

Competency-Based Recruitment and Selection for Enhancing Human Resource Performance in Indonesian Higher Education Institutions

Joko Nugroho

Institut Agama Islam Al Aqidah Al Hasyimiyah, Jakarta, Indonesia; jokojn74@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

Human resource performance is pivotal to academic quality and institutional competitiveness in Indonesian higher education. However, conventional recruitment practices often prioritize academic credentials and seniority over demonstrated competencies, leading to misalignment between employee capabilities and organizational needs. This study employs a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) guided by PRISMA protocols. Academic publications from 2013–2025 were retrieved from Scopus, Google Scholar, and institutional repositories using keywords related to competency-based recruitment and higher education in Indonesia. Of 87 identified studies, 26 met inclusion criteria after screening for relevance, methodological rigor, and duplication. Data were analyzed using thematic coding focused on competency frameworks, recruitment practices, and HR performance outcomes. The findings indicate that competency-based recruitment and selection significantly enhance employee productivity, role clarity, and organizational fit. Institutions implementing structured tools—such as behavioral event interviews, psychometric assessments, and competency matrices—reported performance improvements of approximately 25–40% in targeted units. Alignment between institutional strategies and competency requirements was associated with reduced turnover and increased employee engagement. Nonetheless, challenges include limited HR expertise in competency mapping, inconsistent implementation, and cultural resistance to merit-based systems. Competency-based recruitment demonstrates both theoretical and practical value in improving HR performance when supported by institutional readiness, leadership commitment, and HR capacity development. Although it reduces subjectivity, successful implementation requires sustained investment in competency modeling, assessment tools, and standardized evaluation processes. Future research should expand empirical case studies and integrate digital HR analytics to enhance competency tracking and decision-making.

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Corresponding Author:

Joko Nugroho

Institut Agama Islam Al Aqidah Al Hasyimiyah, Jakarta, Indonesia; jokojn74@gmail.com

1. INTRODUCTION

Human resources are widely recognized as the most strategic asset in higher education institutions because lecturers, administrators, and support staff directly shape institutional quality, innovation, and long-term competitiveness (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). In Indonesia, recruitment practices in many universities continue to rely heavily on academic qualifications, seniority, and bureaucratic compliance rather than a comprehensive evaluation of competencies (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2018). This conventional system often results in a mismatch between employee capability and role expectations, leading to reduced job effectiveness, low engagement, and minimal contribution to institutional improvement (Wibowo, 2016). To resolve these issues, a competency-based recruitment and selection approach has emerged as a strategic HR model emphasizing behavioral, managerial, and technical competencies as predictors of employee performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). By aligning recruitment decisions with institutional strategic goals, competency-based HRM ensures that employees bring both technical proficiency and the right behavioral attributes to support organizational success (Campion et al., 2011).

However, scholarly examinations of competency-based recruitment within Indonesian higher education remain limited, with most existing studies focusing on corporate sectors or Western education systems rather than local university contexts (Rohim & Budiyo, 2021). Consequently, the practical application of competency-based models in Indonesian universities—as well as their impact on HR performance—is not yet well understood. Addressing this knowledge gap, the present study analyzes existing literature to determine how competency-based recruitment and selection influences employee output, role alignment, and institutional capability in Indonesian higher education settings. The central research questions explore the extent of competency-based implementation, the competency frameworks employed, and the measurable effects on HR performance improvement.

Competency in human resource management is commonly defined as a structured combination of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and personal attributes that collectively enable individuals to perform effectively in specific occupational roles (Boyatzis, 2008). One of the most influential theoretical frameworks in competency research is the Spencer & Spencer model, which categorizes competencies into observable skills and underlying behavioral elements such as initiative, teamwork, leadership, and problem solving (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). In the context of academic institutions, competencies must also encompass pedagogical ability, collegial collaboration, and innovative engagement reflecting the knowledge-driven nature of higher education (Brown & Duguid, 2017).

Competency-based recruitment and selection, in contrast to traditional qualification-based hiring, prioritizes identifying and assessing competencies directly linked to job performance requirements (Campion et al., 2016). Rather than merely reviewing academic credentials or work history, this approach incorporates structured assessment tools such as behavioral event interviews, psychometric testing, assessment centers, competency matrices, and performance simulations, all of which have been shown to reduce bias and increase predictive validity in hiring decisions (Sackett & Lievens, 2008). By matching candidates with specific competency profiles, institutions can achieve better job–person alignment and reduce turnover attributable to misfit between employee traits and institutional expectations (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2020).

HR performance in higher education extends beyond measurable outcomes like workload, administrative productivity, or publication rates. It also includes qualitative contributions such as intellectual collaboration, service quality, innovation capability, student engagement, and commitment to academic values (Deem, Hillyard, & Reed, 2007). In Indonesia, improving HR performance in universities is particularly crucial as institutions face growing demands for accreditation standards, global competitiveness, and knowledge-driven leadership (Fahmi, 2019). Competency-driven HR systems provide a pathway for building sustainable human capital that can support these strategic imperatives.

Despite the potential benefits, challenges persist in adopting competency-based HRM in Indonesian universities. Studies indicate constraints such as limited capacity in HR departments to develop competency models, insufficient assessment tools, institutional resistance toward merit-based practices, and strong cultural reliance on hierarchical and relational hiring approaches (Rohim & Budiyo, 2021;

Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2018). This research gap underscores the need for systematic analysis focusing on the interplay between competency-based recruitment and HR performance in higher education settings. While international literature provides extensive examples of successful implementation in corporate and academic contexts (Campion et al., 2011; Boyatzis, 2008), localized research that examines Indonesian conditions remains underdeveloped and fragmented. Accordingly, this review synthesizes existing studies to generate evidence-based insights and inform strategic HR development in Indonesian universities.

2. METHODS

This study applies a Systematic Literature Review (SLR) methodology to evaluate and synthesize scholarly research concerning competency-based recruitment and selection in Indonesian higher education institutions. The SLR approach was selected for its capacity to provide a comprehensive, transparent, and replicable analysis of existing literature, ensuring that the conclusions drawn are based on structured examination rather than subjective interpretation. The review process followed procedures adapted from the PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) framework, which outlines a systematic protocol for identifying, screening, and interpreting academic sources in a rigorous manner.

To ensure broad disciplinary coverage and high-quality sources, the literature search was conducted across multiple major academic databases, including Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar, as these databases index peer-reviewed journals, reputable international publications, and highly cited academic works. In addition to these global sources, institutional repositories from Indonesian universities and national academic journal portals were included to capture locally relevant studies that may not be indexed internationally but provide essential contextual insight into Indonesian HR practices. This combination of international and national repositories allowed the review to gather a balanced set of research findings reflecting both global competency-based HR frameworks and their adapted application in Indonesian academic environments.

The search strategy relied on carefully selected keyword combinations to ensure relevance to the study's research objectives. Phrases such as "competency-based recruitment," "competency-based selection," "higher education HR," "competency framework," "talent acquisition," and "Indonesia" were used independently and in various Boolean combinations (e.g., "competency-based recruitment" AND "higher education" AND "Indonesia"). This prevented overly broad retrieval of unrelated research while ensuring adequate sensitivity to detect studies focused on HRM, recruitment, competency modeling, academic staffing, and institutional HR policy within the educational sector.

To maintain methodological rigor while ensuring conceptual relevance, clear inclusion and exclusion criteria were established before the screening process commenced. Included sources were limited to publications between 2013 and 2025 to reflect recent developments in HR strategy, as the adoption of competency-based frameworks is relatively modern within Indonesian higher education. Eligible documents comprised peer-reviewed journal articles, postgraduate theses, and academic institutional reports; these document types offered verifiable research methodologies, analytical depth, and credible interpretations. Moreover, only studies that explicitly discussed HR competencies, recruitment strategies, or selection frameworks in higher education or related institutional settings were retained.

Conversely, sources were excluded if they were written in languages other than English or Indonesian, in order to avoid translation inaccuracies that could distort conceptual interpretation. Non-academic materials, such as magazine articles, blogs, editorial opinions, and unverified online content, were omitted due to their lack of methodological grounding. Furthermore, studies that discussed recruitment in general managerial or corporate settings without a connection to educational institutions were excluded, unless they provided transferable theoretical frameworks or competency models applicable to academic HR contexts. Additionally, articles that lacked methodological clarity, such as those without a defined research design or empirical support, were eliminated from consideration.

The screening process progressed in multiple stages. Initially, 87 publications were identified across all repositories. The first screening involved reviewing titles and abstracts to evaluate thematic alignment with the research focus on competency-based recruitment in higher education. At this stage, duplicate publications retrieved from multiple databases were removed. The second stage involved detailed full-text reviews to determine whether the methodology, findings, and conceptual orientation were relevant and sufficiently rigorous. Papers that addressed HR competency frameworks but applied them exclusively in non-educational settings were excluded unless their conceptual frameworks remained applicable to university staffing. Ultimately, this systematic filtering process resulted in a final dataset of 26 publications deemed suitable for in-depth review and analysis.

Data from the selected studies were extracted and synthesized using a thematic coding approach. Key findings were classified into conceptual categories, including the types of competency frameworks used in recruitment, specific HR assessment methods employed (such as behavioral interviewing, psychometric measures, and assessment centers), observed performance outcomes associated with competency-based approaches, and institutional or cultural challenges encountered during implementation. This coding process enabled the identification of patterns, convergences, and divergences across the literature, facilitating a nuanced understanding of how competency-based recruitment functions within the unique socio-cultural and administrative environment of Indonesian universities.

Through this SLR methodology, the study offers a methodologically grounded synthesis of fragmented research findings and establishes an evidence-based foundation for analyzing the practicality, effectiveness, and limitations of competency-based recruitment and selection within Indonesian higher education.

As part of the analytical process in this Systematic Literature Review (SLR), thematic coding was conducted to identify patterns, categories, and recurring conceptual structures across the reviewed studies. This process involved mapping the key ideas of each article, grouping variables into thematic clusters, and examining the relationships between competency frameworks, assessment methods, HR performance outcomes, and organizational cultural factors influencing implementation. Table 1 presents the results of this thematic coding analysis, illustrating the connections between competency-related concepts and the literature findings concerning competency-based recruitment and selection in Indonesian higher education institutions.

Table 1. List of 26 Articles Included in SLR

No	Author(s) & Year	Title of Article	Source	Focus of Study
1	Rohim & Budiyo (2021)	Competency-Based HRM Implementation Challenges in Indonesian Institutions	Jurnal Manajemen & Bisnis Indonesia	Barriers and limitations
2	Sutanto & Kurniawan (2018)	Recruitment System Analysis in Indonesian Universities	Jurnal Administrasi Pendidikan	Traditional vs competency-based recruitment
3	Wibowo (2016)	Performance Issues in Indonesian University HR Systems	Indonesian Journal of Educational Management	HR performance indicators
4	Fahmi (2019)	Competitiveness of Indonesian Universities	Journal of Higher Education Policy	Institutional capability and talent needs
5	Sunarto & Amelia (2020)	Competency Requirements for Academic Staff	Jurnal Pendidikan Tinggi	Competency framework for lecturers
6	Hidayat (2021)	Academic Talent Selection Using Competency Modeling	Jurnal Manajemen SDM	Competency-based selection methods
7	Rahmawati & Putra (2022)	Behavioral Interviewing in Indonesian Universities	Jurnal Psikologi Industri	Interview competency assessment

No	Author(s) & Year	Title of Article	Source	Focus of Study
8	Susanto et al. (2020)	Competency Mapping for University Administration	Jurnal Administrasi Publik	Administrative competencies
9	Nurhayati (2018)	HR Professionalism in Higher Education	Management & Education Review	HR skill development
10	Prasetyo & Lestari (2023)	Digital Tools for Competency-Based Recruitment	Journal of HR Technology	Psychometrics & digital testing
11	Wardhani (2020)	Talent Acquisition in Private Universities	Jurnal Kepegawaian Akademik	Recruitment strategy
12	Putri & Santoso (2017)	HR Capacity Building for Competency Evaluation	Asian Journal of HRM	HR training needs
13	Setiawan (2019)	Strategic HRM and Job–Role Alignment	Journal of Organizational Development	Role–competence alignment
14	Rosa & Felani (2022)	Competency Assessment Center in Academic Hiring	Jurnal Psikometri	Assessment center usage
15	Adityo & Handayani (2016)	Organizational Culture and Hiring Decisions	Jurnal Budaya Organisasi	Cultural resistance
16	Ahmad et al. (2024)	How Competency Predicts Job Performance	International Journal of HR Analytics	Competency-performance correlation
17	Hardiansyah (2015)	Academic HR Turnover Factors	Journal of Education Management	Turnover and misfit
18	Azhar & Meilani (2022)	HR Metrics and KPI Standardization	Jurnal Manajemen Strategis	KPI & performance indicators
19	Hernawan (2021)	Competency Profiles for Academic Managers	Journal of Educational Leadership	Leadership competency
20	Kusuma (2019)	Lecturers' Research Competency & HR Evaluation	Jurnal Ilmu Pendidikan	Academic competency indicators
21	Mertayasa & Dewi (2020)	Meritocracy in Academic Hiring	Journal of Public Management	Merit-based recruitment
22	Santika & Arifin (2018)	Psychometric Tools in Indonesian HR Selection	Jurnal Psikologi Terapan	Psychological assessment
23	Budiman et al. (2023)	AI-Based Assessment in University Recruitment	Journal of Digital HR	HR technology
24	Kartika (2017)	HR Policy Reform in State Universities	Indonesian Journal of Higher Education	Policy drivers
25	Yusuf & Safitri (2021)	Soft-Skill Competencies in Academic HR	Jurnal Pengembangan Karir	Interpersonal competency
26	Nugroho & Wulandari (2014)	Hiring Trends in Indonesian Academia	Journal of Academic HR Review	Historical recruitment patterns

3. FINDINGS AND DISCUSSION

The systematic review of the 26 selected sources revealed three dominant thematic insights: (1) institutional implementation approaches, (2) HR performance outcomes, and (3) cultural and structural barriers influencing adoption. These themes collectively illustrate the evolution, impact, and constraints of competency-based recruitment in Indonesian higher education institutions.

To provide a deeper and more granular understanding of these thematic insights, each of the 26 selected articles was examined individually to determine its specific contribution to the broader conceptual landscape of competency-based recruitment. The following table summarizes how each

source aligns with key aspects of the identified themes by categorizing the core concepts extracted from the literature. This thematic coding framework demonstrates how empirical findings, conceptual arguments, and contextual observations are distributed across varying dimensions of HR implementation, performance impact, and institutional challenges within Indonesian universities. Table 2 thus serves as a structured map of the scholarly evidence underpinning the development and evaluation of competency-based recruitment and selection in Indonesian higher education.

Table 2. Thematic Coding from Literature Review

Theme	Code Category	Description	Representative Evidence from Literature
Institutional Implementation Approaches	Competency Profiling	Institutions create role-based competency matrices and job specifications	Some universities require explicit core competency and functional competency mapping for HR planning (Rohim & Budiyo, 2021)
	Behavioral Interviewing	Use of structured behavioral event interviews based on past experiences	Behavioral interviewing improves predictive validity of performance (Campion et al., 2016)
	Standardized Performance Indicators	Using competency-based indicators for evaluation during and after hiring	Competency models enhance role clarity and reduce selection ambiguity (Gatewood et al., 2020)
HR Performance Improvement	Productivity Increase	Higher output in administrative and academic activities	Competency alignment correlates with improved performance output (Wibowo, 2016)
	Better Job–Role Fit	Employees demonstrate stronger alignment with professional expectations	Matching competencies with roles increases effectiveness (Boyatzis, 2008)
	Motivation & Engagement	Employees show stronger intrinsic and professional commitment	Competency-based systems enhance engagement and motivation (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020)
	Reduced Turnover & Hiring Errors	Lower mismatch risk and fewer premature employment failures	Structured recruitment minimizes turnover (Sackett & Lievens, 2008)
Challenges & Barriers	Limited HR Competency	HR departments lack expertise in competency design and assessment	HR staff require upskilling to execute advanced selection methods (Rohim & Budiyo, 2021)
	Cultural Hiring Norms	Preference for relational and hierarchical selection	Traditional hiring favors personal networks over merit (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2018)
	Resource Limitations	Lack of financial & technological tools for assessment	Small-scale institutions face infrastructure constraints (Wibowo, 2016)
	Resistance from Senior Staff	Organizational inertia and unwillingness to change	Long-tenured administrators resist competency-based change (Fahmi, 2019)

To further analyze how different studies contribute to the understanding of competency-based recruitment practices; a matrix coding analysis was performed to relate each article to a set of analytical variables. This matrix enables a systematic comparison of whether each source incorporates competency mapping, applies objective assessment methods, reports measurable improvements in HR performance, identifies cultural barriers, and demonstrates observable shifts from traditional to competency-based recruitment. By mapping these variables across the dataset, the matrix reveals patterns of thematic concentration, methodological alignment, and contextual challenges among the

studies. Table 3 presents the results of this matrix coding analysis, offering a structured view of how each article positions itself within the broader discourse on competency-driven HR reform in Indonesian higher education.

Table 3. Matrix Coding: Article – Variable – Findings

Article	Competency Mapping	Assessment Method	HR Performance Outcome	Cultural Barrier	Recruitment Shift
Rohim & Budiyo (2021)	Yes	No	Limited	Yes	Emerging
Sutanto & Kurniawan (2018)	No	Yes	Moderate	Yes	Yes
Wibowo (2016)	Yes	Yes	Significant	No	Yes
Fahmi (2019)	Yes	No	Moderate	Yes	Emerging
Sunarto & Amelia (2020)	Yes	Yes	Moderate	No	Yes
Hidayat (2021)	Yes	Yes	Moderate	No	Strong
Rahmawati & Putra (2022)	No	Yes	Strong	No	Strong
Susanto et al. (2020)	Yes	No	Strong	No	Yes
Nurhayati (2018)	No	No	Moderate	Yes	Moderate
Prasetyo & Lestari (2023)	Yes	Yes	Strong	No	Strong
Wardhani (2020)	No	Yes	Weak	Yes	Weak
Putri & Santoso (2017)	Yes	Yes	Moderate	No	Yes
Setiawan (2019)	Yes	No	Strong	No	Strong
Rosa & Felani (2022)	Yes	Yes	Strong	No	Strong
Adityo & Handayani (2016)	No	No	Weak	Yes	Weak
Ahmad et al. (2024)	Yes	Yes	Strong	No	Strong
Hardiansyah (2015)	Yes	No	Moderate	No	Moderate
Azhar & Meilani (2022)	Yes	No	Strong	No	Moderate
Hernawan (2021)	Yes	Yes	Moderate	No	Moderate
Kusuma (2019)	Yes	Yes	Moderate	No	Strong
Mertayasa & Dewi (2020)	No	Yes	Strong	Yes	Strong
Santika & Arifin (2018)	Yes	Yes	Strong	No	Strong
Budiman et al. (2023)	Yes	Yes	Strong	No	Strong
Kartika (2017)	No	No	Weak	Yes	Moderate
Yusuf & Safitri (2021)	Yes	Yes	Moderate	No	Strong
Nugroho & Wulandari (2014)	No	No	Weak	Yes	Weak

The matrix coding reveals clear relationships between competency-based hiring practices and improvements in HR performance across the analyzed literature. First, the presence of competency mapping is strongly associated with positive HR outcomes. Articles that include competency profiling—such as Wibowo (2016), Susanto et al. (2020), and Ahmad et al. (2024)—consistently report

strong or significant improvements in productivity, job-role alignment, or employee engagement. This confirms the theoretical argument that explicit competency frameworks provide organizations with a more accurate foundation for assessing job fit (Boyatzis, 2008).

Conversely, studies that lack competency mapping often display weak or moderate results, particularly in terms of performance outcomes (e.g., Kartika, 2017; Wardhani, 2020). This suggests that relying solely on assessment tools—without a competency framework—limits the precision of recruitment decisions. Psychometric tests and interviews are powerful, but only when benchmarked against well-defined competencies. Therefore, competency mapping acts as the conceptual backbone of competency-based recruitment.

The matrix further shows that the incorporation of structured assessment methods—especially behavioral interviews and psychometric testing—strongly correlates with better performance outcomes and reduced hiring failure. Studies such as Rahmawati & Putra (2022), Rosa & Felani (2022), and Budiman et al. (2023) demonstrate that objective assessment strategies effectively predict job performance and facilitate merit-based decision-making. This aligns with empirical evidence on the predictive validity of structured selection methods (Sackett & Lievens, 2008).

However, while assessment tools promote objectivity, their effectiveness is dampened when cultural barriers remain present. Several articles, including Sutanto & Kurniawan (2018) and Nugroho & Wulandari (2014), note that in Indonesian academic institutions, traditional hierarchical norms and personal networking frequently influence hiring decisions. The matrix confirms this: articles identifying cultural barriers tend to reflect weaker recruitment transformation and weaker performance outcomes. This indicates that institutional culture plays a mediating role—either enabling or obstructing competency-based HR reform.

Another prominent insight concerns the “recruitment shift” variable. Articles categorized as demonstrating a strong shift toward competency-based selection also tend to show strong HR performance improvement (e.g., Setiawan, 2019; Mertayasa & Dewi, 2020). This suggests that the transition from qualification-driven hiring to competency-driven hiring is not merely procedural, but transformative. Institutions that move further along this shift adopt standardized evaluation criteria, align roles with measurable competencies, and hold HR personnel accountable to transparent hiring practices.

Interestingly, several studies—such as Nurhayati (2018) and Putri & Santoso (2017)—show moderate results despite competency mapping because institutional follow-through is uneven. Competencies may be defined, yet not fully applied. This illustrates a common pattern in HR reform where formal documents exist but lack operational impact due to insufficient enforcement, oversight, or HR capacity.

In general, the matrix validates three conclusions. First, competency mapping is foundational: without it, other tools become less effective. Second, cultural resistance plays a significant inhibiting role and remains a critical barrier unique to Indonesian academic settings. Third, the degree of institutional commitment to competency-based transformation determines the magnitude of HR improvements, meaning that success depends not only on technical tools but on leadership will, policy enforcement, and cultural adaptation.

3.1 Institutional Implementation Approaches

The first theme concerns the various ways Indonesian universities have begun adopting competency-based recruitment structures. A number of institutions have started developing formal job competency profiles specifying the precise behavioral, technical, and managerial competencies required for academic and administrative roles (Rohim & Budiyo, 2021). These competency profiles serve as reference documents used in the recruitment process and are often aligned with institutional strategic plans or accreditation standards. For instance, in faculty selection, competency mapping is used to pinpoint teaching capability, research productivity potential, student engagement capacity, and

collaborative orientation, thereby creating a more holistic assessment of academic suitability (Fahmi, 2019).

Behavioral interviewing has also been increasingly adopted as a standard hiring technique. Instead of asking candidates hypothetical questions, interviewers often use Behavioral Event Interviews (BEI) designed to elicit evidence of past performance in real scenarios (Campion et al., 2016). This method aligns with competency theory, which holds that observable past behaviors are reliable predictors of future job performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Some institutions supplement interviews with psychometric testing and cognitive assessments, although these tools are more prevalent in administrative recruitment rather than academic appointments (Gatewood, Feild, & Barrick, 2020).

Furthermore, universities adopting competency-based hiring also employ standardized performance indicators. These indicators are used to assess candidate potential and later evaluate employee performance post-hire. For example, administrative employees might be evaluated on competency categories such as communication clarity, analytical problem solving, and responsiveness to institutional stakeholders, while faculty may be assessed based on research output, teaching effectiveness, and participation in academic service (Deem, Hillyard, & Reed, 2007). However, implementation varies significantly across institutions, with some universities applying only rudimentary competency concepts while others fully integrate competency criteria into hiring policy frameworks (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2018). This uneven adoption highlights institutional capability disparities, as well as the role of leadership commitment in sustaining competency-based HR reforms.

3.2 HR Performance Improvement

Across the reviewed literature, there is strong empirical support for the argument that competency-based recruitment enhances HR performance outcomes. Multiple studies document marked increases in employee productivity following the implementation of competency-focused selection processes, with some reporting improvements of 25% to 40% in administrative service performance metrics (Wibowo, 2016). This upward trend is attributed to better alignment between staff competencies and organizational role expectations (Boyatzis, 2008), meaning employees are placed in jobs that match their skill profiles and behavioral tendencies.

Improved role alignment also correlates with heightened motivation, engagement, and professional commitment. Employees recruited through competency-based methods often report feeling more capable in their roles, leading to greater confidence and intrinsic motivation (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). For academic staff, alignment between research interest, teaching style, and departmental needs fosters deeper engagement with scholarly activities and stronger contributions to academic communities.

Moreover, competency-based recruitment has been demonstrated to reduce hiring errors and employee turnover. Institutions that previously relied on traditional qualification-based recruitment practices often hired candidates with adequate credentials but limited soft-skill alignment or unsuitable behavioral profiles (Sackett & Lievens, 2008). With competency-based selection, the risk of poor fit is mitigated, lowering onboarding failure rates and turnover-related costs. As Gatewood et al. (2020) note, effective selection methods have a measurable impact on retention, organizational stability, and institutional morale.

3.3 Challenges and Barriers

Despite substantial benefits, the literature reveals several structural, cultural, and organizational barriers hindering widespread adoption. One of the most frequently cited obstacles is the limited HR capacity to develop competency frameworks and assessment instruments. Many university HR administrators lack formal training in competency-based HRM or behavioral assessment methodology, resulting in inconsistent application and inadequate evaluation criteria (Rohim & Budiyono, 2021).

Cultural traditions also present significant barriers. Indonesian organizational culture often emphasizes respect for hierarchy, interpersonal harmony, and relational hiring practices over objective competency assessment (Fahmi, 2019). In practice, this can lead to bias, favoritism, and informal influence in staffing decisions—especially when senior administrators prefer to appoint candidates based on familiarity or perceived loyalty rather than competency evidence (Sutanto & Kurniawan, 2018).

Resource constraints also limit implementation. Conducting behavioral interviews, psychometric testing, and structured assessments requires time, financial resources, and technical infrastructure. Some universities, particularly those outside major metropolitan areas, lack funding for professional HR tools or access to assessment experts (Wibowo, 2016).

Finally, resistance to change among senior personnel creates additional hurdles. Long-tenured administrators or academic leaders who advanced under traditional credential-driven systems may perceive competency-based hiring as a threat to established norms or hierarchical privilege. Change resistance manifests in reluctance to update job descriptions, opposition to standardized evaluation, or selective compliance with new HR protocols (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020).

3.4 Discussion

The findings of this review demonstrate that competency-based recruitment and selection can significantly enhance HR performance in Indonesian higher education, but only when supported by institutional readiness and strategic commitment. The positive outcomes identified — including improved productivity, stronger role alignment, and reduced turnover — validate theoretical perspectives emphasizing the value of competency-driven HR practices (Boyatzis, 2008; Campion et al., 2011). These findings also align with global research on HR professionalism, wherein competency-based hiring is associated with improved organizational effectiveness and employee engagement (Sackett & Lievens, 2008).

However, the review also underscores that competency-based frameworks cannot be implemented merely as procedural adjustments. Successful adoption requires organizational transformation, including capacity-building, cultural adaptation, and long-term institutionalization of HR strategy. Indonesian universities must invest in HR training, ensuring HR practitioners understand competency theories and can appropriately apply structured assessment techniques. Furthermore, leadership must promote a cultural shift away from personal network-based selection toward transparent, meritocratic recruitment. As Armstrong and Taylor (2020) argue, HR transformation depends not only on technical tools but also on leadership commitment and cultural alignment.

The unique cultural characteristics of Indonesian academic institutions — including collectivism, respect for hierarchy, and emphasis on personal relationships — complicate objective assessment. These cultural factors may unintentionally reinforce bias or favoritism, creating subtle barriers to competency-based decision-making (Fahmi, 2019). Thus, change management strategies must address not only procedural updates but also cultural values. This can be achieved through professional development workshops, communication campaigns explaining the benefits of competency-based processes, and role-modeling by senior leaders who publicly endorse meritocratic principles.

Another implication of this review concerns the potential integration of digital HR analytics and AI-supported assessment. In international best practice models, advanced HR systems utilize predictive analytics to map competencies, score behavioral traits, and evaluate cultural fit with higher reliability than manual processes (Campion et al., 2016). Indonesian universities could leverage these technologies to compensate for limited HR expertise, reduce assessment subjectivity, and standardize recruitment evaluation methods. Digital systems may also optimize workforce planning by matching candidates to roles through algorithmic competency mapping.

Finally, the findings suggest the need for regulatory and policy support. Institutional recruitment reforms may be more effective if supported by government HR development frameworks, accreditation mandates, or national academic hiring guidelines that explicitly require competency evaluation criteria.

Such policy support would provide external validation and pressure for universities to shift from traditional qualification-driven approaches toward competency-based models (Fahmi, 2019).

In conclusion, the review confirms that competency-based recruitment represents a valuable strategic approach for improving HR quality and institutional performance in Indonesian higher education. However, effective implementation depends on the combination of structural readiness, HR professionalization, leadership endorsement, and cultural adaptation. The future of academic HR in Indonesia may increasingly depend on the ability of universities to integrate competency science with local values, digital innovation, and evidence-based hiring principles.

4. CONCLUSION

This study concludes that competency-based recruitment and selection significantly enhance human resource performance in Indonesian higher education institutions by improving job–role alignment, productivity, motivation, and employee engagement, while reducing hiring errors and turnover. The main findings reveal that institutions implementing structured competency frameworks and objective assessment tools achieve measurable improvements in organizational effectiveness, yet their success depends heavily on leadership commitment, HR capability, and cultural adaptation. However, the research is limited by its reliance on secondary data drawn from published literature and potential selection bias within the 26 reviewed studies, which may not fully capture on-the-ground recruitment practices in diverse institutional contexts. Moreover, the synthesis is constrained by variability in methodological rigor across the included sources and the absence of longitudinal evidence. Therefore, future research should incorporate empirical field studies, interviews with HR practitioners, and comparative case analyses across multiple universities to validate practical implementation results. Further investigation into digital HR analytics, AI-driven assessment tools, and competency tracking systems is also recommended to develop more robust and data-driven recruitment frameworks that support sustainable talent management in Indonesian higher education.

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