
The Influence of Work Environment and Ambidextrous Leadership on Employee Performance through Career Development

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Abstract : Human resources play a strategic role in service-oriented organizations, particularly outsourcing companies whose service sustainability largely depends on employee performance. This study aims to examine the effect of the work environment and ambidextrous leadership on employee performance, with career development positioned as a mediating variable. A supportive work environment, encompassing both physical and psychosocial aspects, contributes to employee comfort, work engagement, and productivity enhancement. Meanwhile, ambidextrous leadership emphasizes a leader's capability to balance efficiency-driven practices with innovation-oriented behaviors in addressing dynamic organizational challenges. Career development is regarded as a strategic mechanism that aligns individual potential with organizational goals, thereby strengthening employee motivation and performance. This study adopts a conceptual approach through a literature review to construct a framework explaining the relationships among the work environment, ambidextrous leadership, career development, and employee performance. The proposed model highlights the importance of integrating human resource management practices to achieve sustainable employee performance in service-based organizations.

Keywords: *Work Environment; Ambidextrous Leadership; Career Development; Employee Performance; Human Resource Management*

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a critical determinant of organizational effectiveness, particularly in service-based industries where human resources represent a key competitive advantage. From the perspective of human resource performance theory and strategic human resource management, employee performance is viewed as an outcome of the interaction between organizational resources, leadership practices, and employee development mechanisms. In line with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) model, organizational resources such as a supportive

work environment, effective leadership, and career development opportunities play an essential role in enhancing employee motivation, capability, and performance.

In contemporary organizations, especially those operating in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector, employee competence, adaptability, and service quality are crucial to meeting client expectations and maintaining organizational sustainability. One leadership approach that has gained increasing attention in this context is ambidextrous leadership, which emphasizes the ability of leaders to balance explorative behaviors that foster innovation with exploitative behaviors that ensure efficiency, discipline, and goal achievement. This leadership approach is considered particularly relevant in dynamic service environments where organizations are required to innovate while simultaneously maintaining operational stability.

Previous studies have consistently highlighted that a supportive work environment plays a significant role in shaping employee behavior and performance. A conducive work environment—characterized by adequate physical facilities, positive social interactions, leadership support, and psychological comfort—enables employees to perform their tasks effectively and efficiently. Similarly, leadership practices are widely recognized as key drivers of employee outcomes. However, empirical findings regarding the direct influence of ambidextrous leadership on employee performance remain inconclusive. Several studies indicate that leadership practices do not automatically translate into improved performance unless they are supported by appropriate organizational mechanisms.

One important mechanism that may explain this relationship is career development, which includes training opportunities, clear career paths, fair promotion systems, and continuous competency development. Career development provides employees with motivation, clarity, and readiness to perform, thereby strengthening the link between organizational practices and performance outcomes. From a career development perspective, leadership and work environment factors are expected to influence performance not only directly, but also indirectly through structured developmental processes.

Despite the growing body of literature on the work environment, leadership, and employee performance, most previous studies have primarily focused on direct relationships among these variables. Limited attention has been given to examining career development as an intervening variable, particularly within the context of outsourcing and human resource service organizations in Indonesia. This gap indicates the need for a more comprehensive research model that explains not only whether organizational factors influence performance, but also how these influences occur.

Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of the work environment and ambidextrous leadership on employee performance, with career development positioned as an

intervening variable, using a quantitative approach. By focusing on employees of PT Valdo International, South Jakarta, this research is expected to contribute empirical evidence to the human resource management literature and provide practical insights for organizations in designing effective work environments, leadership practices, and career development systems to enhance employee performance.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Previous Research

Previous studies have extensively examined the determinants of employee performance, particularly the roles of the work environment, leadership, and career development. However, the empirical evidence shows variations in findings depending on research context, analytical approach, and the inclusion of mediating mechanisms.

Studies focusing on the work environment consistently report its positive contribution to employee outcomes. (Junengsih et al. 2022) found that a supportive work environment significantly enhances employee engagement in service-based organizations, while (Junengsih et al. 2024) further demonstrated that environmental support strengthens employee performance through improved motivation and work attitudes. Although these studies confirm the importance of the work environment, they primarily examine direct effects and do not explore the underlying mechanisms through which environmental factors influence performance.

In contrast, research on ambidextrous leadership presents more mixed findings. (Rosing et al. 2011) conceptually argue that balancing explorative and exploitative leadership behaviors is essential for organizational adaptability and innovation. However, their study does not empirically test performance outcomes at the employee level. More recent empirical evidence by (Zhao and Zhang 2024). shows that ambidextrous leadership positively influences employee performance indirectly, particularly when mediated by career-related factors such as learning opportunities and professional development. This suggests that leadership effectiveness depends not only on behavioral balance, but also on the presence of organizational mechanisms that translate leadership practices into employee outcomes.

Regarding career development, empirical studies consistently highlight its strategic role in enhancing employee competence and performance. While Greenhaus and Callanan (2020) provide a strong conceptual foundation for career development theory, empirical studies indicate that training opportunities, clear career paths, and promotion systems serve as critical mediators between organizational practices and performance outcomes. Nevertheless, limited studies have integrated the work environment, ambidextrous leadership, and career

development into a single comprehensive model, particularly within the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and human resource service sector in Indonesia.

As summarized in Table 2.1.1, previous studies emphasize the importance of the work environment, leadership, and career development in shaping employee performance. However, most prior research remains fragmented, focusing on isolated relationships rather than examining career development as an intervening variable that explains how organizational and leadership factors influence employee performance. This research gap justifies the need for an integrated analytical framework.

Summary of Previous Studies

Author (Year)	Research Focus	Key Findings	Method
Junengsih et al. (2022)	Work environment and employee engagement	Work environment positively affects employee engagement in service organizations	Quantitative
Junengsih et al. (2024)	Leadership and employee performance	Leadership and work environment significantly influence employee performance	Quantitative
Zhao & Zhang (2024)	Ambidextrous leadership, career development, and performance	Career development mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee performance	Quantitative
Rosing et al. (2011)	Ambidextrous leadership	Conceptual framework of ambidextrous leadership behaviors	Conceptual
Greenhaus & Callanan (2020)	Career development	Conceptual foundation of career development theory	Conceptual

Theoretical Foundations

This study is grounded in several core theories within human resource management and leadership literature. The Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model explains that job resources—such as leadership support, work facilities, and social support—reduce job strain and enhance employee motivation and engagement, leading to improved performance. This model provides a strong theoretical basis for examining the influence of the work environment on both career development and employee performance.

The Ambidextrous Leadership Theory emphasizes leaders' ability to balance explorative behaviors (encouraging innovation, flexibility, and learning) with exploitative behaviors (ensuring efficiency, discipline, and goal achievement). While conceptual studies highlight its strategic importance, recent empirical evidence suggests that ambidextrous leadership contributes to employee outcomes primarily through developmental mechanisms rather than direct performance effects.

The Career Development Theory posits that employees achieve higher performance when organizations provide structured development opportunities, including training, promotion systems, and clear career paths. Career development thus functions as a strategic mechanism

that translates organizational support and leadership practices into enhanced employee capability and performance. The theoretical foundations supporting each research variable are summarized in Table 2.2.1.

Table Theoretical Foundations of Research Variables

Theory	Key Concepts	Related Variables
Job Demands–Resources (JD- R) Model	Job resources enhance motivation and performance	Work Environment
Ambidextrous Leadership Theory	Balance between exploration and exploitation	Ambidextrous Leadership
Career Development Theory	Career growth enhances competence and performance	Career Development
Performance Theory	Performance reflects quality, quantity, and behavior	Employee Performance

Variable Indicators

In this study, each variable is measured using validated indicators based on established literature. The work environment is measured through physical conditions, work facilities, social relations, leadership support, and psychological comfort. Ambidextrous leadership is measured through opening behaviors (innovation, flexibility, creativity) and closing behaviors (efficiency, discipline, and goal achievement). Career development is measured through training opportunities, career path clarity, promotion systems, organizational support, and competency development. Employee performance is measured through work quality, work quantity, timeliness, initiative, teamwork, adaptability, and commitment.

Tabel Variable Indicators

Variable	Dimension	Indicators	Source
Work Environment (X1)	Physical Conditions & Work Facilities	X1.1–X1.4	Sedarmayanti (2019)
	Social Relations & Communication	X1.5–X1.8	Bakker & Demerouti (2020)
	Leadership Support & Psychological Comfort	X1.9–X1.12	Robbins & Judge (2019)
Ambidextrous Leadership (X2)	Opening Behavior	X2.1–X2.4	Rosing et al. (2011); Zhao & Zhang (2024)
	Closing Behavior	X2.5–X2.8	Rosing et al. (2011)
	Leadership Flexibility	X2.9–X2.10	Zhao & Zhang (2024)
Career Development (Y)	Development Opportunities	Y1.1–Y1.3	Greenhaus & Callanan (2020)
	Career Path & Promotion	Y1.4–Y1.6	Greenhaus & Callanan (2020)
	Organizational Support	Y1.7–Y1.9	Baruch (2022)
Employee Performance (Z)	Individual Performance	Z1.1–Z1.4	Aguinis (2023)
	Adaptive Performance & Commitment	Z1.5–Z1.7	Aguinis (2023)

The indicators used to measure each research variable are presented in Table 2.3.1. All indicators

were adapted from established literature and measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to ensure content validity and measurement reliability.

Methodological Justification for PLS-SEM

In addition to theoretical considerations, the selection of Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) in this study is methodologically justified by the complexity and predictive orientation of the research model. The proposed model involves multiple latent constructs and simultaneous testing of both direct and indirect (mediation) relationships, which requires an analytical technique capable of handling complex structural relationships efficiently. PLS-SEM is particularly appropriate for research that aims to predict key target constructs, such as employee performance, rather than to confirm an established theoretical model. In contrast to covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM places greater emphasis on variance explanation and prediction, making it suitable for exploratory and applied research in human resource management contexts (Hair et al., 2022).

Furthermore, PLS-SEM is well suited for survey-based studies with moderate sample sizes and does not require strict assumptions of multivariate normality. Given the sample size of this study and the use of Likert-scale questionnaire data, PLS-SEM provides a robust and reliable analytical approach. Therefore, the application of PLS-SEM in this study is both theoretically and methodologically appropriate for testing the proposed hypotheses and mediation effects.

Conceptual Framework

Based on the literature and theoretical foundations, this study proposes a conceptual framework that explains the relationships between the work environment, ambidextrous leadership, career development, and employee performance. The framework assumes that the work environment and ambidextrous leadership influence employee performance both directly and indirectly through career development. Career development is positioned as an intervening variable that strengthens and explains the mechanism through which organizational factors affect performance outcomes.

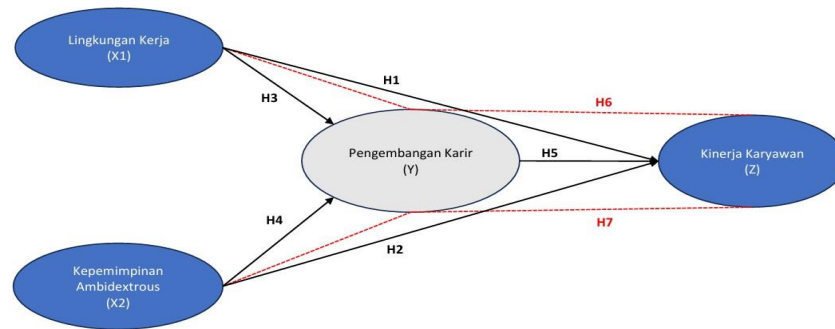


Figure Conceptual Framework of the Study

Figure illustrates the conceptual framework of this study, which explains the relationships among the work environment, ambidextrous leadership, career development, and employee performance. The framework proposes that the work environment and ambidextrous leadership influence employee performance both directly and indirectly through career development. Career development is positioned as an intervening variable that clarifies the mechanism through which organizational conditions and leadership practices affect employee performance.

Research Hypoteses

Based on the conceptual framework, the hypotheses proposed in this study are as follows:

1. H1: The work environment has a positive effect on career development.
2. H2: The work environment has a positive effect on employee performance.
3. H3: Ambidextrous leadership has a positive effect on career development.
4. H4: Ambidextrous leadership has a positive effect on employee performance.
5. H5: Career development has a positive effect on employee performance.
6. H6: Career development mediates the relationship between the work environment and employee performance.
7. H7: Career development mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee performance.

To test the proposed hypotheses, this study employed Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) to evaluate both the measurement model and the structural model. The analysis examined the significance of direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results of the hypothesis testing are presented in the following section.

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative research approach with an explanatory design to examine the causal relationships among the work environment, ambidextrous leadership, career development, and employee performance. A quantitative approach is considered appropriate because this study aims to test hypotheses and measure the magnitude of both direct and indirect effects among variables through statistical analysis.

The research was conducted at PT Valdo International, South Jakarta, a company operating in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) and human resource management sector. The focus of the study was on employees within the Human Resources Department, as this division plays a strategic role in managing employee development and performance. The population consisted of more than 600 employees, including staff, specialists, supervisors, and managerial-level employees.

The sample size of 250 respondents was determined using the Slovin formula with an error tolerance (e) of 5%, assuming relative homogeneity of the population within the Human Resources Department. This sample size also meets the minimum requirement for PLS-SEM analysis, based on the 10-times rule, which states that the minimum sample size should be at least ten times the largest number of structural paths directed at a latent construct. Therefore, the selected sample size is considered adequate to support the complexity of the proposed structural model.

Respondents were selected using a proportional random sampling technique, which provided equal opportunities for all population members to be included in the study. Although the respondents represented different job levels ranging from staff to managerial positions, they were treated as a homogeneous unit of analysis. This approach was adopted because all respondents were directly involved in human resource management processes related to career development and performance evaluation, thereby sharing similar organizational roles and perspectives relevant to the research objectives.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to the selected respondents. The questionnaire was designed to measure perceptions related to the work environment, ambidextrous leadership, career development, and employee performance. All measurement items were adapted from established literature and operationalized using a five-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

To address the potential issue of common method bias, several procedural and statistical remedies were applied. Procedurally, respondent anonymity was assured, and the questionnaire items were clearly worded to reduce ambiguity and social desirability bias.

Statistically, Harman's single-factor test was conducted, and the results indicated that no single factor accounted for the majority of variance, suggesting that common method bias was not a significant concern in this study.

The collected data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). This analytical technique was selected due to its ability to handle complex models involving multiple latent constructs and mediation effects, as well as its suitability for predictive analysis. The analysis was conducted in two main stages. First, the measurement model was evaluated to assess reliability and validity. Second, the structural model was examined to test the proposed hypotheses and evaluate the significance of direct and indirect relationships among variables.

RESULT

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to describe respondents' perceptions of the research variables. Table 4.1.1 presents the minimum values, maximum values, mean scores, and standard deviations for each construct.

Table Descriptive Statistics

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation
Work Environment (X1)	250	1	5	3.75	0.85
Ambidextrous Leadership (X2)		1	5	3.68	0.79
Career Development (Y)		1	5	3.9	0.91
Employee Performance (Z)		1	5	3.85	0.82

The results indicate that all variables have mean values above the midpoint of the five-point Likert scale, suggesting generally positive perceptions among respondents. Career development (Y) shows the highest mean value (3.90), followed by employee performance (Z) (3.85), indicating that respondents perceive career development practices and performance levels favorably. The work environment (X1) and ambidextrous leadership (X2) also demonstrate positive mean values of 3.75 and 3.68, respectively.

The standard deviation values range from 0.79 to 0.91, indicating a moderate level of variability in respondents' perceptions across all constructs. Overall, the descriptive statistics suggest that career development is perceived as the strongest organizational practice among the variables examined.

Measurement Model Evaluation

The measurement model was evaluated to assess the reliability and convergent validity of the research constructs. Reliability was examined using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability (rho_a and rho_c), while convergent validity was assessed using Average Variance Extracted (AVE).

Table Validity and Reliability Results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)	Result
Work Environment (X1)	0.922	0.926	0.934	0.587	Reliable & Valid
Ambidextrous Leadership (X2)	0.89	0.894	0.924	0.752	Reliable & Valid
Career Development (Y)	0.861	0.862	0.906	0.707	Reliable & Valid
Employee Performance (Z)	0.9	0.912	0.922	0.629	Reliable & Valid

As shown in Table 4.2.1, all constructs demonstrate strong internal consistency, with Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values exceeding the recommended threshold of 0.70. Furthermore, all AVE values are above 0.50, indicating that each construct adequately explains the variance of its indicators.

These results confirm that the measurement instruments used in this study are reliable and valid, and therefore suitable for further structural model analysis.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model was analyzed to examine the relationships among variables and to test the proposed hypotheses. Table 4.3.1 presents the path coefficients, t-values, and p-values for each hypothesis.

Table Structural Model Results

Hypothesis	Path Relationship	β	t-value	p-value	Result
H1	Work Environment → Career Development	0.395	4.188	0.000	Supported
H2	Work Environment → Employee Performance	0.377	4.945	0.000	Supported
H3	Ambidextrous Leadership → Career Development	0.355	3.64	0.000	Supported
H4	Ambidextrous Leadership → Employee Performance	-0.027	0.331	0.741	Not Supported
H5	Career Development → Employee Performance	0.502	6.553	0.000	Supported
H6	Work Environment → Career Development → Employee Performance	0.198	3.404	0.001	Partial Mediation
H7	Ambidextrous Leadership → Career Development → Employee Performance	0.178	3.261	0.001	Full Mediation

The results show that the work environment has a significant positive effect on both career development and employee performance, supporting Hypotheses H1 and H2. Ambidextrous leadership has a significant positive effect on career development (H3 supported), but does not have a direct effect on employee performance (H4 not supported).

Career development demonstrates the strongest positive effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.502$, $p < 0.001$), indicating its central role in enhancing employee outcomes. Mediation analysis further reveals that career development partially mediates the relationship between the work environment and employee performance, and fully mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee performance.

These findings highlight the strategic importance of career development as both a direct predictor and a key mediating mechanism in improving employee performance.

DISCUSSION

This study aims to examine the influence of the work environment and ambidextrous leadership on employee performance, with career development positioned as an intervening variable. The discussion is structured according to the sequence of the proposed hypotheses and the empirical results presented in the previous section, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of career development.

This study aims to examine the influence of the work environment and ambidextrous leadership on employee performance, with career development positioned as an intervening variable. The discussion is structured according to the sequence of the proposed hypotheses and the empirical results presented in the previous section, with particular emphasis on the mediating role of career development.

The findings indicate that the work environment has a positive and significant effect on career development. A supportive work environment—characterized by adequate physical facilities, positive social interactions, leadership support, and psychological comfort—creates conditions that encourage employee learning and career growth. This result is consistent with the Job Demands–Resources (JD-R) Model, which emphasizes that job resources enhance employee motivation and development (Bakker & Demerouti, 2020). Previous empirical studies also support this finding, showing that a positive work environment significantly contributes to employee engagement, learning opportunities, and career advancement in service-based organizations (Junengsih, 2022; Junengsih, 2023).

The results further show that the work environment directly influences employee performance. Employees who perceive their work environment as supportive and comfortable tend to demonstrate higher productivity, better service quality, and stronger work commitment. This finding aligns with previous research indicating that environmental factors play a critical role in improving employee performance, particularly in organizations operating in dynamic and target-driven sectors such as Business Process Outsourcing (Junengsih & Dina, 2024). In BPO settings, where performance pressure and service-level agreements are prominent, a conducive work environment functions not only as a developmental resource but also as a direct enabler of performance.

Regarding leadership, the study reveals that ambidextrous leadership has a significant positive effect on career development but does not directly affect employee performance. This finding supports the argument that leadership practices alone may not automatically translate into improved performance unless they are supported by appropriate organizational mechanisms. Previous studies on ambidextrous leadership emphasize that leaders who balance exploration and exploitation contribute primarily to employee learning, adaptability, and capability development rather than immediate performance outcomes (Rosing et al., 2011). More recent empirical evidence also suggests that ambidextrous leadership influences performance indirectly through developmental mechanisms such as career development (Zhao & Zhang, 2024).

Career development emerges as the strongest predictor of employee performance in this study. Employees who experience clear career paths, fair promotion systems, continuous

training, and organizational support are more likely to demonstrate higher performance levels. This finding is consistent with career development theory, which posits that structured career development enhances employee competence, motivation, and long-term commitment, ultimately leading to improved performance outcomes (Greenhaus & Callanan, 2020; Baruch, 2022).

The mediation analysis provides deeper insight into the underlying mechanisms linking organizational factors to performance. The results indicate that career development partially mediates the relationship between the work environment and employee performance, suggesting that a supportive environment enhances performance both directly and indirectly by enabling developmental opportunities. More importantly, career development fully mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee performance. This finding reinforces previous empirical studies that highlight career development as a critical mechanism through which leadership practices are translated into performance outcomes (Zhao & Zhang, 2024).

In the context of PT Valdo International, this mediation mechanism can be observed in managerial practices where BPO supervisors encourage innovation and efficiency while simultaneously supporting employee career growth through training programs, performance feedback, and promotion pathways. Managers who promote innovative problem-solving while maintaining operational discipline can enhance employee performance when these leadership behaviors are accompanied by structured career development initiatives. Without such mechanisms, leadership efforts may fail to translate into measurable performance improvements. Overall, the findings contribute to the human resource management literature by highlighting career development as a strategic mechanism that connects the work environment and ambidextrous leadership to employee performance. Practically, the results suggest that organizations—particularly in the BPO sector—should integrate leadership practices and environmental improvements with systematic career development programs to achieve sustainable performance enhancement.

CONCLUSION

This study examined the influence of the work environment and ambidextrous leadership on employee performance, with career development serving as an intervening variable, within the context of PT Valdo International, South Jakarta. Based on the empirical findings, the study confirms that a supportive and conducive work environment plays a significant role in enhancing both career development and employee performance. A positive work environment not only

directly improves performance outcomes but also facilitates employee readiness for career growth through learning opportunities and organizational support.

The results further demonstrate that ambidextrous leadership significantly influences career development, but does not directly affect employee performance. This finding suggests that leadership practices must be translated into concrete career development actions to generate performance improvements. In the BPO context, where employees often consist of both contract-based and permanent staff, structured career development initiatives—such as technical skill training, performance-based promotion pathways, and competency certification—become critical in ensuring that leadership efforts lead to sustainable performance outcomes.

Career development is identified as the most influential factor affecting employee performance. Employees who receive clear career pathways, continuous technical and behavioral skill development, and fair promotion systems are more likely to demonstrate higher levels of performance. In BPO organizations, technical competencies—such as system proficiency, service handling skills, and process efficiency—play a vital role in determining individual performance, making career development a strategic investment for both employee groups.

Moreover, the mediation analysis confirms that career development partially mediates the relationship between the work environment and employee performance, and fully mediates the relationship between ambidextrous leadership and employee performance. These findings underscore the strategic importance of career development as a key mechanism that connects organizational conditions and leadership practices to performance outcomes.

From a leadership perspective, the findings highlight the need for ambidextrous leaders to adopt concrete actions, including transparent communication regarding career opportunities, empowerment of teams through skill-based task allocation, and active involvement in employee development planning. By balancing innovation-oriented behaviors with efficiency-focused supervision, leaders can create an environment in which career development initiatives effectively translate into improved employee performance.

Overall, this study contributes to the human resource management literature by providing empirical evidence on the integrative role of career development in enhancing employee performance. Practically, the findings offer valuable insights for organizations—particularly in the Business Process Outsourcing (BPO) sector—to focus on strengthening work environments, implementing balanced and empowering leadership practices, and institutionalizing structured career development systems to achieve sustainable performance improvement.

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