

Enhancing Organizational Performance through Motivation and Competence: The Role of Cadet-Based Recruitment Graduates in the Ministry of Transportation

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Article History

Received: 09.11.2025

Accepted: 11.12.2025

Published: 06.01.2026

Abstract: The performance of Civil Servants (ASN) plays a vital role in maintaining the effectiveness, efficiency, and accountability of governance and public service delivery. Strong performance among ASN not only ensures quality services that are responsive to community needs but also fosters an environment that supports innovation, optimal resource utilization, and compliance with regulations and standards. Proper human resource (HR) placement is crucial to organizational success. By aligning employees with their competencies, potential, and interests, organizations can build effective, creative teams that are ready to compete at the global level. Optimizing HR placement is closely related to the principle of "placing the right person in the right position." This study employs a literature review approach. The findings indicate that personnel competence has a positive impact on organizational performance. The higher the competence of ASN personnel, the greater the improvement in organizational performance at the Ministry of Transportation. Similarly, employee motivation positively influences organizational performance. The stronger the motivation of employees at the Ministry of Transportation in carrying out their work and completing assigned tasks, the greater the improvement in organizational performance.

Keywords: Motivation, Competence, talent development, organizational performance.

Cite this article:

Fatonah, F., Desryanto, N., (2026). Enhancing Organizational Performance through Motivation and Competence: The Role of Cadet-Based Recruitment Graduates in the Ministry of Transportation. *ISAR Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Sciences*, 4(1), 1-6.

I. Background

The rapid pace of technological development, coupled with increasingly diverse and complex public demands, has placed significant pressure on public institutions to continuously transform their operational and governance systems. As the main regulatory authority in the transportation sector, the Ministry of Transportation is required to respond proactively to these changes in order to remain effective and relevant. Organizations that fail to adjust to environmental dynamics risk losing their ability to perform optimally, whereas adaptive institutions are more likely to maintain competitiveness and sustainability (Ayuningtias et al., 2016). Consequently, the formulation of updated regulations, strategic initiatives, and policy priorities has become an essential requirement for the Ministry of Transportation in navigating ongoing institutional change (Barus, 2021).

Public perception also serves as an important indicator of organizational effectiveness in the public sector. A national survey conducted by the Indicator Survey Institute reported that public satisfaction with the performance of the Ministry of Transportation

in 2024 reached 72.3%. Although this figure reflects a generally positive assessment, it simultaneously highlights the need for continuous evaluation and improvement in organizational performance to meet rising public expectations.

Within the public administration system, the performance of Civil Servants (Aparatur Sipil Negara/ASN) plays a central role in ensuring the delivery of effective, efficient, and accountable public services. Strong individual performance among ASN contributes not only to service quality and responsiveness but also supports innovation, efficient resource utilization, and compliance with institutional regulations (Widyanti, 2024). In this context, human resources remain the most critical organizational asset, surpassing the roles of technology and financial capital, particularly in regulatory formulation and public service implementation.

The Ministry of Transportation has long invested in human resource development through the Cadet-Based Recruitment Program, which aims to produce competent professionals in the transportation sector. This program is administered through vocational higher education institutions and official academies under the Ministry's supervision. Graduates who successfully

complete the program are appointed as Prospective Civil Servants (CASN) and are expected to contribute directly to governmental and regional transportation institutions.

The vocational education model applied within the Ministry emphasizes not only academic achievement but also professional certification, licensing, and practical competence aligned with job responsibilities. Guided by the principle of “Excellent, Professional, and Ethical,” this system seeks to develop graduates who demonstrate technical expertise, professional conduct, and ethical responsibility. Such qualifications are essential in supporting transportation systems that prioritize safety, security, service quality, and regulatory compliance—commonly referred to as the 3S+1C framework—aimed at achieving zero accidents in the aviation sector (Anwar, 2020).

Despite these efforts, challenges remain in aligning graduate competencies with actual job assignments. In practice, newly appointed civil servants with specialized technical backgrounds are sometimes placed in administrative or managerial roles that do not correspond to their educational expertise. This misalignment weakens the connection between individual competence and organizational function, resulting in a persistent *link and match* problem in human resource management (Hasibuan, 2019).

Effective human resource placement is widely recognized as a key determinant of organizational success. Assigning employees based on their competencies, interests, and potential enables organizations to build productive and innovative teams capable of adapting to dynamic work environments. However, achieving optimal placement requires accurate data, strategic planning, and institutional flexibility—factors that are often constrained in public sector organizations.

The principle of placing the right individual in the right position remains fundamental in public human resource management. Recruitment, selection, and placement processes must be carefully designed to ensure alignment between employee capabilities and job requirements. Organizations that successfully implement this principle tend to demonstrate higher levels of employee motivation, productivity, and adaptability in responding to organizational and environmental change.

This study focuses on graduates of Indonesian Aviation Vocational Higher Education who are currently employed within the Ministry of Transportation in various functional roles, including education personnel, instructors, managers, aviation analysts, inspectors, technicians, and program evaluators. While previous studies have examined the influence of motivation and competence on employee performance in both public and private organizations (Berto Amando A. et al., 2023; Sulistiawan et al., 2023), empirical research that specifically explores these factors among cadet-based recruitment graduates in the Ministry of Transportation remains limited.

This gap in the literature highlights the need for a more focused examination of how motivation and competence among cadet-based recruitment graduates contribute to organizational performance in the public transportation sector. Addressing this gap is essential for developing evidence-based strategies to enhance human resource effectiveness and overall organizational performance within the Ministry of Transportation.

II. Literature Review

1. Motivation

Motivation is widely recognized as a key psychological factor that influences how individuals behave and perform within organizational settings. Rather than having a single definition, motivation encompasses a range of internal and external drivers that shape an individual’s willingness to exert effort in achieving work-related goals. In organizational contexts, effective motivational practices depend heavily on leaders’ ability to understand human behavior and align individual aspirations with institutional objectives.

Motivation can be described as an internal state that encourages individuals to act with commitment, enthusiasm, and persistence, ultimately leading to improved work outcomes (Afandi, 2018). From a managerial perspective, motivation also involves providing stimuli or conditions that energize employees and guide their attitudes and actions toward the accomplishment of organizational goals (Harahap & Tirtayasa, 2020).

In the workplace, motivated employees tend to demonstrate higher levels of engagement, initiative, and responsibility. Motivation serves as a driving mechanism that not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to the achievement of broader organizational objectives. As a result, motivation is considered a strategic factor in improving employee effectiveness and strengthening overall organizational performance.

2. Competence

Competence represents a combination of individual attributes that enable employees to perform their tasks effectively in specific job contexts. Rather than being limited to technical ability alone, competence reflects the integration of knowledge, skills, and work attitudes that support consistent and high-quality performance (Hikmah et al., 2020). These attributes are closely associated with behavioral standards expected within an organization and are essential for achieving optimal work results (Sari et al., 2023).

From a professional standpoint, personnel competence indicates that individuals possess adequate education, training, and work experience relevant to their assigned roles. In regulated sectors, competence is also shaped by formal qualifications and compliance with applicable legal and institutional frameworks, including national competency standards.

Individual competence further refers to underlying personal characteristics that directly influence performance effectiveness. These characteristics function as causal factors that distinguish superior performers from average ones, particularly in demanding work environments. Employees with strong competence are better equipped to adapt to job requirements, solve problems efficiently, and deliver sustainable performance outcomes (Rachmaniza, 2020).

3. Organizational Performance

Organizational performance reflects an organization’s ability to utilize its resources efficiently to achieve predetermined goals. This concept encompasses not only financial outcomes but also the effective management of human, informational, and operational resources in responding to environmental demands (Contu, 2023). Individual employee performance plays a significant role in

shaping organizational outcomes over both short- and long-term periods.

From a broader perspective, organizational performance is also associated with an institution's capacity to satisfy stakeholder expectations while maintaining operational sustainability. This understanding extends performance evaluation beyond traditional market indicators to include non-financial dimensions such as service quality, internal processes, and institutional resilience (Guterman, 2023).

Furthermore, organizational performance is influenced by the quality of relationships between organizations and their employees.

Supportive work environments, trust, and perceived organizational care contribute to positive employee attitudes, which in turn affect performance outcomes (Long, 2022). In practical terms, organizational performance can be assessed by comparing actual achievements with planned objectives and performance targets, providing a comprehensive view of institutional effectiveness (Tomal & Jones, 2015).

Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework of this study is presented as follows:

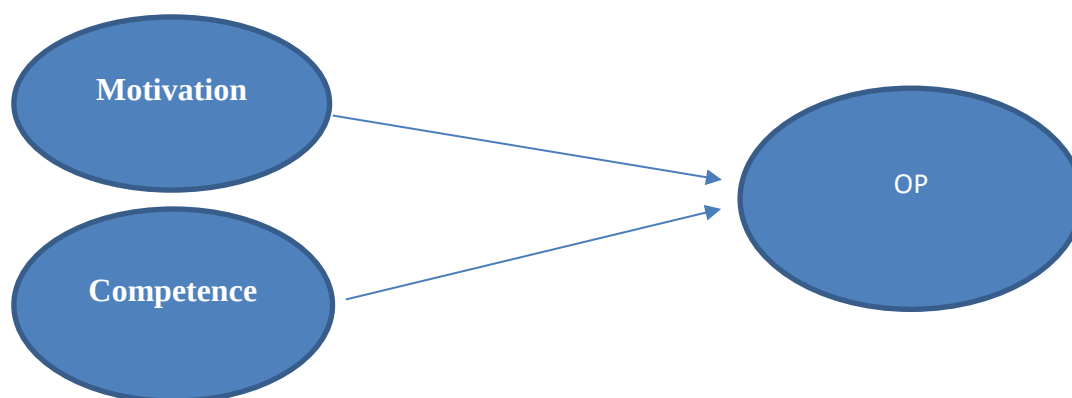


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

III. Research Method

This study employs a **literature review approach** aimed at examining and analyzing scholarly literature related to the influence of motivation and competence on organizational performance. This approach was selected because it provides a broad and comprehensive understanding of the relationships among the studied variables and offers a strong theoretical foundation for further research. The research process was

conducted systematically, structurally, and in accordance with established procedures in literature review studies (Ramayanti, 2023).

IV. Previous Studies

Several previous studies that examine motivation and competence in relation to organizational performance are presented as follows:

Table 1. Previous Studies

Researcher (Year)	Title	Variables and Method	Findings
Hendry Sulistiawan et al. (2023)	The Relationship between Competence and Motivation on Employee Performance at the Bawen District Office, Semarang Regency	Quantitative associative method; Competence, Motivation, Performance	The results indicate a positive and significant relationship between competence and motivation on employee performance at the Bawen District Office, Semarang Regency.
Berto Amando A. et al. (2023)	The Effect of Competence and Motivation on Employee Performance at PT Bank Mandiri Tbk, Bekasi City	Descriptive study with literature review; Employee Performance, Competence, Motivation	The findings show that competence and motivation encourage improvements in employee performance. Competence and motivation individually contribute to enhanced employee performance.
Desak Nyoman Indriyani et al. (2023)	The Effect of Competence, Self-Efficacy, and Work Environment on Employee Performance at the Bali Provincial Secretariat	Multiple linear regression; Competence, Self-Efficacy, Work Environment, Employee Performance	Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Improved competence leads to higher employee performance.
Faris Aprilian & Bayu Suhermin (2023)	The Effect of Motivation, Competence, and Self-Efficacy on Job Satisfaction of Employees at PT Bank Pan Indonesia	Multiple linear regression using SPSS; Motivation, Competence, Self-Efficacy, Job Satisfaction	Motivation, competence, and self-efficacy have significant effects on employee job satisfaction.

Source: Processed by the Authors

Based on Table 1, it can be concluded that this research model differs from previous studies, as it specifically emphasizes the role of motivation and competence of cadet-based recruitment graduates in enhancing organizational performance, with a case study at the Ministry of Transportation.

V. Results and Discussion

1. The Role of Competence in Organizational Performance

Competence can be understood as a set of individual attributes that enable employees to perform their duties effectively and deliver consistent work outcomes. Rather than referring solely to technical ability, competence reflects the integration of knowledge, practical skills, and the capacity to apply them appropriately in work situations. Employees who demonstrate strong competence are generally able to complete tasks more efficiently, minimize errors, and adapt to job demands, thereby contributing to superior performance (Ridwan, 2020).

From an organizational perspective, competence serves as a foundational element in achieving effective task execution. Many organizations therefore establish specific competency standards as benchmarks for employee performance. The development of employee competence is not only aimed at improving individual capability but also functions as a strategic investment in organizational success. Competence encompasses professional knowledge, technical skills, and work-related behaviors that must be continuously developed and demonstrated in daily operations (Rande, 2016). When organizations provide structured training and development opportunities, they strengthen employee competence, which in turn enhances overall organizational performance.

Within the Ministry of Transportation, employee competence is reflected in work experience, educational background, and accumulated practical knowledge. Empirical observations indicate that longer tenure and relevant experience support faster task mastery and more consistent work results. Although some employees may not hold academic qualifications that perfectly match their assigned positions, the knowledge and experience they possess still function as valuable resources in fulfilling organizational responsibilities.

Employees' understanding of their roles, duties, and institutional procedures further reinforces competence in the workplace. Adherence to standard operating procedures (SOPs) ensures that work processes and outputs remain aligned with organizational expectations. In addition, practical skills—such as the effective use of digital tools and administrative technologies—enable employees to work more efficiently and respond effectively to operational demands.

Previous empirical studies consistently demonstrate the importance of competence in shaping organizational performance. Research by Husniati et al. (2021) confirms that personnel competence has a positive and significant influence on organizational outcomes. Similarly, Sabuhari et al. (2020) highlight that improvements in employee competence lead directly to enhanced employee performance, which subsequently supports organizational goal attainment.

Further evidence is provided by Wediastini et al. (2023), who show that increased employee competence contributes to higher levels of individual performance and ultimately strengthens organizational performance. These findings are supported by studies conducted by

Rizal et al. (2021), Irianto and Prijati (2020), and Junianto (2019), all of which emphasize the positive and significant relationship between competence development and organizational performance.

In the context of Indonesian Aviation Vocational Higher Education graduates serving as civil servants within the Ministry of Transportation, competence emerges as a particularly influential factor. Several studies identify personnel competence as one of the most dominant determinants of organizational performance compared to other independent variables. This dominance is reflected in employees' ability to proactively identify operational challenges, analyze underlying problems, and implement effective solutions. Competent civil servants are therefore expected to demonstrate strong critical and analytical thinking skills that support timely and appropriate decision-making.

To support this process, the Ministry of Transportation facilitates competence development through targeted training initiatives, including problem-solving workshops and simulations based on real cases commonly encountered in the transportation sector. These programs are designed to strengthen employees' practical skills and enhance their readiness to address complex organizational challenges.

In summary, personnel competence has a positive and meaningful effect on organizational performance among graduates of Indonesian Aviation Vocational Higher Education employed as civil servants within the Ministry of Transportation. Higher levels of competence, supported by continuous development efforts, contribute to improved employee performance and strengthen overall organizational effectiveness.

2. The Role of Motivation in Organizational Performance

Motivation plays a central role in shaping how employees approach their work and sustain performance over time. It reflects the internal drive that encourages individuals to exert effort, as well as external influences that reinforce work-related behavior. While motivation may stem from intrinsic sources such as personal satisfaction and achievement, it can also be supported by extrinsic factors including recognition, rewards, and career opportunities. Evidence suggests that internally driven motivation tends to be more enduring and effective in supporting long-term performance outcomes (Wardhono, 2024).

Employees who are strongly motivated are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of productivity, creativity, and organizational commitment. Intrinsic motivation, which arises from meaningful work engagement and a sense of personal fulfillment, has been shown to support sustained performance by encouraging employees to take initiative and responsibility for their tasks (Raza et al., 2015). Consequently, organizations are encouraged to cultivate work environments that promote engagement, learning, and professional development in order to maintain high motivation levels.

A substantial body of research identifies motivation as a critical determinant of employee performance. When employees perceive that their motivational needs are adequately addressed, they tend to perform their duties more effectively. Conversely, insufficient motivation often leads to reduced effort and lower performance outcomes. Empirical findings consistently indicate a positive and significant relationship between work motivation and employee performance across various organizational contexts (Tsauri, 2014;

Habba et al., 2017; Badrianto & Eikhsan, 2019; Noer et al., 2020; Kristianti et al., 2021).

Previous empirical evidence further demonstrates that motivation can exert a direct and simultaneous influence on employee performance, highlighting its strategic importance in human resource management (Ridwan et al., 2014). These findings underline the role of motivation not only as an individual psychological factor but also as an organizational lever that supports performance improvement.

In the context of the Ministry of Transportation, employees generally display a strong level of work motivation, particularly in completing assigned tasks and meeting organizational expectations. This motivation is reflected in improved productivity, discipline, and capability, which collectively contribute to the achievement of organizational goals and the enhancement of overall organizational performance.

VI. Conclusion

Personnel competence has a positive effect on organizational performance. Higher levels of competence among civil servants, achieved through continuous competency development, lead to superior employee performance and positively contribute to organizational performance improvement. Thus, enhanced personnel competence among civil servants strengthens organizational performance at the Ministry of Transportation.

Similarly, employee motivation has a positive influence on organizational performance. Increased motivation among employees in performing and completing assigned tasks leads to improved organizational outcomes. Therefore, higher employee motivation within the Ministry of Transportation contributes directly to enhanced organizational performance.

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