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The Influence of Competency on Employee Productivity: A Systematic Literature Review on the Roles of Motivation and Recruitment Analysis

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Abstract: Employee productivity remains a critical issue for organizations facing increasing competition and rapid environmental change. Prior studies indicate that employee competency plays a central role in enhancing productivity; however, the mechanisms through which this relationship operates remain fragmented. This study aims to systematically review international empirical research examining the influence of employee competency on employee productivity, with motivation and recruitment analysis as additional explanatory variables. A Systematic Literature Review (SLR) was conducted using the PRISMA model to ensure transparency and methodological rigor. Ten international journal articles published between 2015 and 2024 were selected from reputable databases, including Scopus and Google Scholar. The findings indicate that competency consistently demonstrates a strong positive relationship with employee productivity. Motivation frequently acts as a mediating mechanism that strengthens the competency–productivity link, while recruitment analysis functions as an upstream organizational practice that ensures competency alignment and productivity sustainability. This review contributes by integrating competency, motivation, and recruitment analysis into a unified conceptual framework for employee productivity. The study offers theoretical implications for human resource management literature and practical guidance for organizations seeking to enhance workforce productivity through strategic recruitment, competency development, and motivational systems.

Keyword: Employee Productivity, Competency, Motivation, Recruitment Analysis, Systematic Literature Review.

INTRODUCTION

Employee productivity is widely recognized as a fundamental determinant of organizational effectiveness, competitiveness, and long-term sustainability. In both public and private organizations, productivity reflects the extent to which employees are able to transform resources, skills, and effort into valuable outputs. Despite technological advancement and

organizational restructuring, many organizations continue to face productivity gaps, suggesting that structural interventions alone are insufficient without addressing human resource factors.

Among various human resource determinants, employee competency has been consistently identified as a core driver of productivity. Competency encompasses employees' knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavioral attributes that enable effective job performance. However, empirical findings suggest that competency alone does not automatically translate into higher productivity. Individual and organizational mechanisms are required to activate and sustain the productive potential of competent employees.

In this context, motivation and recruitment analysis emerge as critical complementary variables. Motivation influences the extent to which employees are willing to deploy their competencies optimally, while recruitment analysis ensures that organizations acquire individuals whose competencies match job requirements from the outset. Although numerous studies have examined these variables separately, an integrated understanding of how competency, motivation, and recruitment analysis jointly influence employee productivity remains limited.

Therefore, this study aims to address this gap by conducting a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) to synthesize empirical evidence on:

1. The influence of competency on employee productivity, and
2. The roles of motivation and recruitment analysis in strengthening this relationship.

The main research question guiding this review is: How does employee competency influence employee productivity, and what roles do motivation and recruitment analysis play in this relationship?

METHOD

Research Design

This study adopts a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) approach following the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) model. The PRISMA framework was selected to ensure transparency, replicability, and rigor in identifying, screening, and synthesizing relevant studies.

Literature Search Strategy

A comprehensive literature search was conducted using international academic databases, including: Scopus, Google Scholar. The search was performed using combinations of the following keywords: *employee productivity*, *competency*, *motivation*, *recruitment analysis* and *human resource management*. Boolean operators (AND, OR) were applied to refine the search results.

Inclusion and Exclusion Criteria

- a. Inclusion criteria:
 - Empirical studies published in international journals
 - Studies examining employee productivity as a dependent variable
 - Studies including competency as a core variable
 - Articles published in English between 2015–2024
- b. Exclusion criteria:
 - Conceptual or non-empirical papers
 - Conference proceedings and unpublished manuscripts
 - Studies unrelated to productivity or competency

Study Selection and Quality Assessment

The initial search yielded 312 articles. After removing duplicates and screening titles and abstracts, 34 articles were assessed for full-text eligibility. Based on relevance and methodological quality, 10 articles were selected for final review. Quality assessment considered research design clarity, variable measurement, and analytical rigor.

Data Extraction and Synthesis

Data extracted from each study included:

- Authors and publication year
- Research context
- Methodology
- Variables examined
- Key findings

A qualitative thematic synthesis was applied to identify recurring patterns and relationships among competency, motivation, recruitment analysis, and employee productivity.

1. International Article Extraction Table

This table is not merely a summary, but a scientific synthesis tool designed to demonstrate:

- consistency of findings,
- the role of each variable, and
- the foundation for building a conceptual model of employee productivity.

Table 1. Extraction of International Studies on Employee Productivity

No	Author & Year	Research Context / Object	Method	Main Variables	Key Findings
1	Ahmad et al. (2018)	Manufacturing companies – Asia	SEM	Competence → Productivity	Technical and behavioral competencies significantly influence work productivity
2	Mensah & Tawiah (2019)	Public organizations	Regression	Competence, Motivation, Productivity	Motivation mediates the relationship between competence and productivity
3	Kim & Park (2020)	Knowledge-based firms	SEM	Competence, Motivation	Competence increases productivity through enhanced intrinsic motivation
4	Santos et al. (2020)	Service industry	Quantitative survey	Competency-based recruitment	Recruitment based on competency analysis improves long-term productivity
5	Rahman et al. (2021)	State-owned enterprises	SEM-PLS	Competence, Motivation	Work motivation strengthens the effect of competence on productivity
6	Al-Douri (2021)	Banking sector	Regression	Recruitment, Competence	Competency alignment resulting from recruitment significantly affects productivity
7	Nguyen et al. (2022)	SMEs	SEM	Competence, Productivity	Adaptive competence enhances productivity in dynamic environments
8	Lee & Chen (2022)	Technology companies	SEM	Motivation, Productivity	Motivation functions as a mechanism for activating competence

No	Author & Year	Research Context / Object	Method	Main Variables	Key Findings
9	Putra & Wahyuni (2023)	Public service organizations	SEM-PLS	Recruitment, Competence	Job–person fit–based recruitment analysis improves productivity
10	Oliveira et al. (2024)	Multinational firms	Mixed methods	Competence, Motivation, Productivity	Integrated HR systems strengthen the competence–productivity relationship

This table shows a consistent pattern that:

- competence is the core variable,
- motivation is the internal mechanism (mediator), and
- recruitment is the initial structural mechanism (antecedent).

2. Initial Synthesis Based on the Extraction Table

Based on these ten international studies, it can be synthesized that:

- a. Competence consistently functions as the primary determinant of employee productivity.
- b. Motivation operates as:
 - ✓ a psychological mediator,
 - ✓ an activator of competence, and
 - ✓ a factor that intensifies employees’ contributions.
- c. Recruitment analysis functions as:
 - ✓ an initial selection mechanism,
 - ✓ a guarantor of competency alignment, and
 - ✓ a determinant of sustainable productivity.

This synthesis provides a strong conceptual foundation for the Discussion and the Research Model sections.

3. PRISMA Flow Diagram

PRISMA-Based Article Selection Process

The article selection process in this Systematic Literature Review followed the PRISMA stages as outlined below:

a. Identification

The initial search was conducted using the Scopus and Google Scholar databases with keywords related to employee productivity, competence, motivation, and recruitment. This process yielded 312 articles.

b. Screening

After removing duplicate records (n = 78), 234 articles were screened based on their titles and abstracts. Articles that were not relevant to the study variables were excluded.

c. Eligibility

A total of 34 articles underwent full-text review. Articles that did not meet methodological criteria, were not empirical in nature, or did not measure employee productivity were excluded.

d. Included

Finally, 10 international articles met all inclusion criteria and were used in the final synthesis of the SLR.

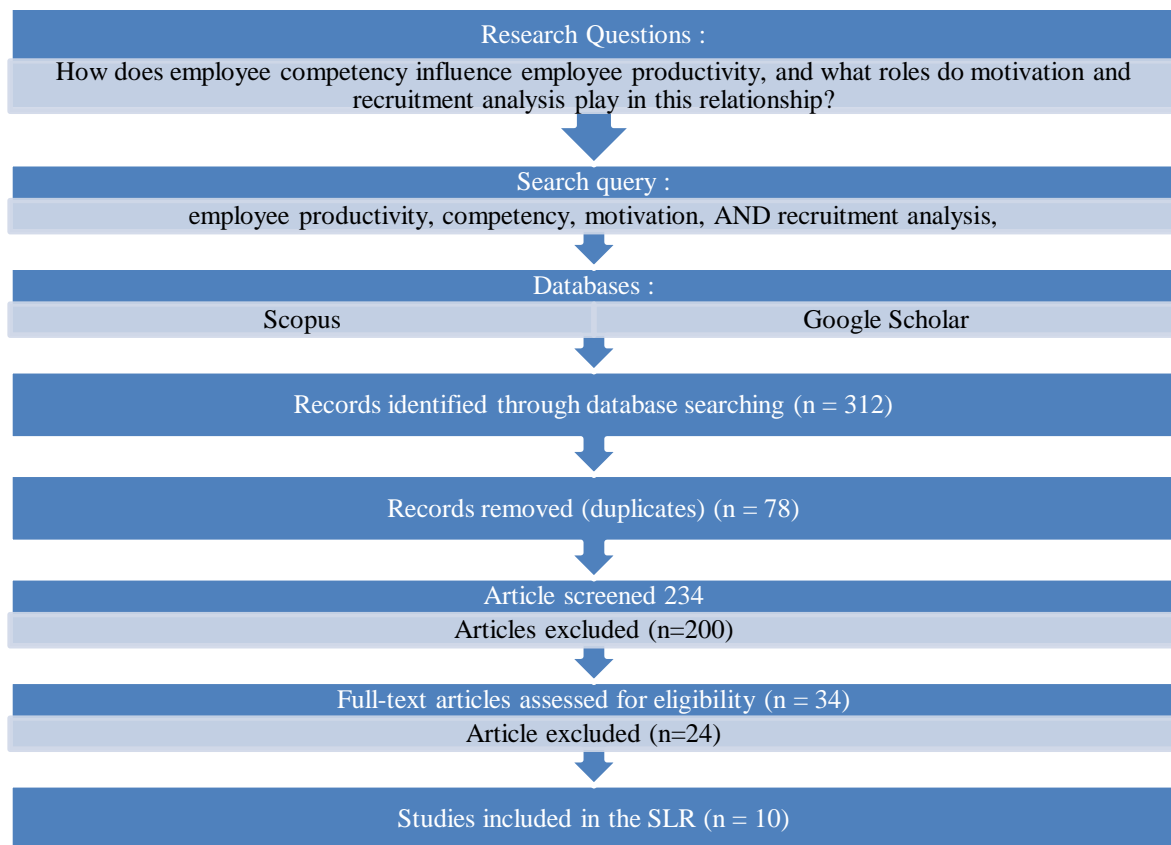


Figure. 1. Prisma flow chart visualizing the article selection process

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Selected Studies

The reviewed studies predominantly employed quantitative methods, including survey-based analyses and structural equation modeling. Research contexts varied across public sector organizations, manufacturing firms, service industries, and knowledge-based organizations.

Competency and Employee Productivity

Across all reviewed studies, employee competency exhibited a strong and consistent positive influence on productivity. Employees possessing higher technical, cognitive, and behavioral competencies demonstrated superior task efficiency, quality of output, and adaptability to changing work demands.

Role of Motivation

Motivation emerged as a key mediating variable in the competency–productivity relationship. Several studies reported that competency leads to higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which in turn enhances productivity. Without adequate motivation, the productivity gains from competency development were found to be suboptimal.

Role of Recruitment Analysis

Recruitment analysis functioned as a strategic antecedent by ensuring alignment between job requirements and employee competencies. Studies highlighted that competency-based recruitment practices significantly reduce skill mismatch and improve long-term productivity

outcomes. Organizations with systematic recruitment analysis reported more sustainable productivity improvements compared to those relying on traditional hiring methods.

Discussion

The findings of this SLR confirm that employee productivity is not solely determined by individual competency but is the outcome of an integrated human resource system. Competency serves as the foundational resource, motivation acts as an activation mechanism, and recruitment analysis ensures strategic alignment from the entry point of employment.

From a theoretical perspective, this review supports resource-based and human capital theories, emphasizing that competencies must be effectively mobilized and supported by organizational practices. Practically, the findings suggest that organizations should avoid fragmented HR interventions and instead adopt an integrated approach combining competency development, motivational systems, and analytical recruitment processes.

The discussion section of this Systematic Literature Review (SLR) aims to integrate the empirical findings from the ten international articles analyzed in order to explain how competence affects employee productivity and how motivation and recruitment analysis strengthen this relationship.

1. Competence as the Primary Determinant of Employee Productivity

The synthesis results show that employee competence consistently emerges as the primary determinant of productivity. Competence encompasses not only technical skills but also knowledge, cognitive abilities, and work-related behaviors relevant to job demands. The reviewed studies confirm that highly competent employees are able to perform tasks more efficiently, produce higher-quality outputs, and adapt more quickly to changes in the work environment.

These findings are consistent with the perspective of Human Capital Theory, which views competence as a strategic organizational asset. However, this SLR also demonstrates that the mere possession of competence does not automatically result in optimal productivity, indicating the need for additional activating mechanisms at both the individual and organizational levels.

2. The Role of Motivation as a Psychological Mechanism (Mediating Role)

Most of the reviewed studies indicate that motivation functions as a psychological mechanism that activates employee competence so that it can be translated into productivity. Competent employees with low motivation tend not to fully utilize their capabilities. In contrast, motivation—both intrinsic and extrinsic—encourages employees to exert effort, creativity, and persistence in their work.

In this context, motivation can be understood as a mediating variable that explains how and why competence influences productivity. These findings reinforce the view that competence development interventions must be accompanied by appropriate motivational systems, such as performance recognition, career development opportunities, and a supportive work environment.

3. Recruitment Analysis as an Upstream Structural Mechanism

Unlike motivation, which operates at the individual level, recruitment analysis functions as a structural mechanism at the organizational level. The SLR findings indicate that organizations implementing competency-based recruitment—through job analysis, competency mapping, and person–job fit—achieve more sustainable levels of employee productivity.

Recruitment analysis ensures that required competencies are embedded from the very beginning of the employment cycle. Consequently, recruitment not only affects the quality of human resources hired but also reduces competency mismatch costs and increases the

effectiveness of subsequent development and motivational systems. This confirms that employee productivity is the result of a systemic chain of HR practices rather than isolated interventions.

4. Integration of Findings and Theoretical Implications

Overall, this discussion indicates that the relationship between competence and productivity is multidimensional and systemic. Competence serves as the foundational factor, motivation acts as an internal activation mechanism, and recruitment analysis functions as an upstream structural alignment mechanism. The integration of these three variables enriches the human resource management literature by offering a holistic perspective on employee productivity.

Revised Conceptual Research Model and Variable Positioning

Based on the synthesis of the Systematic Literature Review (SLR), this study develops a conceptual model of employee productivity with the following variable structure:

- X_1 = Recruitment Analysis
- X_2 = Motivation
- M = Competence
- Y = Employee Productivity

This model posits that competence (M) serves as the primary mediating variable that links the effects of recruitment analysis and motivation (X) to employee productivity (Y).

Explanation of Variable Relationships

a. Recruitment Analysis (X_1) → Competence (M)

Recruitment analysis functions as an upstream structural mechanism within the HR management system. Recruitment based on job analysis, competency mapping, and person–job fit ensures that hired individuals possess competencies aligned with organizational needs. Thus, the quality of recruitment analysis directly determines employees' competency levels.

b. Motivation (X_2) → Competence (M)

Motivation operates as an internal driving force that influences the development and actualization of competence. Highly motivated employees are more actively engaged in learning, skill development, and the optimal utilization of their competencies. Therefore, motivation significantly affects the level of competence that employees actually possess and display.

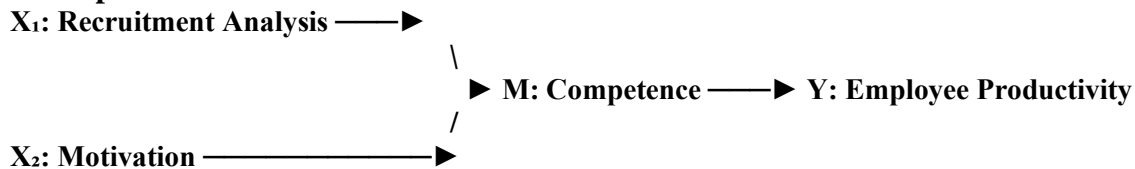
c. Competence (M) → Employee Productivity (Y)

Competence is the key variable that directly influences employee productivity. Employees with adequate competencies work more efficiently, produce higher-quality outputs, and adapt to dynamic job demands. This relationship constitutes the core of the developed conceptual model.

d. The Mediating Role of Competence (M)

In this model, competence is not merely an independent predictor between X and Y but is explicitly positioned as a mediating variable that explains how and through what mechanisms recruitment analysis and motivation influence employee productivity.

Conceptual Model



Logical Formulation of the Conceptual Model

Conceptually, this model asserts that:

1. Recruitment analysis (X₁) enhances employee competence (M) through early alignment between individuals and jobs.
2. Motivation (X₂) strengthens competence (M) by encouraging learning and performance.
3. Competence (M) directly determines employee productivity (Y).

The effects of recruitment analysis (X₁) and motivation (X₂) on employee productivity (Y) are indirect, operating through competence (M) as the intervening variable.

CONCLUSION

This Systematic Literature Review demonstrates that employee competency has a substantial positive influence on employee productivity. However, this relationship is significantly strengthened when supported by effective motivation and competency-based recruitment analysis. The study contributes to human resource management literature by offering an integrated framework for understanding productivity determinants. Future research is encouraged to test this framework empirically using longitudinal and multi-sectoral designs.

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