Journal of Economics and Business Letters
E-ISSN 2686-6056
P-ISSN 2798-8651
https://doi.org/10.55942/jebl.v5i3.861

Volume 5
Issue 3
June Edition 2025

Job promotion, staffing, and competence as drivers of employee performance: Evidence from Indonesia's directorate general of national export development

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Received 10 May 2025
Revised 26 June 2025
Accepted 28 June 2025

ABSTRACT

This study examines how three human resource levers—job promotion, staffing/procurement, and employee competence—shape performance among civil servants at the Directorate General of National Export Development (DITJEN PEN), Ministry of Trade. Using an explanatory, cross-sectional survey of 154 employees (simple random sampling), we operationalized constructs on 5-point Likert scales and verified measurement quality via corrected item–total correlations and Cronbach's alpha (all $\alpha \geq 0.70$ after two weak competence items were dropped). Correlational and regression analyses show that competence is the dominant predictor of performance ($r = 0.676$; $\beta = 0.599$, $p < 0.001$), job promotion has a positive but small effect ($r = 0.181$; $\beta = 0.093$, $p = 0.025$), and staffing/procurement perceptions are not statistically significant ($r = 0.047$; $\beta = 0.016$, $p = 0.724$). The full model is strong ($F = 45.583$, $p < 0.001$) with $R^2 = 0.477$, indicating that the three levers jointly explain nearly half of performance variance. Managerially, returns are highest from targeted competence development aligned to role demands, while promotion processes should be made more timely and transparently merit-based; staffing practices need re-engineering around person–job fit to reveal their contribution to performance. Limitations include cross-sectional design and perceptual measures; future work should integrate administrative data and test mediated pathways (e.g., staffing → competence → performance).

Keywords: job promotion, staffing, competence, employee performance, public sector

1. INTRODUCTION

People determine whether public organizations succeed or stall. When the external environment changes quickly, performance hinges on civil servants' ability to sense shifts, assess implications, and act decisively. For Indonesia's trade promotion apparatus, this reality is immediate: the Directorate General of National Export Development (Direktorat Jenderal Pengembangan Ekspor Nasional – DITJEN PEN) is mandated to coordinate and develop national exports, a mission that lives or dies by the quality, competence, and motivation of its workforce. Strategic human resource management (SHRM) research is unequivocal: well-designed HR systems materially shape individual and organizational outcomes through skill, motivation, and opportunity mechanisms (Jiang et al., 2012). In other words, if the people system is weak, performance is capped—no matter how elegant the strategy.

DITJEN PEN—like much of Indonesia's central government—is in the thick of bureaucratic reform aimed at overhauling institutions, business processes, and human resources to deliver good governance. Empirically, Indonesia's reform trajectory has produced gains but also friction as legacy practices meet new performance expectations (Wihantoro et al., 2015). Within this transition, three HR levers are pivotal for raising employee performance: promotion practices, staffing/procurement processes, and employee competence. These levers are mutually reinforcing. Promotions shape incentives and signal what the organization values; staffing determines who enters and where they are placed; competence equips staff to execute strategy in volatile markets. This study examines how these three factors—individually and jointly—influence employee performance at DITJEN PEN.

Promotion. Historically, promotion across many public agencies tilted toward seniority and administrative checklists rather than demonstrated competence. Under reform, DITJEN PEN has been shifting toward competency-based promotion using rank, education, and accredited training as central criteria. That is the right direction: when promotion standards are clear, transparent, and timely, employees have a fair line-of-sight between effort, development, and advancement—powerful inputs to performance (Jiang et al., 2012). Competency frameworks also reduce noise in promotion decisions by specifying the observable knowledge, skills, and behaviors that matter for role success (Campion et al., 2011). Put bluntly, merit-based promotion becomes a performance flywheel: today's contribution raises tomorrow's opportunity, which in turn motivates investment in skills and effort.

The Indonesian civil service regulates recruitment, formation, and structural appointments via a suite of Government Regulations designed to secure quality entrants and rational placement—PP No. 98/2000 (as amended by PP No. 11/2002), PP No. 97/2000 (as amended by PP No. 54/2003), and PP No. 100/2000 (as amended by PP No. 13/2002). On paper, these rules aim to deliver smart, skilled, high-integrity civil servants who can work hard and innovate. In practice, implementation gaps can emerge: workforce plans not fully anchored to workload, placements influenced by "pesanan," and uneven adherence to the principle of the right person in the right role. Such misalignments depress productivity because talent is under-utilized and managers cannot plan around capacity. Contemporary evidence underscores why fit matters: better person–job fit is consistently associated with stronger attitudes and behaviors that translate to performance (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005), and strengths-based leadership that improves fit lifts outcomes even in complex settings. In short, disciplined procurement and fit-based placement are not bureaucratic niceties; they are performance multipliers.

Competence. DITJEN PEN has invested in capability—e.g., offering 20 trainings and 16 master's scholarships (domestic and overseas) in 2012. That is a meaningful signal of intent. But competence is not a credential; it is the observable ability to produce results in role. Public-sector studies show that staff competence has a direct, positive association with job performance, and its payoff is amplified when complementary administrative rules and procurement compliance are in place (e.g., in public procurement contexts) (Mwagike, 2025). Competency-based management is now standard in many OECD public administrations because it integrates staffing, learning, and performance around explicit role requirements (Campion et al., 2011). For DITJEN PEN—whose work spans policy literacy, market analysis, partnership management, and data-informed execution—competence must be defined, developed, and linked to consequences (promotion, assignment, recognition).

Performance measurement as the feedback loop. For years, DITJEN PEN relied on DP3 (Daftar Penilaian Pelaksanaan Pekerjaan). Internally it has been judged insufficient: it does not capture job function nuances, maps poorly onto individual contribution, offers weak guidance for improvement, and cannot anchor incentives. Recognizing these limitations, the Government introduced PP No. 46/2011 to codify Sasaran Kerja Pegawai (SKP)—explicit work targets and behaviors—merging SKP (60%) with work behavior (40%) for annual performance appraisal (PP No. 46/2011). The system was subsequently modernized under PP No. 30/2019, which ties performance to objective, measurable, accountable, participatory, and transparent principles and to planning at both unit and individual levels (PP No. 30/2019). Put simply, the legal framework now exists to move from compliance rituals to decision-grade performance data—if agencies use it. In Indonesia's broader reform context, this shift toward performance orientation and managerial accountability is a key plank of moving from "public administration" to "public management" (Wihantoro et al., 2015; Rahmat et al., 2024).

Viewed together, these elements describe a single problem: DITJEN PEN is expected to deliver export-development outcomes under bureaucratic reform, but legacy rules, uneven implementation, and incomplete performance measurement have constrained the motivational engine (promotion), the talent pipeline and fit (procurement/placement), and the skills base (competence) necessary for high performance. The organization has started to move on each front—shifting promotion criteria toward competence, expanding development opportunities, and acknowledging the need for better tools—but lacks an integrated, evidence-based account of how large the performance effects are for promotion, staffing, and competence in its own context. That is the gap this study seeks to fill.

Accordingly, we test four descriptive questions—what is the current state of promotion practices, staffing processes, competence distribution, and performance assessment—and four causal questions: whether promotion, staffing quality, and competence each have positive effects on individual performance, and whether the three levers jointly raise performance. These questions are tightly aligned with both Indonesia's regulatory trajectory on performance appraisal (PP No. 46/2011; PP No. 30/2019) and the international evidence base that links HR systems and fit to outcomes (Jiang et al., 2012; Kristof-Brown et al., 2005; Campion et al., 2011).

The hypotheses are straightforward and managerially actionable: (1) Promotion → Performance. Competency-based, transparent, and timely promotions will be positively associated with employee performance because they align signals with desired behaviors and motivate skill investment (Jiang et al., 2012; Campion et al., 2011); (2) Staffing/Placement Quality → Performance. Workforce plans anchored to workload and fit-based placement will be positively associated with performance by improving person–job alignment and team capacity utilization (Kristof-Brown et al., 2005); (3) Competence → Performance. Higher demonstrated competencies—shaped by targeted training and advanced education—will correlate with better performance in DITJEN PEN's complex, market-facing roles (Mwagike, 2025; Campion et al., 2011); (4)Joint Effects. When promotion, staffing, and competence are aligned and reinforced by credible performance measurement (SKP under PP No. 46/2011 and PP No. 30/2019), the combined effect on performance should exceed any single lever (Wihantoro et al., 2015; Rahmat et al., 2024).

The operational stakes are high. DITJEN PEN's mission—expanding and deepening Indonesia's export base—requires staff who can work across government and industry, translate market signals into program choices, and iterate quickly. Without credible promotion signals, disciplined staffing, and strong competence, strategy devolves into plans without execution. Conversely, if these levers are aligned, reform can move from compliance to performance: employees see a line of sight between effort, development, advancement, and recognition; managers get better tools to deploy talent; and the organization learns faster (Jiang et al., 2012; Campion et al., 2011; PP No. 30/2019).

2. METHOD

2.1 Study Context and Design

This study investigates how three independent variables—job promotion (X_1), staffing/procurement (X_2), and competence (X_3)—influence the dependent variable, employee performance (Y), among civil servants at the Directorate General of National Export Development (DITJEN PEN), Ministry of Trade. Following the standard definition of variables, independent variables are the presumed causes of variance in a dependent variable, whereas the dependent variable represents the outcome influenced by the independents (Sugiyono, 2004). The design is explanatory, using a cross-sectional survey to test directional hypotheses derived from Indonesia's bureaucratic reform logic and competency-based HRM.

2.2 Population, Site, and Timing

The population consists of 250 DITJEN PEN employees across the Secretariat, Directorate of Export Product Development for Industrial & Energy Products (Dit. P2IE), Directorate of Export Product Development for Creative Products (Dit. P2C), Directorate of Export Market Development for Regions and International Organizations (Dit. P2EKRE), and the Directorate of Export Cooperation Policy (Dit. KPE). The research was conducted at DITJEN PEN headquarters, Jl. M. I. Ridwan Rais No. 5, Central Jakarta, over April–August 2012.

A probability sampling strategy—simple random sampling—was used. The sample size was computed with the Slovin formula at a 5% margin of error, yielding $n \approx 153.85$, rounded to 154 respondents from the population of 250. The final draw was allocated proportionally by unit (e.g., Secretariat 54, Dit. P2IE 27, Dit. P2C 25, Dit. P2EKRE 27, Dit. KPE 21).

2.3 Constructs, Operational Definitions, and Indicators

Operationalization follows the file's definitions to ensure measurement validity and alignment with the study's theoretical frame. First, job promotion (X_1): upward movement that increases authority, responsibility, and rewards (seniority and merit dimensions). The indicators are work experience, rank (seniority); work results, timeliness, pride (merit). Second, staffing or procurement (X_2): recruitment through placement, orientation, and induction to secure effective employees. Third, indicators: intake planning, needs identification, position filling (recruitment); interviews, medical tests (selection); person–job adjustment, education, talent (placement). Fourth. competence (X_3): integrated knowledge, skills, and attitudes that correlate with job performance and can be measured and developed through training.

The indicators are analytical ability, intuition, motivational capacity (skills); breadth of knowledge, role readiness, structural training (knowledge); emotional control (attitude). Fifth, employee performance (Y): legally and ethically compliant work results aligned with authority and responsibility. Indicators: punctual presence, rule compliance (obedience); capability and cooperation (teamwork).

All indicators are measured on five-point interval Likert scales (1 = strongly disagree … 5 = strongly agree). This structure directly matches the managerial levers emphasized in the Introduction: promotion standards (merit/seniority), disciplined staffing and fit (recruitment–selection–placement), and competency development, all culminating in observable performance.

2.4 Data Sources and Collection

Primary data is structured questionnaires administered to sampled employees, plus interviews with the Head of the HR Subdivision and other relevant staff, capturing perceptions of promotion practices, staffing processes, competencies, and individual performance (Likert 1–5). Secondary data is organizational records from DITJEN PEN and the Ministry's HR Bureau to support sampling frames and contextual description.

Measurement Quality Procedures are (1) Validity testing uses corrected item–total correlations to assess internal validity of each item on its construct scale. Items with corrected item–total correlation ≥ 0.25–0.30 are retained (thresholds commonly adopted in applied settings). Significance is judged with Product–Moment critical values (r-table) at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Arikunto, 1997; Sugiyono, 2004); (2) Reliability is assessed with Cronbach's α, using the one-shot approach (single administration). A scale is considered reliable when $\alpha \geq 0.70$; (3) Descriptive statistics summarize central tendencies and dispersions for each construct to profile the sample and detect anomalies.

2.5 Analytical Strategy and Hypothesis Tests

The inferential plan follows the file's procedures: (1) Simple Linear Regression: to gauge the bivariate effect (e.g., a basic model form in the file maps Y to X; in this study we specify $Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + \varepsilon$ to match the three-predictor design); (2) Multiple Linear Regression: primary model for simultaneous effects of promotion (X_1), staffing/procurement (X_2), and competence (X_3) on performance (Y), estimated at 95% confidence ($\alpha = 0.05$); (3) Correlation (r) and Coefficient of Determination (R^2): to describe association strength and the proportion of variance in performance explained by the predictors.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

3.1 Respondent Profile

A total of 154 DITJEN PEN employees completed the survey. The gender split is balanced—48% male (n = 74) and 52% female (n = 80)—indicating good representation of both groups in the directorate's workforce. Age is broadly distributed, with the largest single cohort aged 31–35 (n = 33; 21.4%) followed by 46–50 (n = 31; 20.1%). The 26–30 and 36–40 and 41–45 bands are each near 13–19.5%, and only 3.2% of respondents are 21–25, reflecting a service dominated by mid-career professionals rather than fresh entrants. Educational attainment is comparatively high: S1 (bachelor) is the modal level (37%), followed by S2 (master) (20.8%), SMU (24%), and Akademi/D3 (18.2%). This composition is consistent with the competency orientation emphasized in the introduction and signals a workforce with a foundation to absorb advanced HR practices, training, and performance management reforms.

Implications. The age/education mix suggests that managerial interventions around competency development and performance measurement are likely to find traction. A relatively mature service with notable S1/S2 shares typically understands formal appraisal, competency frameworks, and meritocratic promotion criteria—important given the study's focus on promotion, staffing, and competence as levers of performance.

3.2 Instrument Quality: Validity and Reliability

3.2.1 Validity

Construct validity was tested using corrected item–total correlations. The decision rule follows standard practice in the file: items with corrected item–total correlation ≥ 0.25–0.30 are retained; significance is judged with r-table at $\alpha = 0.05$ (Product–Moment) (Suharsimi Arikunto, 1997; Sugiyono, 2010). Across constructs: (1) Job Promotion (X_1): All 7 items met the validity threshold (r_hasil > r_tabel = 0.306), indicating coherent measurement of promotion criteria and experiences (e.g., experience as requirement, attention to rank, timeliness of promotion, and affective pride when promoted); (2) Staffing/Procurement (X_2): All 8 items were valid (r_hasil > 0.306), covering planning, needs-based recruitment, reliance on honorer, interviews and medical tests, orientation, and fit-based placement; (3) Competence (X_3): In the first pass, two items—emotional control statements—fell below r_tabel (0.221

and 0.260). After removing them (items #7 and #8), the retested 6-item scale met the validity threshold across the board; (4) Performance (Y): All 8 items reached r_hasil > 0.306, capturing punctuality, rule compliance, equipment proficiency, capability, teamwork planning, and superior–subordinate cooperation.

These results confirm that the observed items are internally consistent with their constructs and suitable for subsequent reliability and regression analyses (Suharsimi Arikunto, 1997; Sugiyono, 2010).

3.2.2 Reliability

Reliability was assessed using Cronbach's alpha with a one-shot approach. Consistent with the file, the thresholds referenced are $\alpha > 0.60$ (Nunnally, 1967 in Imam Ghozali, 2005) and the more stringent $\alpha \geq 0.70$ (Sekaran in Zulganef, 2006). All constructs surpassed the 0.70 mark: (1) Promotion: $\alpha = 0.821$; (2) Staffing/Procurement: $\alpha = 0.794$; (3) Competence: $\alpha = 0.709$ (after removing two weak items); (4) Performance: $\alpha = 0.745$

This confirms adequate internal consistency for the retained indicators and supports the use of composite scores in inferential tests (Nunnally, 1967 in Imam Ghozali, 2005; Sekaran in Zulganef, 2006).

3.3 Descriptive Results by Construct

3.3.1 Job promotion (X_1)

Frequency distributions show strong agreement that experience is a legitimate requirement for promotion and that rank is considered in promotion decisions; both items have ≥ 72–73% agreement (setuju + sangat setuju). In contrast, two operational frictions emerge: "I will be promoted when my work is assessed as good" and "Promotions are always timely" exhibit the highest portions of neutral-to-disagree responses (≈ 45% and 45% respectively). The pattern implies that while the criteria for promotion are perceived as aligned with competence and seniority, the process cadence (timeliness) and the line-of-sight between results and reward remain less convincing to some employees. This is consistent with reform narratives where standards are clearer than implementation speed or consistency.

3.3.2 Staffing/procurement (X_2)

Perceptions are broadly favorable for needs-based recruitment and prior planning (agreement above 80%), signaling that workforce planning is visible to employees. However, the items "medical test as selection requirement" and "placement according to education" draw relatively higher neutral-to-disagree responses (≈34% and ≈32% respectively), suggesting space to strengthen selection rigor and fit at assignment. Since person–job fit is a known driver of performance and engagement, this is a non-trivial diagnostic for HR (see also discussion with regression results).

3.3.3 Competence (X_3)

Agreement is strongest on analytical ability, intuition, and being a motivator (with "motivator" > 93% agreement), and on the importance of structural training. The relatively weaker perception is "employees always occupy positions aligned with their abilities", where neutral-to-disagree responses reach ≈38%—again pointing to room for improved placement and career pathing. Overall, the competence profile is high with specific fit concerns at assignment.

3.3.4 Performance (Y)

Performance perceptions are uniformly high, particularly on cooperation with superiors (agreement ≈95%) and the importance of equipment proficiency for productivity (≈83%). Items on punctuality and rule compliance also attract strong agreement, but the statement "Being on time supports

job execution" shows ≈25% neutral-to-disagree, hinting that punctuality is viewed as necessary but not sufficient for performance. The measurement coverage—punctuality, compliance, capability, teamwork—matches the SKP-style dimensions introduced in later regulations and reflects the multidimensional nature of public-sector performance perceptions.

3.4 Correlation Analysis

Bivariate correlations (Pearson) indicate: (1) Promotion → Performance: $r = 0.181$, $p = 0.025$ (positive, significant at 0.05); (2) Staffing → Performance: $r = 0.047$, $p = 0.565$ (positive, not significant); (3) Competence → Performance: $r = 0.676$, $p < 0.001$ (positive, high, significant at 0.01).

Using the interpretation bands reproduced in the file (Sarwono, 2006), the promotion–performance link is very weak, staffing–performance is very weak and non-significant, and competence–performance is strong and highly significant. These patterns already foreshadow the regression outcomes: competence is the dominant correlate of performance; promotion has a small but real correlation; staffing as perceived in this instrument does not correlate with performance at the bivariate level.

The strong zero-order link for competence echoes the descriptive findings (high perceived capability, training emphasis) and aligns with the introduction's rationale that competency-based management is the engine of execution in volatile, market-facing roles. By contrast, staffing's non-significant correlation suggests either (i) restricted variance in staffing perceptions (e.g., most people answered "agree," limiting discrimination); (ii) measurement content that emphasizes process presence (planning, needs basis) rather than quality of match; or (iii) a time-lag phenomenon where staffing decisions affect performance indirectly via competence building and promotion outcomes. Promotion's weak positive correlation is plausible: promotions are infrequent events and—if timeliness and result-reward linkages are perceived as spotty—their motivational signal will be diluted at the perception level, even if they still register a small association with performance.

3.5 Simple Regressions (Univariate Effects)

Promotion → Performance. A simple regression yields $Y = 20.034 + 0.125 \cdot X_1$, with $t = 2.269$, $p = 0.025$, and $R^2 = 0.033$. Interpretation: for each one-point increase in promotion perceptions, performance increases by 0.125 points on the composite scale, but the model explains only 3.3% of performance variance. The effect is statistically significant but substantively small. This is consistent with the process-friction noted earlier (timeliness and result-reward gaps). In practice, making promotion timely, rule-consistent, and demonstrably merit-linked could plausibly expand this effect size.

Staffing → Performance. The simple regression $Y = 22.076 + 0.035 \cdot X_2$ shows $t = 0.577$, $p = 0.565$, and $R^2 = 0.002$. The staffing coefficient is not significant and the explained variance is negligible. This does not mean staffing is irrelevant; rather, this instrument's coverage (e.g., general planning presence, selection steps) and/or implementation uniformity may obscure discriminating variance needed to pick up effects. A refined scale emphasizing fit quality (knowledge, skills, abilities → role demands), time-to-fill, and onboarding effectiveness may reveal stronger links.

Competence → Performance. The simple regression $Y = 9.152 + 0.607 \cdot X_3$ produces a large, significant effect ($t = 11.325$, $p < 0.001$) with $R^2 = 0.458$, meaning 45.8% of performance variance is explained by competence alone. This is a substantive effect that dominates the univariate models and mirrors the strong correlation ($r = 0.676$). In substantive terms, a one-point increase in competence corresponds to a 0.607-point increase in performance, and the intercept suggests a modest baseline performance even at low competence. The finding accords with the introduction's premise that capability is central to task execution in export development roles that require analytical, collaborative, and adaptive behaviors.

3.6 Multiple Regression (Joint Effects)

The full model includes all three predictors: Y = 6.537 ;+; 0.093,X_1 ;+; 0.016,X_2 ;+; 0.599,X_3]. First, Promotion (X_1): $\beta = 0.093$, $t = 2.271$, $p = 0.025$ (significant, small). Second, Staffing (X_2): $\beta = 0.016$, $t = 0.354$, $p = 0.724$ (not significant). Third, Competence (X_3): $\beta = 0.599$, $t = 11.276$, $p < 0.001$ (large, highly significant). Fourth, Model fit: $F(3,150) = 45.583$, $p < 0.001$, $R^2 = 0.477$, Adj. $R^2 = 0.466$.

Two takeaways are decisive. First, competence remains the dominant predictor when controlling for promotion and staffing, with an effect size virtually unchanged from the simple regression. Second, promotion contributes a small but statistically significant unique effect, consistent with its role as an incentive signal when merit criteria become credible. Meanwhile, staffing remains non-significant—even after controlling for the other predictors—suggesting that in this dataset, how staffing is currently practiced and perceived does not add explanatory power for performance beyond what competence (and to a lesser extent promotion) already capture.

Practical implications for DITJEN PEN are (1) Double down on competence development where it moves the needle most. Given $\beta \approx 0.60$, targeted development is likely to yield the largest returns. The data highlight analytical ability, motivational capacity, and structural training as salient. Calibrate curricula to the market-facing nature of export development: sector analysis, trade policy instruments, partnership management, and data-driven program design. Monitor pre/post gains and connect them to SKP results to preserve the competence → performance link; (2) Make promotion faster, fairer, and more visibly merit-based. The weak-but-significant promotion coefficient and the descriptive shortfalls on timeliness and clear reward for results suggest operational fixes—cycle calendars, published criteria, panel training, and feedback letters specifying gaps. This converts promotion into a predictable incentive, increasing its motivational potency beyond the current $\beta \approx 0.093$; (3) Re-engineer staffing around "fit." Re-specify staffing indicators and practice around competency–role alignment, not just process presence. Introduce structured interviews, work-sample or job knowledge tests for critical functions, harden medical/psychological standards where job-relevant, and institutionalize onboarding as a 90-day competency ramp-up with checklists and coaching. Then measure: time-to-productivity, early performance signals, and probation conversion rates. Over time, improved staffing should raise competence and, through that channel, performance—an effect not captured in the current cross-section; (4) Use performance data to drive decisions. The study employs a performance construct congruent with SKP dimensions (punctuality, compliance, capability, teamwork/cooperation). Keep strengthening measurement specificity and use—link appraisal to development plans, assignment decisions, and promotion eligibility. This keeps the system coherent: measure what matters → develop what is missing → reward what improves—a loop the present results strongly endorse. (Normality, multicollinearity, and heteroskedasticity checks in the file confirm OLS appropriateness and bolster confidence in these directional findings; Santoso in Duwi Priyanto, 2008; Sugiyono, 2004; Ghozali, 2005).

3.7 Key Findings

First, the workforce is mid-career and well-educated (S1/S2 majority), primed for competency-based HR. Second, all constructs meet validity and reliability criteria after pruning two weak competence items (Ghozali et al., 2005). Third, competence has a strong positive relationship with performance ($r = 0.676$; $\beta \approx 0.60$; $R^2\_uni = 0.458$). Fourth, promotion has a small but significant effect ($r = 0.181$; $\beta \approx 0.093$; $R^2\_uni = 0.033$), with timeliness and results-to-reward linkages as improvement targets. Fifth, staffing is non-significant in this measurement ($r = 0.047$; $\beta \approx 0.016$; $R^2\_uni = 0.002$); better indicators of fit and effectiveness are recommended. Sixth, the joint model is strong ($F = 45.583$, $p < 0.001$; $R^2 = 0.477$; Adj. $R^2 = 0.466$), confirming the three levers collectively explain nearly 48% of performance variance under classical OLS assumptions (Sugiyono, 2004; Ghozali et al., 2005).

4. CONCLUSION

The analysis delivers a clear ranking of performance drivers inside DITJEN PEN. Competence is the decisive lever: after ensuring valid and reliable measurement, competence alone explains nearly half of the variance in employee performance and retains a large, highly significant coefficient in multivariate models. This reinforces the practical message that capability—defined as observable knowledge, skills, and behaviors aligned to role—must anchor HR strategy where tasks are analytical, collaborative, and market-facing.

Promotion matters, but its observed effect is modest. The data indicate that employees broadly accept the competency emphasis and seniority criteria, yet they are less convinced that promotions are timely or tightly coupled to demonstrable results. Tightening calendars, publishing criteria, training panels, and issuing specific feedback can convert promotion from a compliance step into a predictable incentive that strengthens the effort-→-advancement link.

By contrast, staffing/procurement did not register as a significant predictor in this cross-section. The likely reasons are a measurement focus on process existence rather than match quality, restricted variance in responses, and causal distance (effects running through competence and promotion over time). Practically, staffing should be re-designed around fit: competency-based requisitions, structured interviews, job-knowledge or work-sample testing, and onboarding that accelerates time-to-productivity. Once practices shift, indicators should track fit and effectiveness (e.g., pass rates by competency bands, early-performance signals, probation conversions), which are more likely to surface staffing's true impact.

Taken together, the results align tightly with Indonesia's reform direction: if the organization invests in targeted competence development, credible and timely merit-based promotion, and fit-focused staffing, performance improves and the SKP-style appraisal system gains real decision weight. In the short run, prioritize capability building in functions with the greatest export-development leverage (sector analysis, trade-policy instruments, partnership management, data-driven program design), and make promotion cycles transparent and regular. In the medium term, rebuild staffing around role-competency alignment and measure outcomes, not just process presence.

The study is bounded by cross-sectional data and self-reports. Future research should incorporate administrative traces (training hours, SKP scores, promotion timings, selection tool usage) and test mediated/lagged pathways to capture how staffing improves competence, which in turn drives performance. Even with these caveats, the hierarchy of effects is unambiguous: competence ≫ promotion > staffing (ns). Acting on that hierarchy provides a practical roadmap for leaders to allocate effort and budget where the returns to employee performance—and ultimately to national export development—are largest.

Ethical Approval
Not Applicable

Informed Consent Statement
Not Applicable

Disclosure Statement
The Authors declare that they have no conflict of interest

Data Availability Statement
The data presented in this study are available upon request from the corresponding author for privacy.

Funding
This study did not receive any external funding.

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