

**THE EFFECT OF BIOGRAPHICAL CHARACTERISTICS AND  
CULTURAL DIVERSITY ON PERFORMANCE  
(Survey: Civil Servants of Lubuk Linggau Government)**

Maulana

Postgraduate Taman Siswa University Palembang, maulana\_57@ymail.com

*Abstract*

This research was done in order to investigate the effect of Biographical Characteristics and Cultural Diversity on Performance in Civil Servants of Lubuk Linggau government. There were two variables in this research. The independent variables were Biographical Characteristics ( $X_1$ ), Cultural Diversity ( $X_2$ ). The dependent variable was the performance of Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau government. The objectives of this research were: a) to investigate the effect of Biographical Characteristics ( $X_1$ ), Cultural Diversity ( $X_2$ ) toward the performance of Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau government, and b) to investigate which dominant independent variables affected the Performance of Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau government. The method used in this research was causal. The number of sample in this research was 100 Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau government. The data were collected through questionnaire. Before the test of influence, the test on validity and reliability was conducted to see the level of validity and instrument trusted which can be used as a data collector. To Measure the relationship between variables, multiple regression analysis was used. Based on the analysis results, it was found that variables Biographical Characteristics ( $X_1$ ), Cultural Diversity ( $X_2$ ) were altogether affected significantly on the Performance of Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau government. The variation of dependent variables changes (performance) affected by independent variables were Biographical Characteristics ( $X_1$ ), Cultural Diversity ( $X_2$ ) was 64.4 percent ( $R^2 = 0.644$ ) while the rest which was 35.6 percent was affected by other variables. It means that if the changes were done together, it would affect the Performance of Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau government which was 64.4 percent. The Result in this research, the independent variables of Biographical Characteristics ( $X_1$ ), Cultural Diversity ( $X_2$ ) partially and simultaneously affected the Performance of Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau City government.

**Keywords:** Biographical characteristics, Cultural diversity, Performance, Civil servants

*Abstrak*

Penelitian ini dilakukan untuk mengetahui pengaruh Karakteristik biografis dan Keanekaragaman Budaya Terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil di pemerintahan Lubuk Linggau. Ada dua variabel dalam penelitian ini. Variabel independen yang Karakteristik biografis ( $X_1$ ), Keanekaragaman Budaya ( $X_2$ ). Variabel dependen adalah kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Pemerintah Lubuk Linggau. Tujuan dari penelitian ini adalah: a) untuk mengetahui pengaruh Karakteristik biografis ( $X_1$ ), Keanekaragaman Budaya ( $X_2$ ) terhadap kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Pemerintah

Lubuk Linggau, dan b) untuk menyelidiki yang variabel independen yang dominan mempengaruhi kinerja Sipil Pegawai di Lubuk Linggau.government. Metode yang digunakan dalam penelitian ini adalah kausal. Jumlah sampel dalam penelitian ini adalah 100 Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Pemerintah Lubuk Linggau. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner. Sebelum uji pengaruh, tes pada validitas dan reliabilitas dilakukan untuk melihat tingkat validitas dan instrumen terpercaya yang dapat digunakan sebagai pengumpul data. Mengukur hubungan antara variabel, analisis regresi berganda digunakan. Berdasarkan hasil analisis, ditemukan bahwa variabel Karakteristik biografis (X1), Keanekaragaman Budaya (X2) yang sama sekali terpengaruh secara signifikan terhadap Kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Pemerintah Lubuk Linggau. Variasi variabel dependen perubahan (kinerja) dipengaruhi oleh variabel independen yang Karakteristik biografis (X1), Keanekaragaman Budaya (X2) adalah 64,4 persen ( $R^2=0,644$ ) sedangkan sisanya yang 35,6 persen dipengaruhi oleh variabel lain. Ini berarti bahwa jika perubahan dilakukan bersama-sama, itu akan mempengaruhi kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Pemerintah Lubuk Linggau yang 64,4 persen. Hasil dalam penelitian ini, variabel independen Karakteristik biografis (X1), Keanekaragaman Budaya (X2) secara parsial dan simultan mempengaruhi Kinerja Pegawai Negeri Sipil di Pemerintah Kota Lubuk Linggau.

Kata kunci: Karakteristik biografis, Keanekaragaman budaya, Kinerja, Pegawai negeri sipil

JEL Classification: M31

## **1. Research Background**

Human resource (HR) is an important asset for the company. HR plays a central role in the achievement of results to fit the company's goals. Without HR, then the company cannot perform activities to achieve its objectives. The company's goal can be achieved through a variety of activities to mobilize all the resources needed to achieve its objectives. The expected goal is the starting point for planning the performance of the company.

Work performance has been identified as the significant key for organizations to gain competitive advantage and superior productivity. Although competitive advantage is more relevant to private sector, it can be extended to public sector by including 'serving the public' because it is the ultimate objective of the public sector. The study by Vermeeren et al. (2009) has proved that work performance could help public organization to improve service delivery. Realizing its importance, public organizations seem to pay attention on work performance in relation to formulating policies and enhance service delivery (Leeuw, 1996). In many organizations, people believe that work performances are more beneficial to them, their customer and more importantly, to their organization (McKendall and Margulis, 1995 and Cook and McCaulay, 1997). Since work performance is crucial to government services, high work performance among employees is a significant management challenge for providing excellent services to the public at all levels.

Company performance is strongly influenced by human resources in the company. Officials in the company of course have their own characteristics and culture. Understanding the characteristics in language is a typical trait in which the characteristics and culture inherent in the employees will differentiate it from other

employees. So the company's performance can be affected by the characteristics of the employee (biographical characteristics) and cultural diversity.

Biographical characteristics are individual characteristics such as age, work period, and the term of office, which is easily and objectively obtained from one's personal archives. Recent reviews of worker age and organizationally relevant outcomes further suggest that chronological age serves as a proxy indicator for a broad constellation of age-related processes that exert diverse and indirect effects on work outcomes (for reviews, see, for example, Davies, Matthews, & Wong, 1991; Hansson, De Koekoek, Neece, & Patterson, 1997; Sterns & Miklos, 1995; Warr, 2001). In particular, recent work on career stages (e.g., Dalton & Thompson, 1986; Greller & Simpson, 1999) and barriers to employee development among midlife and older workers (e.g., London, 1998; Simpson, Greller, & Stroh, 2002; Sterns & Doverspike, 1988) suggests that age-related changes in motivational variables, rather than chronological age or cognitive abilities play a key role in successful work outcomes for middle-aged and older workers. To date, however, relatively little attention has been given to understanding the effects of aging and adult development on work motivation (for exceptions, see Boerlijst, Munnichs, & van der Heijden, 1998; Raynor & Entin, 1982; Warr, 2001). In light of growing organizational interest in how best to manage and motivate an older workforce, the paucity of research in this area represents a serious gap in our knowledge.

Diversity that exists, often referred to different terms, Muhammad Yusri FM (2008: 1) reveals that there are three terms that are often used to describe communities that consisted of religion, race, language, and culture which are different; the plurality, diversity, and multicultural.

All three concepts are represent the same thing, namely a state of more than one or plural. Furthermore Farida Hanum and Setya (2011: 114) explains that the diversity that affect the behavior, attitudes, and patterns of human thought, so humans have ways (usage), habits (folk ways), rules (mores) even mores customs are different from each other. When the above circumstances can not be understood by the one and the other, it will be very prone to intersections which then making of conflict and climate will affect the performance of the organization.

Most qualitative reviews of the field of diversity look at all dimensions of diversity, including gender, Racial, Language, Religion and function, as well as culture and ethnicity. These reviews conclude that studies' results are inconsistent with each other (e.g., Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; Joshi & Roh, 2007; Kirkman, Tesluk, & Rosen, 2004). For example, there are significant positive correlations between diversity and performance in some studies (e.g., Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996; Thomas, Ravlin, & Wallace, 1996), contrasted by significant negative correlations in others (e.g., Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Kirkman et al., 2004; Thomas, 1999; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Meta-analyses have found no overall relationship between diversity and performance (Bowers, Pharmer, & Salas, 2000; Webber & Donahue, 2001), or a small negative effect (Stewart, 2006)

Therefore, in order to understand the characteristics of biographical and cultural diversity into a very interesting problem, there will be the study of both the benefit of individuals, companies, and communities. This study aims to determine the effect of variables to biographical characteristics of employees ( $X_1$ ) and the cultural diversity ( $X_2$ ) on employee performance ( $Y$ ), either simultaneously or partially.

### **1.1. Biographical Characteristics**

Definition of biographical from Indonesian dictionaries gives a meaning of someone biography written by other people. Biographical characteristics are individual characteristics such as age, gender, race, and the term of office, which is obtained easily and objectively from one's personal archives (Robbins and Coulter, 2010: 63)

Characteristics biographical work period showed that post employment affect employee performance. Future work is closely related to a person's work experience and mastery of the job he is doing. The higher the work experience, the more knowledgeable the employees are. So mastery of the job better certainly will affect the performance.

### **1.2. Cultural Diversity**

Diversity that exists, often referred to by different terms, Muhammad Yusri FM (2008: 1) reveals that there are three terms that are often used to describe communities that consisted of religion, race, language, and culture are different, the plurality, diversity, and multicultural. Most qualitative reviews of the field of diversity look at all dimensions of diversity, including gender, Racial, Language, Religion and function, as well as culture and ethnicity. These reviews conclude that studies' results are inconsistent with each other (e.g., Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; Joshi & Roh, 2007; Kirkman, Tesluk, & Rosen, 2004). For example, there are significant positive correlations between diversity and performance in some studies (e.g., Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996; Thomas, Ravlin, & Wallace, 1996), contrasted by significant negative correlations in others (e.g., Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Kirkman et al., 2004; Thomas, 1999; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Meta-analyses have found no overall relationship between diversity and performance (Bowers, Pharmer, & Salas, 2000; Webber & Donahue, 2001), or a small negative effect (Stewart, 2006)

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### **1.3. Performance**

Performance is the result of work that has a strong relationship with the organization's strategic objectives, customer satisfaction and contribute to the economy (Armstrong and Baron, 1998: 15 in Wibowo). Performance is the end result of an activity (Robbins, 2010: 188). Meanwhile, Riniwati (2011: 50) defines the performance is the extent to which a person has played its part in implementing the organization's strategy

## 1.4. Concept Model and Hypotheses

### 1.4.1. Model Concept

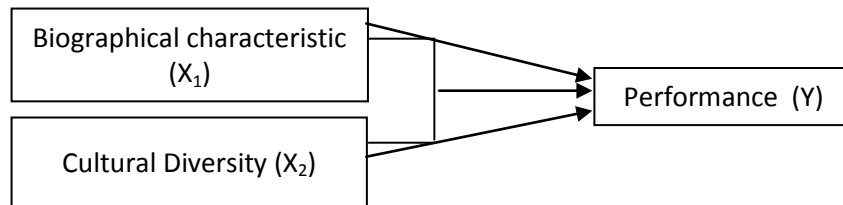


Figure 1. Research Model

### 1.4.2. Hypothesis

The hypothesis to be tested in this study are as follows:

- H1 : Biographical characteristics (X1) have significant influence on employee performance (Y).
- H2 : Cultural Diversity (X2) has significant influence on employee performance (Y).
- H3 : Simultaneously biographical characteristics of employees (X1) and cultural diversity (X2) have significant influence on employee performance (Y)

## 2. Research Methods

This study used quantitative with explanatory research methods. The main reason of using Explanatory research is because researcher will conduct a test of the hypothesis that has been formulated so that it will get an overview of the relationship and influence between independent and dependent variables. The number of sample in this research was 100 Civil Servants in Lubuk Linggau.government. The analysis technique used is descriptive statistical analyst, multiple linear regression analysis, F test (simultaneous test) and t test (partial test).

### 2.1. Test Instrument Research

#### 2.1.1. Validity and Reliability

Instrument as valid if the measuring instrument used to obtain the data (measure) were valid. Valid means that the instrument can be used to measure what should be measured. The results of the study are valid if there is similarity between the data collected with the data actually happened on the object under study (Sugiyono, 2010: 121). According to Arikunto (2010), Reliability is an instrument that is sufficiently reliable to be used as a data collection tool, because the instrument is good enough. Model of internal consistency with Cronbach alpha technique is used to determine the level of reliability of the variables used in the study.

The results of testing the validity and reliability of each variable indicates that all items with a total answer questions for variables  $X_1$ ,  $X_2$ , and Y obtain significant results, namely p-value is less than 0.05 alpha. Item is declared invalid, so that it can be used to measure employee performance variables accurately. Cronbach alpha reliability test results are the three variables above figure 0.6 so that the research instrument is for measuring the characteristics of an employee biographical, cultural diversity, and the employee's performance is reliable.

## 3. Result and Discussion

### 3.1. Linear Analysis

This study has two independent variables which used multiple linear regression analysis. The goal is to determine the influence of two free variables against the

dependent variables. Multiple linear regression analysis used by researchers when the study intends to predict how the situation (rise and fall) dependent variable (criterion), if two or more independent variables as predictors manipulated (derivative value) (Sugiyono, 2002: 210). The results of multiple regression analysis using SPSS 20 is presented in the following Table 1.

**Table 1. The Effect of Biographical Characteristics and Cultural Diversity on Performance**

Note	Standardize d Coefficients ( $\beta$ )	T count	Sig .
Contant	9.380	3.702	.00 0
Biographical Characteristi cs (X1)	.429	5.579	.00 0
Cultural Diversity (X2)	.380	4.858	.00 0
Related Variable	Performance (Y)		
F count (2/97.5%)	87.601	Sig.=0.00 0	
R	0.802		
R Square	0.644		

Based on the multiple linear regression analysis, it can produce regression equation as follows:  $Y = 9.380 + 0.429 X1 + X2 \ 0.380$

From the multiple linear regressions equation, it can be seen that:

- Constant value ( $\alpha$ ) is 10.768. This value indicates the amount of employee performance (Y) if there is no biographical characteristics of employees (X1) and cultural diversity (X2), that is equal to 9.380.
- Regression coefficient biographical characteristics of employees (X1) of 0.429 (b1). This value indicates the influence of biographical characteristics of employees (X1) on employee performance (Y). Regression coefficient is positive, meaning that employees biographical characteristics (X1) unidirectional effect on employee performance (Y).
- Regression coefficient value of cultural diversity (X2) of 0.380 (b2). This value indicates the influence of Cultural Diversity (X2) on employee performance (Y). Regression coefficient is positive, meaning Cultural Diversity (X2) unidirectional effect on employee performance (Y).

The value of multiple correlation coefficient (R) of 0.802 indicates that together there is a significant relationship between the biographical characteristics of employees (X1) and Cultural Diversity (X2) with employee performance (Y), amounting to 80.2%. The coefficient of determination (R Square) is 0.644. This figure shows that the employee biographical characteristics variables (X1) and Cultural Diversity (X2) can explain the variation or able to contribute to employee performance variable (Y) of 64.4%, while the remaining 35.6% were caused by other variables not included in this study.

### 3.2. Hypothesis Test

#### 3.2.1. Partial test (t test)

The hypothesis in this study is confirmed by using partial test. Testing is conducted by looking at the significance level. If the significance level below 0.05, then the hypothesis is accepted, if the significance level is greater than 0.05, then the hypothesis is rejected. In addition, it can also be done by comparing the t Calculate the t table. When the t count > t table then H<sub>0</sub> is rejected. Based on the above data processing results, it can be seen that:

a. Biographical characteristic variable (X<sub>1</sub>).

T value is 5.579 with the significance of 0.000. This value is greater than t table (5.579 > 1,984). Thus, variable employee biographical characteristics (X<sub>1</sub>) has partially significant effect on employee performance variable (Y).

b. Cultural Diversity variable (X<sub>2</sub>).

T value is 4.854 the significance of 0.000. This value is greater than t table (4.703 > 1,984). So, Cultural Diversity variable (X<sub>2</sub>) has partially significant effect on employee performance variable (Y).

#### 3.2.2. Simultaneous Test (Test F)

F test is used to determine the significant influence of independent variables on the dependent variable simultaneously. Based on the calculation results obtained F count of 87 601 with a significance of 0.000. Value of F is greater than the F table, which is 3,119. This indicates that the variable employee biographical characteristics and Cultural Diversity simultaneously affect the performance of employees.

### 3.3. Discussion

#### 3.3.1. Effect of Variable Employee Biographical Characteristics on Employee Performance Variables.

Research shows that there is significant influence between variables biographical characteristics employee to employee performance. This is shows that the performance of civil servants Lubuk Linggau government based on biographical characteristics. Underlying characteristics include length of work period and age.

Characteristics biographical work period showed that post employment affect employee performance. Future work is closely related to a person's work experience and mastery of the job he is doing. The higher the work experience, the more knowledge the employees are, So mastery of the job better and will certainly affect the performance.

In relation to age, explaining that younger employees tend to accept new technology, and easy adaptation with dynamic changes in an organization. Older age is typically lower response to change because it has been used to the routine of what they do. However, their advantages over control of areas are not too demanding innovation and high dynamic change.

This research is not in line with the study of Yearta (1995) which showed that age does not affect work performance, thus it contradicts with what have been revealed by Smedley and Whitten (2006), who suggested that difference of age could be also a potential factor for work performance. This is in tandem with a study by Shultz and Adam (2007) which indicated that there were significant differences between age groups concerning work performance. Kujala et al. (2005) emphasized that younger people are poor on work performance but this is opposed by a study by Birren and Schaie (2001)

Recent reviews of worker age and organizationally relevant outcomes further suggest that chronological age serves as a proxy indicator for a broad constellation of age-related processes that exert diverse and indirect effects on work outcomes (for reviews, see, for example, Davies, Matthews, & Wong, 1991; Hansson, DeKoekkoek, Neece, & Patterson, 1997; Sterns & Miklos, 1995; Warr, 2001). In particular, recent work on career stages (e.g., Dalton & Thompson, 1986; Greller & Simpson, 1999) and barriers to employee development among midlife and older workers (e.g., London, 1998; Simpson, Greller, & Stroh, 2002; Sterns & Doverspike, 1988) suggests that age-related changes in motivational variables, rather than chronological age or cognitive abilities, which play a key role in successful work outcomes for middle-aged and older workers. To date, however, relatively little attention has been given to understanding the effects of aging and adult development on work motivation (for exceptions, see Boerlijst, Munnichs, & van der Heijden, 1998; Raynor & Entin, 1982; Warr, 2001). In light of growing organizational interest in how best to manage and motivate an older workforce, the paucity of research in this area represents a serious gap in our knowledge.

For this research, it can be concluded that both length of work period and age is an indicator of biographical characteristics, which have an influence on the achievement of an organization's performance.

### **3.3.2. The influence of cultural diversity on Performance.**

Most qualitative reviews of the field of diversity look at all dimensions of diversity, including gender, Racial, Language, Religion and function, as well as culture and ethnicity. These reviews conclude that studies' results are inconsistent with each other (e.g., Harrison, Price, & Bell, 1998; Joshi & Roh, 2007; Kirkman, Tesluk, & Rosen, 2004). For example, there are significant positive correlations between diversity and performance in some studies (e.g., Earley & Mosakowski, 2000; McLeod, Lobel, & Cox, 1996; Thomas, Ravlin, & Wallace, 1996), contrasted by significant negative correlations in others (e.g., Jehn & Mannix, 2001; Kirkman et al., 2004; Thomas, 1999; Watson, Kumar, & Michaelsen, 1993). Meta-analyses have found no overall relationship between diversity and performance (Bowers, Pharmed, & Salas, 2000; Webber & Donahue, 2001), or a small negative effect (Stewart, 2006).

The results of this study demonstrate that there is a significant influence of cultural diversity on employee performance. Employee performance can be increased by knowing the cultural diversity clearly, provide guidance, and employees are placed according to the same place with the field. This is possible because the employee will be adaptable in doing the job at hand with a clear knowledge and understanding of cultural diversity.

## **4. Conclusion**

### **4.1. Conclusion**

- a. Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis proved that the employee biographical characteristics variables ( $X_1$ ) partially significant effect on employee performance (Y).
- b. Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis proved that employee job characteristic variables ( $X_2$ ) have partially significant effect on employee performance (Y).
- c. Based on the results of multiple linear regression analysis proved that simultaneously biographical characteristics of employees ( $X_1$ ) and employee job characteristics ( $X_2$ ) have a significant effect on employee performance (Y)



#### 4.2. Rekomendations

- a. Employee as an important asset for the company must be kept by providing useful input and guidance to support the work activities of employees. Direction can be carried out continuously by providing information, guidance and input to the employee in performing the work. Employees who get a real concern of the company will certainly have high morale and a sense of belonging to the company, so employees will always be motivated to work optimally.
- b. Employee and the company should be more understanding of cultural diversity as every individual in the organization has its own characteristics that are different from one another, with the understanding of cultural diversity, the organization and the employee will be easier to build a good working team that can do the work optimally, in addition to the problems that arise in the work can be minimized and managed properly

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