

ANALYSIS OF EMPLOYEE CAREER DEVELOPMENT AT SMAN 4 GORONTALO

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo, with particular attention to career-related information, feedback mechanisms, interpersonal openness, and organizational transparency. A qualitative descriptive research design was employed to obtain an in-depth understanding of how career development is implemented within the school's human resource management practices. Informants were selected purposively and consisted of the principal, teachers, and administrative staff who were considered knowledgeable about employee management and career development processes. Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation, and were analyzed through data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. The findings indicate that career-related information is available but is not yet disseminated and understood equally among employees, particularly regarding functional position advancement and professional certification. Feedback mechanisms have been implemented through performance evaluations, meetings, and supervision, but remain predominantly top-down and have not fully developed into reciprocal career development discussions. Interpersonal relationships are generally supportive and collaborative, although openness to constructive criticism varies among employees. Organizational transparency is relatively evident in routine administrative matters but remains limited in explaining the criteria and rationale underlying career-related decisions. The study concludes that employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo requires stronger integration of information systems, participatory feedback, interpersonal development, and transparent career decision-making. Strengthening these dimensions can support a more systematic, equitable, and sustainable career development system aligned with both employee needs and institutional objectives.

Keywords : Career Development, Human Resource Management, Employee Development, Organizational Transparency, Educational Institution

INTRODUCTION

Human resources represent one of the most important organizational assets in achieving sustainable performance and institutional objectives. In educational institutions, the quality of human resources is particularly important because the effectiveness of educational services depends not only on students and teachers but also on administrative and support personnel who ensure that academic, administrative, and operational activities run effectively. Consequently, human resource management in schools should extend beyond staffing and administrative functions to include systematic efforts to improve employee competencies,

performance, professional growth, and career prospects.

Career development is an important component of strategic human resource management because it connects individual aspirations and capabilities with organizational requirements. It encompasses a continuous process through which employees develop their knowledge, skills, competencies, and professional capacities while pursuing opportunities for career advancement. Career development therefore should not be understood merely as promotion to a higher position, but as a broader process involving continuous learning, career planning, training, mentoring, performance

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evaluation, and opportunities for professional growth [1]. From an organizational perspective, career development enables institutions to develop employee capabilities in accordance with changing organizational needs and strategic objectives [2].

The importance of career development has become increasingly evident as organizations face changing competency requirements and evolving career environments. Internal training and continuous learning can contribute to reducing skills gaps and ensuring that employees possess competencies relevant to their responsibilities [3]. Similarly, employee development should not be limited to formal training, as mentoring, coaching, experiential learning, and opportunities to apply new knowledge are also important mechanisms for developing employees' capabilities [4]. Such approaches indicate that effective career development requires an integrated system rather than isolated training activities.

Career development is also closely associated with employee motivation, job satisfaction, retention, and performance. Opportunities for career advancement can encourage employees to invest in their professional capabilities and strengthen their commitment to the organization [5][6]. Recent evidence further indicates that career development programs can contribute to employee job satisfaction, particularly when employees perceive their workplace as inclusive and supportive [7]. Career development can also mediate the relationship between organizational factors such as the work environment and training and employee performance, demonstrating that employee

development constitutes an important mechanism through which human resource practices can generate organizational outcomes [8].

An effective career development system requires clear career pathways, opportunities for learning, performance feedback, and organizational support. Career pathways provide employees with a clearer understanding of potential professional progression, while performance appraisal can be used not only as an evaluation mechanism but also as a basis for identifying developmental needs and future career opportunities. Accordingly, career development should be integrated with other human resource management practices, including training, performance appraisal, compensation, and organizational development [9]. In this regard, structured career discussions between employees and managers are also important because they allow employees to communicate their aspirations and developmental needs while enabling managers to align individual career plans with organizational priorities [10].

Within educational organizations, these principles are particularly relevant because schools require personnel who are capable of adapting to changes in educational administration, technology, organizational policies, and service demands. Employee capability development can contribute to organizational excellence when individual competencies are systematically aligned with institutional objectives [11]. Moreover, contemporary career development approaches emphasize adaptability and the need for organizations to provide mechanisms that

enable employees to respond to changing career environments [12][13]. Thus, schools need to establish career development practices that are continuous, transparent, competency-based, and responsive to both employee and institutional needs.

The issue becomes particularly relevant in the context of SMAN 4 Gorontalo, a senior high school in Gorontalo that continues to pursue improvements in the quality of educational management and services. As an educational institution, SMAN 4 Gorontalo requires not only qualified teaching personnel but also competent administrative and educational support employees to maintain the effectiveness of its organizational and operational activities. The management of these employees consequently represents an important dimension of the school's overall human resource management. A well-designed career development system can provide employees with opportunities to strengthen their competencies, improve their performance, and develop professionally in accordance with their potential and areas of responsibility.

However, preliminary conditions at SMAN 4 Gorontalo indicate that employee career development still faces several challenges. Some employees do not yet have sufficiently clear career pathways, while opportunities for continuous training and development have not always been fully aligned with their respective areas of responsibility. These conditions may limit employees' opportunities to improve their competencies and understand the career possibilities available within the organization. If career development is not managed

systematically, employees may perceive limited opportunities for professional growth, which may subsequently affect motivation, job satisfaction, and work performance. This concern is consistent with previous research emphasizing that career development opportunities are important for employee motivation, satisfaction, performance, and organizational commitment [5][6][7].

In addition to formal policies and human resource systems, leadership plays an important role in creating an environment conducive to employee career development. School leaders have the responsibility to identify employee development needs, provide access to training and learning opportunities, recognize performance, and facilitate career advancement through transparent and objective mechanisms. Career development is therefore not solely an individual responsibility but also an organizational responsibility that requires managerial support and alignment between individual aspirations and institutional objectives [9]. A supportive organizational environment can further strengthen employees' opportunities to develop their capabilities and contribute to organizational excellence.

Furthermore, contemporary career development perspectives increasingly emphasize fairness, inclusion, and equal access to developmental opportunities. Career advancement should be based on competencies, performance, potential, and organizational needs rather than on subjective considerations. Research on employees with disabilities, for example, demonstrates that organizational barriers and limited access to

developmental opportunities can affect employees' career progression [14]. Although the present study does not specifically focus on disability, this perspective reinforces the broader principle that career development systems should provide equitable opportunities for employees to grow and progress within an organization.

Despite the extensive literature emphasizing the strategic importance of employee career development, its implementation is highly dependent on organizational context. Career development practices that are effective in corporate or technology-oriented organizations may not necessarily operate in the same manner within public educational institutions. Therefore, examining career development within a specific school context is important for understanding how career pathways, training, performance evaluation, leadership support, and employee development opportunities are actually implemented at the organizational level. This contextual perspective is particularly relevant for identifying practical challenges that may not be fully captured through generalized models of career development.

Based on this context, the career development of employees at SMAN 4 Gorontalo warrants further investigation. The study is intended to analyze how employee career development is implemented at the school, particularly in relation to career opportunities, competency development, training, performance evaluation, leadership support, and the alignment between employee development and organizational needs. The findings are expected to provide an empirical

basis for strengthening human resource management practices at SMAN 4 Gorontalo and for developing a more systematic, transparent, equitable, and sustainable employee career development strategy. Ultimately, effective career development is expected to contribute not only to individual employee growth but also to the improvement of organizational performance and the quality of educational services.

RESEARCH METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a qualitative descriptive research design to examine employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo. A qualitative approach was considered appropriate because the study sought to explore and describe, in depth, how career development is implemented within the school's human resource management practices. Rather than measuring career development through numerical indicators, the study focused on understanding the experiences, perceptions, practices, and organizational processes associated with employee career development.

Qualitative research enables researchers to examine social phenomena within their natural settings and to understand how individuals interpret their experiences and organizational circumstances [15]. In the context of this study, career development is viewed as a multidimensional organizational process involving career opportunities, training and competency development, performance appraisal, promotion, managerial support, and the alignment between individual capabilities and institutional needs.

The descriptive design was used to provide a systematic and comprehensive account of the career development practices implemented at SMAN 4 Gorontalo. The study did not aim to test hypotheses or establish statistical relationships among variables. Instead, it sought to identify and interpret existing practices, supporting factors, constraints, and organizational mechanisms that shape employee career development within the school.

Research Setting and Informants

The research was conducted at SMAN 4 Gorontalo, Gorontalo, Indonesia. The school was selected as the research setting because employee management and career development constitute important components of the institution's efforts to maintain effective educational and administrative services.

The participants were selected using purposive sampling, whereby informants were chosen based on their knowledge, experience, and involvement in employee management and career development processes. The informants consisted of relevant school stakeholders, including the principal, teachers, and administrative staff. The principal was considered an important informant because of their managerial authority and role in implementing human resource policies, while teachers and administrative staff were included to obtain perspectives based on their direct experiences as employees within the school.

The number of informants was determined based on the adequacy and relevance of the information obtained during the research process. Data collection continued until the information obtained was

considered sufficiently comprehensive to describe the phenomena under investigation and additional interviews no longer generated substantial new information.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through semi-structured interviews, direct observation, and documentation. The use of multiple data collection techniques enabled the researcher to obtain information from different sources and to develop a more comprehensive understanding of employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo.

1. Semi-Structured Interviews

Semi-structured interviews were conducted with selected informants to obtain detailed information regarding the implementation of employee career development. The interviews explored several aspects, including career development policies, opportunities for training and competency development, performance evaluation, promotion mechanisms, managerial support, career planning, employee perceptions, and factors that facilitate or hinder career development.

The semi-structured format provided a consistent framework for addressing the main research themes while allowing the researcher to ask follow-up questions when informants provided relevant information that required further clarification. This approach was particularly useful for capturing individual experiences and perceptions that could not be adequately obtained through structured questionnaires.

2. Observation

Observation was conducted to obtain contextual information concerning the implementation of human resource management and employee development practices within the school. The researcher observed relevant workplace situations, employee interactions, work processes, and activities associated with training, performance evaluation, professional development, and managerial practices.

Observation served as a complementary technique to the interviews by allowing the researcher to compare participants' statements with conditions and practices observed in the research setting.

3. Documentation

Documentation was used to complement information obtained through interviews and observations. Relevant documents included, where accessible and permitted by the institution, employee-related administrative records, training and development records, performance appraisal documents, organizational structures, school policies, and other documents relevant to employee career development.

Document analysis helped provide supporting evidence regarding the formal mechanisms and policies governing employee development and enabled the researcher to compare documented practices with information obtained from informants.

Research Instrument

In qualitative research, the researcher served as the primary instrument for data collection, interpretation, and analysis. The

researcher directly interacted with informants, conducted observations, examined relevant documents, and interpreted the data within the organizational context of SMAN 4 Gorontalo.

To ensure systematic data collection, the researcher used supporting instruments in the form of an interview guide, observation guide, and documentation checklist. The interview guide was developed based on the main dimensions of employee career development identified in the literature, including career pathways, continuous learning and training, mentoring and managerial support, performance appraisal, promotion opportunities, and organizational alignment.

During the research process, the researcher also maintained field notes to record relevant observations, contextual information, and preliminary interpretations. The use of these supporting instruments helped maintain consistency while preserving the flexibility required in qualitative inquiry.

Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted interactively throughout the research process. The analysis involved three interconnected stages: data condensation, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. This process allowed the researcher to continuously compare information obtained from different informants and data sources.

First, the researcher condensed the data by selecting, organizing, and categorizing information relevant to the research objectives. Interview transcripts, observation notes, and documents were examined to identify statements and information related to employee career development. Irrelevant or repetitive information was excluded while

retaining data that contributed to understanding the research phenomenon.

Second, the condensed data were organized and displayed thematically. The emerging themes included career development policies, career pathways and promotion, training and competency development, performance appraisal, leadership support, employee motivation and perceptions, and supporting and inhibiting factors. Thematic organization enabled the researcher to identify patterns and relationships among different aspects of career development.

Third, conclusions were drawn by interpreting the identified patterns and comparing information across informants and data sources. Conclusions were continuously verified against the collected evidence to ensure that interpretations accurately represented the conditions observed at SMAN 4 Gorontalo. The analysis therefore followed an iterative process in which data collection, interpretation, and verification informed one another.

Data Validity and Trustworthiness

The trustworthiness of the research findings was strengthened through data triangulation. Triangulation was conducted by comparing information obtained from different informants and by examining evidence collected through interviews, observations, and documentation.

Source triangulation was used to compare the perspectives of the principal, teachers, and administrative staff regarding employee career development. Meanwhile, technique triangulation was applied by comparing interview findings with observations and relevant institutional

documents. When discrepancies were identified, the researcher conducted further clarification with relevant informants and examined supporting evidence before drawing conclusions.

In addition, the researcher maintained a clear record of the research process, including interview notes, observation records, documentation, and analytical decisions. This procedure was intended to improve the consistency, credibility, and transparency of the findings. Through these measures, the study sought to ensure that the conclusions represented the actual conditions of employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo rather than being based solely on the researcher's subjective interpretation.

RESEARCH RESULTS

The findings of this study were derived from semi-structured interviews, direct observations, and document analysis conducted at SMAN 4 Gorontalo. The analysis identified four major themes concerning employee career development: clarity of career-related information, two-way feedback, interpersonal openness, and organizational transparency. These themes describe how employees perceive and experience the career development process within the school.

Clarity of Career-Related Information

The findings indicate that career-related information at SMAN 4 Gorontalo is available to employees, particularly information concerning training opportunities, performance assessment, and potential career advancement. However, the distribution and

accessibility of such information are not yet perceived as equal among all employees.

Interviews with teachers and administrative staff revealed differences in employees' understanding of career-related procedures. While some employees were familiar with the general mechanisms for professional development, others reported limited understanding of the procedures and requirements associated with functional position advancement and professional certification. This variation suggests that the availability of information does not necessarily ensure that all employees possess the same level of understanding regarding career development opportunities.

The findings further indicate that information is generally communicated through existing school communication channels and administrative processes. Nevertheless, information concerning specific career pathways and advancement requirements was not consistently received or understood by all employees. Employees therefore demonstrated different levels of awareness regarding the opportunities and procedures available to support their career progression.

Observation findings were generally consistent with the interview data. Career-related information was communicated within the existing organizational structure; however, no dedicated and systematically accessible career information mechanism was identified during the observation process. Consequently, employees tended to obtain career-related information through formal announcements, meetings, or communication with relevant superiors and colleagues.

Overall, the findings demonstrate that the main issue concerning information clarity is not the complete absence of career-related information but rather uneven access, understanding, and dissemination of information among employees.

Two-Way Feedback

The findings show that feedback between school management and employees takes place through several formal mechanisms, including annual performance evaluations, staff meetings, and academic supervision. These mechanisms provide opportunities for school management to communicate expectations regarding employee performance and professional responsibilities.

However, interviews indicated that feedback processes tend to emphasize the transmission of information and evaluation from management to employees. Opportunities for employees to communicate their views regarding career development, training needs, promotion opportunities, and career-related concerns appear to be more limited.

Several employees described performance evaluation primarily as a formal assessment process rather than as an ongoing developmental dialogue. Although employees can communicate with school management through meetings and direct interactions, such communication does not consistently function as a structured forum for discussing individual career aspirations and development needs.

The observation findings also indicated that formal meetings constitute an important channel of organizational communication. Nevertheless, discussions

concerning individual career planning were not consistently observed as a specific component of these activities. This indicates that the existing feedback mechanism provides a basis for communication but has not yet developed into a systematic career dialogue between employees and management.

Thus, the findings reveal a predominantly managerial-to-employee feedback pattern, with opportunities for reciprocal communication regarding individual career development remaining relatively limited.

Interpersonal Openness

The findings indicate that interpersonal relationships within SMAN 4 Gorontalo are generally characterized by cooperation and mutual support. Communication between school leadership and teachers was observed to support the implementation of academic and administrative activities. Employees were generally able to interact with colleagues and superiors in carrying out their respective responsibilities.

Interviews further indicated that employees perceived the working environment as relatively supportive of collaboration. Teachers and administrative personnel were able to exchange information and provide assistance in completing work-related tasks. This interpersonal interaction represents an important social dimension of the organizational environment in which employee development takes place.

Nevertheless, the findings also identified differences in employees' willingness to receive and communicate

criticism or suggestions. Some employees were described as being less open to criticism or feedback from colleagues. Such situations were particularly evident when feedback was perceived as evaluative rather than supportive.

The observation findings support the presence of collaborative interactions among employees, although the degree of openness varied across individuals and situations. Communication was generally more fluid when related to routine work activities, while discussions involving criticism, performance shortcomings, or suggestions for improvement tended to require greater interpersonal sensitivity.

Overall, interpersonal openness at SMAN 4 Gorontalo can be characterized as relatively positive in routine collaboration but variable in relation to critical feedback and constructive evaluation.

Organizational Transparency

The findings show that transparency has been implemented in several aspects of school management. Employees receive information regarding work assignments, teaching responsibilities, performance assessment, and certain administrative activities through established organizational mechanisms. These practices provide employees with access to information relevant to their daily responsibilities.

However, greater variation was identified in relation to transparency in career-related decisions. Interviews indicated that not all employees had the same level of understanding regarding the criteria and considerations underlying particular assignments, promotion opportunities, or

other decisions associated with career development.

In particular, some employees perceived that decisions concerning career advancement and assignment were not always accompanied by sufficiently explicit explanations of the criteria used by management. The absence of detailed information regarding decision-making considerations contributed to different interpretations among employees regarding the fairness of career-related decisions.

The findings from documentation and observation indicate that several administrative processes are formally documented and communicated. Nevertheless, documentation of career-related decision-making criteria was not consistently evident in the information accessible to employees. This distinction indicates that administrative transparency is relatively more established than transparency specifically related to career development and advancement.

Consequently, organizational transparency at SMAN 4 Gorontalo can be understood as relatively established in routine administrative matters but less explicit in relation to the criteria, rationale, and procedures underlying career-related decisions.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo is supported by existing human resource management practices, but its implementation remains uneven across four interconnected dimensions: clarity of career-related

information, two-way feedback, interpersonal openness, and organizational transparency. These findings suggest that the effectiveness of career development is determined not only by the existence of formal policies and administrative procedures but also by how clearly these mechanisms are communicated, discussed, and perceived by employees.

Clarity of Career-Related Information and Career Development

The first finding demonstrates that career-related information is available at SMAN 4 Gorontalo, but its accessibility and understanding are not yet uniform among employees. Some teachers and administrative staff reported limited understanding of procedures related to functional position advancement and professional certification. This finding suggests that the existence of information alone is insufficient to ensure effective career development. Information needs to be accessible, understandable, timely, and directly connected to employees' career needs.

This finding is consistent with the conceptualization of career development as a process that requires employees to understand available career pathways and the competencies necessary to progress within an organization. Sun and Wang [1], emphasize that career development involves the management of career pathways and opportunities that enable employees to understand and pursue professional advancement. Similarly, Jain et al. [6], demonstrate the importance of career development opportunities in helping employees understand and pursue career progression within organizations.

The finding also supports Vnoučková et al. [2], who emphasize that employee development should be connected to organizational practices and employees' developmental needs. When information concerning career opportunities is fragmented or unevenly distributed, employees may experience different levels of access to developmental opportunities despite working within the same organization. In the context of SMAN 4 Gorontalo, differences in employees' understanding of functional advancement and certification requirements indicate that career development may be influenced by the extent to which employees can independently access and interpret relevant information.

This condition is particularly important because career development is closely related to employees' motivation to improve their competencies. When employees understand what opportunities are available and what requirements must be fulfilled, they are better positioned to formulate individual development goals. Conversely, unclear information may create uncertainty and discourage employees from actively pursuing career development opportunities. Therefore, the issue identified at SMAN 4 Gorontalo is not primarily the absence of career development opportunities, but the uneven communication and accessibility of information concerning those opportunities.

From a managerial perspective, this finding implies that career development information should be treated as an integral component of human resource management rather than merely as administrative information. Career pathways, training opportunities, competency requirements, and

promotion procedures should be communicated through mechanisms that employees can access consistently. Such practices would strengthen employees' ability to plan their professional development and align individual career aspirations with institutional needs.

Two-Way Feedback as a Mechanism for Career Development

The second finding concerns the implementation of feedback mechanisms. SMAN 4 Gorontalo has established several formal mechanisms, including annual performance evaluations, staff meetings, and academic supervision. However, the findings indicate that these mechanisms tend to function predominantly as channels through which management communicates expectations and evaluates employee performance rather than as reciprocal forums for discussing employees' career aspirations and developmental needs.

The findings at SMAN 4 Gorontalo indicate, however, that the developmental potential of performance evaluation has not been fully realized. When feedback is primarily top-down, employees may receive information about whether their performance meets organizational expectations without having sufficient opportunity to discuss their own career objectives, developmental barriers, or training needs. This creates a distinction between performance evaluation and career development dialogue.

This finding is also relevant to the perspective of van de Ven [10], who emphasizes the importance of meaningful career development conversations. Career development requires interaction between

employees and managers because career aspirations and developmental needs cannot always be identified through formal evaluation alone. McDonald and Hite [9], similarly conceptualize career development as a human resource development process that should integrate organizational needs with individual career interests.

Therefore, the relatively top-down nature of feedback at SMAN 4 Gorontalo represents an important area for improvement. The school already possesses formal communication mechanisms, but their developmental value could be strengthened by transforming evaluation from a primarily administrative activity into an ongoing dialogue. Such an approach would enable employees to understand performance expectations while simultaneously communicating their career aspirations and identifying the competencies they need to develop.

Interpersonal Openness and the Social Environment of Career Development

The third finding reveals that interpersonal relationships at SMAN 4 Gorontalo are generally supportive and collaborative, particularly in routine academic and administrative activities. Nevertheless, employees differ in their willingness to accept criticism and suggestions from colleagues. This finding indicates that interpersonal openness has two dimensions: cooperation in completing work and openness to developmental feedback.

The distinction is important because employee development depends not only on formal training but also on informal learning through interaction with colleagues,

supervisors, mentors, and other organizational members. Dyke et al. [4], argue that developing knowledge workers involves more than formal training and includes broader mechanisms through which employees acquire and exchange knowledge. In this sense, an organizational environment characterized by constructive communication can become an informal learning environment that supports employee development.

The relatively positive collaborative environment identified at SMAN 4 Gorontalo therefore constitutes an important organizational resource. Employees who are comfortable exchanging knowledge and assisting one another have greater opportunities to learn from workplace experiences. However, the reluctance of some employees to receive criticism may reduce the developmental value of these interactions. Feedback that is intended to improve performance may instead be interpreted as personal criticism, thereby limiting open communication.

This finding is consistent with the broader perspective of employee development proposed by Vnoučková et al. [2], which emphasizes that employee development is embedded within organizational practices and working relationships. Career development should therefore not be understood exclusively as a formal HR process. The social environment in which employees work can either facilitate or constrain their willingness to learn, receive feedback, and develop professionally.

In the context of SMAN 4 Gorontalo, the existing collaborative culture provides a foundation for strengthening informal

learning, mentoring, peer support, and professional exchange. However, interpersonal openness needs to extend beyond routine cooperation toward a culture in which constructive criticism is perceived as part of professional development. Such a culture would allow employees to identify weaknesses, recognize areas for improvement, and learn from colleagues without creating unnecessary interpersonal tension.

Organizational Transparency and Perceptions of Career Fairness

The fourth finding concerns organizational transparency. The study indicates that transparency is relatively visible in routine administrative matters, including work assignments, teaching responsibilities, and certain performance-related processes. However, transparency is less explicit in decisions involving career advancement, assignments, and promotion. Some employees reportedly lack sufficient information about the criteria and rationale underlying particular career-related decisions.

This finding is particularly important because career development involves not only opportunities for advancement but also employees' perceptions of fairness in how those opportunities are allocated. When employees do not understand the criteria used to make career-related decisions, they may interpret organizational decisions differently, even when management has legitimate reasons for making them.

The finding is also consistent with McDonald and Hite's [9], view that career development should integrate individual development with organizational human resource practices. If employees understand

how decisions are made, what competencies are required, and what performance standards must be achieved, career development becomes more predictable and actionable. In contrast, limited transparency can make career progression appear dependent on factors that employees cannot clearly understand or influence.

Accordingly, the transparency issue identified at SMAN 4 Gorontalo should not be interpreted simply as an administrative deficiency. It represents a broader organizational issue concerning how employees understand the fairness, predictability, and legitimacy of career-related decisions. Clear criteria and communication regarding career advancement may therefore strengthen employee trust and reduce uncertainty surrounding professional progression.

Integrating the Findings: Career Development as an Organizational Process

Taken together, the four findings demonstrate that employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo is not determined by a single HR practice. Rather, it emerges from the interaction between information, communication, interpersonal relationships, performance management, and organizational decision-making.

The first dimension, clarity of information, determines whether employees understand available career opportunities and the requirements for advancement. The second dimension, two-way feedback, determines whether employees can actively participate in discussions concerning their development rather than merely receiving performance evaluations. The third dimension,

interpersonal openness, influences the extent to which employees can learn from colleagues and receive constructive feedback. The fourth dimension, organizational transparency, affects employees' perceptions of the fairness and predictability of career-related decisions.

This integrated interpretation is consistent with the broader literature, which emphasizes that employee development should be aligned with organizational objectives while simultaneously addressing individual development needs [2][9]. Career development is therefore more effective when training, performance appraisal, communication, managerial support, and career pathways operate as interconnected components rather than as separate administrative activities.

The findings also reinforce the importance of viewing career development as a continuous process. Training alone cannot guarantee career advancement if employees do not understand available career pathways; similarly, performance appraisal may have limited developmental value if it does not provide opportunities for reciprocal feedback. Likewise, formal career policies may not generate employee confidence if the criteria underlying career decisions are not sufficiently transparent.

For SMAN 4 Gorontalo, this suggests that the central challenge is not necessarily the establishment of entirely new career development mechanisms, but rather the integration and strengthening of existing practices. Existing meetings, performance evaluations, supervision, training opportunities, and administrative communication can serve as foundations for a

more systematic career development system. Strengthening the connections among these practices would enable the school to move from a predominantly administrative approach toward a more developmental approach to human resource management.

Overall, the study demonstrates that effective employee career development requires an organizational environment in which employees know what opportunities are available, can communicate their aspirations, receive meaningful feedback, collaborate openly with colleagues, and understand the basis for career-related decisions. Such an environment can strengthen the alignment between individual professional development and the institutional objectives of SMAN 4 Gorontalo.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that employee career development at SMAN 4 Gorontalo is supported by existing human resource management practices but has not yet been implemented in a fully systematic and integrated manner. The findings indicate that career-related information is available but remains unevenly disseminated and understood, particularly regarding functional career advancement and professional certification; feedback mechanisms through performance evaluations, meetings, and supervision remain predominantly top-down; interpersonal relationships are generally supportive, although openness to constructive criticism varies; and organizational transparency is stronger in routine administrative matters than in explaining the criteria and rationale for career-related

decisions. Therefore, the school should strengthen the accessibility of career information, develop regular two-way career discussions, promote mentoring and constructive feedback, and establish clearer and more transparent criteria for career-related decisions. These improvements can support a more equitable, sustainable, and employee-oriented career development system while aligning individual professional development with the institution's objectives. As this study was conducted in a single educational institution using a qualitative approach, future research is encouraged to involve multiple schools and employ comparative or mixed-method designs to obtain broader evidence on employee career development in educational organizations.

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