

Employee Competency Enhancement Model through Emotional Intelligence

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the effect of Performance-Based Training (PBT) and Work Environment on Employee Competence through Emotional Intelligence among distribution employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra. A quantitative approach was employed, collecting data through questionnaires from 40 respondents. Data analysis was conducted using Partial Least Square (PLS-SEM) to test both direct and indirect relationships between variables. The results indicate that PBT and Work Environment have a positive and significant effect on both Emotional Intelligence and Employee Competence. Furthermore, Emotional Intelligence mediates the influence of PBT and Work Environment on Employee Competence. These findings highlight the importance of implementing performance-based training and creating a conducive work environment to enhance employee competence through the development of emotional intelligence.

Keywords: Performance-Based Training, Work Environment, Emotional Intelligence, Employee Competence

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2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)

Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICIE/index>

Introduction

Employee competence is not only related to technical abilities but also to behavioral, social, and emotional abilities that support work success. One important effort in improving employee competence is through Performance-Based Training (PBT). Performance-based training emphasizes achieving tangible, measurable results in the form of improved work capabilities aligned with organizational needs. According to Noe (2019), performance-based training is a systematic approach focused on enhancing work skills and behaviors that directly contribute to organizational performance. By implementing PBT, employees not only acquire new knowledge but are also able to apply it optimally in operational tasks. In addition to training, the work environment also has a significant influence on the formation of employee competence. A conducive work environment creates comfort, increases work spirit, and encourages employees to achieve. According to Robbins and Judge (2020), a good work environment includes physical conditions, social relationships among employees, and organizational support for employee well-being. Therefore, a safe, supportive, and communicative work environment is essential so that employees can work with focus and improve their competence continuously. Improving competence does not only depend on external factors such as training and the work environment but is also influenced by employees' internal factors, namely emotional intelligence. According to Goleman (2017), emotional intelligence is the ability of individuals to recognize, understand, and manage their own emotions and those of others in work situations. Employees with high emotional intelligence are able to control stress, maintain motivation, build team cooperation, and adapt to changes in the work environment. Emotional intelligence becomes an important bridge between organizational development factors and individual competency outcomes. Some employees still face difficulties in applying training results to daily work, as well as dealing with emotional pressure due to high workload and field work environment dynamics. Considering the role of emotional intelligence as a determining factor for the success of training implementation and adaptation to the work environment.

Problem Formulation

1. Does Performance-Based Training (PBT) have a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra?
2. Does the Work Environment have a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra?
3. Does Performance-Based Training (PBT) have a positive and significant effect on the Emotional Intelligence of employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra?
4. Does the Work Environment have a positive and significant effect on the Emotional Intelligence of employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra?
5. Does Emotional Intelligence have a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra?
6. Does Performance-Based Training (PBT) have a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence through Emotional Intelligence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra?
7. Does the Work Environment have a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence through Emotional Intelligence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra?

Research Objectives

1. To test and analyze the effect of performance-based training (PBT) on the emotional intelligence of Distribution Division employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
2. To test and analyze the effect of the work environment on the emotional intelligence of Distribution Division employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
3. To test and analyze the effect of performance-based training (PBT) on the competence of Distribution Division employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
4. To test and analyze the effect of the work environment on the competence of Distribution Division employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
5. To test and analyze the effect of emotional intelligence on the competence of Distribution Division employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
6. To test and analyze the effect of performance-based training (PBT) on competence through emotional intelligence among Distribution Division employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
7. To test and analyze the effect of the work environment on competence through emotional intelligence among Distribution Division employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.

Employee Competence

According to Wibowo (2016), competence is an individual's ability to perform a job or task well based on knowledge, skills, and work attitudes according to standards set by the organization. According to Spencer and Spencer (2017), competence is a fundamental characteristic of a person that is directly related to performance effectiveness in a job. Competence includes motive, trait, self-concept, knowledge, and skills.

Indicators of Employee Competence

According to Spencer and Spencer (2017), indicators of employee competence include:

1. Knowledge.
2. Skills.
3. Attitude or Behavior.
4. Work Motives
5. Values and Self-concept

Factors Affecting Employee Competence

In this study, the factors affecting employee competence are as follows (Spencer & Spencer, 2017)

1. Performance-Based Training
 - a. Forms technical abilities and work behaviors through measurable learning processes.
 - b. Increases knowledge, skills, and attitudes according to job demands.
 - c. Fosters professional abilities that can be applied directly in tasks.
2. Work Environment
 - a. Encompasses physical, social, and psychological conditions that affect work effectiveness.
 - b. A safe, comfortable, and supportive work environment encourages competency development.
 - c. Harmonious work relationships increase employee motivation and learning spirit.

3. Emotional Intelligence
 - a. The ability to recognize and manage one's own emotions and understand the emotions of others.
 - b. Helps employees control stress, adapt, and maintain positive work relationships.
 - c. Strengthens the application of competence through emotional stability and interpersonal skills.

Performance-Based Training (PBT)

According to Dessler (2020), performance-based training is a systematic approach to developing employee capabilities through structured learning measured based on tangible results in the workplace. Its goal is to ensure that every training provided has a direct impact on improving individual and organizational performance.

According to Noe (2019), performance-based training is a training program designed to improve employee work competence by focusing on skills relevant to job needs and organizational goals. This training not only provides knowledge but also encourages changes in work behavior according to expected performance standards.

Indicators of Performance-Based Training

According to Noe (2019), indicators of performance-based training include:

1. Relevance of training to job needs.
2. Active involvement of participants in the training process.
3. Measurability of training results on performance improvement.
4. Application of training results in work.
5. Organizational support for the continuity of training.

Work Environment

According to Robbins and Judge (2020), the work environment is a set of external conditions that affect employee behavior, motivation, and productivity, including physical aspects (lighting, temperature, cleanliness) as well as non-physical aspects such as inter-employee relationships and organizational work culture. According to Sedarmayanti (2017), the work environment is the entire facilities and infrastructure that influence employees in carrying out their work, both physical, psychological, and social conditions. A good work environment will create a safe, comfortable, and productive work atmosphere.

Indicators of the Work Environment

According to Sedarmayanti (2017), indicators of the work environment consist of:

1. Lighting or illumination in the workplace.
2. Air circulation or ventilation.
3. Cleanliness and safety of the environment.
4. Work relationships among employees.
5. Availability of adequate work facilities.

Emotional Intelligence

According to Robbins and Judge (2019), emotional intelligence is the ability to detect and manage emotions in oneself and others, so that individuals can make better decisions and are able to cooperate effectively in teams.

According to Goleman (2017), emotional intelligence includes self-awareness, self-control, motivation, empathy, and social skills that enable a person to interact effectively with their environment.

Indicators of Emotional Intelligence

According to Goleman (2017), indicators of emotional intelligence include:

1. Self-awareness.
2. Self-regulation.
3. Self-motivation.
4. Empathy.
5. Social skills.

Conceptual Framework

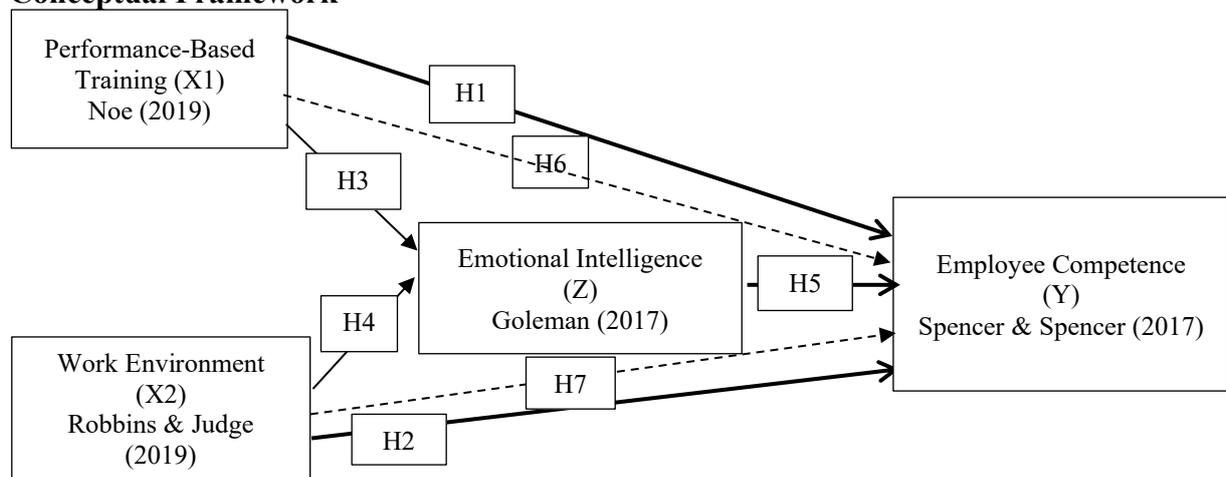


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypotheses

- H₁: Performance-Based Training (PBT) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
- H₂: The Work Environment has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
- H₃: Performance-Based Training (PBT) has a positive and significant effect on the Emotional Intelligence of employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.
- H₄: The Work Environment has a positive and significant effect on the Emotional Intelligence of employees at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.

H₅: Emotional Intelligence has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.

H₆: Performance-Based Training (PBT) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence through Emotional Intelligence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.

H₇: The Work Environment has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence through Emotional Intelligence at PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra.

Research Type

According to Creswell (2018), a quantitative approach is used to test theories by measuring relationships between variables through data that can be analyzed statistically. This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal associative type of research, namely research that aims to determine the influence between two or more variables.

Research Location and Time

This research was conducted at PT PLN (Persero) Main Distribution Unit (UID) North Sumatra, Jl. KL. Yos Sudarso No.284, Glugur Kota, Medan Barat District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20238 (PLN UID North Sumatra Office), specifically in the Distribution Division. The research time is planned to take place from October to December 2025, starting from questionnaire distribution, data collection, to analysis of results.

Research Population and Sample

Population is the entire subject or object that has certain characteristics relevant to the research problem (Sekaran & Bougie, 2019).

The population in this study were all employees of the Distribution Division of PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra, totaling 40 employees.

Sample

The sampling technique used is saturated sampling (census sampling), namely all members of the population are used as research samples totaling 40 employees. According to Hair et al. (2018), this technique is appropriate to use if the population size is relatively small and all elements are considered capable of providing relevant information for structural model analysis.

Data Type and Source

The data used in this study are primary data, namely data obtained directly from respondents through distributing questionnaires to employees of the Distribution Division of PT PLN (Persero) UID North Sumatra. In addition, secondary data in the form of company reports, internal documents, and scientific literature supporting theory and previous research results were also used.

Data Collection Technique

Data collection was carried out using the survey questionnaire method, namely distributing a list of questions filled out directly by respondents. According to Creswell and Creswell (2018), the survey method allows researchers to collect data in a short time with a high level of reliability if the instrument is prepared systematically.

Data Analysis Technique

The PLS-SEM analysis stages include:

1. Evaluation of the Measurement Model (Outer Model) To test the validity and reliability of indicators.
2. Evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model) To test the relationships between latent variables.
3. Mediation Effect Test The test was conducted using the bootstrapping indirect effect method to see the indirect effect of the mediating variable (Emotional Intelligence) between PBT and Work Environment on Employee Competence.

Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

- a. Validity Test is conducted to ensure each indicator is able to measure its variable accurately. Validity is tested using outer loading value and Average Variance Extracted (AVE).
- b. Reliability Test is conducted to ensure the consistency of measurement results using Cronbach's Alpha value and Composite Reliability.

Results

Outer Model Analysis

Details of the relationship between latent variables and manifest variables can be ascertained by using measurement model testing, also known as outer model testing. This test includes reliability, discriminant validity, and convergent validity.

1. Convergent Validity

The correlation between item/indicator scores and construct scores indicates the convergent validity of the measurement model with reflective indicators. If the correlation value of an indicator is more than 0.70, it is considered reliable. However, loadings between 0.50 and 0.60 are still acceptable at this research scale development stage. The indicators have loadings below 0.60 and are not significant according to the outer loading data. The research structural model is depicted in the following figure:

Table 1. Outer Loading

	Emotional Intelligence_(Z)	Employee Competence_(Y)	Work Environment_(X2)	Performance-Based Training_(X1)
X1.1				0,813
X1.2				0,874
X1.3				0,869
X2.1			0,818	
X2.2			0,909	
X2.3			0,938	
X2.4			0,720	
Y.1		0,862		
Y.2		0,951		
Y.3		0,915		
Y.4		0,852		
Y.5		0,770		
Z.1	0,837			
Z.2	0,764			

Z.3	0,822			
Z.4	0,897			
Z.5	0,853			

Source: Smart PLS 3.3.3

Table 1 shows that after the removal of indicator X1.4, all indicators in stage 2 have outer loading values above 0.70. Performance-Based Training (X1) indicators have outer loading values between 0.813--0.874, Work Environment (X2) ranges from 0.720--0.938, Employee Competence (Y) between 0.770--0.951, and Emotional Intelligence (Z) between 0.764--0.897. Thus, all indicators are declared valid and have met the convergent validity criteria, so the measurement model is suitable for further structural analysis.

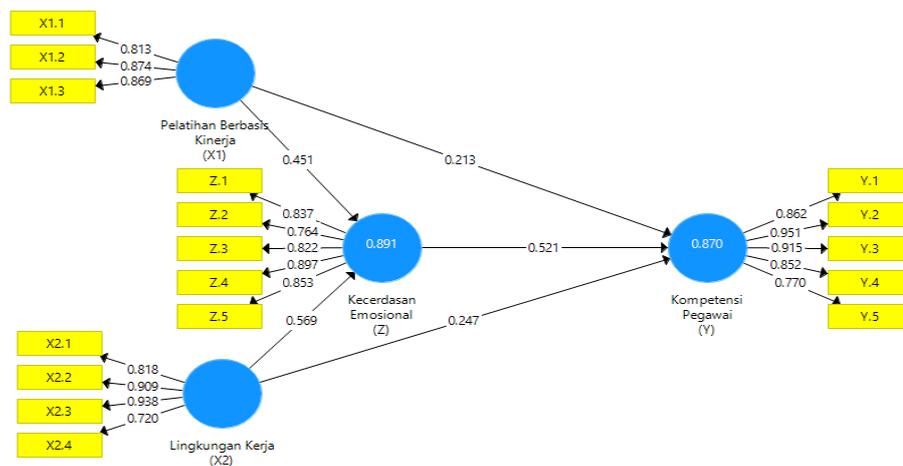


Figure 2. Outer Model

Source: Smart PLS 3.3.3

The Smart PLS output for loading factor provides the following results: Outer Loadings

In this research there are equations and those equations consist of two substructures for substructure 1

$$Z = b1X1 + b2X2 + e1$$

$$Z = 0,451 + 0,569 + e1$$

For substructure 2

$$Y = b3X1 + b4X2 + b5Z + e2$$

$$Y = 0,213 + 0,247 + 0,521 + e2$$

Discriminat Validity

The findings of the discriminant validity test will be discussed in this section. Cross loading values are used for the discriminant validity test. If the cross loading value of an indicator on a variable is greater compared to other variables, then it is said to show discriminant validity. The cross loading values for each indicator are as follows:

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Emotional Intelligence_(Z)	Employee Competence_(Y)	Work Environment_(X2)	Performance-Based Training_(X1)
X1.1	0,638	0,641	0,523	0,813

X1. 2	0,695	0,655	0,539	0,874
X1. 3	0,827	0,811	0,722	0,869
X2. 1	0,634	0,610	0,818	0,564
X2. 2	0,799	0,814	0,909	0,598
X2. 3	0,888	0,884	0,938	0,726
X2. 4	0,666	0,563	0,720	0,498
Y.1	0,761	0,862	0,655	0,763
Y.2	0,899	0,951	0,888	0,788
Y.3	0,834	0,915	0,836	0,774
Y.4	0,782	0,852	0,745	0,631
Y.5	0,735	0,770	0,597	0,669
Z.1	0,837	0,778	0,811	0,706
Z.2	0,764	0,637	0,687	0,614
Z.3	0,822	0,693	0,691	0,614
Z.4	0,897	0,892	0,791	0,764
Z.5	0,853	0,823	0,727	0,844

Source: Smart PLS 3.3.3

Table 2 shows that each indicator has the highest loading value on the construct it measures compared to other constructs. This can be seen in the Performance-Based Training (X1), Work Environment (X2), Employee Competence (Y), and Emotional Intelligence (Z) indicators, each of which has the largest loading value on its original variable. Thus, all constructs have met the discriminant validity criteria, so it can be concluded that each latent variable is able to differentiate its indicators well from other latent variables.

Composite reliability

Two approaches are used in this study to test dependency: composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. While composite reliability evaluates the actual value of a construct's dependency, Cronbach's alpha assesses the lower bound of a construct's reliability value. This study tests reliability using Composite Reliability based on that opinion. In general, the composite dependency value, or alpha, should be higher than 0.7, although 0.6 is still acceptable. The Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values are displayed in the table below.

Table 3. Construct Reliability and Validity

	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Emotional Intelligence_(Z)	0,892	0,920	0,699
Employee Competence_(Y)	0,920	0,941	0,761
Work Environment_(X2)	0,870	0,912	0,723
Performance-Based Training_(X1)	0,812	0,888	0,726

Source: Smart PLS 3.3.3

Table 3 shows that all constructs have Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70 and composite reliability values above 0.80, so it can be concluded that all variables have a good level of reliability. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value for each construct is above 0.50, which indicates that each variable has met the convergent validity criteria. Thus, the constructs of Emotional Intelligence, Employee Competence, Work Environment, and Performance-Based Training are declared reliable and valid for use in further analysis.

Inner Model Analysis

To ensure the created structural model is reliable and accurate, the structural model (inner model) is evaluated. The stages of structural model evaluation analysis are seen through several indicators, including:

Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Based on the data processing that has been carried out using the SmartPLS 3.0 program, the R Square values were obtained as follows:

Table 4. R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Emotional Intelligence (Z)	0,891	0,885
Employee Competence (Y)	0,870	0,859

Source: Smart PLS 3.3.3

Table 4 shows that the R Square value for Emotional Intelligence (Z) is 0.891 with an Adjusted R Square of 0.885, which means that 89.1% of the variation in Emotional Intelligence can be explained by the independent variables in the model. Meanwhile, the R Square value for Employee Competence (Y) is 0.870 with an Adjusted R Square of 0.859, indicating that 87.0% of the variation in Employee Competence can be explained by the variables in the model, while the remainder is influenced by other factors outside the research.

Hypothesis Testing

The next step is to analyze the hypothesized relationships between latent constructs in this study after evaluating the inner model. T-Statistics and P-Values are tested in this research hypothesis testing process. If the P-Value is less than 0.05 and the T-Statistics value is greater than 1.96 then the hypothesis is considered accepted. The results of the direct effect path coefficients are as follows:

Table 5. Path Coefficients (Direct Effect)

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Emotional Intelligence (Z) -> Employee Competence (Y)	0,521	2,723	0,003	Accepted
Work Environment (X2) -> Emotional Intelligence (Z)	0,569	7,358	0,000	Accepted
Work Environment (X2) -> Employee Competence (Y)	0,247	1,651	0,050	Accepted
Performance-Based Training (X1) -> Emotional Intelligence (Z)	0,451	5,569	0,000	Accepted

Performance-Based Training (X1) -> Employee Competence (Y)	0,213	1,745	0,041	Accepted
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Source: Smart PLS 3.3.3

1. Hypothesis 1 (H1): The Effect of Emotional Intelligence on Employee Competence The test results show that Emotional Intelligence (Z) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence (Y) with a coefficient value of 0.521, T-statistic 2.723, and p-value 0.003. This means that the better the employee's emotional intelligence, the more employee competence will increase, so the hypothesis is accepted.
2. Hypothesis 2 (H2): The Effect of Work Environment on Emotional Intelligence Work Environment (X2) is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Emotional Intelligence (Z) with a coefficient of 0.569, T-statistic 7.358, and p-value 0.000. A conducive work environment condition is able to improve employee emotional intelligence, so the hypothesis is accepted.
3. Hypothesis 3 (H3): The Effect of Work Environment on Employee Competence The analysis results show that Work Environment (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence (Y) with a coefficient value of 0.247, T-statistic 1.651, and p-value 0.050. This indicates that a good work environment can encourage an increase in employee competence, so the hypothesis is accepted.
4. Hypothesis 4 (H4): The Effect of Performance-Based Training on Emotional Intelligence Performance-Based Training (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Emotional Intelligence (Z) with a coefficient of 0.451, T-statistic 5.569, and p-value 0.000. This means that performance-oriented training is able to improve employee emotional intelligence, so the hypothesis is accepted.
5. Hypothesis 5 (H5): The Effect of Performance-Based Training on Employee Competence The test results show that Performance-Based Training (X1) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence (Y) with a coefficient of 0.213, T-statistic 1.745, and p-value 0.041. This indicates that effective training can improve employee competence, so the hypothesis is accepted.

Table 6. Path Coefficients (Indirect Effect)

	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values	Results
Work Environment (X2) -> Emotional Intelligence (Z) -> Employee Competence (Y)	0,296	2,493	0,006	Accepted
Performance-Based Training (X1) -> Emotional Intelligence (Z) -> Employee Competence (Y)	0,235	2,394	0,009	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS 3.3.3

6. Hypothesis 6 (H6): The Effect of Work Environment on Employee Competence through Emotional Intelligence The test results show that Work Environment (X2) has a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence (Y) through Emotional Intelligence (Z), with a coefficient value of 0.296, T-statistic 2.493, and p-value 0.006. This shows that emotional intelligence acts as a mediating variable that can strengthen the influence of the work environment on employee competence, so the hypothesis is accepted.
7. Hypothesis 7 (H7): The Effect of Performance-Based Training on Employee Competence through Emotional Intelligence Performance-Based Training (X1) is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Employee Competence (Y) through Emotional

Intelligence (Z), with a coefficient value of 0.235, T-statistic 2.394, and p-value 0.009. This result shows that emotional intelligence is able to mediate the relationship between performance-based training and employee competence, so the hypothesis is accepted.

Conclusion

1. Emotional intelligence has a positive and significant effect on employee competence, so increasing emotional intelligence can improve employee competence.
2. The work environment has a positive and significant effect on emotional intelligence, which means a conducive work environment can improve employee emotional intelligence.
3. The work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee competence, so a good work environment can encourage an increase in employee competence.
4. Performance-based training has a positive and significant effect on emotional intelligence, which shows that effective training can improve employee emotional intelligence.
5. Performance-based training has a positive and significant effect on employee competence, so performance-oriented training is able to improve employee competence.
6. The work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee competence through emotional intelligence, so emotional intelligence plays a role as a mediating variable.
7. Performance-based training has a positive and significant effect on employee competence through emotional intelligence, which shows that emotional intelligence mediates the relationship between training and employee competence.

Suggestions

1. Improvement of Employee Emotional Intelligence Management is advised to develop emotional intelligence development programs, such as emotion control, empathy, and social skills training, because emotional intelligence has been proven to have a significant effect on employee competence.
2. Creation of a Conducive Work Environment The company needs to pay attention to the physical and non-physical conditions of the work environment, including workspace comfort, inter-employee relationships, and leadership support, in order to improve emotional intelligence and employee competence.
3. Optimization of Performance-Based Training Training should be designed according to job needs and oriented towards improving real performance, so that it is able to improve both emotional intelligence and employee competence.
4. Strengthening the Role of Emotional Intelligence as a Mediator In every HR development policy, the company is advised to consider emotional intelligence aspects as a linking factor between the work environment, training, and improving employee competence.

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