

Competency development program for educational staff: implementation at a faculty of education

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Abstrak

Penelitian ini dilatarbelakangi oleh tuntutan transformasi digital di perguruan tinggi yang memerlukan peningkatan kompetensi tenaga kependidikan secara berkelanjutan. Tujuan penelitian ini adalah: (1) mendeskripsikan pelaksanaan program pengembangan kompetensi tenaga kependidikan di Fakultas Keguruan dan Ilmu Pendidikan Universitas Sebelas Maret, (2) mengidentifikasi hambatan yang dihadapi dalam pelaksanaannya, dan (3) mengetahui solusi yang diterapkan untuk meningkatkan kompetensi tenaga kependidikan. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kualitatif dengan desain studi kasus. Subjek penelitian terdiri atas tenaga kependidikan dan pengelola program pengembangan sumber daya manusia di FKIP UNS. Data dikumpulkan melalui wawancara, observasi, dan dokumentasi, kemudian dianalisis menggunakan model interaktif Miles dan Huberman. Keabsahan data diuji melalui triangulasi sumber dan triangulasi teknik. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa pengembangan kompetensi dilaksanakan melalui pelatihan administrasi akademik, teknologi informasi, pelayanan prima, dan bimbingan teknis. Hambatan yang dihadapi meliputi keterbatasan anggaran, tingginya beban kerja, ketidakmerataan kesempatan pelatihan, serta rendahnya kesiapan digital sebagian tenaga kependidikan. Solusi yang diterapkan meliputi optimalisasi pelatihan internal, pelatihan daring, penjadwalan yang fleksibel, dan evaluasi pascapelatihan.

Kata kunci: kualitas layanan; manajemen SDM; pelatihan profesional; studi kasus; transformasi digital

Abstract

Digital transformation in higher education necessitates the continuous enhancement of educational staff competencies. This study aimed to (1) describe the implementation of a competency development program for educational staff at the Faculty of Teacher Training and Education (FKIP), Sebelas Maret University; (2) identify the barriers encountered during implementation; and (3) examine the solutions adopted to strengthen staff competencies. A qualitative case study design was employed, involving five purposively selected informants comprising administrative managers and educational staff. Data were collected through semi-

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Citation in APA style: Taufani, B.H., & Murwaningsih, T. (2026). Competency development program for educational staff: implementation at a faculty of education. *Jurnal Informasi dan Komunikasi Administrasi Perkantoran*, 10(4), 462-471.

<https://dx.doi.org/10.20961/jikarp.v10i4.119230>

structured interviews, observation, and documentation, then analyzed using the Miles and Huberman interactive model with source and methodological triangulation. The findings revealed that competency development was implemented through academic administration training, information technology workshops, service excellence programs, and technical guidance aligned with job responsibilities. Key barriers included budget constraints, heavy administrative workloads, unequal training access, and limited digital readiness among some staff. Solutions encompassed rotational training allocation, online learning platforms, knowledge-sharing mechanisms, and flexible scheduling. However, post-training evaluation remained unsystematic, limiting the measurement of program impact on individual performance and service quality.

Keywords: case study; digital transformation; human resource management; professional training; service quality

Received May 25, 2026; Revised June 21, 2026; Accepted July 22, 2026; Published Online July 02, 2026

<https://dx.doi.org/10.20961/jikap.v10i4.119230>

Introduction

Human resources play a pivotal role in determining the success of higher education delivery. The achievement of university objectives depends not solely on the quality of academic staff but is equally influenced by the quality of educational staff. Educational staff hold a strategic role because they support the effectiveness of educational governance through various services such as administration, academic data management, student services, financial management, document archiving, and other operational support related to the smooth running of the educational process. Wandani et al. (2022) affirmed that educational staff contribute significantly to sustaining the educational process through effective and professional administrative services. This finding was reinforced by Abdurrahman and Hidayat (2023), who stated that the professionalism of educational staff represents one of the critical factors in supporting service quality and the effectiveness of educational delivery.

The role of educational staff has become increasingly prominent alongside advances in information technology and the acceleration of digital transformation in higher education. Educational staff are now required not only to perform conventional administrative tasks but also to master the use of academic information systems, digital data management, communication skills, and the ability to provide fast and accurate services to all service users. Rahayu et al. (2022) stated that employee competency influences the quality of administrative services, thereby constituting a critical factor in enhancing organizational service effectiveness. Furthermore, Gao et al. (2022) added that online training and technology-based professional development also enhance employees' ability to adapt to changes in work systems within the higher education environment.

To address these demands, human resource development activities conducted in a planned and sustained manner are required. Human resource development constitutes a series of efforts to enhance knowledge, skills, abilities, and professionalism of employees so that they can carry out their duties and responsibilities optimally. Yusuf and Hendra (2023) explained that development emphasizes not only technical competency enhancement but also includes the strengthening of professional attitudes, adaptability, problem-solving abilities, and readiness to face changes within organizations. In line with this, Suryani et al. (2023) explained that competency-based human resource development is necessary to ensure that employees can meet the continuously evolving demands of their organizations. Consequently, strengthening the competencies of educational staff constitutes an important strategy for improving the quality of administrative services and supporting the effective achievement of institutional objectives.

According to Nadler (1984), Human Resource Development (HRD) is a series of activities systematically designed to enhance individual capabilities through education, training, and development so that they can meet organizational needs, both in the present and in the future. Through this perspective, competency development is viewed as a planned and continuous process aimed at enhancing the knowledge, skills, and abilities of employees so they can adapt to changes and support the achievement of organizational goals. Therefore, Nadler's HRD concept serves as the theoretical foundation in this study for analyzing the implementation of the educational staff competency development program at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University, from planning and implementation through to the development efforts carried out on a continuous basis.

As part of Sebelas Maret University, FKIP continues to strive to enhance the competencies of its educational staff through various programs. These programs include academic administration training, information technology workshops, service excellence training, administrative digitization training, functional position technical guidance, and various other forms of competency development activities. Susilowati et al. (2023) affirmed that education and training conducted on a continuous basis positively influence the enhancement of employee competency, thereby supporting the effectiveness of work performance within the organization. In line with this, Suryani et al. (2023) stated that training and human resource development designed based on organizational needs play a role in enhancing competency, professionalism, and employee performance effectiveness.

Based on preliminary interviews with several educational staff members and administrative managers at FKIP UNS, it was found that competency development programs have been conducted periodically and adapted to the respective job requirements of each position. Activities that have been carried out include service excellence training, information technology training, correspondence digitization, archival digitization, sign language training, and training related to specific functional positions. However, a number of obstacles exist in the implementation, such as budget limitations, heavy administrative workloads, conflicts between training schedules and routine activities, and the uneven distribution of opportunities for all educational staff to participate in training. Additionally, some educational staff still require improved capabilities in using continuously evolving digital technology to support the performance of their daily tasks. This condition is consistent with the research findings of Susanti et al. (2020), which demonstrated that workload and competency gaps are important factors that need to be considered in the planning of human resource development for educational staff.

These findings are consistent with the research of Ariyanto and Hastutiningsih (2024), who stated that competency development has not been running optimally due to insufficiently thorough program planning, ineffective training evaluation, and unequal access to competency development activities. Shukla et al. (2024) stated that the effectiveness of competency development is influenced by various factors, such as organizational support, participant characteristics, training design, and the work environment that determines the success of transferring training outcomes to task performance. This indicates that the success of competency development programs is determined not only by the availability of training but also by various internal and external factors that need to be managed.

Although research on educational staff competency development has been extensively conducted, the majority of previous studies have focused primarily on the influence of training on employee performance improvement or individual competency. Research that addresses the implementation of educational staff competency development programs at the faculty level particularly encompassing aspects of planning, implementation, barriers, evaluation, and follow-up remains relatively limited. Therefore, this research is expected to provide a more comprehensive picture of the implementation of educational staff competency development programs in higher education. Based on the foregoing discussion, this study aimed to: (1) describe the implementation of the educational staff competency development program at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University; (2) identify the barriers experienced in the implementation of the competency development program for educational staff; and (3) analyze the efforts undertaken to overcome these barriers in order to enhance the competencies of educational staff at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University.

Research Methods

This study employed a qualitative approach with a case study design. The qualitative approach was selected because the research aimed to gain an in-depth understanding of the phenomenon of competency development program implementation for educational staff at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University (UNS). The case study design was used because the research focused on a single unit, namely FKIP UNS, so that it could produce a detailed picture of the program implementation. The research was conducted at FKIP UNS, Surakarta, from September 2025 to March 2026. The selection of this location was based on the consideration that FKIP UNS actively organizes various competency development programs for educational staff, such as training, workshops, technical guidance, and professional development.

Informants were selected through purposive sampling techniques with criteria based on the involvement and knowledge of informants regarding the competency development program. Five informants participated in the study: the Faculty Head of Administration, the Human Resources Sub-division Head, a Study Program Administrator, an Academic Staff Member, and an Archival Staff Member. Data sources consisted of primary and secondary data. Primary data were obtained through in-depth interviews with informants, while secondary data were collected from institutional documents, training activity reports, human resource development policy archives, training assignment letters, and other supporting documents.

Data collection techniques in this study were carried out through interviews, observation, and documentation. Interviews were conducted in a semi-structured manner using an interview guide compiled based on the research focus and theoretical review of educational staff competency development. Prior to use in data collection, the interview guide was consulted with the supervising lecturer to obtain input regarding the appropriateness of indicators, clarity of questions, and their relevance to the research objectives, ensuring suitability for use as a research instrument. Observation was conducted to directly examine the implementation of educational staff work activities, the utilization of training outcomes in task performance, the use of information technology in administrative services, interactions among staff, and workplace conditions related to the implementation of competency development programs. Meanwhile, documentation was used to obtain supporting data in the form of institutional documents, training implementation reports, human resource development policy archives, training assignment letters, activity photographs, and other relevant documents to complement and strengthen data from interviews and observations.

Data trustworthiness was established through source triangulation and methodological triangulation, namely by comparing information obtained from various informants and cross-checking data from interviews, observations, and documentation. In addition, this study also applied member checking, namely confirming interview results and researcher interpretations with informants to ensure that the data obtained were consistent with the information intended by the informants and to minimize misinterpretation. Data analysis in this study used the Miles and Huberman (1994) interactive analysis model, which encompasses data collection, data reduction, data display, and conclusion drawing and verification. These four components were conducted interactively and continuously until credible findings were obtained.

Results and Discussion

Research Results

The research findings indicated that FKIP, Sebelas Maret University (UNS), has implemented an educational staff competency development program through various training and professional development activities. These programs include academic administration training, information technology training, service excellence workshops, digital correspondence and archival training, sign language training, seminars, and various technical guidance activities related to the duties and functions of educational staff. These programs were organized both by Sebelas Maret University and by external institutions collaborating with the university.

The implementation of the competency development program began with the mapping of educational staff competency needs. Based on interview results, the faculty has prepared periodic competency development plans to ensure that every educational staff member receives the opportunity to participate in training appropriate to their field of duty. The Faculty Head of Administration explained that: “We have already mapped out what training programs should be attended for one year ahead, or a maximum of five years ahead.” This statement was reinforced by the Study Program Administrator, who explained that the training needs of educational staff are regularly recorded for the next several years. As stated: “Every year, we record what training programs each staff member will participate in for the next five years.”

In addition, educational staff are given the opportunity to participate in various competency development programs organized by both the university and other institutions. The Faculty Head of Administration stated that: “Educational staff are given the opportunity to develop themselves through training programs both at UNS and at other institutions.” Based on these interview results, it can be seen that the competency development program at FKIP UNS has been systematically planned through competency needs mapping, training needs documentation, and the provision of opportunities for educational staff to participate in various professional development activities appropriate to their respective fields of duty.

The training provided was also aligned with the duties and functions of each educational staff member. The Human Resources Sub-division Head explained that: “If the training does not match the staff member’s job, it would be futile to attend training that does not support their work.” The same point was also conveyed by the Faculty Head of Administration, who explained that the selection of participants and types of training always considers the competency needs of each work unit: “We try to ensure it aligns with their field and job requirements.”

Academic administration training was focused on enhancing the ability of educational staff to manage student data, compile academic reports, perform document archiving, and provide administrative services to students and lecturers. In addition, information technology training was provided to enhance the ability of educational staff to utilize various digital-based administrative applications. Based on these interview results, it can be seen that the implementation of competency development programs at FKIP UNS has been aligned with job requirements so that training outcomes can be directly applied in the performance of daily tasks.

The competency development program also provided various benefits for educational staff. The Study Program Administrator reported that: “I can now manage my work, manage my time, and further upgrade myself upgrading my abilities in the field of technology.” Meanwhile, the Archival Staff Member explained that: “There are many benefits for certification, for performance evaluation, and for being placed according to organizational needs.” In addition to enhancing technical abilities, service excellence training and various other competency development activities also helped improve the communication skills, service orientation, and professional conduct of educational staff.

Although the implementation of the competency development program has been running well, this study identified several barriers in its implementation. One barrier found was budget constraints. The Faculty Head of Administration explained that: “If everything requires fees, the budget allocation for human resource development is likely insufficient.” In addition to budget constraints, the high administrative workload also constituted an obstacle in the implementation of the competency development program. The Human Resources Sub-division Head stated that: “The difficulty is that competency development, to be truly effective, requires full focus, but in practice staff are still busy with their work.” The Faculty Head of Administration also explained that under certain conditions, educational staff must prioritize their primary duties over attending training: “When a study program is undergoing accreditation, it is impossible to leave the task; they must participate in the accreditation first, and then be included in the next training cycle.” Furthermore, the opportunity to attend training could not yet be provided to all educational staff simultaneously due to limited participant quotas. The Faculty Head of Administration stated that: “If they cannot attend this year, they can go in the next period.” Based on these interview results, it can be determined that the barriers to competency development program implementation at FKIP UNS primarily stem from budget limitations, high administrative workloads, time constraints, and the uneven distribution of opportunities for all educational staff to participate in training.

To overcome these various barriers, FKIP UNS undertook a number of efforts, including arranging rotational training participant scheduling, utilizing online training, and conducting knowledge transfer after training completion. The Faculty Head of Administration explained that: “If they cannot attend this year, they can go in the next period.”

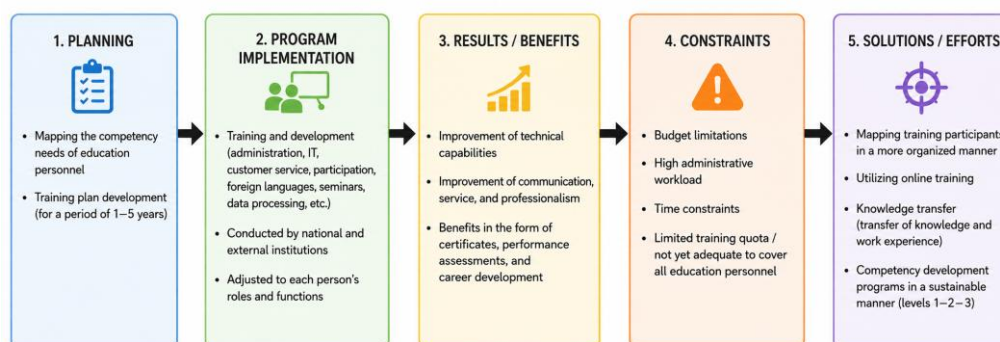
In addition, educational staff who have attended training were asked to share the knowledge and experience they gained with their colleagues. As stated by the Faculty Head of Administration: “After the training, we call in the staff members we nominated and ask them to transfer their knowledge and understanding to their colleagues.”

The Human Resources Sub-division Head also expressed the need for competency development programs to be conducted on a continuous and graduated basis so that competency enhancement can proceed optimally: “Ideally, there should be a continuous competency program for example, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3 so that progressive improvement is evident.” Based on these interview results, it can be determined that FKIP UNS has undertaken various efforts to overcome barriers to competency development program implementation through the equalization of training opportunities, the utilization of technology in training delivery, inter-staff knowledge transfer, and the development of sustainable competency programs.

Figure 1 illustrates the overall implementation flow of the educational staff competency development program at FKIP UNS, encompassing the phases of competency needs assessment, training implementation, barrier identification, and solution strategies.

Figure 1

A Implementation flow of the competency development program for educational staff at FKIP UNS



Source: Data processed by researchers (2026)

Discussion

The research findings demonstrate that the implementation of the educational staff competency development program at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University, has been carried out systematically through competency needs mapping, determination of training types appropriate to work fields, and the delivery of various professional development activities such as academic administration training, information technology training, service excellence workshops, administrative digitization training, seminars, and technical guidance. These findings indicate that competency development at FKIP UNS is not solely focused on the delivery of training but also begins with the identification of competency needs as the basis for program design. This condition is consistent with the concept of Human Resource Development proposed by Nadler (1984), whereby human resource development constitutes a series of activities systematically designed through education, training, and development to enhance individual capabilities so that they can meet organizational needs both in the present and in the future. The findings of this study are also consistent with Yusuf and Hendra (2023) and Suryani et al. (2023), who affirmed that competency-based human resource development needs to be conducted in a planned manner so that organizations can adapt to increasingly dynamic changes in the work environment. Furthermore, the findings of this study reinforce those of Garone et al. (2022), who stated that the effectiveness of professional

development programs in higher education is influenced by systematic program planning, the alignment of training with participant needs, and sustained evaluation. In this study, the planning aspect through competency needs mapping has been well implemented; however, post-training evaluation has not been conducted systematically. This indicates that FKIP UNS has fulfilled the program planning aspect as proposed by Garone et al. (2022) but still needs to strengthen evaluation mechanisms so that the impact of the program on competency enhancement and performance can be measured more comprehensively.

The implemented programs have been proven to contribute to the enhancement of educational staff competencies, particularly in the ability to manage academic administration, utilize information technology, and improve the quality of services to students and lecturers. These findings are consistent with the research of Susilowati et al. (2023) and Yosepa et al. (2020), who stated that training designed based on organizational needs can enhance competency while simultaneously supporting the improvement of employee performance. Nevertheless, this study also found differences in perceptions regarding program effectiveness between program managers and training participants. The Faculty Head of Administration and the Human Resources Sub-division Head placed greater emphasis on program effectiveness from the aspects of planning, alignment of training with job requirements, and the equalization of training participation opportunities. Conversely, educational staff as participants evaluated program effectiveness more based on directly perceived benefits, such as improved work abilities, technology mastery, and ease in completing tasks. This perspectival divergence indicates that program success is determined not only by the quality of training delivery but also by the extent to which training outcomes can be perceived and applied by participants in their daily work.

Analytically, the implementation of the competency development program at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University, demonstrates that the program has generated positive responses from educational staff through increased participation in various professional development activities and the benefits perceived after attending training. Increases in knowledge and skills were also evident from the ability of educational staff to utilize information technology, manage administration more effectively, and provide better services to service users. Nevertheless, the research findings indicate that the application of competencies in daily work has not been fully supported by systematic evaluation mechanisms to measure the sustainability of the impact of training on individual and organizational performance. This condition indicates that program implementation has been successful at the stage of individual competency enhancement but still requires strengthening in the evaluation aspect so that the program's impact on the improvement of administrative service quality can be measured more comprehensively and serve as a basis for refining the competency development program in subsequent periods.

In the context of digital transformation in higher education, the research findings indicate that information technology training has become one of the most relevant forms of competency development. Training on academic information systems, digital correspondence and archival management, and the use of digital-based administrative applications demonstrate institutional efforts to align educational staff competencies with technological developments. These findings support Gao et al. (2022), who explained that technology-based training plays an important role in enhancing employees' ability to adapt to changes in work systems. Additionally, the findings of this study also align with Lim et al. (2025), who emphasized the importance of personalized professional development that is, professional development designed according to individual needs and characteristics. This approach can enhance training relevance, participant engagement, and encourage the application of training outcomes in the performance of daily tasks. This is reflected in the program implementation at FKIP UNS, which aligns training types with the work fields and competency needs of each educational staff member. Beyond enhancing technical competencies, this study also demonstrates that service excellence training contributes to the improvement of communication skills, service ethics, and professionalism of educational staff. These findings reinforce the perspectives of Abdurrahman and Hidayat (2023) and Nisa et al. (2023), who stated that the competency of administrative staff constitutes an important factor contributing to the enhancement of performance and the quality of educational administrative services.

Although program implementation has provided various benefits, this study indicates that its implementation still faces several barriers, namely budget constraints, high administrative workloads, limited time to attend training, and the uneven distribution of opportunities to participate in competency development programs. These barriers cause not all educational staff to be able to attend training according to their needs at the same time. These findings are consistent with the research of Ariyanto and Hastutiningsih (2024), Susanti et al. (2020), and Yoo et al. (2021), who explained that organizational resource limitations particularly the limitation of financial resources to support training and development investments can affect the effectiveness of competency development program implementation. Therefore, the success of competency development is influenced not only by the quality of training materials but also by organizational support in providing resources, time, and equitable learning opportunities.

To overcome these barriers, FKIP UNS has implemented several strategies, such as the gradual equalization of training opportunities, the utilization of online training, and knowledge transfer (knowledge sharing) after the completion of training. Notably, the emergence of knowledge-sharing practices demonstrates that the institution has a fairly good knowledge-sharing culture; however, on the other hand, it also indicates that the formal training system has not been fully capable of reaching all educational staff due to limitations in budget, time, and participant quotas. Consequently, knowledge transfer has developed as an informal mechanism to extend the benefits of training to other staff members who have not yet had the opportunity to participate in competency development activities. Although this strategy is effective in expanding knowledge dissemination, the mechanism cannot fully replace formal training because the learning experiences and competency mastery acquired by each staff member are not always equivalent. Therefore, knowledge sharing should be positioned as a complement within the competency development system, not as a substitute for formal training.

This study also demonstrates that post-training evaluation has not been conducted systematically. Evaluation remains focused on the implementation of activities and participant attendance, while the application of training outcomes in daily work and its impact on improving service quality have not been comprehensively measured. This condition has implications for the suboptimal competency development cycle because the institution does not yet have adequate feedback regarding program effectiveness as a basis for formulating subsequent training needs. According to Nadler (1984), human resource development constitutes a continuous process whereby every development activity requires evaluation as a basis for program refinement in subsequent cycles. Therefore, strengthening post-training evaluation becomes essential so that program implementation not only produces individual competency enhancement but also delivers measurable impacts on the improvement of service quality and organizational performance.

Overall, the research findings demonstrate that the implementation of the educational staff competency development program at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University, has operated in accordance with the principles of systematic human resource development as proposed by Nadler. The program has contributed to the enhancement of technical competence, professionalism, work motivation, and administrative service quality. These findings are consistent with Wiryawan et al. (2020), who stated that competency has a positive influence on the performance of both academic staff and educational staff. Nevertheless, this study indicates that competency enhancement at FKIP UNS has not been fully accompanied by evaluation capable of measuring its impact on individual and organizational performance. Therefore, the strengthening of the evaluation system constitutes an important aspect so that the relationship between competency development and performance enhancement can be demonstrated more objectively. Program effectiveness can still be enhanced through the equalization of training access, strengthening of the post-training evaluation system, and the development of more structured learning mechanisms so that the competency development process can proceed on a continuous basis and deliver more optimal impacts for the organization.

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, the implementation of the educational staff competency development program at FKIP, Sebelas Maret University, has been carried out systematically

through competency needs mapping, alignment of training types with work fields, and the delivery of various professional development activities. The program has contributed to the enhancement of technical competence, information technology utilization capabilities, professionalism, and administrative service quality. Nevertheless, program implementation still faces barriers in the form of budget constraints, high administrative workloads, time limitations, and the uneven distribution of opportunities to attend training. To overcome these barriers, FKIP UNS has implemented the gradual equalization of training opportunities, the utilization of online training, and inter-staff knowledge sharing as efforts to extend knowledge dissemination. However, post-training evaluation has not been conducted systematically, meaning that the program's impact on the improvement of individual performance and organizational service quality cannot yet be comprehensively measured. Therefore, the strengthening of a sustainable evaluation system and the equalization of access to competency development programs are required so that program implementation can deliver more optimal benefits for both educational staff and the institution. This study has limitations because it was conducted at only one faculty, namely FKIP, Sebelas Maret University, using a qualitative approach, so the research findings cannot yet be generalized to other higher education contexts. Additionally, the study has not quantitatively measured the impact of the program on the improvement of educational staff performance or organizational service quality. Therefore, future research is recommended to involve a broader institutional scope, employ a mixed-methods or quantitative approach, and develop evaluations that measure the effectiveness of competency development programs on individual performance and organizational performance more comprehensively.

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