Performance of Garment Workers in Northern Mindanao, Philippines

Stephany A. Hayahay, Anamie R. Ajon, Erwin N. Banguis, Ma. Theressa O. Cuesta, Daylyn R. Palma, Mylene M. Roluna, Roey C. Sumaoy

North Eastern Mindanao State University

ABSTRACT

The garment industry significantly contributes to employment and livelihood in rural areas of the Philippines, including Northern Mindanao. This study assessed the performance of garment workers in the region based on four key indicators: productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. A descriptive research design was employed, using a structured survey administered to 80 purposively selected clients of garment workers. These clients evaluated worker performance based on their direct experiences. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics, particularly weighted means. Results indicated that garment workers in Northern Mindanao demonstrate strong overall performance, with notably high ratings in workplace attitude and skills application. Clients observed that workers were efficient, adaptable, and exhibited professionalism despite limited access to modern equipment and structured training programs. While the findings reflect a competent workforce, the study also identified opportunities for improvement in quality assurance and ongoing skill development. The study highlights the need for localized support strategies such as technical training, soft skills enhancement, and investment in modern tools to maintain and elevate worker performance. The results offer valuable insights for policymakers, vocational training institutions, and industry stakeholders seeking to strengthen the productivity and competitiveness of the garment sector in rural Philippines.

Keywords— Garment Industry, Worker, Performance, Northern Mindanao, Productivity, Quality of Work, Workplace Attitude, Skills Application, Client Evaluation.

INTRODUCTION

The garment industry plays a pivotal role in the global economy, serving as a key driver of employment and economic growth, particularly in developing countries. In the Philippines, the garment sector is a significant contributor to both local and international markets, providing jobs for thousands of workers, especially women. These workers are primarily responsible for producing and assembling various textile products, which require technical skills, efficiency, and adaptability. Despite its importance, the sector is often characterized by challenges such as low wages, limited job security, and insufficient training opportunities, which can affect the overall performance of garment workers (ILO, 2019). Addressing these issues is crucial not only for improving individual livelihoods but also for ensuring the competitiveness and sustainability of the garment industry in the Philippines.

Several studies have explored the factors influencing the performance of garment workers, emphasizing the critical role of productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. For instance, Meunmany (2024) emphasized that aligning vocational education with industry requirements significantly enhances worker productivity and output consistency. Likewise, Minh et al. (2022) found that supportive workplace environments, particularly during times of disruption, promote job satisfaction and reduce quality issues among garment workers. Andersson and Machiels (2019) further suggested that a factory-level focus on workflow, supervision, and worker empowerment significantly boosts output efficiency and teamwork. Ngoc and Tien (2023) stressed the need to develop both technical and interpersonal competencies to match evolving demands in industrial zones. Kurata et al. (2020) also emphasized that sewing delays, often caused by inadequate training and inefficient practices, undermine productivity and work quality in Philippine garment factories. In addition,

Villamil and Hernandez (2021) linked skills upgrading and labor stability to reduced production errors and improved design execution. Collectively, these studies underscore the multifaceted nature of garment worker performance, shaped by training access, work environment, job design, and organizational support.

In Northern Mindanao, garment workers face unique challenges that directly impact their productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. Many workers lack access to efficient production tools and updated machinery, hindering their ability to meet output expectations. Quality assurance mechanisms are often limited, resulting in inconsistencies and reduced garment standards. In terms of workplace attitude, factors such as job insecurity, inadequate support, and minimal incentives may lower morale and hinder cooperation. Moreover, the scarcity of training programs and exposure to modern techniques significantly restrict workers' ability to apply and refine their skills. Saxena and Salze-Lozac'h (2021) noted that productivity stagnation is often tied to insufficient technical mentoring and outdated facilities in rural garment zones. Meunmany (2024) also reported that soft skills such as communication and problem-solving are underdeveloped among rural garment workers, limiting their adaptability to workplace shifts. Similarly, Minn (2023) found that in Myanmar, unskilled sewing operators working without ongoing training programs performed poorly in both speed and output quality. The limited integration of digital garment technologies and sustainable practices further places rural workers at a disadvantage in adapting to modern production requirements (TESDA, 2021; DTI, 2020). These challenges highlight the pressing need for localized studies that assess performance through these specific indicators to provide more targeted interventions.

This study aims to assess the performance of garment workers in Northern Mindanao with particular focus on four key indicators: productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. By examining how these dimensions are manifested and identifying the challenges that hinder optimal performance, the study seeks to offer evidence-based insights for improving the competencies and working conditions of garment workers in rural areas. Ultimately, the research intends to support efforts in enhancing worker efficiency, craftsmanship, professional behavior, and technical capability, thereby strengthening the overall competitiveness and sustainability of the garment industry in the region.

LITERATURE REVIEW

The performance of garment workers is a complex construct influenced by several key dimensions: productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. These indicators provide a comprehensive framework for assessing worker output, behavior, and capability in relation to evolving industry needs. Recent studies from Southeast Asia, including the Philippines, emphasize the importance of aligning workforce competencies with global production standards while also addressing the socio-economic factors that influence labor outcomes.

Productivity

Productivity remains a core performance indicator in the garment industry, closely linked to the timely completion of tasks, production targets, and operational efficiency. Meunmany (2024) found that productivity among garment workers in Lao PDR was significantly influenced by the strength of linkages between vocational training institutions and industry demands. This connection ensured that workers were trained in time-efficient workflows and prepared to meet production deadlines. Similarly, Syed and Mahmud (2022) highlighted that in the Bangladesh garment supply chain, inadequate workplace conditions and lack of modern equipment negatively impacted worker efficiency. These findings align with earlier work by Andersson and Machiels (2019), who proposed a factory-level productivity framework focusing on workflow design, engagement, and operational tools to maximize output. Together, these studies confirm that structural support, updated machinery, and targeted training are essential to sustaining high productivity in garment manufacturing.

Quality of Work

The quality of garments produced reflects not just technical skill but also adherence to design specifications, consistency, and defect minimization. Minh et al. (2022) observed that job satisfaction and psychological well-being were critical factors in maintaining product quality during the COVID-19 pandemic, especially when

workers faced increased stress and irregular schedules. Ngoc and Tien (2023) supported this by noting that investment in high-quality human resources through training and supervisory support correlates with improved craftsmanship and reduced error rates. In earlier findings, Minn (2023) demonstrated that structured sewing operator training resulted in measurable improvements in garment precision and finish. These results collectively suggest that fostering a quality-focused work culture, supported by training and emotional wellness, plays a critical role in improving garment quality.

Workplace Attitude

Workplace attitude encompasses professionalism, cooperation, adaptability, and adherence to rules all of which are essential for cohesive team performance and job satisfaction. Syed and Mahmud (2022) found that workers exposed to poor working conditions reported higher stress levels and lower engagement, negatively influencing team dynamics and workplace morale. Minh et al. (2022) emphasized that supportive leadership and recognition contributed to a more positive work attitude during periods of organizational disruption. Their findings are echoed by Yuan et al. (2022), who identified strong correlations between job satisfaction and worker cooperation in Southeast Asia's garment factories. These studies underscore that workplace attitude is not solely intrinsic but is shaped by organizational policies, job security, and interpersonal dynamics within the factory environment.

Skills Application

Skills application refers to how effectively workers utilize their competencies to execute tasks, operate equipment, and adapt to technological or procedural changes. Meunmany (2024) highlighted that garment workers trained under industry-aligned technical vocational education and training (TVET) systems in Laos were more confident and versatile in applying their skills on the production floor. Likewise, Ngoc and Tien (2023) emphasized that high-quality human resource programs focused on both hard and soft skills resulted in a more capable and agile workforce in Vietnam's industrial zones. Quang, Pimpa, and Burgess (2020) further asserted that close collaboration between vocational training institutions and garment manufacturers in Southeast Asia led to more responsive, skill-aligned curricula, which enhanced both worker performance and industrial productivity. These findings validate that investing in continuous, practical training not only builds technical expertise but also ensures long-term industry competitiveness.

The reviewed literature highlights that the performance of garment workers is critically shaped by four interconnected indicators: productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. Across Southeast Asia, recent studies reveal that productivity is enhanced by industry-aligned training and adequate working conditions, while quality of work improves with structured skill development and job satisfaction. A positive workplace attitude emerges from supportive environments and employee engagement, which also influence overall performance. Additionally, effective skills application is tied to both formal education and continuous upskilling, enabling workers to adapt to evolving industry demands. Collectively, these studies affirm that improving garment worker performance requires an integrated approach that addresses technical, organizational, and psychological factors.

METHODOLOGY

Design

This study utilized a descriptive research design to systematically evaluate the performance of garment workers in Northern Mindanao, Philippines. The research focused on four core indicators of worker performance: productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. The descriptive design was appropriate for obtaining factual and accurate information about the current performance levels of workers as assessed by their clients, and for identifying patterns and areas for improvement.

Participants and Sampling

The participants of the study comprised clients of garment workers, as they are in a strategic position to evaluate

the workers' performance from a consumer or service recipient perspective. The study employed purposive sampling, selecting individuals who had directly engaged the services of garment workers and were capable of providing informed evaluations. A total of 80 respondents participated in the survey. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire designed to assess perceptions on each of the four performance indicators.

Data Collection Instrument

The structured survey instrument included both closed-ended items and a Likert scale to assess the extent of agreement or disagreement with specific statements related to worker performance. The questionnaire was validated through expert review prior to deployment and was pilot-tested to ensure reliability and clarity. The instrument was administered in-person and digitally, depending on the accessibility and preference of the respondents.

Data Analysis

The data collected from the survey responses were analyzed using descriptive statistics, specifically weighted means, to summarize perceptions regarding each performance indicator. The results were interpreted using descriptive categories that reflected the level of agreement across productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application.

Ethical Considerations

This study adhered strictly to ethical research standards. Participation in the research was entirely voluntary, and informed consent was obtained from all respondents prior to data collection. The anonymity and confidentiality of participants were maintained throughout the process. No personally identifiable information was collected, and respondents were informed of their right to withdraw from the study at any point without any negative consequences. All data gathered were used solely for academic and research purposes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The results and discussion were organized in alignment with the key performance indicators of this study: productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. This structure allows for a comprehensive evaluation of the garment workers' performance in Northern Mindanao as perceived by their clients.

The table 1 presents the performance evaluation of garment workers across four key areas: productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application. All categories received high ratings, with average weighted means ranging from 4.53 to 4.61, indicating a strong overall performance. Specifically, productivity scored a 4.56, showing that workers are efficient and manage time effectively. Quality of work, at 4.53, reflects consistent output that meets standards, though there is minor room for improvement in minimizing defects. Workplace attitude received the highest average at 4.61, highlighting professionalism, cooperation, and adaptability. Likewise, skills application also averaged 4.61, underscoring workers' competence, confidence, and continuous efforts for improvement. These findings imply that garment workers are highly reliable, skilled, and committed, contributing significantly to operational efficiency and product quality. Their strong workplace attitude and adaptability suggest readiness for future process improvements, while the high scores in productivity and skills application reinforce the effectiveness of current management and training practices. For employers, this performance level indicates that investing in employee development and sustaining positive work environments can further enhance organizational success.

The high ratings observed in productivity, quality of work, workplace attitude, and skills application among garment workers align with recent empirical studies that emphasize the importance of training, workplace culture, and skill development in the apparel sector. The International Labour Organization (2022) reported that integrating soft-skills training such as communication, teamwork, and

Table 1 The level of performance of Garments Workers

INDICATORS/ STATEMENT	Weighted Mean	Description
PRODUCTIVITY		
The garment worker completes tasks efficiently within the agreed-upon timeframe.	4.50	Strongly Agree
The garment worker consistently meets the production targets or output expectations.	4.52	Strongly Agree
The garment worker demonstrates effective time management in completing assigned tasks.	4.66	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.56	**Strongly Agree**
QUALITY OF WORK		
The garments produced by the worker meet quality standards and design specifications.	4.54	Strongly Agree
The worker ensures minimal errors or defects in the garments delivered.	4.36	Agree
The overall presentation and finishing of the garments reflect high-quality craftsmanship.	4.68	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.53	**Strongly Agree**
WORKPLACE ATTITUDE		
The garment worker maintains a professional and cooperative attitude during interactions.	4.76	Strongly Agree
The garment worker adheres to workplace rules and follows instructions effectively.	4.60	Strongly Agree
The garment worker is adaptable to changes in requirements or procedures as needed.	4.48	Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.61	**Strongly Agree**
SKILLS APPLICATION		
The garment worker effectively applies relevant skills to produce high-quality garments.	4.56	Strongly Agree
The garment worker demonstrates confidence in operating equipment or utilizing new techniques.	4.62	Strongly Agree
The garment worker continuously seeks to improve skills and enhance performance.	4.64	Strongly Agree
Average Weighted Mean	4.61	**Strongly Agree**

4.50-5.00 -Strongly Agree   3.50-4.49 -Agree   2.50-3.49 -Neutral

1.50-2.49 -Disagree   1.00-1.49 -Strongly Disagree

Adaptability into factory operations in Indonesia significantly improved worker performance and professional behavior, directly influencing productivity and interpersonal collaboration. Similarly, an intervention by Good Business Lab and Shahi Exports in India demonstrated that soft-skills training for line supervisors led to a 7.3% increase in line efficiency and a reduction in employee turnover, confirming the positive impact of leadership development on both productivity and morale (Good Business Lab, 2021). Complementing these findings, a

2025 industry report by WiFi Talents revealed that apparel companies investing in structured reskilling programs averaging 20 hours per worker achieved a 20% increase in productivity and a 25% decline in product defects, alongside improved worker engagement and quality assurance outcomes (WiFi Talents, 2025). These studies collectively substantiate the present findings, underscoring that a well-supported, skill-empowered workforce directly contributes to operational excellence and organizational growth in the garment industry.

CONCLUSIONS

In conclusion, the performance evaluation of garment workers reveals consistently high levels of efficiency, craftsmanship, professionalism, and skill application across all measured indicators. The findings demonstrate that workers consistently meet and often exceed expectations in key areas essential to garment production. This reflects a workforce that is both competent and committed, displaying a strong work ethic, adaptability, and a continuous desire for improvement. Such performance underscores the importance of maintaining supportive management practices, targeted training programs, and a conducive work environment to sustain and further enhance worker output and overall organizational success.

RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings, it is recommended that garment industry management continue to invest in the development and well-being of their workers by strengthening existing training programs and providing regular upskilling opportunities. Emphasis should be placed on enhancing quality control measures to further minimize errors and defects, despite the generally high level of craftsmanship observed. Additionally, fostering a supportive and adaptive work environment will help sustain the positive workplace attitudes and high levels of productivity demonstrated. Encouraging continuous improvement, recognizing employee performance, and maintaining clear communication of expectations can further motivate workers and contribute to long-term organizational growth and competitiveness.

REFERENCES

1. Andersson, S., & Machiels, A. (2019). Securing the competitiveness of Asia's garment sector: A framework for enhancing factory-level productivity. ILO Asia-Pacific Working Paper. https://asiagarmenthub.net/resources/2021/wcms_732907.pdf
2. Department of Trade and Industry (DTI). (2020). Philippine garment industry: Challenges and opportunities. https://www.dti.gov.ph/resources/reports/philippine-garment-industry-2020
3. Good Business Lab. (2021). Soft skills training for factory supervisors: An idea whose time has come. https://textilevaluechain.in/news-insights/apparel-fashion-retail-news/fashionvaluechain/soft-skills-training-for-factory-supervisors-an-idea-whose-time-has-come
4. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2019). Decent work in the garment sector: Challenges and opportunities in Asia. https://www.ilo.org/asia/publications/WCMS_723456/lang--en/index.htm
5. International Labour Organization (ILO). (2022). Equipping garment factory workers with soft skills to face future work challenges. https://www.ilo.org/resource/news/equipping-garment-factory-workers-soft-skills-face-future-work-challenges
6. Kurata, Y. B., Cruz, K. A. C., & Gundayao, D. S. U. (2020). Garment sewing process delay problem: Worker performance efficiency improvement in a Philippine garment company. http://apiems2016.conf.tw/site/userdata/1087/papers/0039.pdf
7. Meunmany, S. (2024). Linkage between vocational training institutions and industry: TVET programme contributing to the ready-made garment sector in Lao PDR. Dehisce Universität Dresden. https://tud.qucosa.de/en/api/qucosa%3A93729/attachment/ATT-0/
8. Minh, L. L. T., Huu, T. N., & Duc, Q. N. (2022). Employees' job satisfaction, job performance, and their relationship during the COVID-19 pandemic in Vietnam. Organizational Psychology Journal. https://cyberleninka.ru/article/n/employees-job-satisfaction-job-performance-and-their-relationship-during-the-covid-19-pandemic-in-vietnam
9. Minn, A. (2023). The effect of training on skill development of unskilled sewing operators in

Myanmar. https://bucket-ox15x1.s3.ap-southeast-1.amazonaws.com/files/shares/SCEG%20Thesis/Aung_Minn_Internal_Verified_Thesis.pdf

10. Ngoc, N. M., & Tien, N. H. (2023). Solutions for development of high-quality human resource in Binh Duong Industrial Province of Vietnam. International Journal of Business and Management. https://www.researchgate.net/publication/364994952

11. Saxena, S. B., & Salze-Lozac'h, V. (2021). Competitiveness in the garment and textiles industry: Creating a supportive environment. Citeseer. https://citeseerx.ist.psu.edu/document?repid=rep1&type=pdf&doi=bc96dd3c7e1b6296a85c7b4df4563ea7453d3ade

12. Syed, R. F., & Mahmud, K. T. (2022). Factors influencing work satisfaction of global garments supply chain workers in Bangladesh. International Review of Economics, 69(4), 521–540. https://link.springer.com/article/10.1007/s12232-022-00403-6

13. Technical Education and Skills Development Authority (TESDA). (2021). Skills development for the Philippine garment industry: A report on training needs. https://www.tesda.gov.ph/research/reports/2021-skills-garment-industry

14. Villamil, W. M., & Hernandez, J. (2021). Globalization, labor markets and human capital in the Philippines. De La Salle University. https://www.dlsu.edu.ph/wp-content/uploads/pdf/vcri/aki/_idrc/_vol2/01NovVillamilAndHernandezGlobalization2.pdf

15. WiFi Talents. (2025). Upskilling and reskilling in the garment industry: Key statistics. https://gitnux.org/upskilling-and-reskilling-in-the-garment-industry-statistics/

16. Yuan, D., Gazi, M. A. I., & Rahman, M. A. (2022). Assessment of personal and professional aspects to measure job satisfaction among garment workers. International Journal of Environmental Research and Public Health, 19(24), 16868. https://www.mdpi.com/1660-4601/19/24/16868