

THE CORRELATION BETWEEN EDUCATIONAL BACKGROUND AND THE PERFORMANCE OF VILLAGE GOVERNMENT OFFICIALS IN BONTO KATUTE VILLAGE

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ABSTRACT

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This study examines the relationship between educational background and the performance of village government personnel in Bonto Katute Village, Sinjai Borong District, Sinjai Regency. Educational background is considered an important component of human capital that contributes to employees' competencies, administrative capabilities, and public service performance. However, empirical evidence regarding its influence on village government performance remains limited, particularly in rural governance contexts. This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach involving five purposively selected informants consisting of the Village Head, Village Secretary, Chairperson of the Village Consultative Body, village staff, and community representatives. Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and documentation and analyzed using the interactive model of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing. The findings reveal that educational background is positively associated with employee performance across five dimensions: work quality, work quantity, responsibility, teamwork, and work discipline. Village officials whose educational qualifications are more relevant to governmental administration generally demonstrate stronger administrative competence, better understanding of regulations, and greater adaptability to organizational changes. Nevertheless, educational background alone does not determine performance. Work experience, organizational coordination, leadership support, supervision, and digital competence also substantially influence employee effectiveness. The study concludes that improving village government performance requires an integrated human resource development strategy that combines competency-based recruitment, continuous professional training, digital literacy enhancement, and systematic performance evaluation. These findings provide practical implications for strengthening the quality of village governance and improving public service delivery in rural areas.



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INTRODUCTION

Human resources constitute the most valuable asset in ensuring the effectiveness, accountability, and sustainability of public sector organizations. In contemporary public administration, organizational performance is no longer determined solely by institutional structures or financial capacity but increasingly depends on the competence, professionalism, and adaptability of government personnel in delivering public services. This challenge is particularly evident in local government institutions, where civil servants and village officials directly interact with communities and are responsible for implementing development programs, administrative services, and public policy at the grassroots level. Consequently, improving the quality of human resources has become one of the principal agendas for strengthening public governance and achieving sustainable rural development (Ahmad

Sirojul Munir, 2025; Anggraini & Sutikno, 2025).

In Indonesia, village governments occupy a strategic position within the national governance system following the enactment of Law No. 6 of 2014 on Villages, which grants villages greater authority in managing local development, public services, and village finances. The increasing allocation of Village Funds (Dana Desa) has substantially expanded the administrative responsibilities of village governments, requiring village officials to demonstrate higher levels of managerial competence, accountability, and professional performance. Consequently, village apparatus are expected to possess adequate educational qualifications, technical competencies, and administrative capabilities to ensure transparent, efficient, and responsive governance. Nevertheless, variations in educational backgrounds among village officials remain common across Indonesian villages, creating disparities in administrative capacity and service quality (Hasan et al., 2025).

Educational background has long been recognized as one of the most important determinants of employee performance because education equips individuals with cognitive abilities, analytical thinking, technical knowledge, and professional competencies required for organizational effectiveness. Human capital theory argues that investment in education increases individual productivity by enhancing knowledge, skills, and decision-making capacity, ultimately contributing to organizational performance. Employees with educational qualifications relevant to their occupational responsibilities generally demonstrate higher adaptability, stronger problem-solving abilities, and better work performance than those whose educational backgrounds are unrelated to their assigned duties (Afriza et al., 2019; Dewi & Idi, 2023). Furthermore, continuous educational development enables public employees to respond more effectively to technological advancement, administrative reform, and increasingly complex public service demands (Ohoiner, 2016).

Previous empirical studies generally support the positive relationship between educational background and employee performance. Bere and Hermania Ili (2024) found that educational background significantly improves the performance of village officials through enhanced administrative competence and work effectiveness. Similarly, Agustina et al. (2023) reported that educational background and work experience jointly influence employee performance across public organizations. Dewi and Idi (2023) likewise demonstrated that education, work experience, and employee attitudes contribute positively to labor productivity. More recently, Elthara et al. (2025) concluded that educational background significantly affects employee competency within regional government institutions, while Hasan et al. (2025) emphasized that improving educational qualifications represents an important strategy for enhancing village government performance.

Nevertheless, the existing literature also indicates that educational background alone may not fully explain employee performance. Rahayu et al. (2025) revealed that educational background indirectly affects employee performance through work motivation, suggesting that motivational factors mediate educational influence. Likewise, Zahra Andriyani (2025) reported that educational background did not significantly influence employee performance individually but became significant when combined with leadership style and work motivation. Marsidin and Adi (2021) further argued that organizational commitment substantially contributes to employee performance regardless of educational attainment. These findings indicate that the relationship between educational background and employee performance remains inconsistent and context-dependent, particularly within local

government organizations.

Despite considerable research examining employee performance in public organizations, several research gaps remain. First, previous studies have predominantly focused on provincial government agencies, educational institutions, or urban public organizations, whereas empirical evidence concerning village governments remains relatively limited (Devi Deliana, 2025; Rahmawati, 2024). Second, most studies investigate educational background as one component of multivariate models alongside motivation, leadership, organizational culture, or work experience, leaving limited understanding of the direct relationship between educational background and employee performance in rural governance contexts (Agustina et al., 2023; Rahayu et al., 2025). Third, limited empirical research specifically examines whether educational qualifications aligned with governmental or public administration disciplines produce better performance among village officials than non-linear educational backgrounds.

These research gaps are particularly relevant in Bonto Katute Village, where the educational composition of village officials demonstrates considerable heterogeneity. Preliminary administrative data indicate that only one of seven village officials possesses an educational background directly related to governmental administration, while the remaining officials graduated from diverse disciplines including education, agriculture, animal husbandry, and midwifery. Although these qualifications satisfy general educational requirements, they may not adequately correspond to the competencies required for public administration, governance, financial management, and community services. Initial observations further revealed several organizational challenges, including delays in administrative completion, inconsistent document management, limited utilization of digital technologies, and varying levels of understanding regarding village regulations and administrative procedures. Such conditions potentially affect organizational effectiveness and service quality provided to local communities (Hasan et al., 2025).

From a theoretical perspective, educational background is expected to influence employee performance because higher educational attainment generally enhances analytical capability, administrative competence, communication skills, and problem-solving capacity. Nevertheless, the extent to which educational background contributes to employee performance within village governments remains an empirical question that requires systematic investigation. Considering the increasing complexity of village governance under decentralization, understanding this relationship becomes essential for developing evidence-based human resource policies capable of improving governance quality and public service delivery.

Therefore, this study aims to analyze the correlation between educational background and the performance of village government apparatus in Bonto Katute Village. Unlike previous studies that primarily investigate educational background alongside multiple organizational variables, this research specifically focuses on the direct association between educational background and employee performance within a rural governance setting. The findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the human resource management and public administration literature while providing practical recommendations for village governments regarding recruitment, competency development, and capacity-building strategies to improve organizational performance and public service quality.

METHOD

This study employed a qualitative research approach with a descriptive design to examine the relationship between educational background and the performance of village government personnel in Bonto Katute Village. Qualitative research is appropriate for investigating social phenomena in their natural settings because it enables researchers to understand participants' experiences, perceptions, and meanings from their own perspectives (Creswell & Poth, 2018). Rather than emphasizing numerical measurement, qualitative research focuses on generating rich, contextual, and in-depth descriptions of social reality through direct interaction between researchers and participants (Denzin & Lincoln, 2018). A descriptive qualitative design was selected because this study aims to describe systematically how educational background relates to the performance of village officials without manipulating research variables (Sugiyono, 2014). Such an approach is particularly suitable for public administration research where organizational behavior and human interactions require contextual interpretation (Yin, 2018).

Data were collected through observation, semi-structured interviews, and document analysis. Observation was conducted to examine administrative activities and public service delivery, while semi-structured interviews enabled participants to explain their experiences and perceptions regarding educational background and work performance. Documentary evidence, including village administrative records, personnel documents, and official reports, was used to complement and verify information obtained during fieldwork. The collected data were analyzed using the interactive model proposed by Miles et al. (2014), consisting of data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing/verification. To enhance the credibility and trustworthiness of the findings, this study employed source triangulation, prolonged engagement, and continuous verification throughout the research process, following the criteria of qualitative rigor proposed by Lincoln and Guba (1985).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that the educational background of village government personnel is positively associated with employee performance in Bonto Katute Village. Informants consistently explained that employees whose educational qualifications are more closely aligned with governmental administration demonstrate better understanding of administrative procedures, stronger analytical abilities, and greater confidence in delivering public services. Nevertheless, educational background alone does not fully determine employee performance because organizational experience, coordination, leadership, and technological support also contribute substantially to work outcomes. These findings reinforce previous evidence that educational background significantly influences both employee competence and performance, particularly within village government organizations (Bere & Hermania Ili, 2024; Elthara et al., 2025).

Regarding work quality, the study found that administrative services, including document preparation, population administration, and report writing, have generally been implemented satisfactorily. However, several weaknesses remain evident, particularly delays in completing administrative documents, inconsistencies in document archiving, and limited utilization of information technology. Informants emphasized that these shortcomings are more frequently experienced by employees whose educational background is not directly related to public administration. Higher educational attainment contributes to stronger analytical thinking, greater understanding of administrative regulations, and improved technical skills, thereby facilitating higher quality public services (Marsidin & Adi, 2021; Bere & Hermania Ili, 2024). Nevertheless, practical experience was also identified as an important factor because several employees with non-linear educational backgrounds were able to perform effectively after years of organizational experience.

The relationship between educational background and work quantity was reflected in

employees' ability to complete administrative responsibilities within the required time frame. Although most routine tasks were completed successfully, the increasing volume of administrative work combined with limited digital competence occasionally resulted in service delays. Informants reported that administrative processes often depended on a limited number of employees possessing stronger computer skills, creating workload imbalances whenever those employees were unavailable. These findings suggest that educational background improves productivity primarily by enhancing technical competence and digital literacy rather than merely increasing formal qualifications (Agustina et al., 2023; Anggraini & Sutikno, 2025).

Educational background also influenced employees' sense of responsibility toward organizational duties. Village leaders explained that employees possessing higher educational qualifications generally demonstrated stronger awareness of administrative accountability, legal responsibilities, and public service obligations. They were more capable of interpreting government regulations and implementing administrative procedures independently. Nevertheless, responsibility was also shaped by organizational supervision and internal coordination because delayed completion of several activities resulted not only from limited competence but also from insufficient communication among staff members. These findings indicate that educational qualifications need to be supported by continuous professional development, effective supervision, and organizational commitment to optimize employee performance (Ahmad Sirojul Munir, 2025; Hasan et al., 2025).

A similar pattern emerged regarding teamwork. Informants described collaboration among village officials as generally effective, particularly in providing integrated administrative services and solving operational problems collectively. Employees with higher educational qualifications were perceived to communicate more effectively, coordinate more efficiently, and adapt more easily to organizational changes. However, unequal competence among personnel resulted in certain employees carrying greater administrative responsibilities than others. Consequently, educational background contributes to teamwork through improved communication skills and professional competence, although organizational coordination remains equally important in distributing responsibilities more proportionally (Dewi & Idi, 2023; Nugraha, 2024).

The findings further demonstrate that educational background contributes to work discipline, particularly regarding punctuality, compliance with administrative procedures, and awareness of organizational responsibilities. Village leaders acknowledged that employees with higher educational attainment generally demonstrated stronger commitment to institutional regulations and professional ethics. However, community representatives reported that service interruptions occasionally occurred because several officials were unavailable during office hours, indicating that educational qualifications alone cannot ensure consistent disciplinary behavior. Strengthening supervision, organizational culture, and performance evaluation therefore remains essential to complement educational competence (Khairani Rysda Gusti Aningsih, 2025; Rahmawati, 2024).

Overall, the findings demonstrate that educational background is positively associated with the performance of village government personnel across the five performance dimensions examined in this study, namely work quality, work quantity, responsibility, teamwork, and work discipline. Nevertheless, the relationship should not be interpreted as deterministic because employee performance results from interactions among educational qualifications, work experience, organizational commitment, leadership, technological competence, and institutional support. Employees possessing educational backgrounds relevant to governmental administration generally exhibit superior administrative competence and adaptability, whereas employees from unrelated disciplines rely more heavily on organizational learning and practical experience. These findings support the argument that improving village governance requires integrated human resource development strategies, including competency-based recruitment, continuous professional

training, digital literacy development, and systematic performance evaluation, rather than relying solely on formal educational attainment (Bere & Hermania Ili, 2024; Elthara et al., 2025; Hasan et al., 2025; Rahayu et al., 2025).

CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that educational background has a positive relationship with the performance of village government personnel in Bonto Katute Village across five performance dimensions, namely work quality, work quantity, responsibility, teamwork, and work discipline. Village officials whose educational qualifications are more closely aligned with governmental administration generally exhibit stronger administrative competence, better understanding of regulations, greater communication skills, and higher adaptability in performing public service responsibilities. These findings confirm that education significantly improves the quality of human resources within village government institutions. However, the findings also indicate that educational background is not the sole determinant of employee performance. Organizational experience, leadership, internal coordination, supervision, technological competence, and the availability of institutional support collectively influence work performance. Therefore, improving village governance should not rely exclusively on educational qualifications but should also emphasize competency-based recruitment, continuous professional development, digital skills training, effective supervision, and objective performance evaluation. Implementing these integrated human resource management strategies is expected to strengthen organizational effectiveness, improve the quality of public services, and support sustainable village governance.

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