



## Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science (JAHSS)

ISSN: 3006-9491 (Online)

Volume 2 Issue 2, (2025)

 <https://doi.org/10.69739/jahss.v2i2.790>

 <https://journals.stecab.com/jahss>



Published by  
Stecab Publishing

### Research Article

## Beyond Tenure: A Quantitative Study on Competency Drivers in Local Government Human Resources

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### About Article

#### Article History

Submission: July 17, 2025

Acceptance : August 18, 2025

Publication : August 26, 2025

#### Keywords

*Competency Ratings, Employee Performance, Human Resource Management, Learning and Development, Local Government Units*

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### ABSTRACT

This study examined whether demographic and human resource-related variables influence the competency ratings of employees. It was hypothesized that factors such as age, civil status, educational attainment, years of experience, attendance, salary, test results, learning and development activities, and performance ratings could predict competence. Using stepwise multiple regression analysis, five predictors were found to significantly influence competency ratings: educational attainment, years of experience, intelligence quotient, learning and development participation, and performance rating. Together, these variables accounted for over half of the variance in ratings of competence. The results highlight that competency is not limited to years of experience, as cognitive and developmental factors are significantly involved. The results imply that in human resource planning for the local government units targeted training, higher education support, and promoting competency-based assessments are required to enhance workforce ability and public service delivery.

### Citation Style:

Dulnuan, C. D. L. (2025). Beyond Tenure: A Quantitative Study on Competency Drivers in Local Government Human Resources. *Journal of Arts, Humanities and Social Science*, 2(2), 343-350. <https://doi.org/10.69739/jahss.v2i2.790>



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## 1. INTRODUCTION

Local Government Units operate in fast-paced, service-oriented contexts where employee competence is essential for effectiveness and public trust. However, the specific predictors of competency among Local Government Unit personnel remain poorly understood, impeding the design and implementation of targeted development strategies.

General mental ability, commonly assessed via IQ tests, has been consistently validated as a top predictor of job performance across various roles and complexity levels. Recent meta-analytic research shows general mental ability systems exhibit strong operational validity, averaging correlations of approximately .45 for job proficiency and .54 for training success; the strength increases in more complex jobs (Salgado & Moscoso, 2019). Another meta-analysis spanning 12 EU occupational groups found that substantial general mental ability validity generalizes across job types and complexity (Salgado *et al.*, 2003). These robust findings underscore the cognitive component as a foundational predictor in workforce assessments.

Conscientiousness, a Big Five personality dimension adds incremental predictive value beyond general mental ability. Meta-analytic investigations reveal that narrow facets of conscientiousness consistently account for unique performance variance beyond broad conscientiousness measures (Dudley *et al.*, 2006). Moreover, one study estimates that conscientiousness correlates moderately to substantially with workplace outcomes, explaining meaningful variance in job performance (Kepes & McDaniel, 2015).

Organizational factors, such as leadership style and institutional autonomy, also influence competence in public-sector settings. For instance, in Vietnam, servant leadership, agency accountability, and human resource decision-making autonomy collectively enhance human resource professionals' competence and public service motivation (Vu *et al.*, 2025). These environmental variables cultivate a supportive climate that bolsters both individual and collective performance outcomes.

Despite this evidence, local government contexts have received little attention because most of the research has been done in private-sector or national-level organizations. Local Government Units, as frontline service providers, as engaged community members and as conduits of administration may be an environment where predictors of competence work in a different way. The current study seeks to narrow that gap by systematically analyzing the joint influences of demographic, cognitive, personality, and organizational predictors on Local Government Unit employee competence. It is noteworthy that the use of traditional predictors in a unique governance context not only extends the current models but also offers localized context-driven input for HR planning and competency frameworks at local government levels.

### 1.1. Problem statement

Although the competency of LGU personnel could be affected by a variety of factors, it is unclear which of the predictor variables significantly contribute to the competency rating of the employee. Labor efficiency is an issue in the context of local government units' functioning, yet the knowledge gap is not limited to the lack of a complex research approach. There is an

incongruence in the organization between the recognition of competence as critical and the absence of a clear understanding of what factors contribute to it.

The local government unit system is an intricate organization rendering vital services to its constituents which operates in a dynamic setting and where the employees' competence contributes substantially to its performance. Though one can assume in general terms the influences on employee competence, the absence of a more refined understanding in terms of a Local Government Unit context is a significant omission. This lack is an obstacle for the development of strategies and interventions with contextual specificity geared towards enhancing the overall competence of the Local Government Unit workforce.

The unique issues and nuances of operation environment of the local government unit can also bring in particular factor that affects employee competencies. These factors could include individual, organizational, and contextual factors. These context-specific predictor variables must be properly grasped for the local government to enable it to develop a workforce that perfectly fits its unique operating requirements.

Thus, the current void is symptom not of a lack in the wider academic literature, but, above all, of an overwhelming reality in the form of a concrete organizational challenge in the Local Government Unit. Its main hindrance was the uncertainty of the predictor variables, hence having no strategic and evidence-based human resource management in the local government unit. This institutional void does not allow a strategic training plan to be implemented as well as specific recruiting measures and other interventions in order to improve the competences that employees have regarding a units' special tasks as well as the specific nuances this implies. This gap should be reduced to make the local government unit more efficient in its personnel and better able to provide the community with quality services. It was on these premises that the current study was carried out to identify the core predictors of employee's capability ratings in a local government unit.

Specifically, it seeks to answer the following question:

i. What is the extent to which Age, Civil Status, Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Percentage of Attendance, Percentage of Monthly Salary Received, Intelligence Quotient, Personality Test Result, Pre-employment Test Result, Desired Learning and Development Interventions, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, Performance Rating collectively contribute to predicting an employee's level of competence in a local government unit?

### 1.2. Hypothesis

This study aims to test the following hypothesis:

i. Age, Civil Status, Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Percentage of Attendance, Percentage of Monthly Salary Received, Intelligence Quotient, Personality Test Result, Pre-employment Test Result, Desired Learning and Development Interventions, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, Performance Rating can predict an employee's competency rating.

### 1.3. Significance of the study

This study has significant implications for various stakeholders,



including local government unit administrators, human resource professionals, public service researchers, and citizens. Identifying key predictors of employee competency will guide the development of targeted learning and development programs, performance management systems, and career development initiatives, ultimately leading to a more competent and effective workforce and improved public service delivery. The study findings will inform evidence-based human resource practices for talent acquisition, retention, and development, ensuring a more competent and motivated local government unit workforce. This study will contribute to the growing body of research on employee competency in the public sector, specifically within the local government unit context, paving the way for future research and informing best practices for public sector workforce development. Ultimately, the findings of this study can enhance the quality of public service delivery through a more competent and motivated local government unit workforce.

#### 1.4. Scope and limitations of the study

The extent of the study is limited only within the Municipal Government of Asipulo. Asipulo is the sole site of data collection and analysis, so the study does not represent other municipalities or regions. The specific orientation is to do an in depth and detailed analysis in predicting competence within this unique setting of this local authority.

The theoretical scope of the present study consists of applicable theories in the context of competency prediction, professional development interventions and human resource predictors, based on theories and models in the field of human resource management, organizational behavior and competency assessment. These theories are used to conduct the research on the discovered variables by analyzing the complex relationships and interactions among the variables.

This research further covers the period 2018-2025 in which 60 locally newly hired permanent employees of the Municipal Government of Asipulo were investigated. Competency ratings, professional development interventions, and human resource predictor variables were measured and analyzed within this period. Such an approach may enable us to assess the impact of learning and development intervention and predictors for human resource behavior on ratings of competency during these years.

This study also has limitations. First, it is specifically bound to the geographic area of Asipulo: its findings and implications would be particular to the area. Organizational scope applies only to new regular employees hired from 2018–2025, and only in the Municipal Government of Asipulo for other services, consultants, and job order workers.

Flexible margins identify areas to potentially focus attention on specified predictor variables. The sample size is also small at only 60 new regular employees, providing very important insight within the context of Asipulo not to be introduced to the whole population of the municipal government employees. Finally, theoretical limitation restricts the theoretical discussions and analysis of the studies to the theoretical perspective specified in the research objectives and theoretical boundary rather than consider all the relevant theories or models required to unlock the mental locks in the research area.

## 2. LITERATURE REVIEW

Grounding this review are two key perspectives: Human Capital Theory and Experiential Learning Theory. Human Capital Principle emphasizes that investments in instruction, coaching, and skills immediately improve productivity and organizational success (Becker, 1993). Complementing this perspective, Experiential Learning Theory highlights the maxim that acquiring knowledge is optimized when persons engage in thoughtful consideration and iterative encounters (Kolb, 1984). These frameworks offer the analytical lens through which the subsequent empirical studies on attributes, talents, talent administration, and organizational structures are inspected.

There are many drivers which contribute to the success in the public sector, be it human; organizational or systemic factors. Recent Literature has underscored the interplay between demographic profile, learning and development schemes, competency frameworks, digital capability, talent retention, and strategic human resource policies as levers for improving employee performance and organizational innovation.

Amegayibor (2021) discovered that certain demographic aspects such as age and level of education considerably impact employee productivity and attendance at small and medium enterprises. Kalia and Bhardwaj's (2019) research corroborated this finding in the service industry, emphasizing how remuneration, tenure, and job security shape worker effectiveness in India's hospitality sector significantly under different conditions and objectives. Both studies conclude that, while demographics play a key role, organizational architecture and support systems can magnify or dampen results.

Career adaptability was explored by Coetzee and Stoltz (2015), and the study established that it demonstrated a strong relationship with retention satisfaction, particularly with aspects of career development, training, and work–life balance. For instance, in competitive contexts like oil and gas, Albino (2018) found that behavioral competences such as collaboration, organization, and delivery were more important than technical competences in performance appraisals, thus highlighting the shift toward soft skills that is required by organizations regardless of the sector.

Looking through the dimension of learning and development, several research support its influence on employee's development and organizations capability. Hosen *et al.* (2023) discovered that training and career progression enhanced hotel worker performance in Bangladesh with organizational commitment mediating the relationship. In the Philippine National Police, Sugiarto and Sutianingsih (2025) found that teaching, training, and competency programs had direct effects on service performance. Likewise, Estuche *et al.* (2024) validated that the learning and development programs increased the core competency ratings among the Local Government Unit of Pasay City employees.

Focusing on competency, Kosasih *et al.* (2024) focused on the importance of strategic thinking, leadership, and communication in improving organizational performance in Indonesia. These results echoed those of Silva and Rodrigues (2025) who find a mediation path in which training affects the acquisition of competencies, improved performance appraisal, and a clearer career path, and, therefore, job satisfaction.



Still, they also pointed out limitations in the Portuguese PA system and called for professional development and openness of human resource practices. Ouabi *et al.* (2024) investigated Moroccan civil servants and stated that human resource practices, namely hiring and training, and career opportunities are related to job satisfaction, affective commitment, and in turn, in-role performance. Specifically, salary and job security affected satisfaction but not commitment, which may be due to culture and industry constraints.

In the Polish health care sector, Pomaranik and Kludacz-Alessandri (2024) demonstrated that talent management practices such as attracting, development, and evaluation, as well as job mobility and age, were closely related to employee performance using structural equation modeling approach. They push for merit-based training grounds that are, they say, more efficient and productive.

Taken as a whole, these reviews converge around a central idea that although singular traits and job security matter, worker output and advancement in the public sector are, to a large extent, products of the deliberative investment in human assets, particularly training, skills, talent schemes, and information-guided decisions. Anchoring these insights within Human Capital Theory and Experiential Learning Theory underscores that such investments not only enhance productivity but also enable continuous organizational learning and adaptability (Becker, 1993; Kolb, 1984). The message for civil service institutions aspiring to excellence is pressing: Develop systems that invest in people.

### 3. METHODOLOGY

#### 3.1. Research design

This research utilizes a quantitative research design to make a correlation between demographic factors, human resource-related factors and employee competency in the case of the Municipal Government of Asipulo.

#### 3.2. Sample design

This study utilized all 60 newly hired permanent employees in the Municipal Government of Asipulo from the period spanning 2018 to 2025. Data about demographic factors, professional development interventions, and human resource predictor variables were collected from these employees through records maintained by the Human Resource Management Office of the Agency.

#### 3.3. Sources of data

Data sources for this study include official records maintained by the Municipal Government of Asipulo, specifically those related to employee professional development, demographic characteristics, and competency assessments. The Human Resource Management Office is the central source of data, providing access to critical information on employees such as individual development plans, learning and development ledger, individual performance commitment and review, payroll, records of attendance, pre-employment records, and personal data sheets. These records serve as the primary sources of information about the variables under investigation. The individual development plan served as the source of the

desired learning and development intervention of employees, the learning and development ledger for the learning and development interventions undertaken, the Individual Performance Commitment and Review for the performance ratings, the payroll for the percentage of monthly salary received, the records of attendance for the percentage of attendance, the pre-employment records for intelligence quotient, personality test result, and pre-employment test result and the Personal Data Sheets for the age, civil status, educational attainment, and years of experience.

#### 3.4. Data collection instruments

The primary data collection instruments used for this study include official human resource records and documents from the Municipal Government of Asipulo. Document review and analysis of the official human resource records and documents were conducted to extract relevant data encompassing information on age, civil status, educational attainment, years of experience, attendance records, monthly salaries, intelligence quotient, personality test results, pre-employment test results, desired learning and development interventions of the employees, learning and development interventions provided by the Agency, average performance ratings, and competency ratings. These documents, recorded over the period from 2018 to 2025, provided the necessary data for the research. SPSS version 20 served as a vital tool for running regression analyses. It allowed for the calculation of regression coefficients and the interpretation of statistical relationships between predictor variables and competency ratings.

#### 3.5. Data presentation tools

Data collected from the sources were analyzed using SPSS version 20. To identify the significant group of determinants of competency ratings, multiple regression analysis was used. The best model was chosen via a stepwise process.

#### 3.6. Data analysis and interpretation

A stepwise multiple regression analysis was employed to answer the research question and test the hypothesis. This statistical method was used to determine the extent to which demographic and human resource-related variables predict the competency ratings of employees within the Municipal Government of Asipulo. The analysis revealed which variables significantly contributed to competency ratings and the extent to which they did so, as well as the overall variance accounted for by the predictor variables. The findings were then interpreted to understand the relationship between demographic and human resource-related variables and employee competency in the municipal government context.

#### 3.7. Ethical consideration

Ethical considerations were of paramount importance in conducting this research. Written consent to conduct the study was requested from the local chief executive of the municipal government of Asipulo. The aims and objectives of the study were explained clearly to the head of the agency. Concerns relating to the study were addressed, and misconceptions were corrected. Approval from the head of the agency was obtained





in writing. The study obtained access to official human resource records with the permission of the municipal administrator of the Municipal Government of Asipulo. Confidentiality of individual employee information was strictly maintained, and data were anonymized during analysis and reporting to ensure privacy and compliance with ethical standards. All participants gave informed consent for their data to be used for research purposes.

#### 4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The extent to which Age, Civil Status, Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Percentage of Attendance, Percentage of Monthly Salary Received, Intelligence Quotient, Personality Test Result, Pre-employment Test Result, Desired Learning, and Development Interventions, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, Performance Rating collectively contribute to predicting an employee's level of competence in a local government unit has been thoroughly examined. Table 1 presents the summary of the multiple regression analysis made on the competency rating of employees using demographic and human resource-related variables. It presents the model generated and the significant predictors of competency ratings utilizing demographic and human resource-related variables.

Table 2 also shows that the adjusted R Square or coefficient of multiple determination is 53.60% when all the predictor variables are employed. This shows that the Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Intelligence Quotient, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, and Performance Rating account for 53.60% of the variability in the competency rating of employees. Other factors account for the other 46.40% of the data. This suggests that demographic and human resource-related variables account for more than one-half of an employee's competency.

These findings align with recent evidence that higher education and organizational capacity drive e-government adaptability in local governments (David *et al.*, 2023).

General mental ability and intelligence, as assessed by scores on intelligence tests, continue to be a strong predictor of workplace learning, adaptability, and decision-making (Salgado *et al.*, 2003).

PIDS research underscores that a large portion of the workforce relies on general skills, while the shift toward more analytical and tech-intensive jobs highlights the need for upskilling. The authors emphasize that tertiary education and sector-aligned training—especially through TVET systems supported by industry-qualified trainers—are key to boosting workplace readiness and occupational mobility (Bayudan-Dacuycuy & Dacuycuy, 2021).

Performance ratings are commonly used as capacity indicators, but they can be compromised by unclear standards or accountability issues in decentralized settings. Indeed, governance-quality assessments point out that ill-defined metrics and weak accountability mechanisms hamper LGU performance measurement (Manasan *et al.*, 1999). Such disparities may misrepresent the true competence and indicate the necessity of more objective and competency-based evaluation tools.

These studies jointly provide strong support to the predictive

strength of the regression model variables. It also illustrates the multifaceted competences of employees and these are talents built upon basic qualifications, experience, mental traits, perpetual development and a culture of performance. This lends strong external validity to the present findings and highlights implications for policy and human resource strategy at the local government level.

The t-test for each of the independent variables is significant. Educational Attainment is a significant predictor of the Competency Ratings, as shown in the t-test ( $t=2.237$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The Number of Years of Experience (Experience) is also a significant predictor of Competency Ratings ( $t=3.338$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The Intelligence Quotient is also a significant predictor of Competency Ratings ( $t=2.639$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken is also a significant predictor of Competency Ratings ( $t=2.321$ ,  $p<0.05$ ). The Performance Rating is also a significant predictor of Competency Ratings ( $t=-2.144$ ,  $p<0.05$ ).

The Competency Ratings will increase by 0.050 for a point increase in Educational Attainment, holding the Number of Years of Experience, Intelligence Quotient, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, and Performance Rating constant.

Similarly, for a point increase in the Years of Experience, the Competency Ratings will increase by .058 with fixed values of Educational Attainment, Intelligence Quotient, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, and Performance Rating.

In the Intelligence Quotient, Competency Ratings will increase by .004 for a point increase in the Intelligence Quotient with Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, and Performance Rating fixed.

In the Learning and Development Interventions, Competency Ratings will increase by .003 for a point increase in the Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken with Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Intelligence Quotient, and Performance Rating fixed.

In the Performance Rating, Competency Ratings will decrease by .148 for a one one-point increase in the performance rating with Educational Attainment, Number of Years of Experience, Intelligence Quotient, and Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken as provided by the Agency.

In predicting the Competency Ratings, the equation will be as follows:

$$\hat{y} = 2.937 + 0.050X_1 + 0.058X_2 + 0.004X_3 + 0.003X_4 + (-0.148)X_5$$

Where,

$\hat{y}$  = predicted Competency Ratings

y - intercept = 2.937

$x_1$  = Educational Attainment

$x_2$  = Years of Experience

$x_3$  = Intelligence Quotient

$x_4$  = Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken

$x_5$  = Performance Rating

The above predictive model will be used to forecast employees' competency. The derived model has a standard error of .09047, indicating that the predicted values are near the actual values.

The research objective which is to determine the extent to which



demographic and human resource-related variables predict employee competency was addressed through a comprehensive multiple regression analysis. Five of the thirteen variables, Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Intelligence Quotient, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, and Performance Rating, significantly predicted employee

competency levels of employee respondents. The model's Adjusted  $R^2$  of 53.60% suggests that these variables explain more than half of the variance in competency ratings, which is strong evidence in support of the research aim. Similarly, the hypothesis that all 13 variables would predict competence was partially supported, with some of the variables demonstrating

**Table 1.** Regression parameters on competency rating using demographic and human resource-related variables

Variables	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients Beta	t-value	p-value
	B	S.E.			
Constant	2.937	.300		9.784	.000
Educational Attainment	.050	.023	.275	2.237	.033
Years of Experience	.058	.017	.396	3.338	.002
Intelligence Quotient	.004	.001	.330	2.639	.013
Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken	.003	.001	.272	2.321	.027
Performance Rating	-.148	.069	-.248	-2.144	.040

*Dependent Variable: Competency Rating*  $R^2 = .602$ , *Adjusted*  $R^2 = .536$ , *F-value* = 9.076, *p-value* = .000 *Standard Error of Predictive Value* = .09047

*Source: Data extracted from official human resource records and documents of the Municipal Government of Asipulo (2018–2025), analyzed using SPSS version 20.*

significant contributions. Overall, the model was significant ( $F = 9.076$ ,  $p < .001$ ), which demonstrate that the predictors in totality have predictive value and confirm the utility of the model within local government human resource planning.

The study's findings have strong theoretical grounding in human resource and organizational development. The importance of education level, experience, and cognitive abilities (IQ) is also consistent with established theories: Human Capital Theory (education as formal learning) suggests that education is associated with increases in decision making and administrative effectiveness, while Experiential Learning Theory (experience as practical learning) suggests that experience in the job will lead to institutional knowledge. While there are not directly LGU-based studies, larger research does generalize these beliefs, IQ being a well-established predictor of performance on the job, with standard correlations around .50 (Zimmer & Kirkegaard, 2023). It signifies the intellectual and experiential strengths necessary for good management in the public sector. Investments in L&D interventions were similarly significant. Estuche *et al.* (2024) found a (positive) relationship between them ( $r \approx .48$ ,  $p < .05$ ) about structured L&D and competence development of Pasay City employees. Moreover, scenario-based training in the Philippine Local Government Units has been found as a tool to enhance organization's effectiveness and staff performance (Mendoza & Bautista, 2022).

Taken together, these results also resonate with Social Learning Theory, which holds that individuals acquire and reinforce competencies by observing, practicing, and modeling effective behaviors in organizational contexts (Bandura, 1977). This suggests that LGU staff do not just benefit from formal training but also from the organizational culture and opportunities for experiential application.

Some variables, however, were not significant predictors of competency. Things like civil status and monthly salary, for example, didn't really seem to impact just how competent someone was. Theoretically, this is in line with Public Service Motivation Theory, which argues that employees in public sector organizations might be motivated more by service orientation and internal motivation than personal demographic characteristics and mere monetary inducements (Perry & Wise, 1990). Salary (at least in standard pay systems as Philippine LGU system) might not even have enough variance to affect competencies. And indeed, civil status is more a demographic attribute of an individual than a skill or potential-building quality; it certainly does not per se contribute to the development of professional knowledge, problem-solving capability, or adaptability. This is a reminder that variables related to learning ability, work experience, and developmental experiences not individual demographics are the most potent drivers of employee competence in the public sector.

Embedding the findings in this manner has the effect of not only confirming the statistical model but also advancing the literature of public administration more generally. They underscore that capability at Local Government Units can be explained by investments in human capital (education, training, and experience) and opportunities for applied learning, mirroring human resource frameworks and public administration literature at large, which advocate professionalization of bureaucracy through capacity-building, over static demographic features.

## 5. CONCLUSION

This analysis in the study validates that the demographic and human resources related variables have a significant



contribution to the prediction of the level of competence of an employee serving in a local government unit. The Constructs-Educational Attainment, Years of Experience, Intelligence Quotient, Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken, and Performance Rating explain 53.60% of the total variance in Competency Ratings, thus supporting the proposition that these predictors can predict an employee's competency rating. The results of this research are useful to local government units as a criterion for developing public servant competent workforce and to support selective human resource management strategy. Considering comprehensive analysis conducted on the factors influencing employee competency within a local government unit, several policy measures can be suggested for improving the level of competence of employees. First, the investment in programs that are customized to meet the unique needs of local government personnel is essential. It is crucial to support programs that advocate for a life-long learning philosophy or attitude because there is a positive correlation found between Learning and Development Interventions Undertaken and Competency Ratings. In addition, a recognition and appreciation of years of service should be built into institutional policies that value the knowledge and expertise senior employees are able to contribute to the local government workplace.

The results further underscore the need of considering intelligence factors, as illustrated by the significant predictor value of IQ. A more sophisticated approach to looking at performance reviews believing they should be aligned with development goals may lead to an improved general competence and help energize the work climate. Personalization of learning and development plans based on individual needs and goals are critical, and personalized tools should become standard to ensure training initiatives are as effective as possible. Periodic assessment of competencies with the help of educational institutions and employee involvement programs need to be incorporated into strategic decisions, thereby making the approach of workforce development a dynamic and reactive one. These guidelines are formulated from the perspective that employees in the local government unit have a distinct set of challenges and opportunities to respond to while supporting an environment for service delivery and organizational success.

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