

The Role of Human Resource Management in Improving Employee Performance at the Department of Fire and Rescue Services

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Abstract: *This study examines the role of Human Resource Management (HRM) in improving employee performance at the Fire and Safety Department of Buton Regency. The background of this research lies in the importance of managing human resources effectively to ensure optimal performance in high-risk public service sectors such as firefighting. The study aims to identify how HRM functions—specifically organizing, preparation, employee development, compensation, and discipline—contribute to enhancing employee effectiveness and organizational productivity. The research employs a qualitative descriptive method, using observation, interviews, and documentation techniques to collect data from key informants, including department officials and employees. The results reveal that the Fire and Safety Department has implemented HRM strategies effectively through structured workforce planning, continuous training, employee development programs, performance-based compensation, and strict disciplinary systems. These practices have significantly improved employee readiness, motivation, and overall performance in handling emergency situations. The study concludes that strong HRM implementation plays a crucial role in building a competent, disciplined, and responsive workforce capable of achieving organizational goals and ensuring high-quality public service delivery.*

1. Introduction

Human assets management, according to Mangkunegara (2017:2), involves organizing, planning, implementing, and directing the acquisition, development, administration, integration, maintenance, and termination of the workforce to achieve organizational goals. The Human Resource Management Council, abbreviated as HRM, is a science or technique concerned with managing the relationships and work of human resources efficiently and effectively so that they can be optimally utilized to achieve the goals of the organization, employees, and society in a mutually beneficial way (Bintoro & Daryanto, 2017:15). According to Kasmir (2016:25), Human Resource Management (HRM) is “the process of managing people through planning, recruitment, selection, training, development, compensation, career, safety and welfare, as well as monitoring industrial relations until the

end of employment, in order to achieve organizational objectives and improve public service performance.” In line with this, Hasibuan (2019:10) defines human resource management as “the science and art of managing the relationship and role of the workforce to ensure they are efficient and productive in supporting the realization of organizational, employee, and societal goals.” To meet current work demands and especially to respond to future challenges, the development of human resources is an absolute commitment for every organization.

According to Elbadiansyah (2018:1), management is a process of achieving goals by working collaboratively with individuals and other organizational resources. Meanwhile, human resources refer to individuals who are mobilized and utilized within an institution or organization as the main driving force, thinkers, and planners to achieve the organization’s objectives. In the cycle of human resource management, the system cannot operate in isolation. According to the *Kamus Besar Bahasa Indonesia* (KBBI), a “technique” refers to a series of systematic activities designed to achieve specific goals. One key focus of this system is to improve employee performance. Performance, according to Sutrisno (2016:172), refers to an individual’s success in completing tasks based on the results achieved by a person or group within an organization, in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities.

Employee performance can be improved through increased compensation and work motivation. Providing fair remuneration to employees enhances their enthusiasm, diligence, and commitment to their work. Motivation and the expectation of receiving appropriate rewards encourage employees to perform optimally, which in turn supports superior performance outcomes. Highly motivated employees tend to be energetic and enthusiastic, while those with low motivation often exhibit feelings of stress and dissatisfaction with their work, leading to poor performance and unachieved organizational goals (Ningsih, 2018:24). Representative performance is the result of both the quality and quantity of work performed by an employee or the sincerity of behavior demonstrated in fulfilling assigned duties (Murty & Hudiwinarsih, 2012). With good employee performance, it is believed that the organization will be able to compete effectively with others, thus reflecting a high standard of operational quality. Employee performance can also be enhanced through improved compensation and work spirit, as adequate remuneration motivates employees to be more diligent, active, and disciplined in carrying out their responsibilities (Agiel Puji Damayanti et al., 2013). According to Srimulyani (2013:24), employee performance represents the extent to which employees contribute to the organization, including the amount of output, quality of results, timeliness, attendance, and supportive attitudes.

The performance of each individual varies from one person to another depending on their level of knowledge, ability, and motivation, which drive their actions. Similarly, the performance of a team also differs because the composition of individuals within each group brings diverse understandings and perspectives toward achieving performance outcomes. To ensure balance in performance implementation, organizations must establish standardized norms and benchmarks that can serve as guidelines for all employees (Agiel Puji Damayanti et al., 2013). High-level performance can be cultivated through the attention and involvement of organizational leaders who provide support and guidance to employees in carrying out their duties. Representative performance can also be enhanced through improved compensation and work motivation. By offering rewards and incentives, organizations can increase employees’ energy, diligence, engagement, and discipline in their work.

Indeed, effective human resource management within an organization ensures that corporate administration operates more efficiently and aligns with organizational objectives. With a well-structured HR management system, employee evaluations can be conducted

regularly, accurately, and fairly—resulting in better organizational performance overall. The quality of HR management directly influences how decisions are made and how effectively the organization achieves its goals. Based on brief field observations by researchers, as stated by the Head of the Buton Regional Fire and Rescue Department, human resource management plays a crucial role, especially considering the complex and dynamic nature of this government institution's operations.

The local fire department, commonly abbreviated as DAMKAR, serves as an operational component of the public agency responsible for assisting local governments in fire prevention and emergency response. This aligns with the specific conditions observed at the Regional Fire and Rescue Department of Buton, where certain issues require attention to further improve employee performance. Based on the results of preliminary observations conducted by the researchers, it was found that there is still a lack of work discipline among employees. If employees maintain good work discipline—such as arriving on time, performing tasks according to established procedures, and adhering to organizational regulations—they will be more willing and motivated to perform their duties effectively. Work discipline, therefore, becomes a key determinant of individual and collective performance within the organization. Considering the results of these preliminary observations, the researcher was motivated to conduct a more in-depth study entitled: “The Role of Human Resource Management in Improving Employee Performance at the Fire and Rescue Department of Buton Regency.”

2. Methodology

The type of information used in this study is qualitative information. As stated by Moleong (2015:6), qualitative research aims to understand the uniqueness of phenomena experienced by research subjects such as income, knowledge, development, activities, and others in a comprehensive manner, through descriptions expressed in words and language within a natural and specific context, and by employing various natural methods. This approach enables researchers to interpret and understand human behavior and social interactions holistically, emphasizing depth rather than quantity of data. In this research, data were derived from two primary sources, primary data and secondary data. According to Sugiyono (2018:456), primary data are sources that directly provide information to the data collector. In this case, the data were collected firsthand by the researcher through direct fieldwork involving interviews with the Head of the Buton Regional Fire and Rescue Department and the department's Secretary. Meanwhile, secondary data, as also defined by Sugiyono (2018:456), are those obtained indirectly through other people or recorded documents such as reports, archives, or relevant literature. Both types of data serve to complement one another, ensuring a comprehensive understanding of the study's focus.

The data collection methods used in this study consisted of several techniques including observation, interviews, documentation, and literature study. Observation was carried out by carefully examining the behavior, activities, and events involving individuals or groups being studied. Through this process, researchers were able to record and interpret phenomena that occurred in the field, gaining direct insights into the natural setting of the research. This method allowed a more accurate understanding of the subjects' actual conditions and interactions within the organizational environment of the Buton Fire and Rescue Department. Furthermore, the interview method as explained by Sugiyono (2022:231) involves a meeting between two parties, the interviewer who asks questions and the interviewee who provides information. This exchange of ideas and data through structured yet flexible questioning was conducted to obtain deeper insights related to human resource management practices in improving employee performance within the department. The documentation method

involved collecting written materials such as meeting notes, reports, archives, and books to strengthen evidence and complement interview findings. Lastly, the literature study was conducted to gather theoretical and empirical references relevant to the research topic, thereby providing a strong conceptual foundation for analyzing the role of human resource management in enhancing the performance of fire department personnel in Buton.

The data analysis method used in this study is a qualitative approach with a descriptive methodology. The qualitative analysis technique is employed to examine phenomena that cannot be measured numerically. The process begins with conducting in-depth interviews with key informants, namely individuals who possess a thorough understanding and firsthand knowledge of the research object. After the interviews are conducted, the researcher proceeds by transcribing the recorded discussions, replaying the audio, listening carefully, and writing down the exact words spoken by the participants. This ensures that the data remain authentic and reflect the actual perspectives and experiences of the informants. Once the interview data are transcribed, the next stage involves data reduction. The researcher performs this by identifying and recording only the essential and relevant information while omitting repetitive or unnecessary words, ensuring that the key points are retained accurately. The purpose of this qualitative descriptive analysis is to gain a comprehensive understanding of the observed phenomena. This process includes data collection from interviews and related sources, analysis and interpretation of the obtained information, and finally, drawing conclusions about the issues being investigated. Through this systematic process, the researcher aims to produce valid and meaningful findings that accurately reflect the realities studied.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1 Results

Based on the results of the conducted analysis, several important perspectives need to be considered to ensure that the Buton Regional Fire and Rescue Team develops high-quality human resources. A strong human resource foundation is essential for improving the team's effectiveness, discipline, and professionalism in carrying out its duties. The presence of capable and well-trained personnel will not only enhance operational efficiency but also ensure that the department can respond promptly and effectively to emergencies. Therefore, attention must be given to the systematic development of employee skills, motivation, and organizational support mechanisms to achieve optimal performance. The strategy used in this analysis was the interview method. The meeting was held at the office of the Buton Regional Fire and Rescue Department and attended by Mr. Alimani, S.Sos, the Secretary of the Fire and Rescue Service of Buton, and Mr. Zulkifli, a staff representative from the same department. During the discussion, it was revealed that the implementation of human resource management within the Buton Regional Fire and Safety Department involves several key perspectives. These include employee recruitment and training, performance evaluation, motivation and welfare systems, as well as leadership involvement in fostering discipline and teamwork among employees. Each of these aspects plays a crucial role in enhancing the overall performance and service quality of the department.

Organizing

The arrangement of human resource needs is an essential process aimed at analyzing and identifying an organization's staffing requirements, allowing the office to determine appropriate measures to meet those needs effectively. During the in-depth interview conducted with key informants, the researchers asked how the Fire and Rescue Division of

Buton plans its staffing requirements to support employee performance. In response, Mr. Alimani, S.Sos stated:

“Determining workforce needs within the local fire department is a complex and important process to ensure optimal performance in handling emergency situations. Therefore, a job analysis is conducted first, followed by an assessment of responsibilities based on job data. Afterward, the required number of personnel for each operational response is determined, and an organizational structure is created to ensure better coordination. This process is also carried out in accordance with the regulations and guidelines of the relevant Home Affairs Service.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

From the above statement, it can be inferred that organizing workforce requirements within the local fire department is a critical and systematic process. It involves reviewing job positions and responsibilities to determine the number of employees needed, while aligning the entire process with existing regulations and administrative standards. This ensures optimal operational performance and preparedness in managing emergency situations effectively.

Preparation

Training refers to providing guidance to employees within an organization so that they can effectively carry out the duties and responsibilities assigned to them. The ability to coordinate and prepare employees contributes to creating a productive work environment, leading to improved performance and efficiency. During the in-depth interview conducted with the key informant, the researchers asked what form of instruction or direction was given by the Secretary of the Fire and Rescue Department to the employees. Mr. Alimani, S.Sos stated:

“As the Secretary of the Fire and Rescue Department of Buton Regency, I always instruct that every task must be performed in accordance with each employee’s main functions and responsibilities, and it must be based on established Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs).” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

The researchers then further inquired whether, after receiving such instructions, the employees were able to perform their duties promptly in the event of a fire. Mr. Alimani responded:

“Alhamdulillah, under the supervision of the management, the staff here generally carry out their duties diligently and properly. When a fire incident occurs, our firefighters are always prepared. We have implemented a system called the Response Time, meaning that within 15 minutes of receiving a report of a fire, the team must be ready and dispatched to the scene to extinguish the fire.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

From the statements above, it can be concluded that supervisors consistently guide employees to perform their duties in accordance with their capabilities and responsibilities while adhering to the established SOPs. The leadership also ensures that employees implement the 15-minute response time system, which serves as a readiness protocol to ensure rapid and effective response whenever a fire emergency is reported.

Employee Development

Employee development focuses on improving the career growth of workers based on their performance and achievements during their service. This development process aims to prepare employees to take on greater responsibilities in the future. Employee advancement can be achieved through structured training and continuous improvement programs that

enhance their competence and commitment to the organization, allowing it to achieve its goals effectively. Such initiatives also serve to motivate employees to further develop their professional abilities and contribute meaningfully to the success of the institution.

Based on the in-depth interviews conducted with the informants, the researchers asked whether there were any training or development programs provided to firefighters to enhance their skills and capabilities. Mr. Alimani, S.Sos explained:

“Of course, we conduct training and development for our employees, although we cannot provide training to all members at once. We usually select certain representatives to be sent to the central firefighting training center located in Jakarta. After completing the training, these representatives return to Buton and conduct retraining sessions for their colleagues here, ensuring that everyone benefits from the knowledge and experience gained during the program.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

The researcher then asked a senior employee, Mr. Zulkifli, about the same topic, and he stated:

“It’s true, we often have training or development sessions. I am very grateful because I was among those selected to participate. I attended training in Cilacap in 2018, and I was very happy because I gained a lot of new knowledge. When I returned to Buton, I immediately shared the information and practices I learned in Cilacap with my colleagues here.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024) From these statements, it can be understood that the Fire and Safety Department of Buton Regency actively strives to enhance the skills and knowledge of its employees by organizing training and development programs. These initiatives ensure that all staff members benefit from shared learning experiences, leading to better preparedness and improved overall performance in carrying out their duties.

Compensation

Salary or compensation refers to the reward or appreciation given to employees within an organization for the work they have performed. This aspect must be carefully considered by management, as remuneration directly affects job satisfaction, work motivation, and overall performance outcomes. Compensation can take the form of monetary rewards or other benefits, and when managed effectively, it can significantly enhance employees’ sense of value and commitment to their duties. Appropriate and fair compensation not only motivates employees but also strengthens their loyalty to the organization, ultimately improving productivity and service quality.

Based on the in-depth interview conducted with the key informants, the researchers asked whether the Fire and Safety Department of Buton Regency provided compensation to its employees. Mr. Alimani responded:

“The Fire and Safety Department of Buton generally provides salaries to employees in the form of TPP (Additional Employee Income) and also gives rewards to firefighters who successfully complete fire extinguishing operations, although some of these recognitions are still given verbally.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

The researchers then asked further about the type of compensation provided to employees. Mr. Alimani elaborated:

“The compensation given is in the form of TPP (Additional Employee Income), which is determined based on each employee’s performance ability, along with verbal recognition or appreciation for those who successfully complete firefighting tasks.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

From these statements, it can be concluded that the local fire department generally provides financial compensation to its employees based on their performance levels, as well as additional recognition for those who have successfully carried out firefighting duties. This compensation system serves not only as a reward for hard work but also as a motivation for employees to perform their tasks diligently and responsibly.

Discipline

Discipline is one of the most vital functional competencies within an organization. It represents the fifth key aspect of human resource management, as the higher an individual's level of discipline, the better their job performance tends to be. Discipline fosters responsibility, punctuality, and commitment among employees, which are essential traits for maintaining organizational efficiency and achieving institutional goals. Without discipline, even the best strategies and resources cannot be utilized effectively, making it a crucial element in ensuring success, particularly in high-risk environments such as firefighting.

When the researchers asked about the efforts undertaken by the Fire and Safety Department to improve employee discipline, Mr. Alimani responded:

“To enhance employee discipline, we have implemented a daily control book. This book records the attendance and participation times of employees. Those who frequently arrive late or leave early are issued warnings as a reminder from their supervisors to prevent such behavior from recurring.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

The researchers then asked how the level of employee discipline had improved since the implementation of the daily control book. Mr. Alimani explained: “With the implementation of this daily control book, our employees have generally shown excellent discipline. Moreover, as a public safety organization, discipline must always be one of our strongest traits. In my opinion, the level of discipline among the firefighters in Buton Regency is about 95 percent strong.” (Interview, Wednesday, July 10, 2024)

From these statements, it can be understood that the Fire and Safety Department of Buton Regency has effectively enhanced its discipline level through the use of a daily control book. This system has helped monitor attendance and work ethics, leading to a remarkable improvement in employee discipline, which is now estimated to reach 95 percent across the department.

3.2 Discussion

Organizing human resource needs is a crucial function in ensuring that an organization operates efficiently and effectively. In the context of the Fire and Rescue Department, organizing focuses on analyzing the types and number of personnel required to handle operational demands. This process involves conducting a job analysis to determine specific roles, responsibilities, and qualifications needed for each position. By clearly defining duties and aligning them with organizational objectives, management can allocate human resources strategically to maximize performance and minimize inefficiencies. Proper organization also supports coordination between departments, ensuring that every task is performed by qualified personnel who understand their functions within the system. In addition, organizing human resource needs helps establish a structured and balanced hierarchy that promotes accountability and teamwork. When positions and responsibilities are well-distributed, employees can focus on their respective areas of expertise, leading to faster decision-making and improved crisis management—particularly vital in emergency response organizations. A well-organized structure ensures that communication flows effectively, reducing confusion during critical operations such as fire rescue or disaster management. Therefore, organizing

is not merely an administrative process but a strategic function that directly influences the department's capacity to deliver timely, coordinated, and effective public safety services.

Preparation plays a vital role in improving employee competence and organizational performance. Through systematic training and guidance, employees gain the necessary knowledge and skills to perform their duties efficiently and responsibly. In the context of the Fire and Rescue Department, preparation ensures that all personnel are equipped with both technical and procedural understanding before facing emergency situations. Regular training sessions, briefings, and simulations help employees internalize Standard Operating Procedures (SOPs) and enhance their ability to respond effectively under pressure. By providing structured preparation, the organization creates a disciplined and coordinated workforce capable of achieving high levels of accuracy, speed, and safety in their operations. Moreover, effective preparation builds a culture of readiness and accountability within the organization. It not only focuses on skill enhancement but also fosters teamwork, communication, and problem-solving abilities among employees. In firefighting operations, every second is critical, and a well-prepared team can significantly reduce risks and losses. The establishment of response time standards, such as the 15-minute readiness system, reflects the department's commitment to professional efficiency and public safety. Thus, preparation in human resource management serves as both a preventive and developmental measure—ensuring that employees remain capable, confident, and consistent in performing their duties, while simultaneously strengthening the department's operational resilience.

Employee development serves as a strategic investment in building a competent and motivated workforce capable of meeting both current and future organizational challenges. It emphasizes continuous learning and professional growth, allowing employees to strengthen their technical expertise, problem-solving skills, and leadership potential. Within the Fire and Rescue Department, employee development ensures that firefighters are equipped not only with operational proficiency but also with adaptability and decision-making abilities in high-risk situations. Structured development programs, such as technical workshops, advanced firefighting training, and leadership mentoring, help align individual growth with organizational objectives. This alignment ensures that employees are not only improving their personal careers but are also contributing to the department's long-term effectiveness and resilience. Furthermore, employee development fosters a culture of shared knowledge and teamwork. When selected individuals receive external training and subsequently disseminate the acquired knowledge to their colleagues, the organization benefits collectively. This approach maximizes the value of limited training resources while promoting peer learning and collaboration among staff. Such initiatives enhance both competence and confidence, ensuring that all members are well-prepared to respond efficiently during emergencies. Overall, employee development in the Fire and Safety Department of Buton Regency plays a crucial role in maintaining operational excellence, strengthening organizational capacity, and cultivating a workforce that is skilled, committed, and continuously improving.

Compensation plays a critical role in maintaining employee motivation, satisfaction, and performance within an organization. It serves as both a tangible reward for work accomplished and an acknowledgment of employee contributions toward achieving organizational goals. In the context of the Fire and Safety Department, providing fair and performance-based compensation is essential, as it directly influences the morale and dedication of firefighters who operate in high-risk environments. Monetary rewards such as additional income allowances, bonuses, and other incentives help ensure that employees feel valued and fairly treated. When compensation aligns with employee effort and results, it

creates a positive work environment where individuals are encouraged to perform their duties with greater enthusiasm and responsibility. Beyond its financial function, compensation also carries a strong psychological impact, reinforcing employees' sense of belonging and commitment to the organization. Recognition, whether formal or informal, helps foster a culture of appreciation and accountability among staff members. This system motivates employees to maintain discipline, enhance their skills, and strive for continuous improvement. In the Buton Fire and Safety Department, the implementation of performance-based compensation such as the TPP (Additional Employee Income) system demonstrates an effort to reward dedication and achievement fairly. Such compensation practices not only improve individual productivity but also strengthen teamwork and organizational efficiency, leading to higher-quality public service and operational effectiveness.

Discipline is a cornerstone of organizational success, particularly in public service institutions where responsibility and reliability are essential. Within the framework of human resource management, discipline ensures that employees adhere to established rules, procedures, and ethical standards, thereby fostering consistency and accountability in their work. In the Fire and Safety Department, discipline directly influences operational readiness, response time, and overall performance during emergency situations. A disciplined workforce is more likely to demonstrate punctuality, teamwork, and professionalism, which are crucial for minimizing risks and achieving effective outcomes in crisis management. Therefore, maintaining a high level of discipline is not only a managerial responsibility but also a collective commitment that strengthens organizational integrity. To ensure sustained discipline, management must establish clear regulations and monitoring systems that encourage employees to comply with organizational standards. The implementation of daily attendance and activity records is an example of a practical measure that promotes responsibility and transparency among staff. Through consistent monitoring, supervisors can identify performance issues early and provide corrective guidance before problems escalate. Such practices cultivate a culture of accountability, where employees are aware that their actions are observed and valued. In the case of the Buton Fire and Safety Department, the adoption of structured monitoring has led to significant improvements in employee behavior, punctuality, and work ethic. This demonstrates that effective discipline management not only enhances individual performance but also contributes to the overall professionalism and reliability of the department.

4. Conclusion

Based on the findings of the study, it can be concluded that the role of human resource management in the Fire and Safety Department of Buton Regency has been implemented effectively through several key aspects: organizing, preparation, employee development, compensation, and discipline. Each of these components contributes significantly to improving employee performance and ensuring that the department operates efficiently in fulfilling its public safety duties. Proper organization enables the department to allocate human resources strategically, while systematic preparation and training ensure that every firefighter is equipped with the necessary skills and readiness to handle emergencies. Employee development initiatives further strengthen the department's capacity by enhancing professionalism and motivation among staff. Moreover, the provision of fair compensation and the enforcement of strong disciplinary practices have created a productive and accountable work culture. The combination of financial incentives, recognition, and performance monitoring fosters commitment, responsibility, and job satisfaction among employees. Through these integrated HRM strategies, the Fire and Safety Department of Buton Regency has successfully improved the quality, responsiveness, and reliability of its

workforce. Therefore, it can be concluded that effective human resource management plays a vital role in building a competent, disciplined, and motivated team capable of achieving organizational goals and providing optimal public service.

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