The Influence of Education, Training and Work Experience on Employee Competence at Mall X in Bandung City

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Article Info	Abstract
	This study aims to analyze the influence of education, training, and work experience on employee competence at Mall X in Bandung City. The research employs a quantitative method with a descriptive and verificative approach. The population consists of 110 active employees at Mall X, utilizing a saturated sampling technique. Data were collected through questionnaires using a Likert scale and analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS version 19. The results indicate that: (1) education has a negative and significant effect on employee competence (t-value = 9.517, p < 0.05); (2) training has a positive and significant effect on employee competence (t-value = 23.218, p < 0.05); (3) work experience has a positive and significant effect on employee competence (t-value = 7.153, p < 0.05); and (4) simultaneously, education, training, and work experience significantly influence employee competence (F-value = 384.034, p < 0.05) with a coefficient of determination (R^2) of 91.6%. These findings suggest that while formal education may not directly enhance competence in hard service operations, structured training programs and accumulated work experience significantly contribute to employee competence development in the retail industry.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource development is a crucial process in preparing individuals to undertake higher responsibilities within organizations. Quality human resources constitute a vital element for modern organizational success (Purwadhi, 2021). Without the presence of qualified human resources, organizational performance can be hindered, and desired objectives become difficult to achieve. In the context of the retail industry, particularly modern shopping centers, employee competence becomes a determining factor in delivering quality service to customers.

The Indonesian government has demonstrated serious commitment to workforce competence enhancement. Data from the Ministry of Manpower indicates the existence of thousands of institutions supporting worker competence improvement, including 21 BPVP technical implementation units, 284 government-owned BLK regional technical implementation units, and 3,757 community-owned BLKs (Hakim, 2023). In 2022, there was an addition of 845 Community BLKs with competency-based training participants reaching 146,797 people, increasing from 122,119 people in 2021. Concurrent with the

increase in training programs, the open unemployment rate (TPT) decreased from 7.07% in August 2020 to 5.86% in August 2022.

Competence is a highly influential factor for companies in maintaining effective human resources (Purnomo et al., 2022). Research by Ofori et al. (2020) demonstrates that training and competence simultaneously affect employee performance. Lestari and Arnu (2021) explain that competence is an important factor significantly influencing work achievement, as competence encompasses skills, knowledge, and abilities related to good performance in a position.

Education plays a fundamental role in shaping employee competence. According to Mangkunegara (2013), education is a long-term process using systematic and organized procedures to study conceptual and theoretical knowledge. Rasdiana (2020) emphasizes that education is a conscious and planned effort to create a learning atmosphere so that learners actively develop their potential to possess spiritual religious strength, self-control, personality, intelligence, noble character, and necessary skills.

Training also plays a vital role in competence enhancement. Hamalik (2006) states that training provides enormous benefits because it not only provides new experiences and consolidates learning outcomes and participant skills but also functions to develop thinking abilities to solve encountered problems. Mangkunegara (2013) defines job training as a process of teaching specific knowledge and expertise as well as attitudes so that employees become increasingly skilled and capable of carrying out their responsibilities better according to standards.

Work experience constitutes another important aspect in forming competence. Handoko (2013) explains that work experience is the mastery of employee knowledge and skills measured by length of service, level of knowledge, and skills possessed by employees. Wariati and Sugiati (2015) define work experience as the uniqueness, skills, and abilities of an individual to complete work influenced by knowledge and information obtained in past work or other education.

Mall X in Bandung City, as one of the modern shopping centers managed by PT XYZ, faces challenges in optimizing employee competence. Data shows that of 110 employees, there is a gap between education level and employment status. There are 85 permanent employees, 21 contract employees, 3 two-year contract employees, and 1 probationary employee. From the education perspective, there are 51 employees with bachelor's degrees, 37 employees with high school education, 14 employees with diploma education, 5 employees with junior high school education, and 3 employees with no education data.

Although education, training, and work experience each have their own impacts, the complex interaction among the three may be the main determining factor in forming employee competence. This study aims to: (1) analyze the influence of education on employee competence at Mall X; (2) analyze the influence of training on employee competence at Mall X; (3) analyze the influence of work experience on employee competence at Mall X; and (4) analyze the simultaneous influence of education, training, and work experience on employee competence at Mall X in Bandung City.

2. METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research design with descriptive and verificative approaches. The quantitative method was selected because the research data consists of numerical values that prove confirmations meeting concrete, measurable, and systematic scientific criteria (Sugiyono, 2022). The descriptive approach describes the characteristics of research variables, while the verificative approach tests relationships among variables

through hypothesis testing. This combined methodology enables both characterization of current conditions and examination of causal relationships.

The research population comprises all 110 active employees at Mall X in Bandung City. Given the relatively small and accessible population size, this study utilizes saturated sampling (census), meaning all population members serve as research samples. This approach eliminates sampling error and provides comprehensive data from the entire workforce, enhancing the reliability of findings for this specific organizational context.

Data collection was conducted through structured questionnaires employing a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). The questionnaire measures four main variables: Education (X_1) assessed through 5 indicators covering education level and scientific fields, including formal education, non-formal education, employee selection, HR analysis, and appropriate placement. Training (X_2) evaluated through 10 indicators encompassing instructor expertise, good interaction, material appropriateness to training objectives, material suitability to participant components, training method alignment with training types, method congruence with material, clear targets, objective alignment with training implementation, training atmosphere, and facility completeness. Work Experience (X_3) measured through 2 indicators addressing work period importance and mastery of work equipment. Competence (Y) assessed through 4 indicators including understanding of work implementation methods, understanding of work responsibilities, ability to complete work, and ability to solve problems.

Before main data collection, instrument validity and reliability testing were conducted. Validity testing employed Pearson Product Moment correlation with valid criteria established at r-count > 0.3. Reliability testing utilized Cronbach's Alpha with reliable criteria set at α > 0.6. All items demonstrated satisfactory validity and reliability, confirming the instrument's appropriateness for measuring the intended constructs. Classical assumption tests were subsequently conducted, including normality tests, multicollinearity tests, heteroscedasticity tests, and autocorrelation tests, to ensure the regression model meets required assumptions.

Data analysis employed multiple linear regression analysis with the equation: $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$, where Y represents employee competence, X_1 denotes education, X_2 indicates training, X_3 signifies work experience, a represents the constant, b_1, b_2, b_3 are regression coefficients, and e indicates standard error. Hypothesis testing was conducted through t-tests (partial) with significance level α = 0.05 to examine individual variable effects, and F-tests (simultaneous) to determine the collective influence of independent variables on the dependent variable. The coefficient of determination (R^2) measures the proportion of variance in the dependent variable explained by the independent variables. All data processing utilized SPSS software version 19 to ensure analytical accuracy and reliability.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The demographic profile of research respondents reveals important workforce characteristics at Mall X. Among 110 employees, 74 (67%) are male and 36 (33%) are female, indicating male predominance in the workforce. Age distribution shows concentration in the 30-50 years range with 75 employees (68%), followed by the under 30 years group with 22 employees (20%), and over 50 years group with 13 employees (12%). This age distribution suggests a mature workforce with substantial career development potential. Educational attainment varies considerably, with 40 employees (36%) holding bachelor's degrees, 37 employees (34%) completing high school/vocational education, 14 employees (13%) possessing diploma qualifications, 18 employees (16%) with below high school education, and 1 employee (1%) with other educational credentials. Work experience

distribution demonstrates workforce stability, with 41 employees (37%) having more than 10 years of service, 31 employees (28%) with 6-10 years, 23 employees (21%) with 3-5 years, and 15 employees (14%) with less than 2 years of service.

Validity and reliability test results confirm the appropriateness of the research instrument. All statement items across variables demonstrate Pearson correlation values (r-count) exceeding 0.3, establishing construct validity. The education variable shows correlation values ranging from 0.623 to 0.778, the training variable displays correlation values between 0.381 to 0.761, the work experience variable exhibits correlation values of 0.616 for both items, and the competence variable presents correlation values between 0.340 to 0.851. Reliability analysis reveals Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.6 for all variables: education (0.866), training (0.874), work experience (0.757), and competence (0.813). These values indicate good internal consistency and reliable measurement instruments.

Classical assumption tests verify that the regression model meets required statistical assumptions. The normality test using P-P Plot graphs demonstrates that data points spread around and follow the diagonal line, indicating normal data distribution. The heteroscedasticity test through scatterplot graphs shows no clear pattern with points dispersed above and below zero on the Y-axis, confirming homoscedasticity. The multicollinearity test reveals VIF values below 10 and tolerance values above 0.1 for all independent variables, indicating absence of multicollinearity problems. The Durbin-Watson value of 2.100 falls within the acceptable range ($1 < DW < 3$), confirming no autocorrelation issues.

Descriptive analysis provides insights into variable conditions at Mall X. The education variable achieves a total score of 2,229 from an ideal score of 2,750, representing 81% achievement categorized as "Good," indicating that employee education levels generally align with company requirements. The training variable obtains a total score of 4,464 from an ideal score of 5,500, also achieving 81% and categorized as "Good," demonstrating effective training program implementation regarding instructors, materials, methods, objectives, and supportive environments. The work experience variable records a total score of 874 from an ideal score of 1,100, achieving 79% and categorized as "Good," reflecting adequate work periods and job mastery among employees. The competence variable achieves a total score of 1,697 from an ideal score of 2,200, representing 77% and categorized as "Good," indicating generally satisfactory employee competence in knowledge and skills.

Multiple linear regression analysis generates the equation: $Y = -2.489 - 0.473X_1 + 0.575X_2 + 0.600X_3$. This equation reveals several important relationships. The constant value of -2.489 indicates the baseline competence level when all independent variables equal zero. The education regression coefficient of -0.473 ($t = -9.517$, $p = 0.000$) demonstrates a negative and significant relationship, indicating that each one-unit increase in education decreases competence by 0.473 units when other variables remain constant. The training regression coefficient of 0.575 ($t = 23.218$, $p = 0.000$) shows a positive and significant relationship, meaning each one-unit increase in training enhances competence by 0.575 units. The work experience regression coefficient of 0.600 ($t = 7.153$, $p = 0.000$) indicates a positive and significant relationship, signifying that each one-unit increase in work experience improves competence by 0.600 units.

Hypothesis testing through t-tests examines individual variable effects. The education variable demonstrates a t-value of 9.517 exceeding the t-table value of 1.659 with significance of 0.000 below 0.05, leading to H_0 rejection and H_a acceptance, confirming that education significantly influences employee competence, albeit negatively. This counterintuitive finding merits careful interpretation. In the context of hard service operations in retail environments, high formal education does not necessarily translate to

enhanced job-specific competence. This phenomenon aligns with person-job fit theory, which suggests that overqualification can lead to decreased motivation and job satisfaction (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005). Employees with higher education levels may possess expectations for more complex responsibilities than those inherent in routine operational positions, potentially creating a competence-expectation mismatch. The retail industry emphasizes practical interpersonal skills, service speed, and procedural adherence rather than theoretical knowledge typically acquired through formal education. This finding corroborates Safitri's (2018) research indicating that in certain job contexts, formal education improvements do not guarantee performance enhancements without corresponding practical skill development.

The training variable exhibits a t-value of 23.218 exceeding the t-table value of 1.659 with significance of 0.000 below 0.05, confirming H_0 rejection and H_a acceptance, establishing that training significantly and positively influences employee competence. This represents the strongest effect among all variables examined. The finding validates human capital theory's proposition that training investments yield productivity and competence improvements (Becker, 1993). Effective training programs at Mall X successfully provide necessary knowledge, skills, and attitudes for superior job performance. Mangkunegara (2013) identifies multiple training benefits including enhanced decision-making effectiveness, increased job satisfaction, improved self-development and confidence, and better stress management capabilities. The dominance of training's influence, particularly regarding methodology (achieving 82% in descriptive analysis), indicates that Mall X has implemented training approaches well-suited to employee needs. Hands-on and practical training methodologies prove particularly effective for hard service competence development. This aligns with findings by Mokhtar and Susilo (2017) demonstrating training methods' dominant influence on workforce competence. The critical role of expert instructors possessing strong interaction capabilities further enhances training effectiveness, facilitating knowledge and skill transfer while motivating participants to apply learning outcomes in daily work contexts (Rivai, 2013).

The work experience variable shows a t-value of 7.153 exceeding the t-table value of 1.659 with significance of 0.000 below 0.05, resulting in H_0 rejection and H_a acceptance, establishing that work experience significantly and positively influences employee competence. This finding supports experiential learning theory, which posits that learning occurs through direct experience and reflection on that experience (Kolb, 1984). Extended work tenure enables employees to encounter diverse situations, develop problem-solving capabilities, and accumulate tacit knowledge difficult to acquire through formal instruction. At Mall X, employees with longer service demonstrate superior work mastery and task completion efficiency. The data revealing that 65% of employees possess more than 6 years of experience indicates considerable workforce stability, providing organizational advantages through deep procedural understanding, cultural familiarity, and customer expectation awareness. Experienced employees also serve mentoring functions, facilitating knowledge transfer to newer workforce members. Rahmadhani's (2014) research supports these findings, identifying work experience as the most dominant competence predictor. Work experience cultivates not only technical proficiencies but also essential soft skills including communication, teamwork, and problem-solving capabilities crucial for retail industry success.

The F-test examines the simultaneous influence of all independent variables. Results show an F-value of 384.034 exceeding the F-table value of 3.08 with significance of 0.000 below 0.05, leading to H_0 rejection and H_a acceptance, confirming that education, training, and work experience collectively exert significant influence on employee competence. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.916 indicates that these three

variables explain 91.6% of variance in employee competence, with the remaining 8.4% attributable to other factors not examined in this study. The R value of 0.957 signifies a very strong relationship between independent and dependent variables, demonstrating the model's robust predictive capability.

These findings align with Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, which posits that human resources embodying optimal combinations of education, training, and work experience constitute sustainable competitive advantage sources (Barney, 1991). In Mall X's context, the synergistic integration of these three variables creates a competent workforce capable of delivering high-quality customer service. The analysis reveals that training contributes most substantially to competence (coefficient 0.575), followed by work experience (coefficient 0.600), with education showing negative contribution (coefficient -0.473). This pattern underscores that in retail industry contexts, practical skills acquired through training and experiential learning play more pivotal roles in competence formation than formal educational attainment.

The negative education effect warrants deeper examination. While seemingly paradoxical, this finding reflects the specific nature of retail hard service operations. Employees with higher educational qualifications may experience role ambiguity or perceived underutilization of their capabilities in operational positions, potentially affecting motivation and subsequently observed competence in routine tasks. This does not diminish education's inherent value but rather highlights the importance of person-job alignment. Organizational strategies should consider educational backgrounds when assigning roles, placing highly educated employees in strategic or managerial positions requiring analytical and conceptual capabilities, while operational positions may be better suited for employees whose educational preparation aligns more directly with practical service delivery requirements.

The training variable's dominance suggests that organizations in retail sectors should prioritize continuous, high-quality training program development. Investment in structured training initiatives focusing on instructor competence, material relevance, methodological appropriateness, clear objectives, and conducive learning environments yields substantial returns through enhanced employee competence. These findings validate the practical wisdom that skill development through deliberate practice and guided instruction effectively builds workplace capabilities.

The significant positive influence of work experience emphasizes the value of workforce stability and retention strategies. Organizations benefit from implementing comprehensive retention programs including competitive compensation, clear career progression pathways, and positive work environments that encourage long-term employment. Additionally, establishing formal mentoring systems and knowledge management practices enables experienced employees to transfer their accumulated expertise to newer workforce members, multiplying the value of experiential learning across the organization.

The simultaneous effects model's high explanatory power (R^2 = 91.6%) demonstrates that these three variables collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding and predicting employee competence in retail contexts. However, the remaining 8.4% of unexplained variance suggests opportunities for future research examining additional factors such as work motivation, organizational culture, leadership quality, and individual personality characteristics that may further influence competence development.

From a practical perspective, these findings carry several important implications for human resource management in retail organizations. First, recruitment and selection processes should carefully consider the alignment between candidates' educational

qualifications and position requirements, avoiding overqualification scenarios that may lead to suboptimal competence utilization. Second, organizations should view training not as a cost but as a strategic investment in human capital development, dedicating adequate resources to program quality enhancement. Third, retention initiatives preserving institutional knowledge embedded in experienced employees merit priority attention. Fourth, human resource development strategies should adopt holistic approaches integrating education-based foundational knowledge, training-delivered practical skills, and experience-generated tacit expertise in synergistic combinations tailored to organizational contexts and workforce characteristics.

4. CONCLUSION

This research provides empirical evidence regarding the differential effects of education, training, and work experience on employee competence in retail industry contexts. The finding that education negatively influences competence challenges conventional assumptions about formal education's universal benefits, highlighting the critical importance of person-job fit in competence manifestation. In operational retail positions emphasizing hard service delivery, formal educational attainment does not necessarily translate to enhanced job-specific competence, and may paradoxically associate with reduced competence when educational qualifications substantially exceed position requirements. This underscores the necessity for careful alignment between employee qualifications and role demands in human resource management practices.

Training emerges as the most potent predictor of employee competence, demonstrating that structured skill development programs effectively enhance workplace capabilities. The substantial positive effect of training validates human capital theory's propositions and emphasizes the strategic value of organizational investment in employee development initiatives. Well-designed training programs incorporating expert instruction, relevant content, appropriate methodologies, clear objectives, and supportive learning environments significantly contribute to competence enhancement. Organizations should prioritize continuous improvement of training program quality as a central human resource development strategy.

Work experience significantly and positively influences employee competence, confirming experiential learning theory's relevance in workplace contexts. Accumulated work tenure enables employees to develop both explicit technical skills and tacit procedural knowledge, enhancing overall competence. The value of experienced employees extends beyond their individual contributions to include mentoring functions facilitating organizational knowledge transfer. Workforce stability thus represents a strategic asset meriting deliberate retention efforts.

The simultaneous model's high explanatory power (R^2 = 91.6%) demonstrates that education, training, and work experience collectively provide a comprehensive framework for understanding employee competence development. However, their differential effects emphasize the need for nuanced human resource strategies recognizing context-specific relationships between human capital factors and workplace performance. Retail organizations should adopt holistic approaches integrating these elements synergistically while attending to person-job alignment principles.

These findings contribute to human resource management literature by documenting context-dependent education effects, validating training's central role in competence development, and confirming experiential learning's significance in workplace settings. The research extends theoretical understanding of how human capital components interact to influence organizational capabilities, particularly in service sector contexts. Future research should examine additional variables potentially moderating or mediating these relationships,

investigate industry-specific variations, and explore longitudinal competence development patterns. Methodological extensions incorporating qualitative approaches could provide richer insights into mechanisms underlying observed relationships. Cross-cultural and comparative studies would enhance generalizability and identify universal versus context-specific patterns in competence determinants. Such research would further advance both theoretical understanding and practical guidance for human resource management in diverse organizational contexts.

5. ACKNOWLEDGMENTS

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