

# Analysis of Human Resource Competency Development for State Civil Servants at Gowa “Gau Mabaji” Center, South Sulawesi

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## Abstract

Qualitative research from this type of single instrumental case study is aimed at providing an alternative analytical framework regarding the discourse on developing human resource competencies for state civil servants, which specifically focuses on employees at the Center for Rehabilitation and Social Protection-Sentra Gau Mabaji in Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi. We use Critical Realism as a philosophical basis and an interpretative method modified from contemporary social studies, combined with theoretical eclecticism to allow for a more dynamic analysis. The purposive sampling technique was used with certain practical and methodological considerations to select only subjects who were relevant to the research objectives as respondents. The interviews were then conducted in depth and semi-structured by focusing on three aspects: Knowledge, Utilizing the coding conducted earlier, Skills and Attitudes are identified as dimensions of competency, forming a conceptual framework to steer the analysis. The outcomes present a phenomenological depiction that elucidates diverse perspectives among state civil servants concerning the development of human resource competencies. This exploration encompasses the aspects of knowledge, skills, and attitude, examining their interrelation with the individuals' status, duties, and functions as employees in the rehabilitation and social protection service.

**Keyword:** *Competence, Human Resources, State Civil Apparatus.*

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## A. INTRODUCTION

Loss of capacity in institutions – both state and private institutions, will prevent these institutions from functioning effectively (Annan-Prah & Andoh, 2023). There is a certain level of capacity required in both organizations and society. Therefore, existing capacity needs to be assessed to determine whether there is a gap between the current level of capacity, with the development plan and the goals to determine the points or sectors that need to be developed. Because capacity, of course, correlates with 'Competence' and 'Performance' both individually and in groups (Chaiklin, 2003). Coghlan et al (2014) emphasize (see also in the introductory editorial version: Coghlan & Holian (2023) that competency development will be very necessary for any organization. In Nainggolan et al.'s (2023) identification of the context of competency development among the State Civil Service, this is also closely related to the discourse on technological excellence as a dimension of competence. The competency development of the Indonesian State Civil Service (hereinafter referred to as: ASN) is regulated in the Law on ASN (Statuta, 2014), and; the Law on public services (in particular for persons with disabilities) in the ratification of the CRPD (Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities) (Statuta, 2011).

According to Sudrajat et al (2019) the increasing duties of the State Civil Apparatus - consequently, the quantity and quality will also be needed. The first (quantity) will relate to the proportionality and balance of work based on the quantity of resources; while the second (quality), is closely related to competence. Consistently and gradually, this paper focuses on the second aspect. Spencer, Jr. & Spencer (1993) and Noe (2022) define competence as a basic characteristic of a person formed by at least, three basic dimensions: Knowledge, Skills and Attitudes (for a similar interpretation of competence, see also other related articles: Esubalew & Raghurama, 2020; Goffin & Woycheshin, 2006; Hsiao & Lin, 2018; Katawneh & Osman, 2014; Martini et al., 2018). Furthermore, in other research conducted, Martini et al (2020) confirmed that competence, which is proxied through knowledge, skills and attitudes, has been proven to influence work commitment (affective, normative and sustainable) positively. However, research into developing the competence of State Civil Service resources - in particular, public services within the Social Rehabilitation and Protection Center is still lacking or at least, limited. There are only a few scholars and academics and also researchers who give focused on this theme.

Be worth noting, based on literature, the research conducted by Khairin, Arnetti, & Hasan (2023) is the closest to the focus of this paper. While others have a more varied focus, and are explicitly – different from the aim of this paper. In our review of several studies, there were significant differences in focus, although the themes (on Civil Servants and Competency Development) may have similarities. This can be seen, for example, in Astuti et al.'s (2023) research on ethical leadership styles; public services (Nasution & Regif, 2019); work performance development strategy (Mujahid et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Indiahono (2022) tries to measure the bureaucratic neutrality index, which seems to still be a *mysterium tremendum*, with optimism for developing a professional bureaucracy in Indonesia; Karunia et al (2023) tried a general approach by promoting the importance of 'Good Governance' in government organizations; Meanwhile, the influence of organizational culture and transformational leadership is the focus of Meliala et al (2023). On the other hand, what differentiates previous studies from this paper's is the focus and context as well as the peculiarity methodological maneuvers of each study, which will only create a simplification of the case if it is simply reduced.

Hence, this paper represents an attempt at a conceptual examination through a singular instrumental case study exploring the potential for enhancing the capabilities of State Civil Service personnel at the 'Gau Mabaji' Center, a Rehabilitation and Social Protection facility in Gowa, South Sulawesi. The analysis aligns with the competence framework outlined by Noe (2022) and Spencer, Jr. & Spencer (1993), encompassing three dimensions: Knowledge, Skills, and Attitudes. The study employs qualitative methodological strategies and incorporates theories on human resource development (HRD) proposed by Lê & Schmid (2019, 2022), Lester (2023), with a specific focus on phenomenology (Gibson & Hanes, 2003; Kuchinke, 2023) and critical action research (Githens, 2015). This approach aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of how individuals perceive initiatives and practices related to human resource

competency development and their connection to the responsibilities of State Civil Servants in serving the community? Obstacles that they may, or have the potential to face in developing competencies in accordance with their main tasks and work functions.

## **B. METHOD**

### **1. Research Design and Type**

This paper is a qualitative analysis of a type of single instrumental case study with a conceptual-analytical basis that relies on the critical realism philosophy of Bhaskar (2008) and the interpretive method of Lê & Bednarek (2023) to analyze aspects of knowledge, skills and attitudes as those that form competence in the development of human resources, especially in this case, its relationship with the competence of the State Civil Service. Critical realism and interpretive in this analysis combined with dynamic and inclusive theoretical eclecticism approach - enable the utilization of contemporary theories from the latest literature that focuses on the competency and development of human resources in the state civil service with a focus on developing employee and organizational competencies; on the one hand, as described by Denzin & Lincoln (2005), this effort is a series of interpretive maneuvers and on the other hand, does not privilege the practice of any approach or theory over other methodological practices.

### **2. Population and Research Sample**

The research was carried out at the 'Gau Mabaji' Center, situated on Jurusan Malino Street, Kilometer 29, Romangloe Village, Bontomarannu District, Gowa Regency, South Sulawesi Province. The study spanned approximately two months (from 6 June to 31 August, 2023).

The research population was all employees with ASN status as human resources at the Gau Mabaji Center with various classifications (see [table 1](#)); Next, the sample was determined using a purposive sampling technique with considerations including - that, only subjects who were deemed to understand the problem were used as respondents, so that only 6 employees were obtained (Furthermore attention to [table 2](#)) from the Center Gau Mabaji who were then interviewed in depth and semi-structured at the next stage. This kind of sample selection technique in qualitative research in particular in this study, partly also takes comparisons from Fox's (2010) non-probability technical guidelines; pay attention to suggestions from Andrade (2021) where sample characteristics need to be determined for purposes relevant to the research; including the standards of respondent quality criteria centered on credibility, transferability, confirmability and transparency by Cresswell (2007) and other practitioners such as (Patton et al., 1985) for a longer context.

**Table 1. Human Resources at Gowa's 'Gau Mabaji' Center in 2022/2023**

| Level of Education | ASN (Adm Position) | ASN (Supervisory Position) | ASN (Certain Functional Positions) | ASN (General Functional Position) | Non ASN |
|--------------------|--------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------|---------|
| Doctoral           | 1                  | -                          | -                                  | -                                 | -       |
| Masters            | -                  | -                          | 2                                  | 1                                 | -       |
| Bachelor           | -                  | 1                          | 6                                  | 4                                 | 6       |
| Diploma III        | -                  | -                          | 2                                  | 2                                 | -       |
| SHS                | -                  | -                          | 2                                  | 2                                 | 14      |
| JHS                | -                  | -                          | -                                  | 1                                 | 6       |
| ES                 | -                  | -                          | -                                  | 2                                 | -       |
| Total              | 1                  | 1                          | 12                                 | 12                                | 26      |

Source: Administration Sub-Division, Gowa "Gau Mabaji" Center.

Tabel Information:

SHS : Senior High School

JHS : Junior High School

ES : Elementary School

**Table 2. List of Research Informants**

| Informan                                                                   | Person   |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------|
| Head of Center "Gau Mabaji"                                                | 1 Person |
| Head of Central Administration Sub-Division                                | 1 Person |
| Coordinator of Functional Officials for the Social Rehabilitation Services | 1 Person |
| Functional Officials for Social Workers, Nurses and Physiotherapists       | 3 Person |
| Total Informants                                                           | 6 Person |

Source: Research Data, 2023

### 3. Coding and Data Analysis Techniques

We adopted a modified grounded theory approach, where each interview informed the focus and direction of the subsequent interviews. This approach was slightly modified in three instances where interviews were conducted on the same day, with the same person and time, hence termed as a modified approach. The coding process aligned with Braun & Clarke's (2006) methodology for data analysis. Additionally, we incorporated a theory-based deductive approach inspired by Sugahara & Lau (2019). This approach allowed us to delve into the rich narrative experiences of respondents in the context of competency development. Essentially, our focus was on seeking data relevant to the research question and theoretical model, particularly within the framework of Human Resource Development. For instance, our exploration aimed to identify instances where participants emphasized the prioritization of human resource competency development over other needs and the contexts in which this occurred. Finally, the data analysis structure is presented based

on suggestions from Hennekam et al (2020) which have been modified (see [table 3](#)). We needed to explain this procedure as a conceptual and technical-practical reference according to procedures, so as not to slip into what Lance & Vandenberg (2014) as 'myth'.

**Table 3. Coding Techniques**

| Parent Nodes | Child Node                          |
|--------------|-------------------------------------|
| Knowledge    | • Formal education                  |
|              | • Profession Further Education      |
|              | • Working experience                |
| Skills       | • Technical Education and Training  |
|              | • Managerial Education and Training |
|              | • Problem Solving                   |
|              | • Technology                        |
|              | • Communication                     |
| Attitude     | • Motivation                        |
|              | • Ethics and Integrity              |
|              | • Adaptation                        |
|              | • Leadership                        |
|              | • Innovative                        |

Source: Modified from Braun & Clarke (2006), and Hennekam et al. (2020)

## C. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### 1. Knowledge Aspect in Human Resource Competency Development

The majority of respondents described human resource development efforts as a necessary positive step, in maximizing their competence and its relationship to their status and duties as State Civil Servants. Although it goes without saying, that there are always certain obstacles in this kind of endeavor. One respondent (SK) described the importance of education (especially formal education) as a maneuver to develop competence by increasing their knowledge capacity:

[...] we are very aware of the importance of formal education in building superior human resources for us as public service officials. Although there are still some of our employees, who have not been able to continue their education to the next level for various reasons [...]

It seems that the drive to develop competence has received sufficient attention and appreciation from employees at the center Gau Mabaji in particular, through formal education which (in their perspective) is considered as a way to optimize aspects or dimensions of their knowledge. This would perhaps be in line with Samson & Gloet (2014) argument that knowledge assets create competitive advantage; while, integrated quality management encourages innovation capabilities (Zehir et al., 2012). The organization's recognition of the imperative for ongoing enhancement of employee qualifications and skills is evident in the remarks of a participant (NL). This respondent emphasized the significance of pursuing additional education to elevate

professionalism within their work domain. Furthermore, they highlighted the importance of staying abreast of the latest developments in their specific fields, ensuring that the responsibilities they bear align with their acquired competencies:

[...] we actively promote further education for our employees, particularly for positions associated with service-oriented professions. This initiative serves not only to keep their knowledge up-to-date but also to enhance their proficiency in executing their duties. [...]

In addition to the significance of ongoing professional education for competency development, another participant (SR) contributed a perspective that aligns with our coding and analysis, focusing on a crucial aspect of knowledge – work experience:

[...] In considering candidates, the emphasis is placed not only on formal education but also on relevant work experience. This experience is viewed as instrumental in applying acquired knowledge to real-world situations [...]

The information gathered from respondents underscores their endorsement of the importance of the knowledge aspect in optimizing both individual and institutional performance in the context of developing competencies within the State Civil Service. This is what Mohamad et al (2023) say is an adequate response to the progress and sustainability of their organization. In addition, it is crucial for state civil servants to empower themselves with a positive attitude, pertinent skills, and knowledge through human resource development programs formulated on competency development. Furthermore, a commitment to continuous learning is emphasized (Rodríguez-Sabiote et al., 2020). Because after all, a highly skilled and knowledgeable workforce will be needed by any institution (Tafvelin et al., 2019).

## **2. Skills Aspect in Human Resource Competency Development**

The skills aspect plays a crucial role in the development of human resource competencies, and several key factors have been identified based on our coding (see again [table 3](#)), particularly in the context of education and technical training. This is evident in statements from respondents, such as NL:

[...] who highlighted the impact of technical training on their ability to effectively approach and assist various vulnerable groups, including the elderly, children with disabilities, victims of substance abuse, and those experiencing social disadvantage or human trafficking. The acquired skills not only make them better prepared but also enhance their competence in providing care and social support [...]

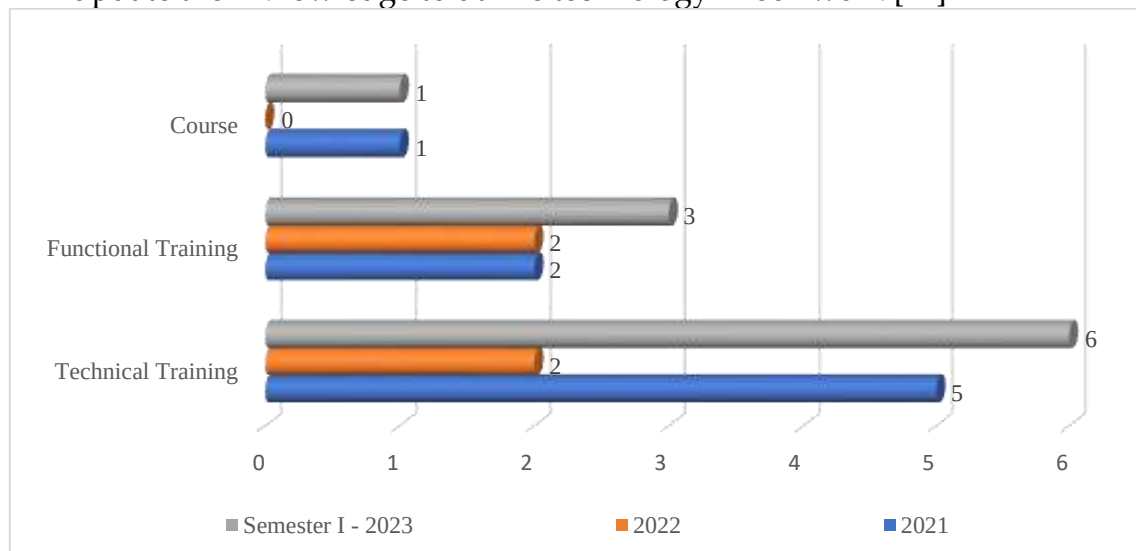
Insights shared by another participant, NK, align with the established code, emphasizing factors related to the skills aspect. This is based on the analysis that considers the relationship between Parent Nodes (initial code) and Child Nodes (subthemes), specifically focusing on Education and Managerial Training:

[...] the importance of managerial skills within our roles at the "Gau Mabaji" Center. Our responsibilities encompass active involvement in the planning and organization of rehabilitation programs, leading teams, and making informed

decisions to successfully attain our objectives in delivering high-quality protection and care [...]

As for other inquiries 'Such as the significance of training and mastery in the field of technology, further exploration is needed to understand how technological expertise contributes to their overall competencies?' - our initial respondent (SK) was quite responsive and very open with views that tended to be professional along with complete data (then pay attention to [figure 1](#)) balanced with the optimism shown. This attitude seems to challenge the globalization argument with a combination of demands: rapid technological development on the one hand, and the need for creativity, productivity and flexibility on the other (Berntson et al., 2006); all aspects that (De Vos et al., 2020) call necessary to maintain a career in the era of technological dominance:

[...] training and mastery of technology is a must ... our employees continually update their knowledge to utilize technology in our work [...]



**Figure 1. Graphics of ASN Training and Education at the Gau Mabaji Center**

Source: Gowa Gau Mabaji Center

Should be added here soon as a confirmation of methodological consistency, that the graphs shown do not represent any statistical model apart from being another form of creativity, different analytical tools can be combined in diverse ways to yield meaningful insights and foster effective innovation. It is essential to recognize that any research method comprises two components. Firstly, there are the apparent research elements, which typically pertain to the reported research tools and the inventive approaches applied. This encompasses the methods of data generation, as highlighted by Bernstein (2012), the analytical procedures like multimodal analysis employed by LeBaron et al. (2016), and the collection and presentation of data, akin to a composite sketch described by Smets et al. (2004). The utilization of these tools allows for ample opportunities for creativity, as they can be blended in various permutations to derive significant insights. Secondly, there are the less visible facets of research, generally alluding to the underlying guiding principles inherent in innovative methods and

research techniques. These principles, often left implicit, play a pivotal role in shaping the research process.

### **3. Attitude Aspect in Human Resource Competency Development**

Human resource development, especially in the attitude aspect, is very important. After all, an individual's attitude influences how they interact with coworkers, face challenges, or even contribute to the organization's culture. Although research on organizational influence and efficacy, as stated by Boyatzis & Rochford (2020), is still rare. However, that the role of the organization and the quality of relationships, whether directly or indirectly, influence attitudes, is a common assumption (Kruger & Terblanche, 2022). Our next analysis, based on the results of interviews obtained from respondents regarding the development of human resource competencies for state civil servants in the Gau Mabaji center, points to several factors that shape the attitudes of ASN in their service. For instance, motivation is highlighted as a factor influencing attitudes. In this context, our respondent (SR) explicitly emphasized that motivation plays a role in shaping attitudes:

[...] We also concentrate on nurturing attitudes, particularly emphasizing motivation for each team member, as we firmly believe that it constitutes a primary key to delivering exceptional services to the community [...]

Another factor highlighted in interviews with the same respondent (SR) concerning the development of human resource competencies is ethics and integrity. In the information provided, these aspects were regarded as among the most crucial and influential factors shaping the attitudes of servants at the Gau Mabaji center:

I believe that maintaining ethics and integrity is imperative in all circumstances, particularly within the context of a work environment. This can be viewed as the cornerstone of organizational culture [...] we regard it as non-negotiable [...]

In addition, leadership appears to be another significant factor, as indicated by our respondents (SK). This is evident in their response to the question: "How important is the leadership factor in efforts to develop attitudes?"

[...] Leadership is not confined to a specific position; rather [...] it revolves around the capability to inspire and guide colleagues, irrespective of one's position within the organization [...]

These diverse statements are intriguing, not only because they allow us to discern the relevance of both overarching themes (Parent Nodes) and detailed subthemes (Child Nodes) within the coding framework we have established, aligning with the responses and information furnished by the respondents. But furthermore, the respondents seemed to really understand their duties and what their functions were. Regarding leadership for example, Schindler & Burkholder (2016) also on the other hand Govaerts et al (2018) prove that its positive practice (for example - willing to discuss problems and share training techniques; providing complete training guides, and able to express ideas thoughtful training ideas) can have a positive impact on employee attitudes. This practice also applies to ethics and integrity, because efforts

to develop competence - especially in aspects of attitudes and more specifically - ethics and integrity, can be shaped by the habits of leaders or among employees themselves (Park et al., 2018); of course with motivation as a willingness and readiness that originates within oneself or is formed from good habits forced because of the demands of professionalism, or voluntarily because it is an innate characteristic (Kanfer et al., 2017).

#### D. CONCLUSION

Our analysis ultimately summarizes several things that are important to note as a result. Initially, the Gau Mabaji center's competency development initiatives, whether currently in progress or part of future plans, have significantly influenced the optimization of essential facets of State Civil Servants' competencies, encompassing the knowledge, skills, and attitudes of the personnel. Furthermore, employees within the State Civil Service assigned to the Gau Mabaji facility genuinely value diverse initiatives aimed at enhancing human resources and refining their competencies. The positive impact of these efforts is anticipated not only for the individuals but also for the collective workforce. Lastly, the Gau Mabaji Center in Gowa demonstrates a dedicated commitment to and investment in the enhancement of human resource competencies among its staff. This commitment is evident in their emphasis on developing competencies in the critical areas of knowledge, skills, and attitudes, with a strategic focus on factors considered pivotal and indispensable for employee growth and effectiveness. We also found obstacles in developing ASN competency in the Gau Mabaji Gowa center which in general and basically, are institutional problems that naturally occur in institutions and organizations such as: limited financial resources to support various development plans; Lack of appreciation or reward, as well as; changes and influences from the external environment on employees at the Gau Mabaji center. Lastly, we strongly encourage scientific efforts that critically and focuses to the discourse on human resource competency development, especially in the fields of Government Science, Public Management, Public Administration and various other disciplines in the social sciences.

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