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Analyzing the Competencies of Village Officials: A Fishbone Approach to Knowledge, Skills, Attitudes, and Leadership

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ABSTRACT

Purpose of the study: The purpose of this study is to analyze the causes and impacts of low competence among village officials from the perspective of knowledge mastery, skills, mental attitude, and leadership in Gebog District, Kudus Regency. This study also aims to identify the supporting and inhibiting factors affecting the performance and competency improvement of village officials. Furthermore, the research seeks to formulate strategic policies for improving and developing the competencies of village officials through a Fishbone analysis approach, in order to enhance the effectiveness of public services and administrative performance at the village level.

Materials and methods: This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to analyze the competence of village officials from the perspectives of knowledge mastery, skills, mental attitude, and leadership. The research was conducted in villages across Gebog District, Kudus Regency. Data were collected through in-depth interviews with key informants, including district and village government officials, village facilitators, local village assistants, and community members who utilize village administrative services. Informants were selected purposively based on their role and relevance to the research objectives. The collected data were analyzed using qualitative analysis supported by the Fishbone (cause-and-effect) diagram to identify root causes of competence-related problems, as well as supporting and inhibiting factors affecting performance improvement. Data credibility was ensured through triangulation of sources and techniques.

Results: The results show that the low competence of village officials in Gebog District is influenced by both internal and external factors across the dimensions of knowledge, skills, mental attitude, and leadership. Supporting factors for competency improvement include government support, adequate budgeting, availability of technology and infrastructure, and strong leadership commitment. On the other hand, limited resources, resistance to change, insufficient development opportunities, and bureaucratic constraints hinder improvement efforts. The Fishbone analysis highlights the need for integrated strategies focusing on training and education, supervision and evaluation, incentive enhancement, bureaucratic reform, and the effective use of technology to improve overall competency.

Conclusions: This study reveals that village officials' competencies are influenced by internal and external factors related to knowledge, skills, mental attitude, and leadership. Strengthening training, leadership commitment, and technological utilization are essential to improve performance, service quality, and sustainable governance effectiveness at the village level.

Keywords

competence, knowledge mastery perspective, skills perspective, mental attitude perspective.

INTRODUCTION

Human resources constitute a pivotal asset within village administrations, amenable to systematic management, training, and nurturing to foster long-term advancement. These resources are indispensable for the enduring viability of village governance structures and their developmental trajectories. Functioning as primary agents, human resources play a decisive role in establishing goals, fostering innovation, and executing processes aligned with principles of regional autonomy (Jašková et al., 2021; Muda & Erlina, 2020). Consequently, even substantial village funding proves ineffective absent professional oversight. As emphasized by extant scholarship (Aris et al., 2024; Kalontong et al., 2019), human resources profoundly shape the efficacy of complementary assets. Thus, proficient human resources engender capable village officials adept at operationalizing directives from higher authorities while fulfilling communal aspirations through enhanced public service delivery. Uniquely, human resources possess rational cognitive capacities (Ayu et al., 2018; Wahyuni et al., 2025).

Effective human resource management among village officials emerges as a paramount concern for village administrations. Professional governance practices, underpinned by principles of good governance, are essential for optimizing the disbursement of centrally allocated village funds. Governance paradigms increasingly prioritize human resource attributes such as

preparedness, quantity, educational attainment, and allied factors. Notably, human resource management challenges within village apparatuses, particularly in bolstering micro-, small-, and medium-sized enterprises, hinge on concerted quality enhancement initiatives (Rosita et al., 2024; Santoso & Rahayu, 2025). Accordingly, a rigorous analysis of human resource quality in village governance—encompassing asset stewardship and productivity—is imperative to augment performance efficacy.

Village apparatuses comprise the village secretary, territorial executors, and technical executors, who collectively support the village head in fulfilling duties and responsibilities, rendering them accountable thereto (Hamka et al., 2023; Komala et al., 2024). Appointments occur via the village head, following consultations with the sub-district head on behalf of the regent or mayor. The village secretariat, under the village secretary's leadership and augmented by staff, facilitates administrative functions for the village head, encompassing up to three domains as stipulated by Minister of Home Affairs Regulation No. 84 of 2015 (Widyawati et al., 2022). Territorial executors serve as the village head's field operatives, scaled proportionally to territorial demands and fiscal capacity. Technical executors, limited to three sections, operationalize tasks, per the aforementioned regulation (Hamka et al., 2023).

Gebog Sub-District, situated at the northern extremity of Kudus Regency, abuts Jepara Regency to the north and west, Dawe and Bae Sub-Districts to the east, and Kaliwungu Sub-District to the south. It encompasses 11 villages, 38 hamlets, 82 neighborhood units, and 435 citizen associations.

Competence refers to the capacity to comprehend, utilize, and advance knowledge, thereby enhancing the quality of public services alongside the efficacy and efficiency of village-level operations. The notion of a Learning Organization underscores the imperative for ongoing knowledge enhancement within organizations, positing individual mastery of knowledge as the cornerstone for adapting to dynamic environments (Charisma et al., 2025; Stacho et al., 2019). Experiential learning further accentuates the value of hands-on engagement and reflective practice in competency cultivation. Consequently, village officials proficient in acquiring knowledge via experience and introspection exhibit superior competencies in task execution, which is vital for elevating public service quality and overall performance at the village level (Djou et al., 2023; Mulyani & Hayati, 2023).

Empirical observations concerning knowledge acquisition among village officials encompass the accessibility of educational resources, such as proximate institutions, training programs, and learning facilities. Officials with constrained access to formal education and professional development encounter difficulties in attaining sufficient comprehension for effective duty fulfillment. Disparities in educational attainment and literacy among these officials constitute salient field phenomena (Pawiro & Janie, 2017; Urriola et al., 2018). Those with suboptimal education and literacy levels grapple with comprehending and accessing essential information requisite for their responsibilities.

A further dimension of competency pertains to augmenting village administrative efficacy through leadership skills, encompassing technical, interpersonal, and conceptual proficiencies. Technical skills facilitate task completion, interpersonal skills enable constructive interactions with peers and communities, while conceptual skills foster holistic comprehension and judicious decision-making. Scholarly discourse emphasizes managerial, technical, and conceptual competencies as pivotal to effective management (Chuang & Eversole, 2022; Irawati & Munajat, 2023). These encompass proficiencies in personnel management, task execution, and organizational insight (Beenen et al., 2021). Interpersonal, leadership, and communication skills are likewise deemed essential for individual efficacy (Beenen et al., 2021), involving adept interaction, motivation, and information dissemination—critical for nurturing community relations and promoting public engagement at the village level.

Field challenges, particularly skill deficiencies among village officials, profoundly impair public service quality and operational efficiency. Inadequate staffing impedes precise and timely administrative processing, precipitating delays in decision-making, development initiatives, and community issue resolution. Subpar skills yield suboptimal service delivery to residents (Febriyanti et al., 2023). Officials deficient in public service knowledge or skills falter in rendering quality services, while also failing to discern or enact innovations essential for enhancing efficiency and effectiveness, thereby impeding village development (Jumaiyah et al., 2025).

Mental disposition, particularly mindset, constitutes a pivotal determinant in the competency profile of village officials. Those embracing a learner-oriented disposition demonstrate greater receptivity to self-enhancement and skill augmentation. They perceive challenges as avenues for intellectual and professional advancement rather than insuperable barriers, thereby fostering perpetual refinement of abilities and expertise, which ultimately elevates community service standards. Management scholars underscore the nexus between mindset and competency; (Venesaar et al., 2021) delineates fixed versus growth mindsets, positing that the latter—characterized by the conviction that capabilities are cultivable through diligence and learning—correlates with elevated competency attainment. (Schauer et al., 2025) conceptualized self-efficacy as an individual's conviction in their capacity to accomplish designated objectives, with elevated self-efficacy engendering heightened motivation for competency development. (Kimani et al., 2019) accentuates emotional intelligence's salience in competency formation, wherein facets such as self-awareness, self-regulation, motivation, empathy, and social acumen modulate an individual's self-management and interpersonal efficacy, thereby shaping overall competence.

Unconstructive mental dispositions among village officials warrant scrutiny, as they impede competency progression. A fixed or pessimistic outlook obstructs the assimilation of learning opportunities, framing adversities as prohibitive impediments. This engenders motivational deficits in skill and knowledge enhancement, culminating in diminished service quality for communities. Thus, remedial interventions via mentoring and training are indispensable to instill adaptive dispositions conducive to perpetual learning.

Leadership exerts profound influence on village officials' competencies, thereby bolstering public service quality, administrative proficiency, and grassroots development. Proficient leaders furnish unambiguous directives and inspirational visions, aligning officials with village development imperatives and galvanizing competency cultivation thereto. Scholarly consensus affirms this linkage; (Orapēba et al., 2016) posits that efficacious leadership augments individual competencies—including those of village officials—through motivational influence and strategic guidance. Superior leadership stimulates skill and knowledge refinement while

nurturing growth-oriented dispositions. (Lestari et al., 2021) emphasizes leadership proficiencies' role in elevating workplace performance, wherein adept leaders inspire adherence to objectives, surmounting obstacles and honing requisite competencies.

The competencies of village officials are frequently undervalued. Typically recruited from local communities and selected based on social influence rather than requisite administrative expertise, these officials often lack the proficiencies essential for managing governmental systems. Consequently, they struggle to adapt to and implement rapid contemporary changes, yielding suboptimal performance and productivity in community service, which may precipitate public discontent. Dahlan & Fatmawada, (2020) conceptualizes human resource competency as encompassing capabilities, expertise, knowledge, attributes, and allied characteristics. Likewise, (Pandya, 2019) delineates it as an individual trait that engenders effective and superior performance. Empirical studies identify a discrete array of competency factors—including personal characteristics, experience, motivation, and ancillary attributes—that distinguish exceptional from average performance. As behavioral attributes, competencies are susceptible to development. Thus, ascertaining the individual competencies requisite for strategic objectives is imperative. However, sustaining and augmenting village officials' competencies remains challenging amid multifarious influencing factors. Prominent field phenomena concerning their competencies include disparities in educational attainment and training experiences.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

Method of Collecting Data

Data collection techniques are techniques or methods used to collect data. In qualitative research, data collection is conducted in natural settings (natural conditions), using primary data sources, and data collection techniques are more focused on observation and (participant observation) as researchers sort (sort). The data collection techniques used by researchers include data collection and interviews, processing and analysis. Triangulation processing and analysis are defined as data collection techniques that combine various data collection techniques and existing data sources. When researchers collect data using triangulation, they are actually collecting data while simultaneously testing the credibility of the data, namely checking the credibility of the data with various data collection techniques and various data sources. Technical triangulation means researchers use different data collection techniques to obtain data from the same source. Researchers use observation, in-depth interviews, and documentation for the same data source simultaneously. Source triangulation means obtaining data from different sources with the same technique. 1) Observation is a data collection method where researchers or their collaborators record information as they witness it during the research, as a way of collecting data through direct observation of situations or events in the field; 2) Interviews are a way of collecting data and information which is carried out face to face with informants to obtain complete and in-depth data regarding the perspective of knowledge mastery, skills perspective, mental attitude perspective and leadership perspective regarding Village Apparatus competency. 3) In-depth interviews were used to gain deeper and more qualitative insights related to the factors present in the Fishbone analysis. In-depth analysis is very helpful with the Fishbone technique with more detailed and in-depth data on the perspective of knowledge mastery, skill perspective, mental attitude perspective and leadership perspective on Village Apparatus competency.

Research Approach

In this research, the approach that will be used is a qualitative descriptive approach, namely a study that collects data in the form of words, pictures and not numbers. The analysis method used is the Fishbone approach. This method implies the existence of several complementary methods in the three approaches used in both data collection and analysis. Qualitative research, data collection is conducted in natural settings (natural conditions), primary data sources, and data collection techniques are more focused on participant observation. The data collection technique used by researchers is triangulation. Triangulation is defined as a data collection technique that combines various methods and different data sources. By using triangulation, researchers not only collect data but also test the credibility of that data. This process involves checking the credibility of data from various sources to ensure its reliability.

Data reduction is the process of simplifying and reducing raw data into a more structured and meaningful form. This activity involves selecting, focusing, and transforming data from field notes, interviews, or other sources to identify key patterns, themes, and insights. The primary goal of data reduction is to make data easier to analyze and interpret, reduce complexity, and help researchers find relevant meaning within the research context. The object of this research was carried out in the Village Governments throughout Gebog District, Kudus Regency, for 1 month after the proposal was approved.

RESULTS

Geography of Gebog District, Kudus Regency

Gebog District is a mix of lowlands and mountains. The land area of Gebog District covers 55.10 km², consisting of 2,447.93 hectares of rice fields and 2,314.34 hectares of dry land. Its area spans 27 km. from east to west and as far as 9 miles km From north to south. The boundaries of Gebog sub-district are:

1. Adjacent north bordering the region Jepara Regency
2. Adjacent east bordering the region Dawe District And Bae District
3. Adjacent south bordering the region Kaliwungu sub-district
4. Adjacent west borders the Jepara Regency area

Gebog District consists of 11 villages, namely: Besito, Getassrabi, Gondosari, Gribig, Canyon, Karangmalang, Kedungsari, Klumpit, Captivating, Padurenan, Rahtawu Gebog District has a recorded area of 5,505.97 hectares, or approximately 12.95 percent of

Kudus Regency. Rahtawu Village is the largest village, covering 1,610.67 hectares (29.25%), while Padurenan Village has the smallest area, at 163.12 hectares (2.96%). Gebog District has a population of 88,607 (2007), consisting of 43,872 men and 44,735 women, with a population density of 1,637 km²/person. The majority of villagers in Gebog District work as factory workers, farm laborers, and traders. Agricultural commodities widely cultivated in Gebog District include coffee, tea, chocolate, rice, and fruit.

Vision and Mission of Gebog District, Kudus Regency

Vision and Mission of Gebog Kudus District Guided by the vision of the Kudus Regency government, Gebog District formulated the following vision: "Creating Excellent Service Towards an Advanced and Prosperous Society". According to Bambang Gunadi (56 years old) as the Head of Gebog Kudus District as follows: Vision is the goal to be achieved as an effort to improve the welfare of the community, in the vision of Gebog District has the goal of being able to provide good service for the Gebog Kudus community and realizing a state of advanced and prosperous society. The missions that will be implemented in order to realize the vision of Gebog sub-district are:

- Realizing professional public services, based on information technology and social order in society.
- Increasing community participation and involvement in development and environmental quality.
- Increasing community economic independence based on local potential.
- Improving the preservation of regional arts and culture as well as the potential of local governments in development and the quality of women's lives.

Through this vision and mission, it is hoped that not only will general welfare be achieved but also that it will be able to form a society that is high quality and cultured, but also has high religiosity and tolerance with a harmonious life.

Gebog District Government, Kudus Regency

In carrying out governance in Gebog District, Kudus Regency, the highest position in Gebog District is led by a Sub-district Head, namely Mr. Fariq Mustofa, SH, assisted by 29 administrators who work according to their respective duties and responsibilities.

The number of village government officials in Gebog District is 152 people consisting of 136 men and 16 women, where the largest number of officials is in Getassrabi Village and the smallest in Padurenan Village.

Respondent Characteristics

The respondents in this study were informants from the sub-district structure, village government, village facilitators, and the community in Gebog sub-district, Kudus Regency. The characteristics of the respondents were obtained through a questionnaire, with 15 respondents. From the questionnaire distribution, the data sample obtained had several characteristics based on gender, age, and education. Descriptive analysis is shown in the following table.

Table 5.1 Respondent Data

Data	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Man	7	46.7
	Woman	8	53.3
	Amount	15	100%
Data	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
	25 - 35 years old	6	40.0
	36 - 45 years old	4	27.0
	46 - 55 years old	3	20.0
	> 55 years	2	30.3
	Amount	15	100%
	Criteria	Frequency	Percentage
Education	High School	5	33.3
	D1 - D3	3	20.0
	S1	7	46.7
	S2	0	0
	Amount	15	100%

Source: Processed primary data, 2025.

Based on the table above, it is known that the majority of respondents who were research informants in Gebog District, Kudus Regency, as many as 7 people or 46.7% were male, and 8 people or 53.3% were female. Most of the respondents were aged 25-35 years as many as 6 people or 40% aged 36-45 years as many as 4 people 27% aged 46-55 years as many as 3 people or 20% and those aged over 55 years as many as 2 people or 30.3%. Most of the respondents had a bachelor's degree as many as 7 people or 46.7%, high school education as many as 5 people or 33.3% and D1-D3 education as many as 3 people or 20%.

Fishbone Analysis

Employee competency refers to the importance of developing the competencies of government officials to improve the quality of public services. Competency development through training and education can increase the capacity of officials to carry out their duties effectively. Some of the reasons why Village Official Competency is important are:

- 1) Improving Service Quality: The competence of village officials is very important to improve the quality of service to the community.
- 2) Increasing Efficiency: The competence of village officials can increase efficiency in carrying out work and managing resources.
- 3) Increasing Public Satisfaction: The competence of village officials can increase public satisfaction with the services provided.
- 4) Improving Cooperation: The competence of village officials can improve cooperation between village officials and other stakeholders.

- 5) To improve the performance of civil servants (ASN) in the Pati Regency Health Office, objective assessments, competency development, training, appropriate rewards, and a supportive work environment are necessary. All of this will enhance village development: The competence of village officials is crucial for enhancing village development and improving the quality of life of the community.
- 6) Improving Accountability: The competence of village officials can improve accountability in carrying out work and managing resources.
- 7) Enhancing Innovation: Village officials' competencies can enhance innovation in public services and village development, contributing to the provision of better health services and effectively meeting community health needs.

Village Apparatus Competence in Gebog District, Kudus Regency is not yet optimal. The competency of village officials is low when viewed from the perspective of knowledge mastery, skills perspective, mental attitude and leadership. To identify the root of the problem, the author used Fishbone Analysis, a systematic tool that analyzes issues and the factors that cause them. Fishbone analysis, or a fishbone diagram, displays a situation by examining the effects of the causes that contribute to that effect.

Based on the phenomena that occurred and to answer the research problems, the researcher conducted observations and in-depth interviews with informants who were directly related to competency seen from the perspective of knowledge mastery, skills perspective, mental attitude and leadership.

Analysis of Village Apparatus Competencies seen from Knowledge Mastery Perspective

Competence in the knowledge perspective, there is a real condition that village officials' knowledge of the Regulations and Policies applicable in the village is still lacking. Village officials must have knowledge of village financial management, including budgeting, cash management, and financial reporting. Village officials must have knowledge of village resource management, including land, water, and other natural resources management and village officials must have knowledge of public services provided to the community, including health, education, and social services. The following are the results of interviews with research informants.

Competence is crucial for village officials because carrying out their specific duties and functions requires understanding and competency. This is a mandatory requirement that must be met to ensure the fulfillment of the duties and functions that fall under their respective responsibilities. The essential competencies for village officials have many uses in ensuring that village government runs effectively and efficiently. Lack of knowledge about village development planning, as well as limited knowledge about natural resource management, which will ultimately improve the quality of services and village development.

Based on the results of the interview above, the real condition is that village officials who are less competent in handling conflicts can cause the quality of village services and development is less than optimal. Education that is appropriate for village officials, such as public administration, management, and law, is essential. Understanding the administrative tasks of the job is crucial for village officials to carry out their duties and functions effectively and efficiently.

Supporting factors for village apparatus competency from a knowledge perspective are:

- 1) High learning motivation can encourage village officials to improve their analytical thinking skills, conceptual thinking, knowledge of work procedures, and understanding of administrative tasks.
- 2) Good conceptual learning and thinking skills can help village officials to understand and apply new knowledge.
- 3) Extensive work experience can help village officials understand and apply knowledge in real contexts.
- 4) Organizational support, such as support from local governments or civil society organizations, can help village officials to improve their knowledge.
- 5) The development of information systems can help village officials to obtain the latest knowledge and information.

Factors inhibiting the competence of village officials from a knowledge perspective are:

- 1) Lack of motivation to learn can make village officials uninterested in increasing their knowledge.
- 2) Time constraints can prevent village officials from having the opportunity to learn and improve their knowledge.
- 3) Lack of learning skills can make it difficult for village officials to understand and apply new knowledge.
- 4) Limited work experience can prevent village officials from having the opportunity to practice their knowledge and skills.
- 5) Rapid policy changes can make it difficult for village officials to keep up with changes and improve their knowledge.
- 6) Limited use of technology can prevent village officials from having the opportunity to increase efficiency and effectiveness in carrying out their work.
- 7) Limited development of information systems can prevent village officials from having access to the latest knowledge and information.
- 8) Rapid policy changes can make it difficult for village officials to keep up with changes and improve their knowledge.

Analysis of Village Apparatus Competencies seen from Skill Mastery Perspective

Competence in the skills perspective there is a real condition that village officials from a skills perspective (including: physical skills, creativity, innovation, ability to understand the best procedures in work, and skill in completing work that is their individual responsibility) in reality, many village officials have not yet fulfilled optimally. The following are the results of interviews with research informants. Village officials from a skills perspective must understand government regulations and policies, knowing financial management procedures, understanding human resource management systems, and knowing the procedures for procuring goods/services. With these skills, village officials can work more efficiently, provide better services to the community, and support sustainable village development. Improving these skills, whether through education, training, or practical experience, is crucial to ensuring better quality village government management. From a skills perspective, village officials must master various important aspects, including physical skills, creativity, innovation, and the ability to understand procedures and complete tasks individually. Physical skills are necessary for carrying out tasks involving field activities, such as overseeing infrastructure development or empowerment.

Based on the results of the interview above, the real condition is that inadequate village apparatus optimal. Village officials are expected to have skills (including: physical skills, creativity, innovation, the ability to understand the best procedures in work, and the skills to complete work that is their responsibility individually. By understanding this, their main tasks will be carried out well and correctly in accordance with existing provisions. Supporting factors for village apparatus competency from a skills perspective are:

- 1) Creative skills: compiling ideas/work plans before carrying out activities so as not to burden yourself or others.
- 2) Innovative: important in work, because being innovative means proving that a person's competence has increased.
- 3) Understanding procedures: if employees don't understand the procedures involved in their work, they will waste time in vain, even though time continues to pass and the workload continues to increase so that the work piles up.
- 4) Skilled in completing work: almost the same as understanding procedures, if a person is skilled in completing work, then other work will also be completed on time.

Factors inhibiting the competence of village officials from a skills perspective are:

- 1) Lack of motivation to learn can make village officials uninterested in improving their skills.
- 2) Time constraints can prevent village officials from having the opportunity to learn and improve their skills.
- 3) Limited work experience can prevent village officials from having the opportunity to practice their skills.
- 4) Physical, creative, innovative skills and the ability to understand procedures and complete work individually still need to be improved.

Analysis of Village Apparatus Competencies seen from Mental Attitude Perspective

Competence in the perspective of mental attitude there is a real condition that village apparatus mental attitude perspective (including: involvement, adaptability, punctuality, consistency, ability to listen to input from the community and actions of village apparatus that consistent with moral values and ethical standards). The involvement of village officials in community activities, the ability to listen to the community, and the ability to adapt to the community reflect the mental attitude of village officials. The following are the results of interviews with research informants. A lack of proactivity, a lack of motivation, and an inability to adapt to change can be major obstacles. A lack of concern for improving service quality is also a problem. Ethically, the village apparatus has then the village apparatus is able to communicate effectively with the community, and be able to use polite and clear language.

Village officials are expected to have high levels of involvement, the ability to adapt to change, punctuality, concentration in work, openness to community problems, and actions that are consistent with norms and ethical values. Based on the results of the interview above, the real condition is that village officials are expected to have a good mental attitude. With this mental attitude, village officials will not only be able to carry out their duties well, but will also build harmonious and respectful relationships with the community, creating better, fairer and more transparent village governance.

Supporting factors for village apparatus competence from a mental attitude perspective are:

- 1) Training and Development, village officials need to be given training and development to improve their mental attitude.
- 2) Collaboration with Stakeholders, village officials need to collaborate with other stakeholders to improve mental attitudes and understand community needs.
- 3) Evaluation and Monitoring, village officials need to conduct evaluation and monitoring to improve service quality and efficiency.

Factors inhibiting the competence of village officials from a skills perspective are:

- 1) Ineffective Decision Making: Threats to village officials from a mental attitude perspective can lead to ineffective decision making.
- 2) Lack of Public Satisfaction: Threats to village officials from a mental attitude perspective can lead to a lack of public satisfaction with the services provided.
- 3) Lack of Cooperation: Threats to village officials from a mental attitude perspective can lead to a lack of cooperation between village officials and other stakeholders.

Analysis of Village Apparatus Competencies seen from Leadership Perspective

Competence in the leadership perspective there is a real condition that village apparatus leadership perspective with village apparatus having a clear vision and mission to improve the quality of life of village communities. Good leadership is key to improving the competence of village officials through effective supervision, leadership acumen in managing various aspects of government, and high self-confidence. Village leaders can create an environment that supports the development of village officials. Leaders who demonstrate consistent supervisory skills, provide clear direction, and inspire and motivate village officials will improve their performance and competence, ultimately contributing to better village development. In the perspective of leadership village officials are expected to be able to increase their competence so that it will have an impact on increasing the performance of village officials, and influencing community satisfaction. The following are the results of interviews with research informants:

From a leadership perspective, we believe not all village officials require this; only village secretaries and hamlet heads require leadership perspectives. However, the most important aspect is the village head, who is prioritized and required to possess this perspective. Village apparatus from a leadership perspective, then the village apparatus is able to analyze situations, identify solutions, and make strategic decisions. Village officials are capable of leading and supervising others. Leaders are able to act decisively based on their intelligence and self-confidence. By being assertive, village officials are able to improve their competence by not giving up and continuing to learn to balance themselves with others.

Based on the results of the interview above, the real condition is that village officials are expected to have a good leadership perspective. From a leadership perspective, village officials are greatly influenced by their leader's ability to manage tasks and direct the team toward achieving village goals. Every person is their own leader. If village officials can practice this attitude, they will undoubtedly be able to manage themselves, increase their capacity, and treat everyone fairly.

Supporting factors for village apparatus competence from a mental attitude perspective are:

- 1) Supervisory Skills: Supervise and guide other village officials.
- 2) Need for Achievement: Motivating oneself and others to achieve higher levels of achievement.
- 3) Assertiveness: Able to make firm and fair decisions.
- 4) Intelligence: Having good intellectual ability to analyze problems and find solutions.
- 5) Self-Confidence: Believing in one's own ability to lead and direct a team.

Factors inhibiting the competence of village officials from a leadership perspective are:

- 1) Inability The tools for making appropriate and effective decisions will face challenges and difficulties.
- 2) Inability to manage conflict and differences of opinion within the team and village community.
- 3) Unforgiveness in developing a solid and effective team in achieving goals.
- 4) Less mable to communicate effectively with village communities, teams, and other stakeholders.
- 5) Less able to use language effectively in communicating with village communities and other stakeholders.

DISCUSSION

The findings of this study indicate that the low competence of village apparatus in Gebog District is the result of interconnected internal and external factors, as analyzed through the Fishbone diagram, viewed from the perspectives of knowledge mastery, skills, mental attitude, and leadership (Latifah et al., 2023). Limited educational backgrounds, insufficient access to structured training programs, and inadequate understanding of administrative procedures contribute significantly to weak knowledge mastery among village officials (Indranika et al., 2020; Sihombing & Lumbantobing, 2024). These limitations not only impair their ability to adapt to frequent regulatory changes and technological advancements—such as digital village administration systems—but also reduce the effectiveness and efficiency of public service delivery at the village level, leading to delays in processing community requests and errors in documentation (Iswanto, 2022; Wirata et al., 2024).

From the knowledge mastery perspective, interview results reveal that village officials often struggle with mastering up-to-date policies, village fund management, and digital tools essential for modern governance. Supporting factors include government-provided training and stakeholder collaborations to enhance policy comprehension, while inhibiting factors encompass limited resources for continuous education and resistance to new learning methods (Budiana et al., 2019; Sulila, 2020).

From the skills perspective, the study reveals profound deficiencies in technical, administrative, and interpersonal skills that hinder optimal job performance. The absence of ongoing practical training opportunities exacerbates issues like delays in administrative processes, poor handling of community complaints, and suboptimal use of technology for services such as online document submissions (Hartanto & Syamsir, 2022; Munanto, 2022). Fishbone analysis identifies supporting elements like budget allocation for skill development workshops and infrastructure improvements, contrasted by inhibitors such as inadequate facilities (e.g., unreliable computers and internet) and lack of hands-on mentoring, which perpetuate low service quality and public dissatisfaction (Andrianto et al., 2023).

In the mental attitude perspective, mental attitude emerges as a critical shaper of competence, where resistance to change, low learning motivation, punctuality issues, and a fixed mindset weaken individual capacity for improvement. Village officials exhibiting limited self-efficacy and adaptability often view challenges—such as adapting to e-government mandates—as insurmountable obstacles rather than growth opportunities, further constraining performance (Aneta et al., 2023; Donzelli, 2024). Real conditions from interviews highlight the need for village officials to embody traits like openness to community issues, ethical consistency, and concentration. Supporting factors include targeted training to foster positive attitudes, stakeholder collaborations for need understanding, and regular evaluations for service enhancement. Conversely, inhibiting factors comprise ineffective decision-making, public dissatisfaction, and poor inter-stakeholder cooperation stemming from attitudinal shortcomings (Theodore et al., 2021).

Leadership perspective stands out as a pivotal determinant influencing all competency dimensions. Weak leadership capacity, especially in direction-setting, motivation, and supervision, limits competency development across perspectives. Interviews emphasize that while not all officials require strong leadership, key roles like village heads and secretaries must demonstrate clear vision, mission, supervisory skills, assertiveness, intelligence, and self-confidence to guide teams toward village goals (Handayani et al., 2023; Setiadi et al., 2025). Good leadership fosters environments for skill-building and mindset shifts, impacting performance and community satisfaction. Supporting factors are supervisory guidance, achievement motivation, firm decisions, intellectual problem-solving, and team confidence-building. Inhibiting factors include decision-making failures, conflict mismanagement, team-building weaknesses, and communication gaps with communities and stakeholders (Argaw et al., 2021; Srimulyani et al., 2023).

The Fishbone analysis further illuminates supporting factors like government commitment, adequate budgeting, technological infrastructure, and leadership initiatives for change (Latifah et al., 2023) alongside inhibitors such as limited human resources, bureaucratic hurdles, and unequal training access (Setiadi et al., 2025; Sulila, 2020). These elements interconnect; for instance, poor leadership exacerbates skill gaps by neglecting training, while attitudinal resistance undermines knowledge adoption.

Therefore, integrated, sustainable strategies are imperative: bolstering leadership through capacity-building for village heads (Setiadi et al., 2025) implementing mindset transformation via motivational workshops addressing self-efficacy (Aneta et al., 2023) rolling out structured training in digital and administrative skills (Sihombing & Lumbantobing, 2024) and leveraging technology like village information systems (Iswanto, 2022). Continuous monitoring, incentives, and simplified procedures will drive measurable gains in competence, village governance, and public service performance (Handayani et al., 2023; Indranika et al., 2020).

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that the low level of competence among village officials in Gebog District, Kudus Regency, is influenced by a combination of internal and external factors viewed from the perspective of knowledge mastery, skills, mental attitude, and leadership. Limited access to education and training, varying educational backgrounds, insufficient technical and administrative skills, less adaptive mindsets, and suboptimal leadership practices contribute to weaknesses in service quality and administrative performance at the village level. The fishbone analysis reveals that competency improvement is supported by government commitment, adequate budgeting, availability of technology and infrastructure, and leadership willingness to initiate change. On the other hand, constraints such as limited human resources, resistance to change, bureaucratic complexity, and unequal opportunities for capacity development hinder systematic competency enhancement. These factors interact and reinforce one another, affecting the effectiveness and efficiency of village governance and public service delivery.

Therefore, improving village officials' competence requires integrated and sustainable strategies, including structured training and education programs, strengthening leadership capacity, fostering a learning-oriented mental attitude, and optimizing the use of technology. Continuous supervision and evaluation, supported by appropriate incentives and simplified bureaucratic procedures, are essential to ensure that competency development efforts lead to measurable improvements in performance and public service outcomes at the village level.

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CONFLICT OFINTERESTS

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest related to the research, authorship, or publication of this article. All procedures, analyses, and interpretations were conducted independently, without any financial, institutional, or personal influence that could affect the objectivity of the study.

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