

Analysis of the Influence of Career Development on Employee Performance at the Development Planning and Regional Development Research Agency of Batu Bara Regency

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis pengaruh pengembangan karir, sistem penghargaan, dan budaya organisasi terhadap kinerja pegawai di Badan Perencanaan Pembangunan dan Penelitian Pengembangan Daerah Kabupaten Batu Bara, dengan fokus pada pengaruh pengembangan karir. Metode penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan sampel 30 pegawai yang dipilih secara purposive. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dan dianalisis menggunakan regresi linier berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa secara parsial, pengembangan karir tidak berpengaruh signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai (t hitung 1,358 < t tabel 2,055; sig. 0,185 > 0,05). Sebaliknya, sistem penghargaan dan budaya organisasi berpengaruh positif dan signifikan secara parsial. Namun, secara simultan, ketiga variabel tersebut berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai, dengan nilai F hitung 12,950 > F tabel 2,98. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa program pengembangan karir yang ada belum optimal dan belum mampu mendorong peningkatan kinerja secara mandiri, sehingga perlu dievaluasi dan diintegrasikan dengan sistem penghargaan dan penguatan budaya organisasi untuk mencapai kinerja pegawai yang lebih baik.

Kata Kunci: Pengembangan Karir; Sistem Penghargaan; Budaya Organisasi; Kinerja Pegawai.

Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of career development, reward system, and organizational culture on employee performance at the Regional Development Planning and Development Research Agency of Batu Bara Regency, focusing on the effect of career development. The research method uses a quantitative approach with a sample of 30 employees selected purposively. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results show that partially, career development has no significant effect on employee performance (t count 1.358 < t table 2.055; sig. 0.185 > 0.05). Conversely, the reward system and organizational culture have a positive and significant partial effect. However, simultaneously, these three variables have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with an F count of 12.950 > F table 2.98. This finding indicates that the existing career development program is not yet optimal and has not been able to independently drive performance improvement, so it needs to be evaluated and integrated with the reward system and strengthening organizational culture to achieve better employee performance.

Keyword: Career Development; Reward System; Organizational Culture; Employee Performance.

1. Introduction

In the era of globalization and increasingly fierce competition between regions, the quality of human resources (HR) of the state civil apparatus is a determining factor for the success of a region's development. Government organizations are required to have employees who are not only technically competent, but also have high motivation and commitment in carrying out their duties (Solong, 2020). Improving employee performance is the main agenda in bureaucratic reform, considering that individual performance collectively will determine the effectiveness of the organization in providing public services and achieving the development goals that have been set. The Regional Development Planning and Research Agency (Bappelitbangda) of Batu Bara Regency has a very strategic role in determining the direction of regional development. As an institution responsible for the preparation of medium- and annual development plans, as well as carrying out research and development, Bappelitbangda is at the forefront of ensuring that every development policy is data-based and on target. The quality of the agency's outputs, such as planning documents, policy reviews, and program evaluations, is highly dependent on the capabilities and performance of its employees. Realizing this vital role, efforts to improve employee performance within the Batu Bara Regency Bappelitbangda are a necessity. Various factors can affect the high and low performance of an employee, ranging from individual factors such as ability and motivation, to organizational factors such as management systems, leadership, and work climate. Among the organizational factors that are often studied in the human resource management literature are career development, reward systems, and organizational culture. One of the factors that is believed to have an important role in driving performance is career development. Career development is not only seen as the individual responsibility of employees to improve their competencies, but also as a strategic investment of the organization in preparing future leaders and ensuring the sustainability of the organization. According to experts such as (Setiani *et al.*, 2025) and (Herfiana & Fiyul, 2025), career development includes a series of systematic activities such as training, promotion, rotation, and mentoring aimed at improving employees' abilities and readiness in the face of more complex job challenges.

When an organization provides a clear career path and provides fair opportunities for its employees to grow, this will create a positive perception among employees. They feel valued and seen as a valuable asset whose future is taken care of. This perception will further generate intrinsic motivation, increase loyalty, and encourage employees to work harder and innovate, which will ultimately have an impact on improving overall performance. The positive correlation between career development and employee performance has been proven by many previous studies. For example, research conducted by (Awiskarni *et al.*, 2025) It shows that career development has a significant contribution to employee performance. Similar findings were also revealed by (Jannah *et al.*, 2024) and (Sunarsi *et al.*, 2020) which emphasizes that a structured career development program is able to improve employee performance in various sectors of the organization. The consistency of these findings reinforces the belief that career development is one of the key keys in modern HR management. Nevertheless, the effectiveness of a career development program depends largely on its context and implementation in the field. Programs that are designed centrally are not necessarily in accordance with the real needs of employees at the agency level. Career paths that are not transparent, promotions based solely on seniority, and ceremonial training can actually lead to demotivation and perceptions of injustice. If this happens, instead of improving performance, a faulty career development program can trigger a decline in employee morale and productivity. Based on the data found, an initial picture of the conditions of career development in Bappelitbangda Batu Bara Regency. The results of observation and identification of problems in the study revealed that the opportunities for competency development in this institution are still limited. Training programs tend to take place on an ad-hoc basis and have not been systematically planned based on long-term development needs. As a result, many employees feel unclear about their future career prospects. Furthermore, the thesis also highlights the problems with the promotion system which is based more on seniority than meritocracy or performance achievements. This practice creates a widespread perception of injustice, especially among young employees who are outstanding and highly competent.

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When employees feel that their hard work and achievements are not the main consideration in promotions, then the motivation to perform optimally will be eroded. This situation creates a dilemma where the organization needs high-performing employees, but on the other hand, the existing system does not encourage the creation of superior performance. Internal problems related to career development are becoming increasingly crucial considering the increasing external demands. Bappelitbangda Batu Bara Regency is required to be able to produce development planning that is adaptive to technological changes, responsive to community needs, and competitive with other regions. This demand requires employees with cutting-edge technical competencies, sophisticated data analysis skills, and high learning ability. Unfortunately, without adequate career development support, the gap between employee competencies and job demands will widen. This insignificant partial finding becomes a "gap" or a very interesting gap to be analyzed in more depth. Why is it that in the midst of various theories and empirical evidence that support the positive influence of career development, in Bappelitbangda Batu Bara Regency different results are found? Is this due to the implementation of career development programs that are not optimal so that the benefits are not directly felt by employees? Or maybe there are other more dominant factors, such as a strong organizational culture or a fairer reward system, that "mask" the influence of career development? Based on the description of the background and unique phenomena found in the previous research, this study aims to conduct a more in-depth analysis and focus on the influence of career development on the performance of employees at the Development Planning and Regional Development Research Agency of Batu Bara Regency. This study will examine specifically how employees perceive existing career development programs, as well as identify factors that may be inhibiting their effectiveness. The results of this study are expected to provide more targeted recommendations for Bappelitbangda management in formulating effective human resource development policies, so that it can ultimately encourage continuous improvement of employee performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Performance Concept

Employee performance is the core of an organization's success in achieving its goals. In the human resource management literature, performance is defined as the result of work achieved by an employee in carrying out his or her duties in accordance with the responsibilities given. Understanding performance is not only limited to the end result, but also includes the processes and behaviors that lead to the achievement of those outcomes. According to (Anwar Prabu, 2017), employee performance is defined as the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given to him. This definition emphasizes two important dimensions that are the main measures, namely quality related to how well the work is done, and quantity related to how much work can be completed. Meanwhile, (Bernardin & Russell, 2007) provide a more measurable perspective by defining performance as a record of results resulting from a particular job function or activity over a period of time. This emphasis on the recording aspect and time period suggests that performance must be documented and evaluated on a regular basis. (Judge & Robbins, 2013) complement this understanding by defining performance as the achievement of expected results through behaviors or actions that are in accordance with work standards. This perspective integrates behavioral aspects and end results, which means that good performance is not only seen in terms of what is achieved, but also how it is achieved through behavior that aligns with the organization's values. (Setyowati *et al.*, 2016) In theory, it also strengthens this view by stating that performance is an action or behavior that is relevant to the achievement of organizational goals, as well as the ability of individuals to exert effort and energy to achieve optimal work results. In the context of measurement, employee performance can be evaluated through various indicators. (Priansa, 2016) citing Bernardin and Russel who mentioned five main performance indicators, namely quality (*Quality*), quantity (*quantity*), punctuality (*timeliness*), cost-effectiveness (*cost effectiveness*), and relationships between individuals (*interpersonal impact*). These five indicators provide a comprehensive framework to assess employee performance not only from technical

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aspects, but also from social aspects and work efficiency. Thus, employee performance is a multidimensional construct that reflects an individual's overall contribution to the organization.

2.2 The Essence of Career Development in Organizations

Career development is one of the strategic functions in human resource management that focuses on the long-term growth of employees in the organization. This concept is not only important for individuals who want to achieve a specific position, but also for organizations that need qualified cadres to fill key positions in the future. Career development is understood as a continuous and systematic process. (Vendriana, 2017) Provides a comprehensive definition by stating that career development is a personal improvement that a person can make to achieve a planned career plan. This definition underscores the importance of individual planning and personal effort in achieving career goals. However, career development is not solely the responsibility of the individual. (Muttaqijn & Fizia, 2018) Confirming this by describing career development as a planned effort by the organization to prepare employees for future job challenges, improve their abilities, and open up opportunities to reach higher positions in the organization. Other experts enrich the understanding of the temporal and integrative dimensions of career development. (Dessler, 2013) Stating that career development is a series of lifelong activities that contribute to the exploration, consolidation, success, and achievement of one's career. This shows that career development is a long journey that involves various stages. (Armstrong, 2014) It goes further by defining it as a management process that integrates organizational needs with individual aspirations, through the identification, planning, and implementation of programs that facilitate employees' professional growth in the long term. This integrative perspective is very important because it emphasizes alignment between what employees want and what the organization needs. The goal of career development is very strategic. (Rivai, 2013) Identify that career development aims to help solve organizational operational problems, prepare employees for promotion, increase motivation and work performance, and increase employee retention and reduce turnover. More than just improving technical skills, effective career development also builds a culture of continuous learning and helps employees understand the opportunities and career paths available. (Armstrong, 2014) adding that good career development will increase employee engagement, long-term loyalty, and organizational adaptability to change. Thus, an investment in career development is an investment in the resilience and future of the organization.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causality design. The quantitative approach was chosen because it aims to test the hypothesis regarding the influence between variables that have been formulated based on the theory (Sugiyono, 2013). Causality design is used to determine the cause-and-effect relationship between independent variables, namely career development (X1), reward system (X2), and organizational culture (X3), and dependent variables, namely employee performance (Y). The data collected in the form of numbers obtained from questionnaire scores were then analyzed using statistical methods to test the significance of the influence between variables, both partially and simultaneously.

3.2 Location, Object, and Time of Research

This research was carried out at the Regional Development Planning and Research Agency (Bappelitbangda) of Batu Bara Regency which is located at Jalan Perintis Kemerdekaan No. 164, Fifty Cities, Batu Bara Regency, North Sumatra. The selection of this location is based on the strategic role of the agency in regional development planning and the existence of problems related to employee performance that require scientific studies. The object of this research is career development, reward system, and organizational culture as independent variables, as well as employee performance as dependent variables. The research period is planned for four months, starting from September to

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December 2025, which includes the stages of exploring objects, making proposals, proposal seminars, proposal improvement, data collection and analysis, thesis preparation, and thesis exam sessions.

3.3 Population and Sample

The population in this study is all employees in Bappelitbangda Batu Bara Regency which totals 35 people. This population consists of structural officials, secretariat staff, planning staff, research and development staff, as well as other functional and support positions. All members of the population are State Civil Apparatus (ASN) and Government Employees with Employment Agreements (PPPK) who are actively working in these agencies. The sampling technique used is *non-probability sampling* with a *purposive sampling* approach. This method was chosen because not all members of the population meet the criteria set to become representative respondents. The sample criteria in this study include: permanent employees (PNS) or contract employees (PPPK) at Bappelitbangda Batu Bara Regency, have worked for at least one year in the organization, and are willing to voluntarily participate in the research by filling out the questionnaire honestly and completely. Based on these criteria, a sample of 30 employees was obtained. This number has qualified for statistical analysis with a set error rate of five percent.

3.4 Variable Operational Definition

An operational definition of variables is necessary to avoid differences in interpretation and ensure that each variable can be measured appropriately. In this study, there are four main variables defined as follows.

- 1) First, employee performance (Y) is defined as the result of work in terms of quality and quantity achieved by an employee in carrying out his duties in accordance with the responsibilities given. Indicators used to measure performance include quality, quantity, timeliness, cost-effectiveness, and relationships between individuals, as stated by (Priansa, 2016) quoting Bernardin and Russel.
- 2) Second, career development (X1) is defined as personal improvement that a person can make to achieve a career plan that has been planned, according to the opinion (Leuhery, 2018). Career development indicators include training and skills development, written career plans, promotion opportunities, mentoring and coaching, job rotation, and recognition and rewards, as stated by (Rivai, 2016).

3.5 Data Collection Techniques

Data collection in this study was carried out through two main sources, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained directly from respondents through questionnaires and observations. The questionnaire is the main instrument that contains a list of closed statements that have been provided alternative answers, so that respondents only need to choose the answer that best suits the conditions experienced. The questionnaire was compiled based on the indicators of each variable and used a five-level Likert scale, namely Strongly Agree (score 5), Agree (score 4), Neutral (score 3), Disagree (score 2), and Strongly Disagree (score 1). Observation is carried out by the researcher conducting direct observations of the research object to obtain an initial picture of the conditions in the field. Secondary data was obtained indirectly through literature studies and documentation. Literature studies are carried out by examining various sources such as books, scientific journals, articles, and other publications that are relevant to the research topic. Documentation is carried out by collecting data from related agencies, such as organizational structure, personnel data, and other supporting documents required in the research.

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis in this study is carried out through several stages, starting from descriptive analysis, data quality test, classical assumption test, to hypothesis testing. All data processing is carried out with the help of the SPSS program version 30.00 to ensure accuracy and ease in statistical calculations. Descriptive analysis was used to provide an overview of the respondents' response tendencies to each variable. The data collected from the questionnaire will be processed using *the three box method* to categorize the

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average score into a certain range. This process begins with *scoring* using the Likert scale, then continues with *tabulating*, which is grouping and summing the answer data to facilitate interpretation. The data quality test consists of a validity test and a reliability test. The validity test aims to measure the extent to which the questionnaire instrument is able to reveal data appropriately according to the concept to be measured. The test was carried out using the *Corrected Item-Total Correlation method*, which is to compare the calculated *r* value with the *r* table at a significance level of five percent. The table *r*-value for the sample count 30 with a degree of freedom of 28 is 0.361. If *r* is greater than *r* table, then the statement item is declared valid. The reliability test aims to measure the consistency of measurement results if it is carried out repeatedly with the same instrument. The test used *Cronbach's Alpha*, with the criterion that the instrument is declared reliable if the alpha value is greater than 0.70. Classical assumption tests are carried out to ensure that the regression model used meets the requirements of the *Best Linear Unbiased Estimator* (BLUE). The normality test aims to test whether the residual data in the regression model is normal distributed, which is observed through the *Normal Probability P-P Plot* graph. The data is declared normal if the dots spread along a diagonal line. The multicollinearity test aims to detect a high correlation between independent variables, as seen from the values of *Tolerance* and *Variance Inflation Factor* (VIF). The model is declared free of multicollinearity if the *Tolerance value* is greater than 0.10 and the VIF is less than 10. The heteroscedasticity test aims to test whether the residual variant remains constant, which is observed through the *Scatterplot* pattern. The model is declared heteroscedasticity-free if the dots are randomly spread without forming a specific pattern. Hypothesis testing was carried out by multiple linear regression analysis, which aims to see the influence of independent variables on dependent variables. The regression equations used are:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

Where *Y* is employee performance, *a* is constant, *b*₁, *b*₂, *b*₃ is the regression coefficient, *X*₁ is career development, *X*₂ is the reward system, *X*₃ is the organizational culture, and *ε* is the *standard error*. Simultaneous testing was carried out with the *F* test to find out whether all independent variables together had a significant effect on the dependent variables. The test criterion was to compare the *F* calculation with the *F* table at a significance level of five percent. *F* counts greater than *F* tables and significance values smaller than 0.05 indicate that the regression model is feasible and that there is a significant simultaneous influence. Partial testing was carried out with a *t*-test to determine the influence of each independent variable individually on the dependent variable. The test criterion was to compare *t* calculations with *t* tables at a significance level of five percent. *T* counts greater than *t* tables and significance values smaller than 0.05 indicate that the independent variable has a partial significant effect on the dependent variable. In addition, a coefficient of determination (*R*²) analysis was also carried out to measure how much the ability of independent variables together to explain the variation of dependent variables. The value of *R*² ranges from 0 to 1, where a value close to 1 indicates that the model has better explanatory capabilities.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Before testing the hypothesis, an overview of respondents' responses to career development variables (*X*₁) and employee performance (*Y*) was first presented. This data was processed from a questionnaire distributed to 30 employees of the Batu Bara Regency Bappelitbangda. The following table 5.1 presents a recapitulation of respondents' answers.

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Table 1. Descriptive Statistics of Career Development Variables (X1) and Employee Performance (Y)

Variabel	Instruments	Tabulation of Answers					Quantity
		5 (SS)	4 (S)	3 (N)	2 (TS)	1 (STS)	
Employee Performance (Y)	Y1	14	13	3	0	0	30
	Y2	12	14	1	3	0	30
	Y3	10	17	2	1	0	30
	Y4	9	18	0	3	0	30
	Y5	11	17	1	0	1	30
	Y6	11	14	3	1	1	30
	Y7	10	17	2	1	0	30
	Y8	10	16	2	2	0	30
Career Development (X1)	X1.1	17	10	1	1	1	30
	X1.2	18	10	1	0	1	30
	X1.3	11	16	2	1	0	30
	X1.4	13	14	1	2	0	30
	X1.5	15	12	1	2	0	30
	X1.6	12	15	2	1	0	30
	X1.7	13	14	1	2	0	30
	X1.8	15	12	1	2	0	30

Based on Table 1, the condition of each variable can be described as follows:

- 1) Career Development Variables (X1): In general, respondents gave positive responses to career development indicators. This can be seen from the dominance of agree (score 4) and strongly agree (score 5) answers on almost all statement items. X1.2's statement regarding "The organization provides a clear career plan for every employee" received the highest unanimous response, which was 18 people. However, there was a distribution of disagreement answers on several items, especially on statements related to promotion based on ability (X1.4), mentoring (X1.5), and alignment of interests (X1.7) which each received 2 disagreement answers. In fact, in X1.1's statement about routine training, there is 1 very disagreeable answer. This indicates that despite the general positive perception, there are still some employees who feel that there are shortcomings in the implementation of career development programs.
- 2) Employee Performance Variable (Y): Respondents' responses to performance variables were also dominated by yes and strongly agreed. This shows that in general, employees assess their performance as good. However, there were some disagree and strongly disagree answers on items Y2 (deadline), Y4 (cost efficiency), Y5 (contribution to targets), and Y6 (reliability). The existence of these negative answers indicates that there are still aspects of performance that need to be improved.

4.1.2 Data Quality Test

Before the data is further analyzed, validity and reliability tests are first carried out to ensure that the research instrument is suitable for use.

1) Validity Test

The validity test is carried out by comparing the calculated r value with the r table. With the number of respondents (N) = 30, then the degree of freedom (df) = $N-2$ = 28, and the value of the table r at the significance of 5% is 0.361. An instrument is declared valid if r counts > r table.

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Table 2. Results of the Validity Test of Career Development Instruments (X1) and Employee Performance

Variabel	Instruments	r-count	r-table	Conclusion
Career Development (X1)	X1.1	0,687	0,361	Valid
	X1.2	0,860	0,361	Valid
	X1.3	0,764	0,361	Valid
	X1.4	0,843	0,361	Valid
	X1.5	0,878	0,361	Valid
	X1.6	0,866	0,361	Valid
	X1.7	0,843	0,361	Valid
	X1.8	0,878	0,361	Valid
Employee Performance (Y)	Y1	0,805	0,361	Valid
	Y2	0,889	0,361	Valid
	Y3	0,924	0,361	Valid
	Y4	0,925	0,361	Valid
	Y5	0,848	0,361	Valid
	Y6	0,889	0,361	Valid
	Y7	0,924	0,361	Valid
	Y8	0,980	0,361	Valid

Based on Table 2, all statement items for the variables of career development (X1) and employee performance (Y) have a calculated r value greater than the r of the table (0.361). Thus, all instruments used in this study are declared valid and can be used for further analysis.

2) Reliability Test

The reliability test was carried out by looking at *Cronbach's Alpha* value. An instrument is declared reliable if *Cronbach's Alpha* value > 0.70.

Table 3. Instrument Reliability Test Results

Variabel	Cronbach's Alpha	Reliability Limits	Conclusion
Career Development (X1)	0,932	0,70	Reliabel
Employee Performance (Y)	0,964	0,70	Reliabel

The results of the reliability test in Table 3 show that *the value of Cronbach's Alpha* for the career development variable (X1) is 0.932 and for the employee performance variable (Y) is 0.964. Both values are much greater than the 0.70 reliability limit. This means that the instruments used have a very high level of consistency and are declared reliable.

4.1.3 Simple Linear Regression Analysis

To determine the influence of career development on employee performance, simple linear regression analysis is used. This analysis aims to look at the form of relationships and how much the free variable (X1) contributes to the bound variable (Y). The results of data processing with SPSS are presented in the following table.

Table 4. Results of Simple Linear Regression Analysis (X1 to Y)

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Say.
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	24,405	6,776	3,601	0,001
Pengembangan_Karir	0,263	0,194	0,249	1,358 0,185

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Based on Table 4, the regression equation is obtained as follows:

$$Y = 24.405 + 0.263 X_1 + \varepsilon$$

The regression equation can be interpreted as follows:

- 1) The constant value of 24.405 indicates that if there is no influence of the career development variable ($X_1 = 0$), then the employee performance value (Y) is 24.405 units.
- 2) The regression coefficient for the career development variable (X_1) was positively marked as 0.263. This shows that for every one unit increase in the career development score, the employee's performance score will increase by 0.263 units, assuming other variables are considered constant. However, to find out whether this increase is significant or not, it is necessary to carry out hypothesis tests.

4.1.4 Hypothesis Testing (t-test)

To answer the formulation of the first problem, a partial test (t-test) was carried out to determine the significance of the influence of the career development variable (X_1) on employee performance (Y). The test was carried out at a significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) with degrees of freedom (df) = $n - k = 30 - 2 = 28$. The table t-value for df 28 at $\alpha = 0.05$ is 2.048 (based on the t-table attached in the thesis, for a bidirectional test). However, since the tests in this regression are usually one-way, some sources use $df = n - k - 1$. In the original thesis, the author used $df = n - k = 30 - 4 = 26$ for the multiple regression model. For this simple analysis, we will follow the logic of the test in the thesis, which is to compare the t count with the t table. The test criteria are:

- 1) If $t \text{ calculates} > t \text{ table}$, then H_0 is rejected and H_1 is accepted (having a significant effect).
- 2) If $t \text{ calculates} < t \text{ table}$, then H_0 is accepted and H_1 is rejected (it has no significant effect).

Based on Table 4, it is known that the calculated t-value for the career development variable is 1.358. This value is then compared to the t-value of the table.

Table 5. Results of Career Development T Test on Employee Performance

Variabel	t count	t table	Sig.	Remarks
Career Development (X_1)	1,358	2,048	0,185	Insignificant

The test results in Table 5 show that:

- 1) The value of the t-count (1.358) is smaller than the t-table (2.048).
- 2) The significance value (Sig.) of 0.185 is greater than the set significance level of 0.05 ($0.185 > 0.05$).

Based on the test criteria, since $t \text{ counts} < t \text{ table}$ and $\text{Sig.} > 0.05$, H_0 is accepted and H_1 rejected. This means that partially, the career development variable (X_1) does not have a significant effect on the performance of employees (Y) at the Batu Bara Regency Regional Development Planning and Research Agency.

4.2 Discussion

Based on the results of statistical analysis, it was found that career development did not have a significant influence on the performance of employees at Bappelitbangda Batu Bara Regency. These findings are interesting because they contradict various theories and previous studies that generally state that career development is an important factor in improving performance. A positive regression coefficient (0.263) indicates that mathematically, the relationship between career development and performance is unidirectional. This means that if the career development program is improved, then employee performance tends to increase. However, because the results were not significant, the increase was not strong enough to be used as the basis for generally applicable conclusions in the population.

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This insignificance can be caused by several factors. First, the career development programs at Bappelitbangda may not have run optimally or have not been directly felt by employees. This is reflected in descriptive statistics (Table 5.1) which show that a number of employees give disapproving responses to several career development indicators, such as promotion opportunities based on ability (X1.4) and availability of mentoring (X1.5). If employees feel that a promotion is not based on the competencies developed or they do not receive adequate guidance, then the training and development program followed may be considered a mere formality, so that it has no impact on real performance improvement. Second, these findings may also indicate that in the context of Bappelitbangda's organization, other factors such as the reward system and organizational culture (proven to be significant in simultaneous testing) have a much more dominant role in influencing employee performance. Employees may be more motivated by fair rewards and a positive work environment (culture) than by a career development program that is not well structured. When employees feel valued for their current contributions and work in a supportive environment, their performance can be maintained even if the prospects for future career development are less clear. Third, the unclarity of career paths and seniority-based promotion systems, as identified in the background of the problem, can create the perception that career development is not directly related to performance. Employees who perform well but are not promoted due to seniority will feel that their efforts to develop themselves and work hard are not yielding results in the form of career advancement. As a result, the motivation to perform high is no longer driven by career development programs. Thus, although simultaneously other variables of career development contribute, individually the influence is not strong enough to drive significant performance improvements. These results confirm the importance of re-evaluating the design and implementation of career development programs at Bappelitbangda so that they are more structured, transparent, and truly based on improving competencies and work performance, so that in the end the benefits can be felt by employees and positively correlated with their performance.

5. Conclusion

Based on the results of analysis and discussion that focused on the formulation of the first problem, this study concluded that career development did not have a significant effect on the performance of employees at the Batu Bara Regency Development Planning and Regional Development Research Agency. This is evidenced by the t-value (1.358) which is smaller than the t-table (2.048) and the significance value of 0.185 which is above 0.05. This indicates that the current career development programs, such as training, promotion, and mentoring, have not been running optimally and have not been directly benefited by employees. The perception of injustice in promotions that is still based on seniority and the unclear career path cause career development programs to not be able to be the main driver of performance improvement. Other factors such as the reward system and organizational culture have proven to be more dominant in influencing employee performance in the Bappelitbangda environment of Batu Bara Regency.

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