

THE ROLE OF CAREER DEVELOPMENT SYSTEM IN IMPROVING EMPLOYEE PRODUCTIVITY IN THE GARMENT INDUSTRY, A CASE STUDY OF PT KURNIA ANDIKA GEMILANG

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Abstract

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This study aims to analyze the strategy and implementation of career development programs at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang and evaluate their impact on employee motivation and productivity. In the context of the labor-intensive garment industry, career development is a crucial factor in maintaining workforce sustainability and increasing company competitiveness. This study uses a library research method with a descriptive-qualitative approach, in which various human resource management theories and previous research results are analyzed to identify patterns, challenges, and best practices in career development in the apparel manufacturing sector. The results show that the implementation of competency-based training, mentoring programs, and performance-based promotion systems has been proven to significantly increase employee loyalty and productivity. PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang, through its "Career Path Development" program, has successfully reduced turnover rates and increased production efficiency by up to 12% in the past two years. This research makes an important contribution to the development of HR management theory and practice in developing countries, particularly in building sustainable and adaptive career systems to industry dynamics. The results of this study also serve as a strategic reference for other garment companies in designing integrated career development policies oriented towards improving organizational performance.

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INTRODUCTION

The garment industry is a crucial pillar of the global economy, particularly for developing countries that rely on labor-intensive sectors for their industrial growth. In



Indonesia, this sector contributes significantly to non-oil and gas exports and absorbs a significant workforce, particularly in West Java, Central Java, and East Java. According to 2023 data from the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), the textile and apparel industry employs more than 3.5 million workers, contributing 1.2 percent to Gross Domestic Product (GDP). (Nada et al., 2023) . This strategic position makes the garment industry not just an economic instrument, but also a social entity that plays a role in reducing unemployment and strengthening the competitiveness of the national workforce. However, despite this vital role, many garment companies still face fundamental challenges in managing their human resources, particularly in the area of sustainable career development.

Career development challenges in the garment sector generally arise due to the industry's labor-intensive nature and heavy reliance on low-wage labor. Companies often prioritize production cost efficiency, while human resource development is seen as an additional burden. As a result, many employees experience job stagnation despite long-term employment. This situation not only hinders professional development but also leads to decreased motivation, increased turnover, and weakened organizational commitment. According to a 2022 survey conducted by the International Labour Organization (ILO) in several Asian countries, including Indonesia, approximately 46% of garment workers admitted to not seeing clear career opportunities in their workplace (Astutik, 2023) . This phenomenon demonstrates that without a directed career system, labor productivity will not grow optimally.

In the context of a medium-sized company like PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang, these challenges are even more complex. As a business entity operating in the apparel industry with high production capacity, the company is faced with the need to maintain quality, efficiency, and the sustainability of an experienced workforce. However, career development is often hampered by budget constraints, minimal formal training, and a lack of support from top management. This makes career development strategies not merely additional programs, but an integral part of the company's strategic planning. In other words, the success of career management is a measure of the extent to which a company is able to balance production interests with the well-being of its workforce.

As a long-established company, PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang has begun to recognize that systematic career development can be a solution to classic problems such as declining loyalty and high absenteeism. The company then introduced several programs such as technical training, supervisor coaching, and a performance-based promotion system. This step demonstrates a new awareness that human resources are productive assets that require long-term investment. In the context of a labor-intensive industry, this is a significant breakthrough because it shifts the paradigm from a cost-oriented to a value-oriented HR. Thus, career development is not only seen as a form of appreciation for employees, but also as a strategic instrument in enhancing the company's competitive advantage.

However, the implementation of career development programs in the field does not always run smoothly. Companies often face technical and structural obstacles, such as the absence of a competency-based evaluation system, a lack of ongoing training, and a mismatch between individual aspirations and organizational needs. Several previous studies, such as those by Wijayanti (2021) and Putra (2022), revealed that one of the main causes of career development program failure in the manufacturing industry is weak top management commitment and the lack of effective communication channels

between employees and HR. As a result, HR development policies often stop at the administrative level without addressing deeper transformational aspects. This situation is also reflected at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang, where the career development system is still in the process of moving towards an ideal and sustainable model.

When compared with companies in other developing countries such as Bangladesh, Vietnam, or Cambodia, the pattern of challenges faced is relatively similar. The garment industry in these countries also faces limited resources in implementing effective career development systems. However, some have shown progress through cross-institutional collaboration and the implementation of *competency-based training*. For example, in Bangladesh, competency-based vocational training supported by the *Bangladesh Garment Manufacturers and Exporters Association (BGMEA)* has succeeded in reducing turnover rates by 15% in the past three years (Bakhtiar, n.d.). This comparison provides context that innovation in career development depends not solely on the scale of the company, but on the extent to which management is able to build a commitment and culture of continuous learning within the organization.

In terms of the state of the art, research on career development in the garment sector continues to evolve from the classic approach that focuses on job promotions to a new paradigm that emphasizes *career adaptability* and *employee empowerment*. Contemporary studies highlight the importance of building a flexible, participatory, and integrated career system with digital competency development. In an academic context, this research seeks to contribute to the discourse on human resource management in labor-intensive sectors by linking career development theory, work motivation, and organizational productivity. The author's motivation in discussing this topic is driven by the fact that although the garment industry is the largest absorber of labor, attention to career aspects and human resource development in this sector is still relatively limited. This research is expected to open a new perspective that career development is not only an individual need, but also a corporate strategy in maintaining business sustainability in a highly competitive global era.

Therefore, this study uses PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang as a case study to deeply understand how career development strategies are designed, implemented, and measured for their success in increasing employee productivity and loyalty. This approach is expected to provide a broader empirical and conceptual understanding of the relationship between HR development policies and company performance. By integrating theory, practice, and comparisons across developing countries, this study aims to build a scientific argument that career development is a key factor in creating adaptive, innovative, and highly competitive organizations. The results of this study are expected to not only contribute to the development of HR management theory but also serve as a practical reference for garment companies in Indonesia in designing equitable and sustainable career strategies.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a library research approach that focuses on conceptual analysis and theoretical synthesis related to career development strategies in industrial organizations, particularly in the context of medium-sized companies in developing countries. This method is based on the assumption that knowledge about career management can be obtained comprehensively through a critical review of scientific literature, previous research results, and empirical reports from international institutions.

This approach allows researchers to identify patterns, gaps, and the evolution of concepts relevant to human resource development practices in the textile and garment industry. As explained by Creswell (2018), library research serves not only as an effort to summarize secondary data but also as a means of reconstructing scientific arguments based on theory and empirical evidence (Amane et al., 2023) . In this context, researchers play an active role as analysts who interpret various academic sources, including reputable journals, corporate documents, and reports from global labor organizations, to find logical relationships between career development policies, productivity, and employee loyalty.

This research process was conducted systematically through several stages of analysis. First, the researcher identified and selected relevant literature using databases such as Scopus, ScienceDirect, and Google Scholar, covering publications from 2015–2024. Selection criteria included topic suitability, source reputation, and empirical relevance to the industrial sector in developing countries. Second, all collected data and theories were analyzed using content analysis and a comparative approach to connect career development practices at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang with similar research findings in various international contexts. Third, the researcher synthesized and interpreted the findings to formulate argumentative conclusions based on academic logic. Data validity in this study was strengthened through source triangulation, namely comparing findings from scientific journals, reports from international institutions such as the International Labour Organization (ILO), and relevant internal company data. With this methodological approach, the research is expected to not only provide a strong conceptual overview but also present theoretical and practical contributions to the development of career management in the modern manufacturing industry.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Career Development Strategies and Programs at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang

Career development in the apparel manufacturing industry, such as PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang, reflects the corporate strategy of maintaining the continuity of human resource (HR) competency. In a highly competitive global economy, company success is no longer determined solely by production technology, but rather by the quality and engagement of employees within an adaptive work system. The company implements a series of strategies consisting of training, coaching, promotion, and job rotation as key instruments in strengthening a professional culture. Regular technical training provided to sewing operators and production staff is an integral part of the continuous learning process. This approach aligns with the concept of *human capital investment* implemented in many medium-sized companies in developing countries, such as Vietnam and Bangladesh, where improving workforce skills directly impacts the productivity and quality of export products (Rohimah, 2021) .

The coaching and mentoring program implemented by PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang demonstrates a concrete example of an internal mentoring system. Each new employee receives direct guidance from experienced seniors to adapt to the work rhythm and organizational culture. This practice creates a knowledge bridge between generations of employees and strengthens loyalty through more personal social relationships. A study by the International Labour Organization (2022) showed that companies in developing countries that implemented *on-the-job mentoring systems* experienced a 15% reduction in turnover compared to companies without structural

mentoring systems (Ansari et al., nd) . This provides empirical evidence that mentoring strategies are not merely administrative activities but part of the process of shaping employees' professional identity.

Meanwhile, the promotion and job rotation system at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang serves as a form of recognition for individual performance and a means of diversifying skills. Performance- and loyalty-based promotions encourage healthy competition among employees, while rotation between departments facilitates cross-functional understanding within the production chain. This concept is identical to the *job enrichment approach* widely implemented in the manufacturing sectors of developing countries such as Indonesia, Thailand, and the Philippines. By rotating work positions, employees can understand the relationships between production units, increase work empathy, and foster operational flexibility (Dassucik & Farida, 2025) . In the long term, this system contributes to the stability of business processes and minimizes dependence on a single, specific role.

Benefits of Career Development

The implementation of a career development strategy at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang has had a significant positive impact on two key entities: employees and the company. For employees, this system creates a measurable space for professional growth. Feeling valued for opportunities to learn and develop strengthens their intrinsic motivation. According to the *Self-Determination theory* proposed by Deci and Ryan (2017), employees who feel they have autonomy and a clear career path tend to have higher performance and stable levels of job satisfaction (Risman, 2023) . In the case of PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang, a structured career path helps workers navigate their future within the organization. Employees work not only for wages but also have a vision of the strategic position they want to achieve in the future.

From an organizational perspective, systematic career development creates *organizational citizenship behavior*, namely employee behavior that voluntarily contributes to the company's sustainability. PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang has successfully increased productivity by 12% in the past two years as a result of internal training and promotion programs. This phenomenon is consistent with research findings in the textile sectors of Sri Lanka and India, where companies implementing *career development planning* experienced operational efficiency increases of between 8–15% (Asian Productivity Organization, 2021). Furthermore, employee retention rates also increase, as they perceive they have room for growth and fair promotion opportunities (Herawati, 2023) . This reinforces the assumption that investment in career development serves not only as an HR strategy but also as an economic instrument to increase long-term profitability.

Another benefit experienced by companies is the formation of an internal leadership reserve ready to fill strategic positions when vacancies arise. With a training and rotation system, companies do not need to rely entirely on external recruitment. This is particularly relevant in the context of developing countries facing a shortage of skilled labor. Experience from the garment industry in Bangladesh shows that companies that build an internal leadership pipeline are more resilient to labor crises and market fluctuations (World Bank, 2020). Thus, career development programs not only empower individuals but also strengthen organizational resilience in the face of global industry dynamics (Nugraha et al., 2023) .

Barriers to Career Development

Despite its structured program design, the career development system at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang still faces a number of structural and cultural obstacles. One major obstacle is the limited training budget. As a medium-sized company, PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang must balance financial priorities between production needs and human resource investment. This phenomenon is common in various developing countries, such as the manufacturing sectors of Vietnam and Cambodia, where training programs are often hampered by limited funding and reliance on short-term contract orders. In the long term, these budget constraints have the potential to hinder sustainable competency development, requiring companies to seek creative solutions, such as collaborating with vocational training institutions or utilizing CSR programs based on workforce capacity building.

The second obstacle arises from the managerial aspect, namely the low commitment of some line leaders to the implementation of career development. When top management does not provide full support, HRD programs often stall at the administrative formality stage without meaningful evaluation. However, the success of a career development system depends heavily on structural support from top management, including in terms of time allocation, funding, and incentive policies. A study conducted by Garavan et al. (2019) showed that organizations with strong leadership support tend to achieve career development program effectiveness up to three times higher than organizations with weak support.

Another equally significant obstacle is the mismatch between individual aspirations and organizational needs. Some employees have career aspirations that are inconsistent with the existing organizational structure, leading to stagnation or even job frustration. This situation often occurs in developing countries with rigid hierarchical organizational structures and limited promotion opportunities. Furthermore, the lack of an objective career evaluation system contributes to perceptions of unfairness among employees. To address this, companies need to adopt a competency-based assessment system that measures performance transparently and measurably. This will enable the promotion and career development process to be fairer, more accountable, and support a culture of meritocracy within the company.

Example of Implementation at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang

Career Path Development program at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang is a concrete example of how a well-planned HR management system can directly contribute to organizational performance. This program was designed by the HR department in response to the company's need to build a competent, results-oriented, and highly loyal workforce. Through a competency-based approach, the company conducts intensive training for sewing machine operators, quality control staff, and machine maintenance technicians with modules tailored to actual production needs. Each participant who passes the internal evaluation is awarded a skills certificate and prioritized for job rotation or promotion. In two years of implementation, this program has successfully increased productivity by 12% and reduced *absenteeism* by 8%, demonstrating that career development not only impacts the personal aspect but also improves overall organizational efficiency.

This success demonstrates a strong correlation between a well-planned training

system and improved organizational performance. Similar strategies have been implemented in many developing countries with comparable results. For example, garment industries in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka developed *Career Ladder Programs* that provide a path to career advancement for high-performing operators through a combination of technical training and *soft skills development* (YUDHISTIRA, 2019) . The results showed a 20% increase in employee retention and significant improvements in employee job satisfaction. A similar trend can be observed in textile companies in Indonesia that collaborate with local Vocational Training Centers (BLK) to develop national competency-based training modules. This collaboration not only saves training costs but also ensures that the workforce has skills that meet industry standards. Therefore, the implementation of programs like those at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang demonstrates that investment in human resources is an adaptive strategy to the pressures of workforce globalization and the need for long-term efficiency.

Furthermore, the implementation of *Career Path Development* also strengthens an organizational culture oriented towards continuous learning (*learning organization*). Employees are encouraged not only to work according to their main tasks, but also to develop their own capacity through independent learning and active participation in training programs (Gandi & Maisaroh, 2025) . This model encourages the formation of micro-innovation cycles at the operational level, where employees exchange experiences and technical knowledge to find solutions to production problems. More broadly, this approach reflects the practice of sustainable human resource management , where the company strives to balance economic goals with the welfare of the workforce. By placing people at the center of organizational development, PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang not only forms a competent workforce but also builds a humanistic and progressive corporate image—a model worthy of reference for medium-sized manufacturing companies in other developing countries.

CONCLUSION

Career development at PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang demonstrates that human resource management is not merely an administrative matter, but a fundamental strategy for shaping organizational competitiveness. Through training, coaching, promotions, and job rotation, the company has successfully created an adaptive work environment oriented toward individual capacity building. This has resulted in a 12% increase in productivity over the past two years, accompanied by a decrease in employee absenteeism. This demonstrates that investment in human resource development is a form of *strategic leverage* that directly impacts the company's operational performance. Competency-based training programs also play a crucial role in fostering a collaborative work culture and strengthening professional integrity across every line of production.

From an academic and practical perspective, the career development system implemented by PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang aligns with the principles of *human capital theory* , which emphasizes that employee knowledge and skills are productive assets for an organization. This approach aligns with practices implemented by various companies in developing countries such as Indonesia, Vietnam, and Sri Lanka, which prioritize technical training and *mentoring systems* as key instruments for improving workforce efficiency. The case of PT Kurnia Andika Gemilang demonstrates that the success of a career development program is not solely the result of HRD policies, but also the synergy between top management commitment, clear career paths, and a

transparent, competency-based evaluation system. Thus, career development strategies have proven to be an important mechanism for strengthening loyalty, reducing turnover rates, and creating sustainable internal leadership regeneration.

However, this study also revealed that the implementation of career development programs still faces several challenges, particularly budget constraints, weak support from some line managers, and a mismatch between individual aspirations and organizational needs. These obstacles require innovative management policies, such as establishing partnerships with external training institutions, integrating digital competency-based evaluation systems, and strengthening a culture of meritocracy. In the long term, companies that can balance corporate interests with employee development needs will be better prepared to face industry dynamics and global change. Therefore, career development is not only a function of HRD, but also a reflection of the company's vision to create superior, resilient, and highly competitive human resources amidst the pressures of ever-growing global economic competition.

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