



The Influence of Training and Work Compensation on Employee Performance Through Competence as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract

Competition in the engineering services industry demands that companies have competent, productive, and adaptable human resources to technological developments. PT Wijaya Anugrah Persada Raya (WAPR), a company engaged in engineering services and supply, strives to improve employee performance through appropriate training and compensation. However, the effectiveness of these two factors in improving performance still needs to be studied, particularly considering the role of competency as a mediating variable. This study aims to analyze the effect of training and compensation on employee performance through competency as a mediating variable. The approach used was quantitative, using the Partial Least Square–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS–SEM) method. Data were collected through an online questionnaire, with respondents being PT WAPR employees. The results showed that job training significantly impacted employee performance, while compensation had no direct effect. Training and compensation had a positive effect on competency, but competency did not significantly mediate their influence on performance. These findings confirm that performance improvement is not solely determined by training and compensation but is also influenced by other factors such as motivation, work environment, and job satisfaction.

Introduction

The increasingly competitive development of the service and engineering industries demands that companies have competent, productive human resources capable of adapting to technological developments and work demands, including PT. WAPR. Companies are not only required to achieve operational targets but also to ensure that employees perform optimally and sustainably. Various human resource management studies indicate that employee performance is a key factor in a company's success, as it reflects an individual's ability to carry out tasks according to established standards and directly contributes to the achievement of company goals (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022; Wijayanto & Riani, 2021; Sitopu et al., 2021; Uka & Prendi, 2021). Therefore, efforts to improve employee performance are a strategic necessity that cannot be ignored.

One effort that can be made to improve PT. WAPR's employee performance is through appropriate competency development. Human capital theory explains that people are a primary asset that needs to be developed through continuous investment, one of which is in the form of job training (Nwachukwu, 2024; Ma et al., 2024; Sudarwati & Naim, 2022; Islam & Amin, 2022). Systematically designed training can improve employee knowledge, skills, and work attitudes, thus positively impacting performance. In addition to training, compensation is also a crucial factor in motivating employees to perform better. Providing fair and appropriate compensation can increase job satisfaction and motivation, ultimately encouraging employees

to develop their competencies optimally (Akuffo-Aduamah, 2025; Tumi et al., 2022; Adanlawo et al., 2023; Hariyasasti & Purwanto, 2025; Putri, 2024). However, various research findings indicate that training and compensation do not always directly improve performance, necessitating a more practical approach to help employees understand, develop, and apply the competencies required for their work.

Based on this situation, this research activity was conducted as a form of academic contribution to improving the quality of human resources, specifically through training and mentoring activities focused on strengthening the competencies of PT. WAPR employees. This activity was motivated by the ongoing need for PT. WAPR employees to have a more comprehensive understanding of the importance of work competencies, the effectiveness of training, and the role of compensation in driving optimal performance (Awoitau et al., 2024; Mofu et al., 2024; Hidayat et al., 2025). Drawing on human resource management concepts, human capital theory, and previous research findings related to training, compensation, competency, and employee performance, this community service activity aimed to provide participants with practical and applicable understanding (Al-Tit et al., 2022; Kang & Lee, 2021; Chelladurai & Kim, 2022; Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Heslina & Syahrini, 2021).

The primary objective of this research was to improve the understanding and skills of PT. WAPR employees regarding the importance of competency development as a means of improving work performance, while also providing insight into how training and compensation can be optimally utilized to support the achievement of PT. WAPR's corporate goals. Through this activity, it is hoped that employees will be able to apply the knowledge and skills they have acquired in their daily work activities, thereby creating sustainable performance improvements and a more productive working relationship between employees and the company.

Methods

This study adopted a quantitative research design with supportive qualitative elements to examine the causal relationships between job training, compensation, and employee performance, with competency functioning as a mediating variable. The primary approach was quantitative, enabling objective measurement of relationships among variables through statistical analysis, while limited qualitative data were incorporated to enrich interpretation and contextual understanding of the findings.

The research was conducted at PT Wijaya Anugrah Persada Raya (WAPR), located in Cirebon Regency, West Java, Indonesia. The company was selected due to its relevance to the research focus, particularly its structured implementation of employee training programs and compensation systems. The study was carried out from July to November 2025, covering stages of instrument development, data collection, analysis, and reporting. Ethical considerations were strictly observed, including respondent anonymity, voluntary participation, and formal organizational consent prior to data collection.

The population consisted of all 150 employees of PT WAPR. Simple random sampling was applied to ensure equal participation opportunity for each employee. Using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, 109 respondents were selected. This sampling approach enhanced representativeness while minimizing selection bias, although the findings remain specific to the organizational context of PT WAPR.

Primary quantitative data were collected using a structured questionnaire measured on a five-point Likert scale ranging from strongly disagree to strongly agree. The questionnaire was developed based on validated indicators from prior empirical studies to ensure construct validity and reliability. The research variables comprised job training, compensation, employee

performance, and competency. Job training was measured through indicators related to training opportunities, learning environment, supervisory support, and skill development. Compensation included financial and non-financial components, while employee performance was measured through work results, efficiency, discipline, and responsibility. Competency was operationalized through dimensions of knowledge, skills, and attitudes.

To complement the quantitative data, qualitative data were obtained through non-participant observations and informal managerial discussions during the data collection period. These qualitative inputs were used to capture contextual information related to training implementation, employee work behavior, and organizational practices, and to support the interpretation of statistical findings. This approach allowed limited methodological triangulation, thereby strengthening the robustness and credibility of the research results.

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) with SmartPLS software. This method was selected due to its suitability for mediation analysis, moderate sample size, and non-parametric data characteristics. The analysis encompassed evaluation of both measurement and structural models to test direct and indirect relationships among variables.

Data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM–PLS) with SmartPLS software. SEM–PLS was selected due to its suitability for analyzing complex models with mediation effects, moderate sample sizes, and minimal distributional assumptions. The analysis involved evaluation of both the measurement model and the structural model.

The measurement model was assessed to ensure validity and reliability through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Convergent validity was evaluated using factor loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE), while discriminant validity was assessed using cross-loadings and the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Construct reliability was confirmed through Composite Reliability and Cronbach’s Alpha.

The structural model evaluation included analysis of path coefficients, coefficients of determination (R^2), and bootstrapping procedures to test the significance of direct and indirect effects. The mediating role of competency was examined through indirect effect analysis to determine its function in linking training and compensation with employee performance. Model fit was assessed using the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), with acceptable values indicating adequate model fit.

Result and Discussion

Inner model testing is conducted to determine how strongly the exogenous constructs (independent variables) influence the endogenous constructs (dependent variables) and how well the overall structural model can explain the phenomena under study. Three types of tests are used: R-square, F-square, and Direct Hypothesis Testing.

Table 1. Results of the Coefficient of Determination (R-square) Test

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Performance	0,111	0,086
Competence	0,886	0,884

The coefficient of determination (R^2) test is used to determine the extent to which the independent variables are able to explain the variation in the dependent variable. Based on the results of the R-square analysis, it can be concluded that the R-square value for the Employee

Performance variable is 0.111, indicating that only 11.1% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the independent variables in the model.

Table 2. F-square Test Results

	Employee performance	Compensation	Competence	Training
Employee Performance				
Compensation	0,027		7,772	
Competence	0,036			
Training	0,068		0,032	

The F square (F2) test is used to see how much influence there is between variables, including how much the mediating variable has an influence in this model. Based on the table above, it is known that: (1) Compensation → Performance has an f^2 value of 0.027, which is close to the lower limit of a small effect. This indicates that Compensation has a small to moderate influence on Performance. (2) Compensation → Competence has an f^2 value of 7.772, which is very high, even far above the 0.35 threshold for a large effect. This indicates that Compensation has a very strong and significant influence on Competence, being one of the main contributors in the model. (3) Training → Performance has an f^2 value of 0.068, which is close to the lower limit of a small effect. This indicates that Training has a small to moderate influence on Performance. (4) Training → Competence has an f^2 value of 0.032, which is small. This indicates that Training has a weak but significant influence on Competence. (5) Competence → Performance has an f^2 value of 0.036, which is included in the low effect category. This means that Competence makes a significant contribution in influencing Performance.

Table 3. Results of Direct Hypothesis Testing

	T Statistics	P Values
Compensation → Employee Performance	1,004	0,315
Compensation → Competence	47,005	0,000
Competence → Employee Performance	0,471	0,216
Training → Employee Performance	1,966	0,049
Training → Competence	0,826	0,409

Direct hypothesis testing was used to determine the direction of the relationship and the extent of influence between variables in this model. The relationship between compensation and employee performance was not significant, as the p-value was greater than 0.05. This means that increasing compensation does not directly improve employee performance in this model. Similarly, the relationship between competency and employee performance was also significant. Meanwhile, the relationship between training and employee performance and compensation and employee competency were significant, as their p-values were <0.05. However, the relationship between compensation and employee competency was significant and positive, as the p-values were <0.05 and the T-statistics were well above 1.96.

Table 4. Model Fit Test Results

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.080	0.080

Model fit testing was used to assess the overall suitability of the research model (both the outer and inner models) to the data used. The resulting SRMR value was 0.080, which is less than 0.10, thus concluding that the data used were fit to be used as a research model.

To provide a deeper interpretation of the quantitative findings, this study incorporates limited qualitative insights derived from non participant observation and informal discussions with managerial staff during the data collection process. These qualitative inputs are not positioned as independent empirical evidence but are used to enrich the understanding of the statistical relationships identified through the SEM PLS analysis. By grounding numerical patterns in everyday organizational practices at PT Wijaya Anugrah Persada Raya, the discussion becomes more contextually meaningful and analytically grounded.

Training as a Practical Reinforcement of Daily Work Practices

Observational findings indicate that job training at PT Wijaya Anugrah Persada Raya is primarily perceived and implemented as a practical reinforcement of daily operational procedures rather than as a comprehensive competency development mechanism. Training activities largely emphasize technical instructions, safety procedures, and task standardization that can be immediately applied in routine work processes. One managerial staff member noted that

“Most of the training provided focuses on helping employees perform their current tasks more efficiently, especially in avoiding operational errors and following standard procedures”

Employees who participated in training were observed to demonstrate higher confidence in executing assigned tasks, greater compliance with work standards, and improved efficiency in task completion. This practical orientation helps explain why job training shows a significant direct effect on employee performance in the quantitative results. Performance improvements are visible in short term indicators such as discipline, work accuracy, and task completion speed. However, because training is oriented toward immediate operational execution rather than long term skill integration or behavioral transformation, its contribution to deeper competency development remains limited. As one supervisor explained,

“Training helps employees do their jobs better right away, but it does not necessarily change how they grow professionally over time”.

This qualitative insight supports the statistical finding that training significantly affects performance but does not have a significant impact on competency.

Compensation as a Driver of Competency Orientation Rather Than Performance Output

Insights from informal managerial discussions reveal that compensation at PT Wijaya Anugrah Persada Raya is primarily structured around employment grade, tenure, and role responsibilities, rather than being directly linked to individual performance outcomes. Compensation is generally perceived by employees as an indicator of organizational recognition and employment stability. According to one manager,

“As long as employees meet the required standards and responsibilities of their position, compensation remains relatively stable”

This compensation structure appears to motivate employees to maintain competencies that are formally recognized by the organization, such as technical qualifications, work readiness, and adherence to role expectations. Employees are encouraged to ensure that their skills and knowledge align with organizational standards in order to sustain their position and

compensation level. This organizational logic helps explain the very strong effect of compensation on competency observed in the quantitative analysis. At the same time, because compensation is not explicitly tied to measurable performance outputs, it does not function as a strong incentive for improving day to day performance. As another managerial informant stated,

“Salary is not adjusted based on daily performance, so employees do not always associate better performance with higher compensation”.

This context clarifies why compensation does not show a significant direct effect on employee performance in the structural model.

The Competency Performance Implementation Gap

One of the most critical qualitative insights relates to the limited translation of individual competency into measurable performance outcomes. Observations indicate that employee performance at PT Wijaya Anugrah Persada Raya is heavily influenced by systemic and structural factors, including workflow coordination, availability of materials, inter unit dependencies, and managerial approval processes. Even employees who demonstrate adequate or high levels of technical competency often face organizational constraints that limit their ability to independently apply their skills. A supervisor explained that

“Performance outcomes depend not only on individual ability but also on how work processes and approvals are coordinated across units”

Performance is frequently evaluated as a collective outcome rather than an individual achievement, shaped by team dynamics and operational interdependence. As a result, individual competency does not consistently translate into higher performance evaluations. This organizational condition creates an implementation gap between competency as an individual attribute and performance as a system driven outcome. This insight directly supports the quantitative finding that competency does not significantly influence employee performance and does not mediate the relationship between training, compensation, and performance (Purwanto & Perkasa, 2021; Astarina et al., 2022; Salsabila & Lo, 2023; Ingsih et al., 2021). It also helps explain the low coefficient of determination for employee performance, indicating that substantial performance variance is driven by factors beyond the variables included in the current model.

The findings of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how training, compensation, and competency interact to influence employee performance at PT Wijaya Anugrah Persada Raya (WAPR). Overall, the results indicate that training and compensation affect performance through different mechanisms, and that competency does not function as a significant mediating variable in this relationship.

The empirical results show that job training has a significant positive effect on employee performance. This finding suggests that the training programs implemented by PT WAPR are sufficiently aligned with operational job requirements and are capable of improving employees' ability to carry out their tasks effectively. From a human resource management (HRM) perspective, training is a strategic development function designed to enhance employee productivity and work effectiveness (Natsir et al., 2024; Sinambela et al., 2022; Mohammed et al., 2022; Anwar & Abdullah, 2021). Training equips employees with job-related knowledge and skills that can be directly applied to daily work activities, leading to observable improvements in performance indicators such as work quality, discipline, and teamwork (Endreas, 2024; Emon & Chowdhury, 2023; Chhantyal, 2025). In line with human capital

theory, training represents an investment in human resources that can generate immediate returns when the acquired skills are directly transferable to job tasks.

In contrast, the results indicate that compensation does not have a significant direct effect on employee performance. This finding implies that financial rewards alone are not sufficient to motivate employees to improve their performance in the context of PT WAPR. One possible explanation is that compensation may be perceived as relatively fixed or not strongly linked to performance outcomes, thereby limiting its motivational impact. Another explanation is that employee performance may be influenced more strongly by non-financial factors, such as leadership quality, work motivation, job satisfaction, organizational culture, or work systems. This interpretation is supported by the low coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.111$) for employee performance, which suggests that a large proportion of performance variation is explained by variables outside the current model.

Interestingly, the study reveals that compensation has a very strong and significant influence on employee competency. This result indicates that compensation plays an important role in encouraging employees to develop their skills, knowledge, and work-related abilities. From an HRM perspective, fair and adequate compensation functions not only as a financial reward but also as a form of organizational recognition that reinforces employees' sense of value and motivation for self-development. In terms of human capital theory, compensation can be viewed as an investment mechanism that stimulates employees to maintain and enhance their productive capabilities in order to sustain or improve their economic rewards (Igbaji et al., 2024; Hernita et al., 2021; Bindeeba et al., 2025).

However, job training does not significantly affect employee competency in this study. This finding suggests that although training contributes directly to performance improvement, it may not be sufficiently designed to foster broader and deeper competency development. Training programs may be more focused on short-term task execution rather than on developing comprehensive competencies that encompass knowledge, attitudes, values, and long-term behavioral change. Additionally, competency development often requires continuous reinforcement through mentoring, supervision, feedback, and repeated practice in the workplace (Zamiri & Esmaeili, 2024; Oikarainen et al., 2022; Aleo et al., 2024). Without these supporting mechanisms, the impact of training on competency may remain limited and not statistically significant.

The results further indicate that employee competency does not significantly influence employee performance, and consequently does not mediate the relationship between training, compensation, and performance. This finding points to a potential "implementation gap," where employees may possess or perceive improved competencies but are unable to fully translate them into higher performance. Such a gap may arise due to the absence of competency-based performance appraisal systems, limited managerial support, or organizational structures that do not sufficiently encourage the application of employee capabilities. This result reinforces the idea that competency alone is not enough to improve performance unless it is supported by appropriate organizational systems and work environments.

Taken together, these findings suggest that at PT WAPR, training functions as a direct driver of employee performance, while compensation primarily serves as a driver of competency development. However, the absence of a significant link between competency and performance indicates that these two HR functions are not yet fully integrated. To enhance employee performance more effectively, PT WAPR should strengthen the alignment between training, competency development, and performance management. This may include designing training

programs that emphasize competency application, implementing competency-based performance evaluations, and linking compensation more explicitly to both performance outcomes and demonstrated competencies. Such an integrated HR strategy would help ensure that investments in human capital translate into sustainable improvements in employee performance and organizational effectiveness.

Conclusion

Compensation as an independent variable has a positive, strong, and significant influence on competency as a dependent variable compared to other independent variables in this study. This can be seen from the effect size (F square) value = $7.772 >$ upper threshold = 0.35; p-value = $0.000 < 0.05$ and t-statistics = $47.007 > 1.96$. Job training as an independent variable also has a positive and significant influence, but its strength is weak on employee performance as a dependent variable compared to other independent variables in this study. This can be seen from the effect size (F square) value = $0.068 < 0.15$; p-value = $0.049 < 0.05$; and t-statistics = $1.966 > 1.96$. Then, between employee performance and competency, the independent variables in this study are more able to explain variations in competency than employee performance. This can be seen from the coefficient of determination (R²) for competency of 0.886 or 88.6%. Meanwhile, the coefficient of determination for employee performance is 0.111 or 11.1%.

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