enhance the capability and productivity of educational staff. Career development is another critical factor influencing employee performance. Based on career development theory, clear career paths and advancement opportunities increase employee engagement and commitment. According to Edgar H. Schein (1978), career development is closely related to organizational support and individual growth orientation. Employees who perceive opportunities for advancement are more likely to demonstrate higher performance and organizational loyalty.

The reward system also plays a significant role in shaping employee behavior and performance. According to Frederick Herzberg (1968), rewards and recognition are important extrinsic factors that influence job satisfaction and performance. In addition, expectancy theory proposed by Victor Vroom (1964) states that employees will exert higher

effort when they believe that their performance will lead to desirable rewards. A fair and transparent reward system can therefore strengthen performance outcomes.

Work motivation serves as a key mediating variable in this study. According to Abraham H. Maslow (1943), motivation arises from the fulfillment of hierarchical needs, which influence behavior and performance. Similarly, Clayton Alderfer (1969) emphasizes that fulfillment of existence, relatedness, and growth needs enhances work motivation. Motivated employees are more likely to demonstrate higher commitment, persistence, and productivity, thereby improving overall performance. Empirical research findings indicate that training, career development, and reward systems may influence performance both directly and indirectly through work motivation. However, previous studies show varying results, suggesting the need to examine mediation effects to better understand the underlying mechanisms. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the influence of Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems on Educational Staff Performance, with Work Motivation as a mediating variable at Public Universities in Southeast Sulawesi. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to human resource management and organizational behavior literature, and practically to university policymakers in strengthening training programs, improving career systems, optimizing reward mechanisms, and enhancing employee motivation and performance.

II. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Training

According to Gary Dessler (2020), training is a process of teaching employees the basic skills they need to perform their jobs effectively. Training is designed to improve employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities so that they can carry out their responsibilities more efficiently and contribute to organizational goals. Similarly, Noe (2017) defines training as a planned effort by an organization to facilitate employees' learning of job-related competencies. This definition emphasizes that training is a systematic and structured activity aimed at enhancing performance through competency development. In addition, Robert L. Mathis and John H. Jackson (2011) explain that training is a process designed to improve employees' work capabilities in order to support organizational effectiveness and achieve strategic objectives.

Conceptually, training is an essential component of human resource development that focuses on short-term and job-specific competency improvement. It represents a learning-oriented and systematic process intended to enhance individual performance and organizational productivity. The main objectives of training, as stated by Gary Dessler (2020), include improving job skills, increasing productivity, reducing work errors, enhancing organizational effectiveness, and preparing employees to adapt to changes in the work environment. According to Noe (2017), the indicators of training include the relevance of training content to job tasks, the effectiveness of training methods, the competence of the trainer, the adequacy of training facilities and environment, and the evaluation of training outcomes. These indicators reflect the quality and effectiveness of training programs in supporting employee performance improvement.

2.2 Career Development

According to Edgar H. Schein (1978), career development refers to the continuous process through which individuals progress in their work roles, guided by both personal aspirations and organizational support. Career development is not only related to promotion or upward mobility, but also to the enhancement of competencies, experiences, and professional growth within an organization. It represents a long-term human resource strategy that aligns individual career goals with organizational objectives. In the context of human resource management, career development is considered a structured effort to provide employees with opportunities for learning, advancement, and skill improvement so that they can contribute more effectively to organizational performance. Conceptually, career development focuses on planning, training, mentoring, and providing clear career paths that encourage employees to grow professionally and remain committed to the organization.

The main objective of career development is to improve employee competence, increase job satisfaction, strengthen organizational commitment, and enhance overall performance. A well-structured career development system helps employees understand their career trajectory, reduces uncertainty, and motivates them to achieve higher levels of productivity. According to Edgar H. Schein (1978), indicators of career development include clarity of career paths, availability of promotion opportunities, fairness in career advancement systems, organizational support for professional growth, and access to development programs such as training and mentoring. These indicators reflect the extent to which an organization provides systematic support for employee career progression and long-term development.

2.3 Reward Systems

According to Frederick Herzberg (1968), reward systems are an important extrinsic factor that influences employee motivation and job performance. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory explains that rewards, including salary, incentives, recognition, and other forms of compensation, function as hygiene factors that can prevent dissatisfaction and support positive work attitudes. In addition, according to Victor Vroom (1964), based on Expectancy Theory, employees are motivated to perform better when they believe that their effort will lead to good performance and that good performance will result in desirable rewards. This theory highlights the importance of a clear and fair reward system in strengthening employee performance outcomes. Conceptually, a reward system refers to a structured organizational mechanism designed to provide financial and non-financial incentives to employees based on their contributions and achievements. It includes compensation, bonuses, recognition, performance-based incentives, and other forms of appreciation that aim to reinforce productive behavior and align individual performance with organizational goals.

The primary objective of a reward system is to increase employee motivation, enhance job satisfaction, encourage high performance, and promote organizational effectiveness. A well-designed reward system ensures fairness, transparency, and consistency in evaluating employee contributions. According to Victor Vroom (1964), indicators of an effective reward system include clarity of performance–reward linkage, fairness of compensation, adequacy of incentives, recognition of achievements, and employee perception of equity. These indicators reflect the extent to which the reward system is perceived as just, motivating, and performance-oriented within the organization.

2.4 Work Motivation

According to Abraham H. Maslow (1943), work motivation is driven by the fulfillment of hierarchical human needs, ranging from physiological and safety needs to social, esteem, and self-actualization needs. When these needs are satisfied through organizational support and rewarding work conditions, employees are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of effort and performance. In addition, Clayton Alderfer (1969) proposed the ERG Theory, which categorizes human needs into existence, relatedness, and growth needs, emphasizing that motivation increases when organizations provide opportunities for personal development and meaningful relationships at work. Furthermore, according to Frederick Herzberg (1968), motivation is influenced by intrinsic factors such as achievement, recognition, responsibility, and personal growth, which directly contribute to higher job satisfaction and improved performance. Conceptually, work motivation refers to the internal and external forces that initiate, direct, and sustain employee behavior toward the achievement of organizational goals. It reflects the level of enthusiasm, commitment, and willingness of employees to exert effort in performing their duties effectively. The main objective of work motivation is to enhance employee engagement, improve productivity, strengthen commitment, and support overall organizational performance. A highly motivated employee is more likely to demonstrate persistence, responsibility, and dedication in completing tasks. According to Abraham H. Maslow (1943), indicators of work motivation include fulfillment of basic needs, sense of security, opportunities for social interaction, recognition, achievement, and self-development. These indicators represent both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors that influence employee behavior and performance outcomes.

2.5 Educational Staff Performance

According to Stephen P. Robbins (2005), employee performance refers to the results achieved by individuals in carrying out their job responsibilities, which are measured based on effectiveness, efficiency, and the attainment of organizational goals. Performance reflects how well employees complete assigned tasks in accordance with established standards and expectations. In the context of educational institutions, performance of educational staff plays a crucial role in supporting administrative processes, academic services, and overall institutional effectiveness. High performance ensures the smooth implementation of academic activities, timely service delivery, and improved organizational productivity. Conceptually, educational staff performance refers to the level of work accomplishment demonstrated by non-academic personnel in performing administrative, technical, and support functions within higher education institutions. It encompasses the quality of work, quantity of output, punctuality, responsibility, and cooperation in carrying out duties. The main objective of measuring performance is to evaluate employee contributions, identify areas for improvement, and enhance institutional effectiveness.

According to Stephen P. Robbins (2005), indicators of performance include work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, independence in task completion, and interpersonal cooperation. These indicators provide a comprehensive framework for assessing how well educational staff fulfill their responsibilities and contribute to the achievement of university goals.

2.6 Conceptual Framework and Research Hypotheses

The conceptual framework of this study examines the relationships among Training, Career Development, Reward Systems, Work Motivation, and Educational Staff Performance. The model assumes that educational staff performance is influenced by human resource management practices, both directly and indirectly. Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems are positioned as independent variables, while Work Motivation functions as a mediating variable that explains how this human resource practices enhance employee engagement, commitment, and effort in performing job responsibilities. The framework proposes that effective training programs improve employee competencies, structured career development strengthens professional growth and organizational commitment, and a fair reward system enhances employee satisfaction and perceived fairness. These factors are expected to increase work motivation, which in turn contributes to higher levels of educational staff performance in public universities in Southeast Sulawesi.

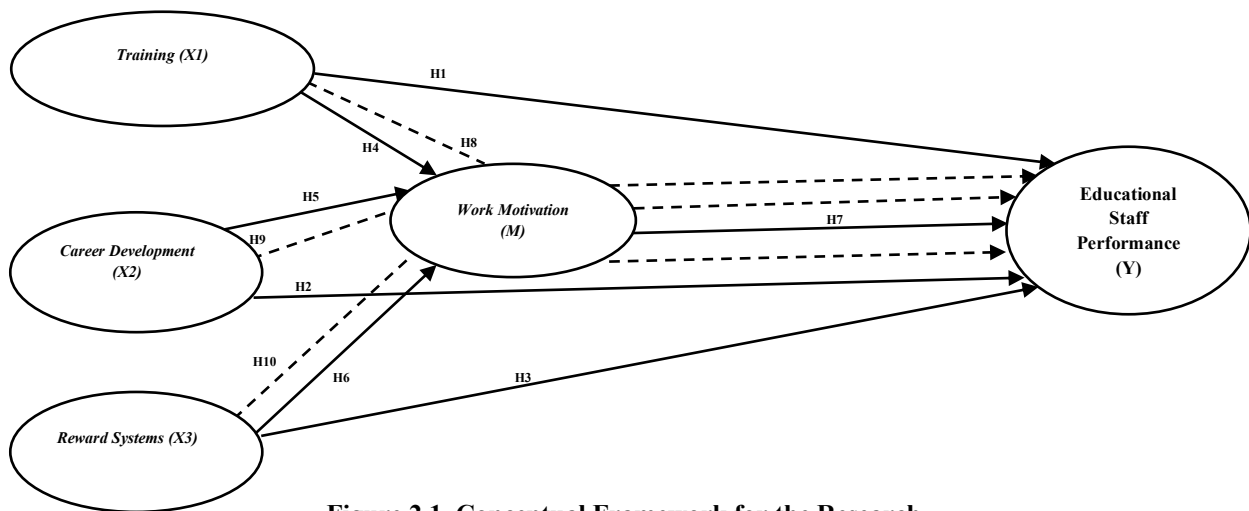


Figure 2.1. Conceptual Framework for the Research

2.7 Research Hypothesis

- H1: Training has a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance.
- H2: Career Development has a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance.
- H3: Reward Systems have a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance.
- H4: Training has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation.
- H5: Career Development has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation.
- H6: Reward Systems have a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation.
- H7: Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance.
- H8: Work Motivation mediates the positive and significant effect of Training on Educational Staff Performance.
- H9: Work Motivation mediates the positive and significant effect of Career Development on Educational Staff Performance.
- H10: Work Motivation mediates the positive and significant effect of Reward Systems on Educational Staff Performance.

III. RESEARCH METHOD

This study was conducted to examine the relationships among Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems, with Work Motivation as a mediating variable and Educational Staff Performance as the dependent variable in Public Universities in Southeast Sulawesi. The research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method and was carried out among educational staff working at public universities in Southeast Sulawesi. The total sample consisted of 230 respondents, selected using a proportional random sampling technique to ensure representative data across institutions. The study includes three independent variables (Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems), one mediating variable (Work Motivation), and one dependent variable (Educational Staff Performance). Data were collected using a structured questionnaire developed based on validated measurement indicators relevant to each variable to ensure reliability and validity of the research instruments.

IV. RESEARCH RESULT AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Research Result

Table 4.1. Direct Effect

Relationship Between Variables	Path Coefficient (β)	T-Statistic	P-Value	Description
Training → Educational Staff Performance	0,462	4,85	0,003	Significant
Career Development → Educational Staff Performance	0,438	4,32	0,000	Significant
Reward Systems → Educational Staff Performance	0,501	5,67	0,000	Significant
Training → Work Motivation	0,589	6,74	0,000	Significant
Career Development → Work Motivation	0,553	6,11	0,001	Significant
Reward Systems → Work Motivation	0,612	7,28	0,000	Significant
Work Motivation → Educational Staff Performance	0,667	8,02	0,001	Significant

Table 4.1 presents the results of the direct effect analysis between the independent variables, the mediating variable, and the dependent variable. The findings indicate that all proposed relationships are positive and statistically significant.

First, Training has a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance, with a path coefficient (β) of 0.462, a T-statistic of 4.85, and a P-value of 0.003. This result indicates that improvements in training programs contribute significantly to enhancing educational staff performance. Similarly, Career Development shows a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance, with a path coefficient of 0.438, a T-statistic of 4.32, and a P-value of 0.000, meaning that better career development opportunities lead to higher levels of performance. Reward Systems also have a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance, with a path coefficient of 0.501, a T-statistic of 5.67, and a P-value of 0.000, indicating that effective and fair reward mechanisms improve staff performance.

Furthermore, the results demonstrate that Training has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.589$; $T = 6.74$; $P = 0.000$). Career Development also significantly influences Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.553$; $T = 6.11$; $P = 0.001$), while Reward Systems have the strongest effect on Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.612$; $T = 7.28$; $P = 0.000$). These findings suggest that human resource management practices play an important role in increasing employees' motivation to work.

Finally, Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance, with a path coefficient of 0.667, a T-statistic of 8.02, and a P-value of 0.001. This indicates that higher levels of work motivation significantly enhance educational staff performance. Overall, all hypotheses related to direct effects are supported, confirming that Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems positively influence both Work Motivation and Educational Staff Performance.

Table 4.2. Indirect Effect

Construct	Indirect Effect	P-Value	Direct Effect	Mediation Effect	Type of Mediation
Training → Work Motivation → Educational Staff Performance	0,392	0,001	0,462	4,76	Partial Mediation
Career Development → Work Motivation → Educational Staff Performance	0,369	0,002	0,438	4,41	Partial Mediation
Reward Systems → Work Motivation → Educational Staff Performance	0,408	0,000	0,501	5,12	Partial Mediation

Table 4.2 presents the results of the mediation analysis examining the indirect effects of Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems on Educational Staff Performance through Work Motivation. The findings indicate that Work Motivation plays a significant mediating role in the relationships among the variables.

The indirect effect of Training on Educational Staff Performance through Work Motivation is positive and significant, with a value of 0.392 and a P-value of 0.001. This result demonstrates that Training not only has a direct influence on performance but also improves performance indirectly by increasing employees' work motivation. Similarly, Career Development shows a positive and significant indirect effect of 0.369 with a P-value of 0.002, indicating that career development initiatives enhance staff performance through the strengthening of work motivation. Furthermore, Reward Systems have the strongest indirect effect among the three independent variables, with a coefficient of 0.408 and a P-value of 0.000, suggesting that effective reward mechanisms significantly enhance work motivation, which subsequently improves educational staff performance.

In addition, the mediation effects indicate that Work Motivation functions as a partial mediator in all relationships. This means that Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems influence Educational Staff Performance both directly and indirectly through Work Motivation. Therefore, the results confirm that strengthening human resource management practices can improve performance, particularly when these practices are capable of increasing employees' motivation to work. Overall, the mediation analysis supports all indirect hypotheses and highlights the important role of Work Motivation in explaining the relationship between human resource management variables and Educational Staff Performance.

4.2 Discussion

The findings indicate that Training has a positive and significant relationship with Educational Staff Performance. This suggests that well-structured training programs, improved skill development, and relevant competency enhancement directly contribute to better performance among educational staff in public universities in Southeast Sulawesi. In addition, Training also has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation, indicating that effective training initiatives increase employees' enthusiasm, confidence, and commitment to perform their duties.

Career Development demonstrates a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance, both directly and indirectly through Work Motivation. This finding implies that clear career paths, promotion opportunities, and organizational support for professional growth play an essential role in strengthening staff performance. Furthermore, Career Development significantly influences Work Motivation, showing that employees who perceive opportunities for advancement tend to exhibit higher levels of motivation and engagement in their work.

Reward Systems also have a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance. This indicates that fair compensation, performance-based incentives, and recognition systems are crucial in enhancing employee productivity and job effectiveness. Moreover, Reward Systems significantly affect Work Motivation, meaning that

appropriate and transparent reward mechanisms increase employees' willingness to exert greater effort in achieving organizational goals. The mediation analysis reveals that Work Motivation partially mediates the relationships between Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems on Educational Staff Performance. This means that the influence of these human resource management practices on performance occurs both directly and indirectly through improved motivation. Work Motivation serves as a key psychological mechanism that strengthens the impact of training programs, career development opportunities, and reward systems on overall performance outcomes.

Overall, the results emphasize that strengthening training programs, providing clear career development opportunities, and implementing effective and fair reward systems are essential strategies for enhancing work motivation and ultimately improving the performance of educational staff in public universities in Southeast Sulawesi. These findings highlight the importance of comprehensive human resource management practices in achieving sustainable institutional performance improvement.

V. CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the results and discussion, this study concludes that Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems have positive and significant effects on Educational Staff Performance both directly and indirectly through Work Motivation as a mediating variable in Public Universities in Southeast Sulawesi.

Training has a positive and significant influence on Educational Staff Performance, indicating that systematic skill development, competency enhancement, and structured learning programs directly improve employees' ability to perform their duties effectively. In addition, Training significantly affects Work Motivation, showing that well-designed training programs increase employees' confidence, enthusiasm, and commitment in completing their tasks.

Career Development also demonstrates a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance. This finding indicates that clear career paths, promotion opportunities, and organizational support for professional growth contribute directly to improved performance. Furthermore, Career Development significantly influences Work Motivation, meaning that employees who perceive opportunities for advancement tend to demonstrate higher levels of motivation and engagement. Reward Systems have a positive and significant effect on Educational Staff Performance. This suggests that fair compensation, performance-based incentives, and recognition mechanisms enhance employee productivity and work quality. Reward Systems also significantly affect Work Motivation, indicating that appropriate and transparent reward structures strengthen employees' willingness to achieve organizational goals.

The mediation analysis reveals that Work Motivation partially mediates the relationships between Training, Career Development, and Reward Systems on Educational Staff Performance. This means that these human resource practices influence performance both directly and indirectly through increased motivation. Work Motivation serves as an important psychological mechanism that strengthens the impact of training programs, career development opportunities, and reward systems on overall performance outcomes. Overall, the findings emphasize that improving training programs, strengthening career development systems, and implementing effective reward mechanisms are essential strategies to enhance work motivation and ultimately improve the performance of educational staff in Public Universities in Southeast Sulawesi.

5.2 Suggestions

This study recommends strengthening Training programs by ensuring continuous skill development, competency-based learning, and structured training evaluation to enhance the capabilities of educational staff in public universities in Southeast Sulawesi. Universities should design training programs that are aligned with job requirements and institutional strategic goals so that employees can improve their knowledge, professionalism, and work effectiveness.

Career Development should be reinforced through clear career pathways, transparent promotion systems, mentoring programs, and opportunities for professional advancement. University management is encouraged to establish structured human resource development policies that support long-term career growth. Strong career development systems will increase employees' commitment, job satisfaction, and motivation to perform better. The Reward System also needs to be improved through fair, transparent, and performance-based compensation mechanisms. Institutions should implement incentive systems, recognition programs, and evaluation procedures that are aligned with employee performance outcomes. An effective reward system will enhance employees' sense of fairness and encourage higher productivity.

Since Work Motivation plays a significant mediating role, efforts should focus on strengthening both intrinsic and extrinsic motivational factors among educational staff. University leaders are encouraged to create supportive work environments, provide recognition for achievements, and foster opportunities for personal and professional growth. Enhancing work motivation will help maximize the impact of training, career development, and reward systems on overall performance. Overall, improving the Performance of Educational Staff requires integrated efforts between university leadership, human resource management units, and institutional policymakers. Continuous monitoring and evaluation of training programs, career development policies, reward mechanisms, and motivational strategies are necessary to ensure sustainable improvements in public university performance in Southeast Sulawesi.

Future research is recommended to involve a broader sample across multiple universities or regions to improve generalizability. Researchers may also consider adding variables such as organizational culture, leadership style, job satisfaction, or organizational commitment to further explain factors influencing work motivation and educational staff

performance. Longitudinal or mixed-method approaches are suggested to provide deeper insights into the long-term impact of human resource management practices on institutional performance.

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