

The Role of Workload in Mediating the Effect of Competence on Employee Performance at the Medan Religious Court

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of competence on employee performance with workload as an intervening variable at the Medan Religious Court. Employee performance is an important factor in supporting organizational effectiveness, especially in public service agencies that are required to provide services quickly, accurately, professionally, and accountably. In this context, employee competence is a factor suspected of influencing performance, while workload is thought to act as a variable that mediates the relationship between competence and employee performance. This study uses a quantitative method with an associative approach. The population in this study were all 60 employees of the Medan Religious Court. The sampling technique used total sampling, so that the entire population was used as a research sample. Data collection was carried out by distributing questionnaires to respondents. The data analysis technique used Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the help of the SmartPLS 3.0 application. The results showed that competence had a positive and significant effect on workload with a coefficient value of 0.872, t-statistics of 49.041, and p-value of 0.000. Competence also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a coefficient value of 0.476, t-statistics of 4.153, and p-value of 0.000. Furthermore, workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance with a coefficient value of 0.475, t-statistics of 4.181, and p-value of 0.000. The results of the indirect effect test show that workload is able to significantly mediate the effect of competence on employee performance with a coefficient value of 0.414, t-statistics of 4.106, and p-value of 0.000. The R Square value for the workload variable is 0.761, while the R Square value for the employee performance variable is 0.846, which indicates that the research model has strong explanatory power.

Keywords: *Competence, Workload, Employee Performance, Intervening Variables, Medan Religious Court.*

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2nd International Conference on Islamic Community Studies (ICICS)

Theme: History of Malay Civilisation and Islamic Human Capacity and Halal Hub in the Globalization Era

<https://proceeding.pancabudi.ac.id/index.php/ICIE/index>

Introduction

Human resources (HR) are a crucial aspect that plays a central role in the success of an organization. The presence of high-quality human resources is one of the determining factors in achieving organizational goals effectively and efficiently. In the context of government institutions, the quality of human resources greatly influences the delivery of public services that are professional, accountable, and responsive to the needs of the community. Therefore, employee performance becomes a very important element to consider in efforts to improve the quality of organizational services.

The Religious Court of Medan, as one of the judicial institutions under the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia, has duties and responsibilities in handling cases related to Islamic family law. In carrying out its functions, the Religious Court of Medan is required to provide legal services that are fast, accurate, fair, and transparent. To achieve this, employees with high performance are needed so that all service processes and case resolutions can run effectively. Conceptually, employee performance is understood as the work results achieved by employees in accordance with their assigned responsibilities, both in terms of quality and quantity. In line with this, recent studies also emphasize that improving employee performance is a key element in organizational effectiveness.

One of the factors assumed to influence employee performance is competence. Competence reflects employees' abilities, including knowledge, skills, and work attitudes that support the optimal execution of tasks. Employees with high competence tend to be more capable of completing their work effectively, efficiently, and in accordance with the standards set by the organization. This is supported by research conducted by Palahudin, Rahayu, and Ismartaya (2023), which shows that competence has a direct and significant effect on employee performance. Other findings also indicate that competence and the alignment between competence and job requirements contribute to improving employee performance.

However, the competence possessed by employees does not necessarily lead directly to optimal performance without being supported by appropriate working conditions. One of the conditions that may influence this relationship is workload. Workload refers to the number of tasks or jobs that must be completed by employees within a certain period in accordance with applicable work standards. Excessive workload can lead to fatigue, work pressure, and decreased concentration, which in turn negatively affect employee performance. Conversely, a proportional workload can help employees work more effectively and productively. Research by Farida, Soma, and Mulyanti (2024) shows that workload and competence are important factors influencing service performance. Similarly, Putri (2025) emphasizes that workload and competence are closely related to human resource performance.

In the context of the Religious Court of Medan, employee workload tends to be high due to the large number of cases that must be handled, as well as increasingly complex public service demands. Each employee is required to work quickly, accurately, and carefully in completing administrative tasks and judicial services. This condition indicates that, in addition to competence, workload is also an important factor that can influence the achievement of employee performance. Employees with high competence may still experience a decline in performance when facing excessive workload. Conversely, if workload is well managed, the competence possessed by employees can contribute more significantly to improving performance. This relationship is in line with recent empirical findings showing that competence and workload are both associated with employee work performance.

Based on the above explanation, it can be understood that competence and workload are two interrelated factors influencing employee performance. Competence serves as the basic capability possessed by employees in carrying out their tasks, while workload acts as a condition that can strengthen or weaken the influence of competence on performance. Therefore, this study is important to analyze the role of workload in mediating the effect of competence on employee performance at the Religious Court of Medan. The results of this study are expected

to provide theoretical contributions to the development of human resource management knowledge, as well as practical input for the Religious Court of Medan in improving employee performance through more effective management of competence and workload.

Conceptual Framework

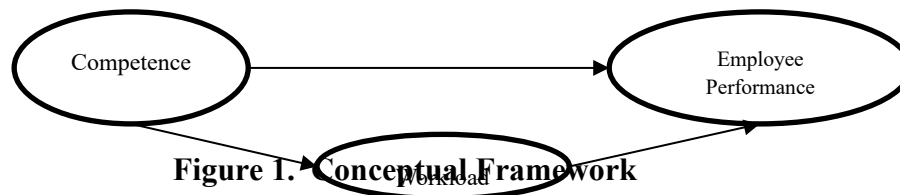


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

Hypothesis:

- H1: Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee workload at the Medan Religious Court.
- H2: Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Religious Court.
- H3: Workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Medan Religious Court.
- H4: Workload mediates the effect of competence on employee performance at the Medan Religious Court.

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative method. According to Sugiyono (2019), quantitative research is a method used to examine a particular population or sample, in which data collection techniques utilize research instruments and data analysis is conducted statistically to test predetermined hypotheses. In this study, the quantitative method is used to analyze the role of workload in mediating the effect of competence on employee performance at the Religious Court of Medan.

This research was conducted at the Religious Court of Medan, located at Jl. Sisingamangaraja Km. 8.8 No. 198, Timbang Deli Village, Medan Amplas District, Medan City, North Sumatra 20148. The study was carried out over a period of five months, from March 2026 to July 2026.

The population in this study consists of all employees of the Religious Court of Medan, totaling 60 individuals. Due to the relatively small population size, the entire population was used as the research sample through a total sampling technique. Therefore, the sample size in this study is 60 respondents.

The data analysis technique used is Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with the assistance of SmartPLS 3.0 software. The analysis was conducted through the evaluation of the outer model and inner model. The outer model is used to test the validity and reliability of the constructs. Validity is assessed based on loading factor values ≥ 0.70 , while reliability is evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values ≥ 0.60 . Furthermore, the inner model is used to test the R^2 values and research hypotheses through a bootstrapping procedure. A hypothesis is considered significant if the t-statistic value ≥ 1.96 and the p-value ≤ 0.05 .

Results and Discussion 4.1 Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

Model evaluation was conducted to assess the feasibility of the research model through testing the outer model and inner model. The evaluation results were obtained from the PLS Algorithm report using SmartPLS software. This represents the initial stage of data processing.

a. Convergent Validity

The convergent validity test was conducted by examining the loading factor values of each indicator on its corresponding latent construct. An indicator is considered valid if it has a loading factor value > 0.70 . Based on the data processing results, the convergent validity test for the variables of Competence, Workload, and Employee Performance shows that most indicators have loading factor values above 0.70 and are therefore considered valid.

Table 1. Outer Loadings Values

Latent Variable	Workload	Employee Performance	Competence
BBK1	0.820		
BBK2	0.851		
BBK3	0.790		
BBK4	0.852		
BBK5	0.809		
KP1		0.848	
KP2		0.796	
KP3		0.880	
KP4		0.744	
KP5		0.823	
KP6		0.791	
KPT1			0.771
KPT2			0.882
KPT3			0.839
KPT4			0.869
KPT5			0.914

The results indicate that all indicators have loading factor values above 0.70. Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators for the variables of Competence, Workload, and Employee Performance meet the convergent validity criteria and are suitable for further analysis.

4.2 Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

a. Path Coefficient

Testing After conducting a model evaluation and finding that each construct has met the requirements of Convergent Validity, Discriminant Validity, and Composite Reliability, the next step is to evaluate the structural model, which includes testing the model's fit, Path Coefficient, and R^2 . Testing is used to determine whether a model fits the data. The following is Figure 1 of the Path Coefficient:

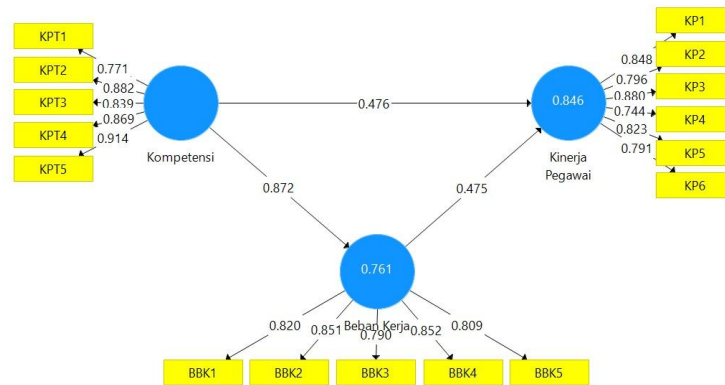


Figure 1. Path Coefficient

Based on Figure 4.2, which is the result of several valid statements, the results of the path coefficient analysis between latent variables in the structural model. The following is a table of path coefficients:

Table 2. Path Coefficient

Latent Variable	Workload	Employee Performance
Workload		0.475
Competence	0.872	0.476

Based on Table 2, Competence has a positive effect on Workload with a coefficient value of 0.872. This indicates that higher employee competence leads to a greater influence on workload within the organization. Furthermore, Competence also has a positive effect on Employee Performance with a coefficient value of 0.476. Meanwhile, Workload has a positive effect on Employee Performance with a coefficient value of 0.475.

These findings suggest that Competence is the most dominant variable influencing Workload. In terms of Employee Performance, Competence provides the largest direct effect (0.476), although its value is very close to that of Workload (0.475).

Thus, these results indicate that competence plays a crucial role in improving employee performance, both directly and indirectly through workload as an intervening variable.

4.3 Construct Validity and Reliability

After testing the construct validity, the next test is the construct reliability test measured by Composite Reliability (CR) from the indicator block that measures the construct (CR) used to display good reliability. A construct is declared reliable if the composite reliability value is > 0.6 . According to (Hair et al., 2016), the composite reliability coefficient must be greater than 0.7 although a value of 0.6 is still acceptable. In the internal consistency test, it is not absolute to be carried out if the construct validity has been met, because a valid construct is a reliable one, conversely a reliable construct is not necessarily valid (Cooper & Schindler, 2014). **Table 3.** Construct Validity and Reliability

Latent Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Workload	0.882	0.884	0.914	0.680
Employee Performance	0.898	0.901	0.922	0.664
Competence	0.909	0.918	0.932	0.733

Based on Table 3, the composite reliability test results for each latent variable showed values above 0.70, namely Workload at 0.914, Employee Performance at 0.922, and

Competence at 0.932. This indicates that all variables in this study are reliable. Furthermore, the Cronbach's Alpha and rho_A values for each variable were also above 0.70, further confirming that all constructs have a good level of internal consistency. Furthermore, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for all variables were also above the minimum threshold of 0.50, namely Workload at 0.680, Employee Performance at 0.664, and Competence at 0.733. Thus, all variables were declared to have met convergent validity.

Based on these AVE values, the variable with the highest AVE value was Competence at 0.733, indicating that this variable has the best ability to explain the variance of its constituent indicators.

a. R Square

The inner model (inner relation, structural model, and substantive theory) describes the relationship between latent variables based on substantive theory. The structural model is evaluated using R-square for the dependent construct. The R^2 value can be used to assess the influence of certain endogenous variables and whether exogenous variables have a substantive influence (Ghozali, 2018).

Tabel 4. R Square

Latent Variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Workload	0.761	0.757
Employee Performance	0.846	0.841

Based on Table 4, the R Square value for the Workload variable is 0.761 and the Adjusted R Square is 0.757. This indicates that 76.1% of the variance in Workload can be explained by the Competence variable, while the remaining 23.9% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Furthermore, the R Square value for the Employee Performance variable is 0.846 and the Adjusted R Square is 0.841. This shows that 84.6% of the variance in Employee Performance can be explained by Competence and Workload variables, while the remaining 15.4% is explained by other factors outside the research model.

Based on the R Square evaluation criteria, these values fall into the strong category. Therefore, it can be concluded that the research model has a strong explanatory power in explaining the effect of Competence on Employee Performance with Workload as an intervening variable at the Religious Court of Medan.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing is conducted based on the results of the Inner Model (structural model) testing, which includes r-square output, parameter coefficients, and t-statistics. To determine whether a hypothesis can be accepted or rejected, among other things, we pay attention to the significance values between constructs, t-statistics, and p-values. This research hypothesis testing was conducted using SmartPLS 3.0 software. These values can be seen from the bootstrapping results. The rule of thumb used in this study is a t-statistic >1.96 with a significance level of p-value 0.05 (5%) and a positive beta coefficient. Figure 2. Hypothesis Testing:

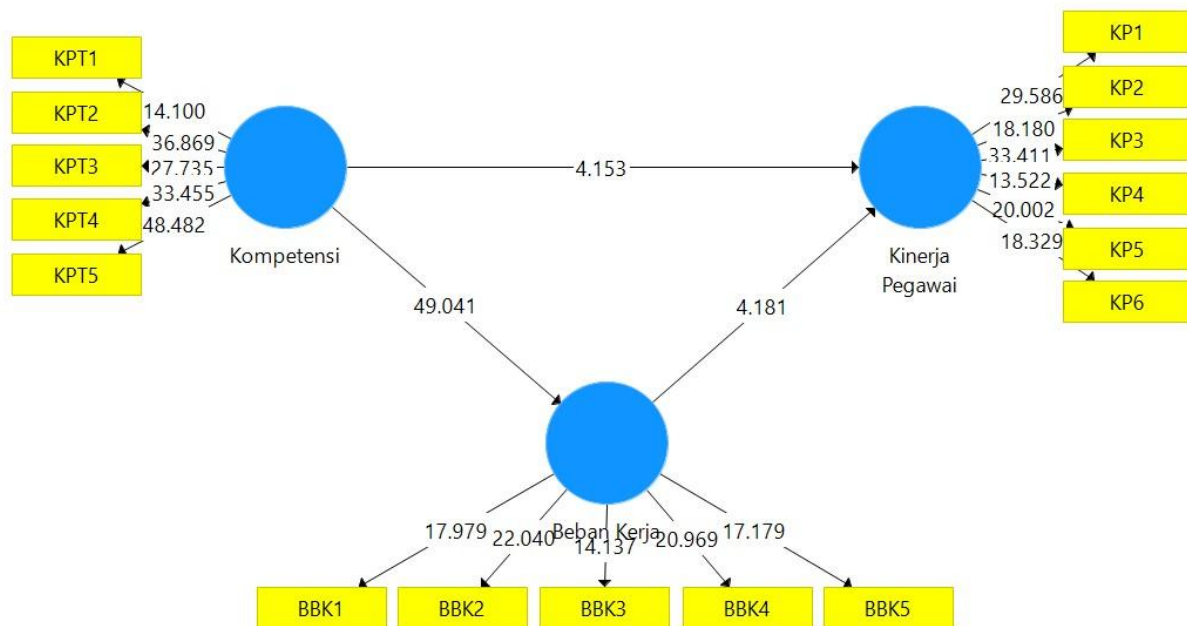


Figure 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

Figure 2 shows that to determine the structural relationship between latent variables, hypothesis testing must be performed on the path coefficients between the variables by comparing the p-value with alpha (0.005) or a t-statistic (>1.96). The p-value and t-statistic were obtained from SmartPLS output using the bootstrapping method, along with the direct effect table.

Table 5. Direct Effects

<i>Variabel Laten</i>	<i>Original Sample (O)</i>	<i>Sample Mean (M)</i>	<i>Standard Deviation (STDEV)</i>	<i>T Statistics (O/STDEV)</i>	<i>P Values</i>
Workload → Employee Performance	0,475	0,475	0,114	4,181	0,000
Competence → Workload	0,872	0,877	0,018	49,041	0,000
Competence → Employee Performance	0,476	0,477	0,115	4,153	0,000

The following is the explanation of the results from Table 4 (Direct Effects):

1. The first hypothesis (H1) indicates that Workload has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance, with a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic of 4.181; therefore, H1 is accepted. The path coefficient value of 0.475 suggests that better workload management significantly improves Employee Performance.
2. The second hypothesis (H2) shows that Competence has a positive and significant effect on Workload, with a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic of 49.041; thus, H2 is accepted. The path coefficient value of 0.872 indicates that Competence has a very strong influence on Workload.
3. The third hypothesis (H3) reveals that Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance, with a p-value of 0.000 and a t-statistic of 4.153; therefore, H3 is accepted. The path coefficient value of 0.476 indicates that higher employee competence leads to higher Employee Performance.

And to determine the structural relationship between latent variables, hypothesis testing has been carried out on the path coefficients between variables using the bootstrapping method, as follows:

Table 6. Indirect Effects

<i>Variabel Laten</i>	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDEV)	P Values
Competence -> Workload -> Employee Performance	0,414	0,417	0,101	4,106	0,000

The following is an explanation of the results in Table 5:

- 1) The fourth hypothesis (H4) indicates that Competence has a positive and significant indirect effect on Employee Performance through Workload. This is evidenced by a pvalue of 0.000 and a t-statistic of 4.106. Since the t-statistic is >1.96 and the p-value <0.05 , H4 is accepted. The path coefficient of 0.414 indicates that Workload significantly mediates the effect of Competence on Employee Performance.

Therefore, better employee competency will further improve employee performance through appropriate workload management. Overall, the results of the indirect effect test indicate that Workload mediates the relationship between Competence and Employee Performance.

4.5 Discussion

The results of this study indicate that competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Religious Court of Medan. This finding suggests that the higher the level of competence possessed by employees, the better the performance they produce. Competence, which encompasses knowledge, skills, and work attitudes, serves as an essential asset for employees in carrying out their duties effectively, efficiently, and professionally. In the context of the Religious Court of Medan, competent employees are better able to complete administrative tasks and judicial services accurately, promptly, and efficiently, thereby enabling the organization to achieve its objectives more optimally.

Furthermore, the results also show that competence has a positive and significant effect on workload, and workload, in turn, has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This indicates that well-developed competence enables employees to be more prepared in handling job demands. Employees with adequate capabilities tend to be more capable of managing their tasks, adapting to targets, and completing responsibilities effectively. On the other hand, properly managed workload can encourage employees to work more systematically and productively. However, if workload is not proportional, it may lead to fatigue and a decline in employee performance.

Moreover, the results of the indirect effect analysis reveal that workload significantly mediates the relationship between competence and employee performance. This finding confirms that competence not only has a direct effect on performance but also influences performance indirectly through workload. In other words, employees with higher competence are more capable of handling and completing their workload, which ultimately enhances their performance. Therefore, improving employee performance at the Religious Court of Medan should be carried out through two main approaches: enhancing employee competence and effectively managing workload to ensure optimal task execution.

4.6 Research Implications

This study has both theoretical and practical implications. Theoretically, the findings strengthen the field of human resource management, particularly regarding the relationship between competence, workload, and employee performance. The results demonstrate that competence has both a direct effect on employee performance and an indirect effect through workload as an intervening variable. This confirms that workload plays an important role in

explaining how competence contributes to improved employee performance. Thus, this study contributes to the development of an empirical model showing that employee performance is influenced not only by individual capabilities but also by supportive working conditions.

Practically, the findings provide important implications for the Religious Court of Medan to place greater emphasis on improving employee competence through continuous training, coaching, and skill development programs. In addition, the institution should manage workload effectively by ensuring proportional task distribution, aligning workload with employee capacity, and conducting regular workload evaluations. These efforts are essential to optimize employee competence in task execution, thereby enhancing employee performance and ensuring that public services are delivered more effectively, efficiently, and professionally

Conclusion

Based on the research findings, it can be concluded that competence has a positive and significant effect on workload among employees at the Religious Court of Medan. This is evidenced by a path coefficient value of 0.872, a t-statistic of 49.041, and a p-value of 0.000. These results indicate that competence has a very strong influence on workload. In addition, competence also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a coefficient value of 0.476, a t-statistic of 4.153, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding implies that higher levels of employee competence lead to higher levels of performance.

Furthermore, workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with a path coefficient value of 0.475, a t-statistic of 4.181, and a p-value of 0.000. This result suggests that well-managed workload can support improvements in employee performance. From the indirect effect analysis, it is found that competence has a positive and significant indirect effect on employee performance through workload, with a coefficient value of 0.414, a t-statistic of 4.106, and a p-value of 0.000. Therefore, workload is proven to significantly mediate the relationship between competence and employee performance at the Religious Court of Medan.

Based on the coefficient of determination test, the R Square value for the workload variable is 0.761 and the Adjusted R Square is 0.757, indicating that 76.1% of the variance in workload is explained by competence, while the remaining 23.9% is influenced by other factors outside the research model. Meanwhile, the R Square value for the employee performance variable is 0.846 and the Adjusted R Square is 0.841, meaning that 84.6% of the variance in employee performance is explained by competence and workload, while the remaining 15.4% is influenced by other factors outside the model.

Overall, these results indicate that competence is the main factor influencing both workload and employee performance, while workload acts as a significant intervening variable in the relationship between competence and employee performance.

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