

The Role of Competency in Mediating the Effect of Workload on Work Performance Among Executive Employees PTPN IV Regional Office II Medan

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the role of competence in mediating the effect of workload on work performance among managerial employees at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan. The background of this study is based on the fact that managerial performance greatly determines the operational effectiveness and achievement of the company's strategic targets, while high workloads can reduce work performance if not balanced with adequate competence. The type of research used is quantitative with a survey approach. The research population consisted of all 123 managerial employees at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan, who were used as the sample. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method to test the structural and mediation models. The research variables included workload as the independent variable, competency as the mediating variable, and work performance as the dependent variable. The results showed that workload had a negative and significant effect on work performance ($\beta = -0.445$; $t = 6.791$; $p < 0.05$) and competency ($\beta = -0.618$; $t = 12.301$; $p < 0.05$). Competence has a positive and significant effect on work performance ($\beta = 0.483$; $t = 7.545$; $p < 0.05$). In addition, competence was found to significantly mediate the effect of workload on work performance ($\beta = -0.298$; $t = 6.968$; $p < 0.05$). These results indicate that leaders with high competence are able to maintain and improve work performance even when faced with high workloads. This study suggests that companies should improve leadership competency development through technical and managerial training, establish clear work quality standards, and adjust task complexity to individual abilities. Improving competency and proper workload management are expected to improve leadership performance, which in turn contributes to the achievement of the company's strategic objectives.

Keywords: Workload, Competence, Work Performance

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Introduction

In an era of increasingly fierce business and industrial competition, employee productivity and performance have become key factors in organizational success. This is especially true for large companies such as PTPN IV, which is engaged in the plantation and agroindustry sectors, where the achievement of organizational goals is highly dependent on the quality of employee performance, particularly those who occupy leadership positions in regional offices. Leadership performance not only impacts daily operational effectiveness but also determines the achievement of the company's strategic targets (Robbins & Judge, 2023).

One factor that often affects employee performance is workload. A high workload can cause stress, fatigue, and reduce work effectiveness if it is not balanced with adequate abilities and resources (Green, 2020). However, in the context of modern human resource management, workload does not always have a negative impact. The impact of workload on performance can be minimized or even turned into positive motivation if employees have adequate competencies, both in terms of knowledge, skills, and managerial abilities (Noe, Hollenbeck, Gerhart, & Wright, 2019).

Competence, defined as an individual's ability to perform tasks effectively, is believed to mediate the relationship between workload and work performance (Spencer & Spencer, 2019). A competent leader is able to set priorities, make strategic decisions, and manage teams efficiently even when facing high work pressure. Thus, competence is not only an individual asset, but also a strategic factor for organizations in maintaining and improving work performance amid increasing work demands (Mathis & Jackson, 2022).

Particularly at the PTPN IV Regional II Medan Office, leaders face various operational and managerial challenges, including human resource management, production, and company asset maintenance. Therefore, understanding how competence can mediate the influence of workload on leadership performance is very important. This study is expected to contribute to more effective human resource development strategies, training planning, and managerial policies within PTPN IV (Dessler, 2021).

With this background, this study aims to analyze the role of competencies in mediating the influence of workload on the work performance of management employees at the PTPN IV Regional II Medan Office, so that the results can provide recommendations for improving management performance and overall organizational success.

Literature Review Work Performance

According to Mangkunegara (2021), work performance is the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them. Work performance reflects the level of success of an employee in completing the work assigned to them, which is measured based on the quality of work output, quantity of work output, timeliness, and conformity with the standards set by the organization.

Work Performance Indicators

Work Performance Indicators according to Mangkunegara (2021):

- 1) Work Quality
The level of accuracy, neatness, and conformity of work results with the standards set by the organization.
- 2) Work Quantity
The amount of work or output that employees are able to complete within a certain period of time.
- 3) Task Execution
The ability of employees to perform work in accordance with procedures, responsibilities, and work instructions provided.

- 4) Responsibility
Employees' awareness and willingness to take on work risks and complete tasks independently and reliably.

Competency Definition of Competency

Sutrisno (2020) defines competency as the abilities and characteristics of an individual that are used to perform work or tasks in a particular field.

Competency Indicators

According to Sutrisno (2020), competency indicators are:

- 1) Knowledge
This refers to an understanding of the concepts, principles, and procedures required to perform tasks and knowledge related to the job or field being pursued.
- 2) Skills
The ability to apply knowledge practically in daily work and the skill to use tools or technology relevant to the job.
- 3) Attitude
Commitment to work and the organization, willingness to work hard and take responsibility for work results, and ability to work in a team and communicate effectively.
- 4) Behavior
Actions that demonstrate the ability to adapt to various situations, the ability to manage conflicts and interact effectively with colleagues, and the ability to work under pressure and complete tasks on time.
- 5) Social and Emotional Skills
The ability to interact with others and maintain good interpersonal relationships, and the ability to manage emotions in challenging situations.

Workload

According to Tarwaka (2020), workload is the number of activities or job demands that must be completed by workers within a certain period of time, both physical and mental, in accordance with their work capacity.

Workload Indicators

Workload Indicators according to Tarwaka (2020)

- 1) Physical Workload
The amount of physical activity that employees must perform in carrying out their work, such as strength, work position, and physical fatigue.
- 2) Mental Workload
The level of cognitive demands in the job, including concentration, accuracy, decisionmaking, and psychological pressure.
- 3) Working Time
The alignment between available time and the volume and complexity of tasks that must be completed.
- 4) Level of Job Difficulty
The complexity of tasks, responsibilities, and risks faced by employees in their work.

Conceptual Framework

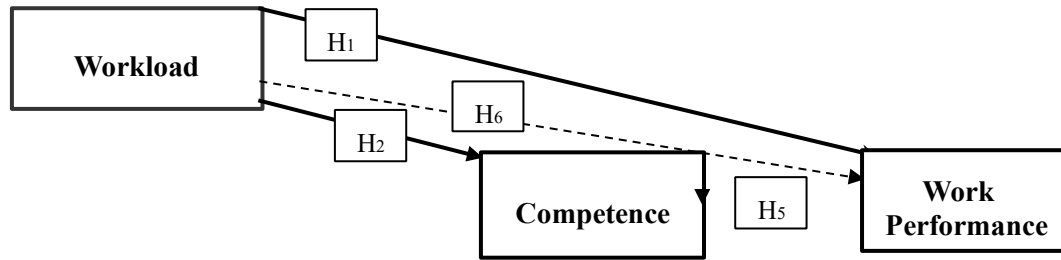


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Research Hypothesis

- H₁ Workload has a negative and significant effect on the work performance of employees in leadership positions at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
- H₂ Workload has a negative and significant effect on the competence of managerial employees at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
- H₃ : Competence has a positive and significant effect on the work performance of employees in leadership positions at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
- H₄ : Workload has a negative and significant effect on work performance through competency among managerial staff at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.

Research Methodology Type of Research

The type of research used by the researcher is quantitative research. According to this type of quantitative research, it is conducted to create a study aimed at adjusting a study and analyzing job grading and workload on work performance with competency as a mediating variable among managerial employees at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.

Research Location and Time

The research location was at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan, located at Jalan Letjen Suprpto No. 2, Medan, North Sumatra. The research was conducted over a period of 3 months, from October to December 2025.

Population and Sample

Sugiyono (2022) defines population as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then conclusions are drawn. The population and sample in this study were all 123 management employees of the PTPN IV Regional II Medan Regional Office. Because the population was not too large, the entire population was used as the sample.

Research Data Sources

The data source used in this study is primary data.

Results

Outer Model Analysis

Outer Model Analysis using the *PLS Algorithm* produced the following results: **Validity Test**

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

	Competence	Employee Performance	Workload
X2.1			0.870

X2.2			0.830
X2.3			0.914
X2.4			0.898
	Competence	Employee Performance	Workload
X2.5			0.847
Y.1		0.754	
Y.2		0.903	
Y.3		0.789	
Y.4		0.808	
Y.5		0.856	
Y.6		0.863	
Z.1	0.831		
Z.2	0.713		
Z.3	0.812		
Z.4	0.823		
Z.5	0.891		
Z.6	0.764		

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Based on the values in Table 1 above, which show the results of outer model testing through loading factor/outer loadings values, all indicators in each variable have a loading value ≥ 0.70 . This indicates that each indicator is measured validly and strongly. Therefore, it can be concluded that all items in the questionnaire have met the validity criteria, as shown in the following figure.

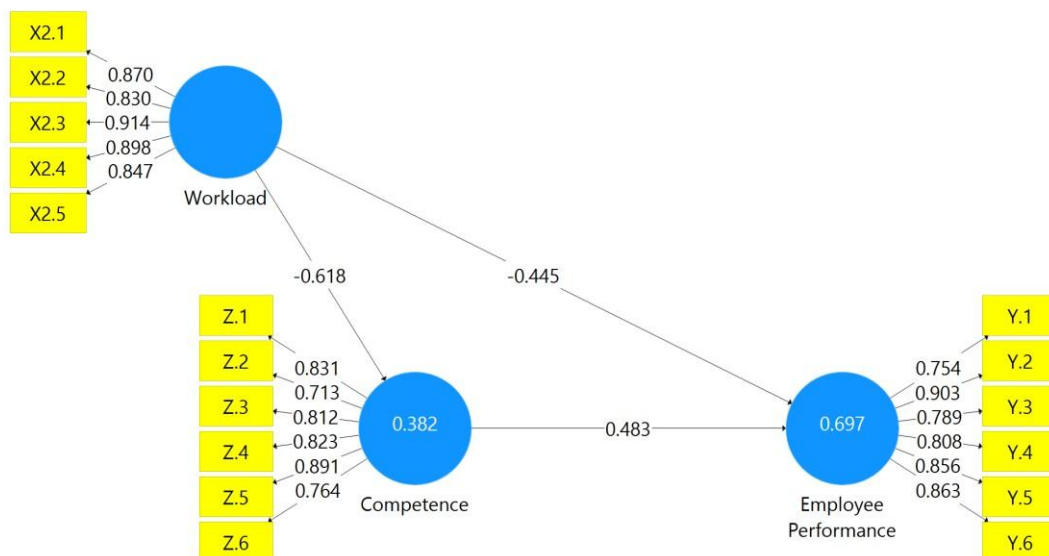


Figure 2. Outer Loading

Reliability Test**Table 2.** Construct Reliability and Validity Test

	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Competence	0.892	0.907	0.918	0.652
Employee Performance	0.909	0.914	0.930	0.689
Workload	0.921	0.924	0.941	0.761

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

From Table 2 above, the reliability test results show that the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values for all constructs are above 0.70. This indicates that all indicators have high internal consistency and are reliable in measuring their respective constructs. Thus, the research instrument is declared reliable and suitable for use in structural model testing.

Coefficient of Determination (R^2)

In assessing the model with PLS, we begin by looking at the R-square for each dependent latent variable. The table below shows the Rsquare estimation results using SmartPLS. **Table 3.** R Square Results

	R Square	Adjusted R-Square
Competence	0.382	0.375
Employee Performance	0.697	0.691

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 3 shows the R square values for both dependent variables. For the competency variable, the R square value is 0.382, meaning that the influence of workload is 0.382 or 38.2%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model. The R-squared value for work performance is 0.697, meaning that workload and competency account for 0.697 or 69.7%, with the remainder attributable to other variables outside the model.

Structural Model Testing (Inner Model) Hypothesis Testing Direct Influence Between Variables

The direct effect between variables can be seen in the *path coefficients*. The data analysis results show the direct effect values in the following table.

Table 4. Path Coefficients (Direct Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Workload -> Employee Performance	-0.445	6.791	0.000	Accepted
Workload -> Competence	-0.618	12,301	0	Accepted
Competence -> Employee Performance	0.483	7,545	0	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS Output, 2025

Table 4 shows the following direct effect values:

1. Workload has a negative and significant effect on work performance with a t-statistic value of 6.791 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that workload has a real effect on work performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, which found that workload has a positive and significant effect on work performance (Mezaluna et al., 2024).
2. Workload has a negative and significant effect on competence with a t-statistic value of 12.301 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that workload has a significant effect on competence because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that workload has a positive and significant effect on competence (Robiah et al., 2025).
3. Competence has a positive and significant effect on work performance with a t-statistic value of 7.545 above 1.96 and a significance of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that competence has a significant effect on work performance because the significance value is below 0.05. The results of this study are in line with previous studies, namely that competence has a positive and significant effect on work performance (Basa & Indrawan, 2023; Purwaningsih et al., 2025).

Indirect Influence Between Variables

The indirect effect between variables can be seen in the *specific indirect effects* values. The data analysis results show the indirect effect values in Table 5 below. **Table 5.** Specific Indirect Effects (Indirect Effects)

	Original Sample	T Statistics	P Values	Conclusion
Workload -> Competence -> Employee Performance	-0.298	6.968	0.000	Accepted

Source: Smart PLS, 2025

Table 5 shows the indirect effect between variables, namely: workload has a negative and significant effect on work performance through competence with a t-statistic value of 6.968 above 1.96 and a significance value of 0.000 below 0.05, meaning that competence acts as an intervening variable between workload and work performance.

Conclusion

1. Workload has a negative and significant effect on work performance among managerial staff at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
2. Workload has a negative and significant effect on competency among managerial staff at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
3. Competence has a positive and significant effect on work performance among managerial employees at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
4. Workload has a negative and significant effect on job performance through competency among managerial staff at the Regional Office of PTPN IV Regional II Medan.

Recommendations

1. The lowest performance rating is "My work performance meets the quality standards set by the company." Therefore, the recommendation is that the company should clarify and standardize work quality indicators for each leadership position so that employees have a clear reference for expected work performance. These quality standards need to be documented in SOPs, Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), and performance evaluation

guidelines, and communicated consistently to all managers. In addition, the company needs to improve the competency development of managerial employees through technical, managerial, and decision-making training, so that employee capabilities are in line with the demands of work quality. Performance evaluations accompanied by periodic feedback are also important so that leaders know which aspects of their work need improvement to meet company quality standards. This effort is expected to improve the alignment of work results with quality standards, which will ultimately have a positive impact on the work performance of PTPN IV Regional II Medan leadership.

2. The competency with the lowest score was "I have the managerial and technical skills required to perform my job." The company is advised to improve the development of managerial competencies in a structured and sustainable manner, particularly in terms of managerial and technical skills relevant to job requirements. Management needs to conduct competency mapping to identify the gap between the competencies possessed by leaders and those required in the job grading system. Furthermore, the company can organize targeted training and development programs, such as leadership training, decision making, team management, and technical skills improvement in accordance with their respective fields of work. In addition, the implementation of coaching, mentoring, and periodic competency evaluations needs to be strengthened so that leaders can optimally improve their capacity. This competency improvement is expected to support the effectiveness of work performance and ultimately have a positive impact on the work performance of leaders at PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
3. Workload with the lowest rating statement: "The level of complexity of the tasks I handle is commensurate with my abilities and experience." The company is advised to re-evaluate the suitability between the complexity of tasks and the abilities and experience of management employees, particularly through a review of the division of tasks, job descriptions, and applicable job grading. Management needs to ensure that the tasks and responsibilities assigned take into account the background of competencies, work experience, and individual capacity, so that the workload received does not cause imbalance. In addition, companies are also advised to periodically adjust workloads and provide competency improvement support through training or mentoring for leaders who face high levels of job complexity. These adjustments are expected to increase work effectiveness, reduce work pressure, and support the improvement of the work performance of leaders at PTPN IV Regional II Medan.

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