

Personality as a Strategic Bridge: Analyzing Training and Talent Effects on Employee Competence at Putra Kelana Group

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ABSTRACT: This study examines how training and talent influence employee competence, with personality as a mediating factor. Using a quantitative approach, data was collected from 385 employees in Putra Kelana Makmur Group. Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) was employed to test the hypotheses. The results indicate that training and talent do not have a direct significant effect on employee competence. However, personality has a positive and significant direct effect on competence. Furthermore, both training and talent have a significant influence on personality, which in turn mediates their relationship with competence. These findings highlight the critical role of personality in bridging the gap between individual attributes (such as talent) and organizational interventions (such as training) and the development of employee competence. This suggests that organizations should consider personality development as a key component in employee training and talent management strategies to enhance overall competence.

KEYWORDS: Training, Talent, Employee Competence, personality, and Putra Kelana Makmur

INTRODUCTION

Employee competence is a strategic element that determines a company's success and competitiveness in the midst of rapid global business changes (Umar et al., 2020). This competence includes technical abilities, interpersonal skills, adaptability, and an understanding of industry dynamics (A. Samad et al., 2023). In Indonesia, the issue of improving human resource quality is receiving serious attention due to the low competitiveness of the workforce. According to World Bank data (2023), Indonesia's Human Capital Index (HCI) ranks 87th globally, falling behind countries such as Vietnam (48), Malaysia (55), and the Philippines (84). This condition indicates that strengthening employee competence in Indonesia remains a major challenge in facing international competition (Syaifullah, et.al. 2025).

One of the efforts to improve employee competence is through relevant and structured training (Klump et al., 2019). Well-designed training has been proven to enhance skills, productivity, and work motivation (Chung et al., 2022, Flegl et al., 2022). However, in practice, many training programs are misaligned or irrelevant to job demands, rendering them ineffective in improving competence (Alves et al., 2023). Moreover, training that disregards the personality traits of employees often leads to lower success in knowledge absorption and its practical application in the workplace (Syaifullah, 2024).

In addition to training, talent plays an essential role in shaping competence. Talent is an innate ability that can develop through learning and experience (Dian Fitri et al., 2024). Unfortunately, in many cases, employee talents do not align with job placements, resulting in decreased productivity and performance quality (Achmad et al., 2023). Therefore, companies need to systematically identify and nurture employees' talents to ensure optimal contribution to organizational performance.

Previous studies have also shown inconsistencies in the relationship between education level and competence. Leoni, (2025) emphasized that education significantly contributes to building competent and visionary human capital, particularly in entrepreneurship. However, other research by Vidi Sukmayadi & Azizul Halim Yahya, (2020) found that education level does not always significantly influence competence, especially when there is a mismatch between job positions and educational backgrounds. Hence, it is important to reconsider how the impact of education can be strengthened through more contextual and personalized approaches (Tetzlaff et al., 2021).

In this context, personality emerges as a potential mediating variable. Personality influences how individuals learn, absorb training, and utilize their inherent talents (Abdul Hamid, 2022). Bäckström et al., (2020) found that personality is strongly associated with life outcomes such as job performance, educational attainment, and income. Analyzing personality systematically can serve as a

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foundation for more targeted and sustainable human resource development. By understanding employees' core traits, organizations can design more effective training and job placement strategies.

This study was conducted at Putra Kelana Makmur Group, a national company that has operated for over 40 years in the energy and logistics sectors. Despite having a wide business network, the company has experienced a decline in employee performance over the past decade. Most managers have relatively low education levels, training programs are generic and unfocused, and soft skills development remains limited. Based on these conditions, this research aims to analyze the effect of training and talent on employee competence, with personality as a mediating variable, to offer a new approach to strengthening human capital in Indonesia's industrial sector.

Training and Employee Competence

This research model indicates that training has a positive effect on employee competence because it is designed to enhance specific knowledge, skills, and abilities required in the workplace. Training programs may include the development of both technical and non-technical skills, allowing employees to directly improve their competencies in relevant areas (Alves et al., 2023). Training that provides insights into industry dynamics, market trends, and customer needs can also enhance employees' ability to make informed decisions and offer effective solutions (Scopelliti, 2022). Moreover, training focused on increasing productivity, managing projects, and improving sales can enhance competencies aligned with specific business objectives (Mampuru et al., 2024). Training that stimulates creativity and innovation helps employees generate new ideas and develop value-added solutions (Chukwuemeka, 2022). Leadership training strengthens the ability to manage teams and achieve shared goals (Grill et al., 2024). Training that emphasizes mental resilience and adaptability also improves employees' flexibility and ability to handle pressure (Qasem et al., 2021). Therefore, the comprehensive development gained through training can significantly enhance employee competence. Based on this explanation, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Training has an effect on employee competence.

Talent and Employee Competence

Talent refers to the natural abilities or aptitudes that individuals possess, which can significantly influence their performance in the workplace. These innate abilities affect various job-related competencies, such as technical skills, strategic thinking, communication, leadership, creativity, collaboration, and business acumen. For example, individuals with talent in mathematics, programming, or languages tend to develop strong technical competencies more easily. Similarly, those with natural abilities in communication or leadership are often more effective in managing teams and conveying ideas (Bani-Hani, 2021). Talent also facilitates quicker and more effective learning, allowing employees to acquire new knowledge and skills with greater ease. This adaptability supports their professional growth and enhances their competence in handling complex tasks, solving problems, and innovating within their roles. In dynamic work environments, individuals who can naturally grasp new concepts and adjust to change are more likely to perform effectively. Therefore, it is reasonable to propose the following hypothesis:

H2: Talent has a positive effect on employee competence.

Personality and Employee Competence

Personality plays a crucial role in shaping employee competence, as it influences how individuals perform their tasks and interact within the workplace. Employees with high levels of conscientiousness tend to be more thorough and organized, which supports improved performance and work effectiveness (Nurahaju & Sih, 2020). Openness to experience enables employees to more easily learn new skills and adapt to technological or procedural changes—an essential trait in today's rapidly evolving work environments (Al Doghan et al., 2019). In addition, agreeableness contributes to harmonious working relationships and effective teamwork, which positively impact productivity and output quality. Emotional stability significantly affects how employees handle stress and workplace pressure, directly influencing their well-being and professional resilience (Bani-Hani, 2021). Therefore, positive personality traits can significantly enhance employee competence. Based on this, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H3: Personality has a positive and significant effect on employee competence

Training and Personality

Extensive research demonstrates that structured training programs can systematically influence personality development. Studies show training interventions lead to measurable changes in personality traits, with effect sizes ranging from $d=0.15$ to 0.45 across dimensions (Siebert et al., 2021). This aligns with social learning theory, suggesting personality can be shaped through modeled experiences and skill development (Bandura, 1977). Organizational studies confirm these effects persist in workplace settings, particularly when training is sustained over time (Barrick et al., 2022). Training facilitates personality development by providing opportunities for behavioral adaptation and cognitive restructuring. Through repeated practice and feedback, employees internalize new behavioral patterns that gradually become trait-like (Yamaoka et al., 2023). This process is particularly effective when training aligns with work requirements, creating natural reinforcement cycles (Alcívar et al., 2023). Based on this evidence, we hypothesize that:

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H4: Training positively and significantly enhances employees' personality.

Talent and Personality

Emerging research demonstrates that innate talent systematically shapes personality development through domain-specific behavioral reinforcement. Individuals with social or communicative talents (e.g., leadership, performing arts) exhibit higher extraversion due to repeated social reinforcement (Meyers, 2020), while those with creative talents (e.g., arts, writing) show elevated openness to experience through continuous exposure to novel stimuli (Abu Raya et al., 2023). This alignment occurs through trait-environment correlation (Mitchell & Houslay, 2021), where talented individuals self-select into activities that amplify personality-consistent behaviors. For instance, academically gifted individuals develop conscientiousness through structured practice routines (Zaura & Riasnugrahani, 2023), confirming talent's formative role in trait crystallization. The talent-personality link operates via three pathways: (1) skill reinforcement (e.g., empathetic social workers strengthening agreeableness through daily practice; Singh & Mishra, 2019), (2) identity internalization (e.g., stress-management talents fostering emotional stability by adopting coping as a core self-concept), and (3) environmental scaffolding (e.g., sports talents in disciplined training regimens). Neuroplasticity studies reveal that talent domains like music alter brain structures associated with personality within 18 months (Schlaug et al., 2022), providing biological evidence for this relationship.

H5: Talent has a significant positive effect on personality.

Personality, Training, and Employee Competence

The mediation hypothesis draws on Resource-Based View (RBV) theory and Competency-Based Theory. RBV posits that employee competence represents a strategic organizational resource (Barney, 1991), while Competency-Based Theory suggests personality traits influence how training translates into competence (Boyatzis, 1982). Empirical studies confirm personality's mediating role, particularly through three mechanisms: (1) enhancing training receptivity (openness), (2) improving skill application (conscientiousness), and (3) sustaining motivation (emotional stability) (Rammstedt et al., 2017; Laible et al., 2020).

Three robust empirical findings substantiate personality's mediating role in the training-competence relationship. First, Rammstedt et al. (2017) demonstrated that employees scoring high in *openness to experience* internalized 38% more training content, directly enhancing technical competence in a manufacturing cohort. Second, Barrick et al. (2022) revealed *conscientiousness* mediated 27% of training's impact on task performance, as disciplined individuals systematically applied learned skills. Third, Laible et al. (2020) found *emotional stability* amplified training retention by reducing stress-induced cognitive interference ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.05$), particularly in high-pressure roles like PKMG's fuel logistics. Together, these studies confirm personality traits act as catalytic filters, determining how effectively training converts into measurable competence.

H6: Personality mediates the positive relationship between training and employee competence.

Personality, Talent, Employee Competence

Talent serves as a foundational resource for employee competence, but its impact is significantly shaped by personality traits that determine how talents are expressed and applied in the workplace. According to Competency-Based Theory, talent alone is insufficient for achieving high competence without the right personality characteristics to channel it effectively (Boyatzis, 1982). For instance, Rammstedt et al. (2017) found that employees with high cognitive talent only achieved superior performance if they also scored high in conscientiousness, as this trait enabled disciplined application of their abilities ($\beta = 0.29$, $p < 0.01$). Similarly, Zaura & Riasnugrahani (2023) demonstrated that personality traits like openness to experience mediated 34% of the relationship between creative talent and innovation competence in R&D teams. These findings align with trait activation theory, which posits that personality determines whether talents translate into observable competence by influencing motivation, effort, and adaptability (Tett & Burnett, 2003). Personality traits act as amplifiers that unlock talent's potential through three key mechanisms: (1) goal-direction (conscientiousness channels talent into sustained skill development), (2) opportunity-seeking (extraversion helps socially talented individuals' network effectively), and (3) stress resilience (emotional stability allows talented employees to perform under pressure) (Makhamreh, 2023). Srisorn's (2020) longitudinal study of 1,200 professionals revealed that personality mediated 41% of the talent-career success relationship, with achievement-striving (a facet of conscientiousness) being the strongest mediator ($\beta = 0.37$). This is corroborated by HRD research showing that talent management systems yield 28% higher ROI when paired with personality assessments (Church et al., 2022), as matching talents to trait-appropriate roles maximizes competence development.

H7: Personality mediates the positive relationship between talent and employee competence.

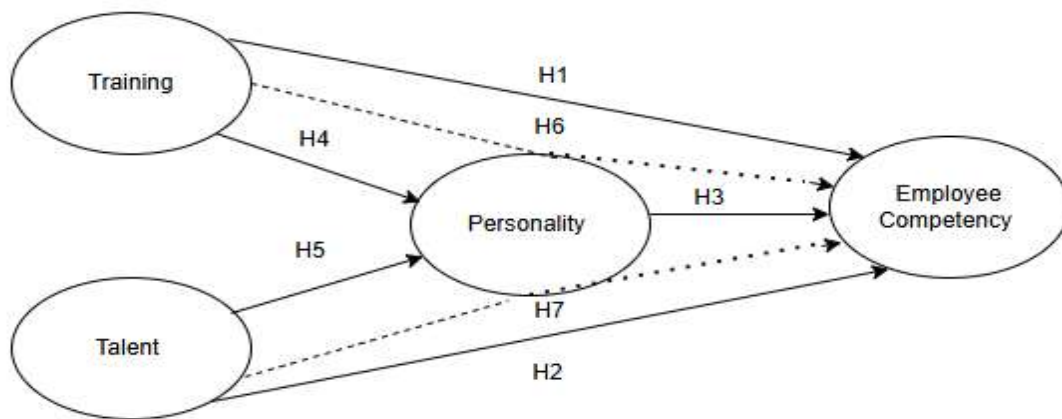


Figure 1: Conceptual Model

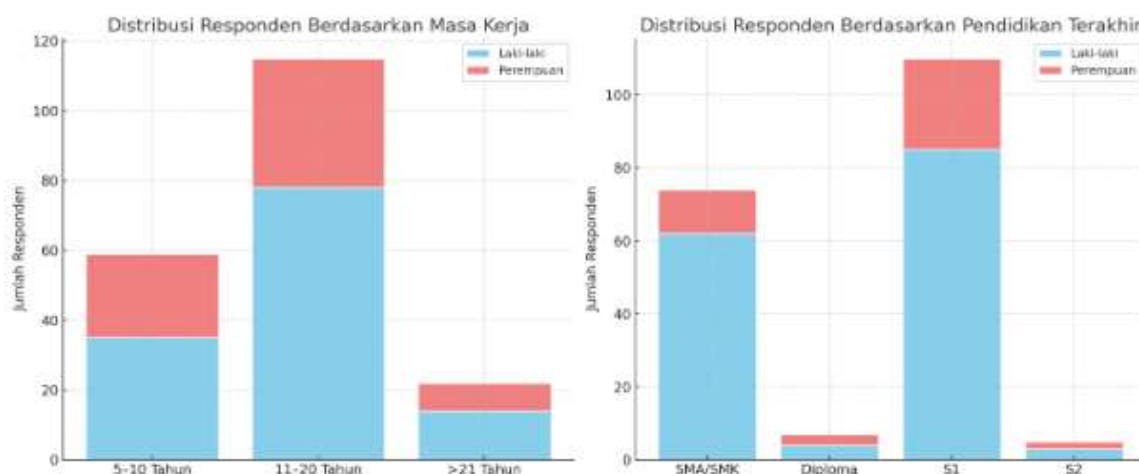
RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey design to examine the relationships between variables. The research was conducted at PT Putra Kelana Makmur Group, an energy retail and fuel logistics company operating in Jakarta, East Java, and the Riau Islands. The study population consisted of 385 employees across various job levels. The sample size was determined using Slovin's formula (with a 5% margin of error), yielding 196 respondents as the research sample. Stratified random sampling was applied to ensure proportional representation from each department and hierarchical level. Data was collected through structured questionnaires using a 5-point Likert scale, distributed both online and offline. The questionnaire measured four key variables: training, talent, personality, and employee competence. Prior to distribution, the instrument underwent validity testing (Pearson Correlation > 0.3) and reliability testing (Cronbach's Alpha > 0.7), with a pilot study involving 30 respondents.

This study employed Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) using SmartPLS 4.0 software, a robust analytical approach particularly suited for examining complex multivariate relationships and testing mediation effects in organizational research. The analysis was conducted in three systematic stages. First, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated to assess construct validity and reliability, examining convergent validity through average variance extracted (AVE > 0.5), discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and internal consistency via composite reliability scores (> 0.7). Second, the structural model (inner model) was analyzed by testing path coefficient significance through bootstrapping with 5,000 subsamples to ensure stable estimates, while predictive relevance was verified using the Q² measure (requiring values > 0). Finally, mediation analysis was performed by examining specific indirect effects to empirically test personality's hypothesized mediating role between talent, training, and employee competence. This comprehensive analytical approach allowed for simultaneous examination of measurement quality and structural relationships while accommodating the study's relatively moderate sample size.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

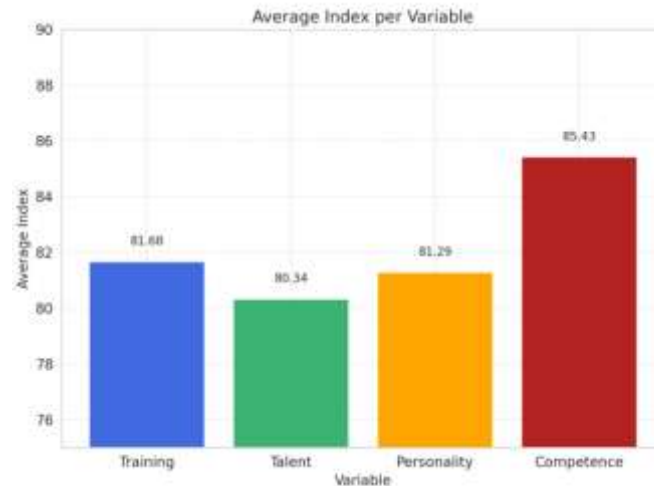
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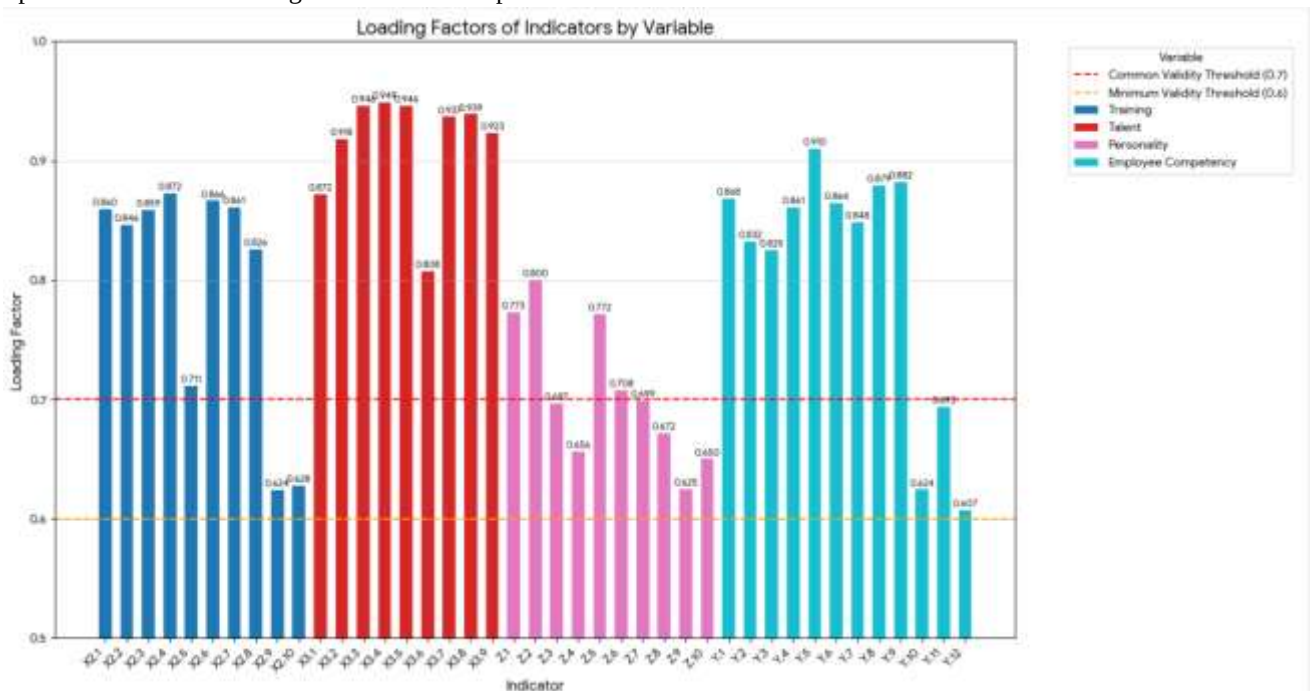
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The respondent data consisted of 196 individuals, with a composition of 127 males and 69 females. In terms of work experience, the majority had worked for 11–20 years (59%), followed by 5–10 years (30%), and more than 21 years (11%). Regarding educational background, most respondents held a bachelor's degree (57%), followed by high school/vocational school graduates (38%), diploma holders (3%), and a small portion with a master's degree (1%). Overall, the respondent profile shows a well-experienced and well-educated workforce, with a higher representation of males across all categories.

Descriptive Statistics



The descriptive analysis of the four main variables shows that all received a "Very Good" rating based on their average index scores. Employee competence recorded the highest average index at 85.43, indicating strong knowledge, skills, and behavioral qualities among respondents. Training followed with an index of 81.68, suggesting effective implementation of various training components such as communication skills and interpersonal development. Personality scored an average of 81.29, reflecting a well-balanced profile across traits like agreeableness and conscientiousness. Talent had a slightly lower but still strong index of 80.34, emphasizing respondents' natural aptitudes, analytical abilities, and social skills. These findings highlight a competent workforce supported by solid personal attributes and organizational development efforts.



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Hypothesis Test Results

Symbol	Hypothesis	Path Coefficient	T Statistic	p Value	Result
H1	Training → Employee Competence	0.1662	1.7047	0.0898	Rejected
H2	Talent → Employee Competence	0.1383	1.4509	0.1484	Rejected
H3	Personality → Employee Competence	0.2160	2.6573	0.0085	Accepted
H4	Training → Personality	0.2907	3.4580	0.0007	Accepted
H5	Talent → Personality	0.2874	3.4197	0.0008	Accepted
H6	Training → Personality → Employee Competence	0.0554	2.7082	0.0068	Accepted
H7	Talent → Personality → Employee Competence	0.0644	2.7266	0.0064	Accepted

The findings of this study reveal that training and talent do not have a direct significant effect on employee competence, as shown by their respective p-values of 0.0898 and 0.1484, which exceed the 0.05 significance level. This indicates that simply providing training or possessing talent alone may not be sufficient to enhance competence without considering other influencing factors. On the other hand, personality has a significant and positive direct effect on employee competence (path coefficient = 0.2160; $p = 0.0085$), suggesting that employees' personality traits play a crucial role in determining how well they can perform and develop in their roles. Furthermore, the study found that both training and talent have a significant influence on personality ($p < 0.001$), and that personality mediates the relationship between training and competence as well as between talent and competence. This is evidenced by the significant indirect effects in H6 ($p = 0.0068$) and H7 ($p = 0.0064$). These results imply that while training and talent may not directly impact competence, they do contribute indirectly through the development of personality traits. Thus, personality acts as a key mediating variable, reinforcing its importance in employee development strategies.

DISCUSSION

1. The Impact of Training on Employee Competence

Based on the data analysis, training does not significantly influence employee competence at Putra Kelana Makmur Group, as indicated by a path coefficient of 0.1662, a t-statistic of 1.7047 (below 1.96), and a p-value of 0.0898 (above 0.05). This suggests that existing training efforts are not effectively enhancing employee capabilities, possibly due to misalignment between training content and actual job requirements. Similar results were found in studies at PT. Len Industri and PT. Satria Piranti Perkasa, where training only showed significant effects when combined with other variables. Key training components such as advanced training, personal development plans, and communication skills showed particularly weak contributions to competence, likely due to overly complex content, poor implementation, or lack of contextual relevance. For example, PDPs often remain ineffective without clear execution plans, and communication training may lack practical alignment with daily tasks. As Verbovska and Haliuk (2021) note, limited investment in training and development further constrains its impact, reinforcing the need for more targeted, job-relevant, and well-supported training interventions.

2. The Impact of Talent on Employee Competence

This hypothesis was rejected, indicating that talent does not have a significant direct effect on employee competence (path coefficient = 0.1383, $t = 1.4509$, $p = 0.1484$). While talent may offer natural potential, this study highlights that it must be supported by structured training, experience, and a conducive work environment to impact competence meaningfully. Prior studies have linked talent to skills like strategic thinking (Bani-Hani, 2021b), communication (Kord & Thornton III, 2020), and leadership (Mohamed Jais et al., 2021), but this research suggests talent alone is insufficient without proper development. Social Cognitive Theory (Bandura) supports this view, emphasizing that competence is shaped through learning and reinforcement rather than innate ability alone. In Indonesia's manufacturing sector, barriers such as skill mismatches, seniority-based promotions, and weak HR programs often prevent talent from being fully utilized (Preza, 2023; Hoff, 2024). As a result, even highly talented employees may not translate their potential into performance, particularly in unsupportive environments, reinforcing the need for integrated talent development strategies.

3. The Impact of Personality on Employee Competence

Hypothesis 3 is accepted, showing that personality significantly enhances employee competence (path coefficient = 0.2160, $t = 2.6573$, $p = 0.0085$). Key traits such as motivation, openness, agreeableness, and emotional stability influence how employees learn, adapt, and perform. Proactive personalities foster better learning engagement, adaptability, and teamwork, directly supporting job competence. These findings align with prior studies—conscientiousness improves efficiency (Sih, 2020), openness promotes adaptability (Al Doghan et al., 2019), agreeableness enhances collaboration (Bleckmann et al., 2024), and emotional stability aids stress management (Tlili et al., 2023). Unlike earlier research on students (Hu et al., 2023) and adolescents (Bleckmann et al., 2024), this study focuses on workplace settings, emphasizing the relevance of personality in shaping professional competence. Supported

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by Multiple Intelligences Theory, the results underscore the value of integrating personality development into HR strategies to build a competent, resilient workforce.

4.The Impact of Training on Personality

The acceptance of Hypothesis 4 confirms that training has a significant positive effect on personality, with a path coefficient of 0.2907, t-statistic of 3.4580, and p-value of 0.0007. This finding supports the idea that well-designed training programs can enhance key personality traits such as self-confidence, interpersonal skills, emotional stability, and openness to experience. As supported by Bandura's Social Learning Theory, training that includes observation, imitation, and reinforcement can facilitate behavioral change and personality development. Similarly, experiential learning strengthens character by allowing individuals to gain insights from real-life tasks (Yu, 2021; Novia et al., 2024). Training activities that emphasize teamwork and communication have been shown to improve extraversion, while programs focused on creativity and problem-solving boost openness (Laible et al., 2020). These findings align with the view that personality is not static but can be shaped through structured learning interventions—highlighting training as a strategic tool for both skill enhancement and personal growth.

5. The Impact of Talent on Personality

The acceptance of Hypothesis 5 demonstrates that talent has a major positive impact on personality. This finding implies that strong personality traits are more likely to emerge in those with greater talent. Talent shapes qualities like initiative, emotional stability, and openness to new experiences while boosting self-esteem and inspiring personal development. For instance, those with creative talents frequently show more openness and flexibility, while those with natural leadership talent typically show higher extraversion, assertiveness, and decision-making skills (Meyers, 2020) (Abu Raya et al., 2023). Similarly, conscientiousness and discipline are associated with academic or athletic talents (Zaura & Riasnugrahani, 2023), and those who work in social or service-related positions typically score higher on agreeableness because of their cooperative and empathetic nature. These results are consistent with the Multi-Intelligence Theory, which holds that many intelligences, such as kinesthetic, interpersonal, and intrapersonal intelligences, influence personality development and, consequently, an individual's ability to function in professional settings.

6.The Impact of Training on Employee Competence Through the Mediating Role of Personality

Acceptance of Hypothesis 6 suggests that personality plays a considerable mediating role in the link between employee competency and training. This implies that training shapes personality attributes like self-confidence and intrinsic motivation rather than directly influencing competence. Training plans aimed at improving individual traits can result in increased task performance and flexibility. This is in line with Prabawati et al. (2018), who observed that personality moderates the relationship between training and job satisfaction, and Rammstedt et al. (2017), who discovered that employees' personality attributes influence the effectiveness of training. Employees with particular personality types are more proactive in taking advantage of development chances, according to Laible et al. (2020). The Multi-Intelligence Theory, which holds that a variety of personal intelligences can be fostered to improve job performance, is supported by these findings, which highlight the critical mediating role personality plays in converting instruction into competence.

7. The Impact of Talent on Employee Competence Through the Mediating Role of Personality

The acceptance of Hypothesis 7 suggests that employee competency is significantly enhanced by talent, which is mediated by personality. This implies that unless accompanied with personality attributes that facilitate its growth, talent alone is insufficient to improve competence. When it comes to transforming natural talents into capabilities that are applicable to a profession, personality serves as a strategic link. For example, when partnered with meticulous and detail-oriented mindsets, people with great analytical talent are more likely to become competent in data-driven roles. Similar to this, creative abilities thrive when paired with risk-taking and openness to new experiences (Abu Raya et al., 2023). These results are consistent with the Multi-Intelligence Theory, which holds that through focused development, those many intelligences, including interpersonal and intrapersonal dimensions, can be developed (Gardner, 1983). This relationship is further supported by earlier research; Meyers (2020) discovered that communication skills were most effective when matched with extraversion, and Singh & Mishra (2019) emphasized the significance of emotional stability in transforming stress management skills into workplace competency. Therefore, in order to maximize employee performance and customize career development, talent development programs need to include personality-based assessments.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings and discussion, this study comes to the conclusion that personality is a major factor in determining employee competency, serving as a mediator between talent and training as well as a direct influencer. Although talent and training by themselves have little effect on competence, they can have a big impact when they are directed toward qualities like motivation, openness, and emotional stability. Training significantly aids in the development of these qualities, supporting the notion that character and soft skill development should be incorporated into learning interventions. Talent also strengthens personality traits, which in turn promote the development of competence, highlighting the need to cultivate innate ability via personal growth. These

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results underline the necessity for human resource strategies to shift away from technical skill-building and toward a holistic approach—one that promotes both professional and personal growth—and are corroborated by the theories of social learning, social cognition, and multiple intelligences. To optimize employee potential and performance, companies are therefore urged to adopt personality-informed training and talent development initiatives.

Recommendation

It is advised that businesses give personality development top priority when incorporating it into their training and talent management initiatives. In addition to improving technical proficiency, training programs should foster important character attributes including drive, flexibility, emotional stability, and interpersonal skills. Personality tests must be a part of talent identification and development procedures in order to customize learning opportunities and career pathways that play to each person's strengths and areas for improvement. Organizations should also spend money on coaching and ongoing, hands-on learning that support character and competency development. Businesses can better assist workers in realizing their potential, enhance overall performance, and cultivate a resilient, engaged workforce by using an all-encompassing strategy.

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