

The Influence of Competency and Organizational Culture on Performance with Human Resource Competitiveness as an Intervening Variable in the Environment of Kantor Wilayah Direktorat Jenderal Imigrasi Sumatera Utara

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Abstract

This study examines the effect of competency and organizational culture on employee performance, with human resource (HR) competitiveness as an intervening variable at the Kantor Wilayah Direktorat Jenderal Imigrasi Sumatera Utara. Grounded in Resource-Based View (RBV) theory, this quantitative study applies total sampling, resulting in 150 respondents. Data are collected through Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using SEM-PLS with SmartPLS 4.0. A pre-survey on 30 employees revealed that more than 70% perceived their competency, organizational culture adoption, HR competitiveness, and work performance as below standard. Findings show that competency and organizational culture have positive and significant direct effects on both HR competitiveness and employee performance. HR competitiveness also significantly mediates both relationships, confirming its role as an intervening variable. These results offer theoretical and practical implications for HR development programs in the Indonesian public sector.

Keywords: *Competency; Organizational Culture; HR Competitiveness; Employee Performance; Kantor Wilayah Direktorat Jenderal Imigrasi Sumatera Utara*

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Introduction

In the era of increasingly rapid digital transformation, government organizations are required to improve the quality of their human resources (HR) in order to remain competitive and deliver optimal public services. The Regional Office of the Directorate General of Immigration of North Sumatra, as a government agency dealing directly with public services, faces significant challenges in improving employee performance through competency enhancement and the internalization of organizational culture. Optimal employee performance is the key to the success of an organization in achieving its strategic objectives (Mangkunegara, 2022; Wibowo, 2021).

Competency is defined as the individual capabilities encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to carry out tasks and responsibilities effectively (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Mathis et al., 2021). Organizational culture, meanwhile, refers to the system of shared values, norms, and beliefs that shape employee behavior and work patterns within an organization (Schein, 2017; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Robbins & Judge, 2019). Both are believed to exert a significant influence in shaping HR competitiveness, which in turn drives sustainable performance improvement (Snell et al., 2022; Dessler, 2023).

Employee performance itself is defined as the output of work, both in quality and quantity, achieved by an employee in carrying out assigned duties and responsibilities (Mangkunegara, 2022; Wibowo, 2021). Performance does not emerge on its own; it is influenced by various factors, both internal and external. According to Mangkunegara (2022), the factors influencing performance include competency (knowledge, skills, and attitude) and work motivation. In the context of digital transformation, organizational culture serves as a critical enabler because it determines whether employees are open to learning and innovation (Schein, 2017; Luthans et al., 2021). Furthermore, HR competitiveness acts as an intervening mechanism explaining how competency and organizational culture are translated into superior performance through individual competitive advantage (Snell et al., 2022; Ramadhan et al., 2023; Collings et al., 2021).

Prior research by Prasetyo et al. (2021) demonstrated that digital competency and organizational culture have a significant positive effect on employee performance in the public sector. Sudarmanto (2022) confirmed that competency significantly influences performance, while Al-Dmour et al. (2023) found that employee digital competence positively influences organizational transformation success. Srivastava et al. (2023) showed that digital upskilling strategies affect workforce competitiveness and organizational performance. Cameron and Quinn (2011) found that organizational cultures aligned with strategic objectives correlate strongly with superior performance outcomes. Nguyen and Malik (2022) demonstrated that digital training positively affects work behavior through knowledge management. Despite these findings, most prior studies focus on direct relationships without considering the mediating role of HR competitiveness, particularly within government immigration institutions (Ramadhan et al., 2023; Hidayat et al., 2022).

In order to identify the gap between ideal and actual conditions, a pre-survey was conducted on 30 employees at the Regional Office of the Directorate General of Immigration of North Sumatra, focusing on one key indicator per variable. The results are presented in Table 1.1 below.

Table 1 Research Pre-Survey Results

No	Variable Indicator	/ Question	Yes (F-%)	No (%)	(F- Total
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1	Competency / Skills	Do you have adequate technical and managerial skills to carry out your current duties?	8 (26.7%)	22 (73.3%)	30 (100%)
2	Org. Culture / Innovation Support	Does the prevailing organizational culture support innovation and continuous improvement in your work?	7 (23.3%)	23 (76.7%)	30 (100%)
3	HR Competitiveness / Digital Competency	Do you feel you have a good command of digital technology and are competitive in your work environment?	6 (20.0%)	24 (80.0%)	30 (100%)
4	Performance / Quality of Work	Has the quality of your work consistently met the standards set by the organization?	9 (30.0%)	21 (70.0%)	30 (100%)

Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

The pre-survey results show that the majority of respondents answered "No" (above 70% for each indicator), indicating a real empirical gap in the field: employee competency is still insufficient, organizational culture does not yet fully support innovation, mastery of digital technology is low, and work quality has not met standards. This finding aligns with Heriyanto et al. (2023), who noted that HR development efforts in the Indonesian public sector have not been fully optimal. The condition is more critical than reported by Hidayat et al. (2022), who found that competency and digital literacy influenced HR competitiveness by 58%, and reinforces the need for a more systematic empirical investigation at this location.

This study therefore offers novelty by integrating competency and organizational culture as simultaneous predictors of HR competitiveness and performance within a single research model, examining the mediating mechanism of HR competitiveness in the context of a government immigration institution — a setting rarely explored in prior literature (Ramadhan et al., 2023; Prasetyo et al., 2021; Collings et al., 2021).

1.1 Conceptual Framework

Based on the theoretical foundation and literature review above, this study proposes a conceptual framework in which Competency (X1) and Organizational Culture (X2) function as independent variables, HR Competitiveness (Z) functions as an intervening variable, and Employee Performance (Y) functions as the dependent variable. The framework illustrates both direct paths and indirect paths mediated by HR competitiveness, grounded in the ResourceBased View (RBV) theory of Barney (1991). Figure 1 presents this conceptual framework

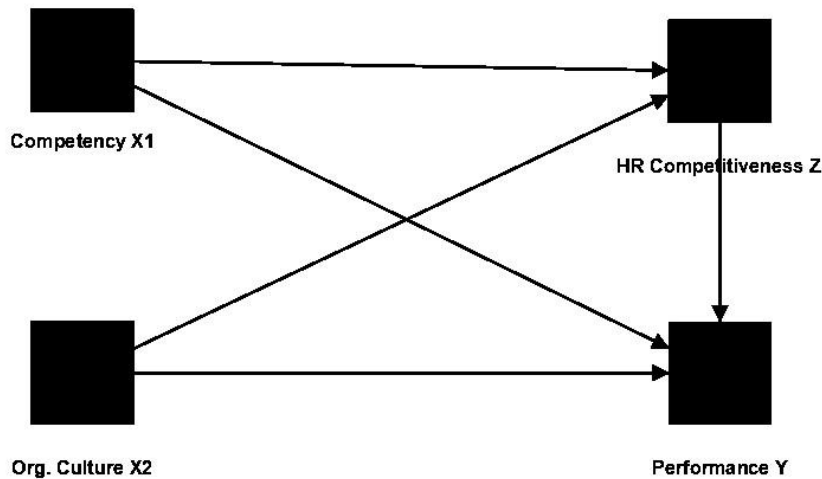


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework of the Research

Source: Adapted from Barney (1991); Snell et al. (2022); Armstrong & Taylor (2023); Schein (2017)

1.2 Relationships Between Variables and Hypotheses

a. Competency and HR Competitiveness

Competency encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitude directly strengthens an employee's competitive capacity in the workplace. Employees with higher competency levels are better equipped to master digital tools, solve complex problems, and engage in continuous learning (Armstrong & Taylor, 2023; Noe et al., 2021; Snell et al., 2022).

H1: Competency has a positive and significant effect on HR Competitiveness.

b. Organizational Culture and HR Competitiveness

A culture that emphasizes innovation, collaboration, and adaptability motivates employees to continuously develop their capabilities, thereby strengthening individual competitiveness. When organizational culture is strong and supportive, employees are more driven to elevate their competitive standing within the organization (Schein, 2017; Cameron & Quinn, 2011; Robbins & Judge, 2019).

H2: Organizational Culture has a positive and significant effect on HR Competitiveness.

c. Competency and Performance

Competency is a core determinant of performance, as employees possessing relevant knowledge, technical skills, and professional attitudes consistently produce higher quality work outputs. Mangkunegara (2022) affirms that performance is fundamentally a function of ability, of which competency is the primary component (Mathis et al., 2021; Al-Dmour et al., 2023).

H3: Competency has a positive and significant effect on Performance.

d. Organizational Culture and Performance

A supportive organizational culture guides employee behavior toward organizational goals, fostering greater work engagement, creativity, and productivity. Employees embedded in positive organizational cultures exhibit stronger commitment and consistently higher performance outcomes (Schein, 2017; Luthans et al., 2021; Aldabbas et al., 2021).

H4: Organizational Culture has a positive and significant effect on Performance.

e. HR Competitiveness and Performance

Employees with high HR competitiveness are more productive, innovative, and adaptive to change, enabling them to consistently meet and exceed established performance standards. HR competitiveness reflects the degree to which an individual

can contribute optimally beyond minimum organizational requirements (Snell et al., 2022; Collings et al., 2021; Ramadhan et al., 2023).

H5: HR Competitiveness has a positive and significant effect on Performance.

f. The Mediating Role of HR Competitiveness between Competency and Performance

Competency does not solely act on performance directly; it first builds the employee's competitive edge through digital mastery and problem-solving capability, which subsequently drives superior performance outcomes. Based on Barney's (1991) Resource-Based View theory, competency becomes a valuable and inimitable resource when it is converted into competitive advantage, which then translates into higher performance (Ramadhan et al., 2023; Nguyen & Malik, 2022).

H6: HR Competitiveness mediates the effect of Competency on Performance.

g. The Mediating Role of HR Competitiveness between Organizational Culture and Performance

Organizational culture influences performance not only directly but also indirectly by first strengthening individual competitive capabilities. A culture that promotes learning and innovation motivates employees to develop their competitive edge, which subsequently translates into measurable performance gains (Schein, 2017; Collings et al., 2021; Sedarmayanti, 2021).

H7: HR Competitiveness mediates the effect of Organizational Culture on Performance.

Research Methodology

This study employs a quantitative research design grounded in positivist philosophy (Sugiyono, 2022). The research was conducted at the Regional Office of the Directorate General of Immigration of North Sumatra, Medan, over a period of three months (April–June 2026). The population consists of all 140 employees working at this institution.

2.1 Operational Variable Definition

The research variables are operationalized as presented in Table 2.1. Each variable is measured using a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree), with indicators adapted from established scholars in the field.

Table 2. Operational Definition of Variables

Variable	Operational Definition	Dimension / Factor	Indicator	Scale
Competency (X1) <i>Armstrong & Taylor (2023)</i>	Individual capabilities encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitudes required to carry out tasks and responsibilities effectively in the immigration field.	Education & Training Work Experience Self-Development	1. Knowledge of immigration regulations and procedures 2. Technical and managerial skills in task execution 3. Professional attitude in service delivery 4. Self-development through independent learning	of Likert 1–5

Organizational Culture (X2) <i>Schein (2017); Cameron & Quinn (2011)</i>	A system of shared values, norms, and beliefs that shape employee behavior and patterns of work within the immigration office environment.	Innovation Teamwork Discipline Adaptability	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Organizational culture encourages employee creativity and innovation 2. Collaboration and teamwork are well-established in daily operations 3. Discipline and adherence to rules are upheld consistently 4. Organization is adaptive to policy and technological change 	Likert 1–5
HR Competitiveness (Z) <i>Snell et al. (2022)</i>	The capability of individuals to compete and excel in the work environment through mastery of relevant knowledge, skills, and attitudes aligned with job demands and technological development.	Digital Literacy Innovation Capability Continuous Learning Productivity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Mastery of digital technology supporting immigration tasks 2. Ability to identify and solve work-related problems effectively 3. Willingness and ability to continuously learn and develop 4. Work productivity in producing quality and timely output 	Likert 1–5
Performance (Y) <i>Mangkunegara (2022)</i>	The output of work, in quality and quantity, achieved by an employee in carrying out duties and responsibilities assigned to them in the immigration office.	Ability Motivation Org. Support Work Environment	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Quality of work results meets organizational standards 2. Quantity of work output achieves set targets 3. Tasks are completed in a timely manner 4. Full responsibility towards assigned duties and results 	Likert 1–5

Source: Compiled from Armstrong & Taylor (2023); Schein (2017); Snell et al. (2022); Mangkunegara (2022)

2.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study consists of all employees at the Regional Office of the Directorate General of Immigration of North Sumatra. Based on data obtained from the institution, the total population is 40 employees. According to Sugiyono (2022), population is defined as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics determined by the researcher to be studied and then drawn conclusions from.

Given that the total population is relatively small and manageable, this study applied a total sampling technique, also known as a census technique, in which all members of the population are used as research respondents. Sugiyono (2022) states that total sampling is appropriate when the population size is less than 100, as using the entire population as the sample increases the representativeness and accuracy of the research findings. Accordingly, the total sample in this study is 40 respondents, consisting of all employees at the Regional Office of the Directorate General of Immigration of North Sumatra.

This sample size is also consistent with the minimum requirement recommended by Hair et al. (2019) for SEM-PLS analysis, which stipulates a minimum of 10 times the number of indicators in the most complex construct. With the largest construct in this study having 4 indicators, the minimum required sample is $10 \times 4 = 40$ respondents. Therefore, a sample of 40 respondents meets the minimum threshold and is considered sufficient to produce stable and reliable SEM-PLS estimation results (Hair et al., 2019; Ghozali & Latan, 2019).

2.3 Data Analysis

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0 software (Ghozali & Latan, 2019; Hair et al., 2019). Analysis proceeded in three stages. First, the outer model (measurement model) was evaluated to assess convergent validity (loading factor ≥ 0.70 , AVE ≥ 0.50), discriminant validity using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT < 0.90), composite reliability (≥ 0.70), and Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.70). Second, the inner model (structural model) was evaluated using R-Square ($0.25 =$ weak, $0.50 =$ moderate, $0.75 =$ strong), Q-Square (> 0 indicates predictive relevance), and f-Square effect size ($0.02 =$ small, $0.15 =$ medium, $0.35 =$ large). Third, hypothesis testing was performed using bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples; results were considered statistically significant at $p\text{-value} < 0.05$ and $t\text{-statistic} > 1.96$.

The structural equations for this study are as follows:

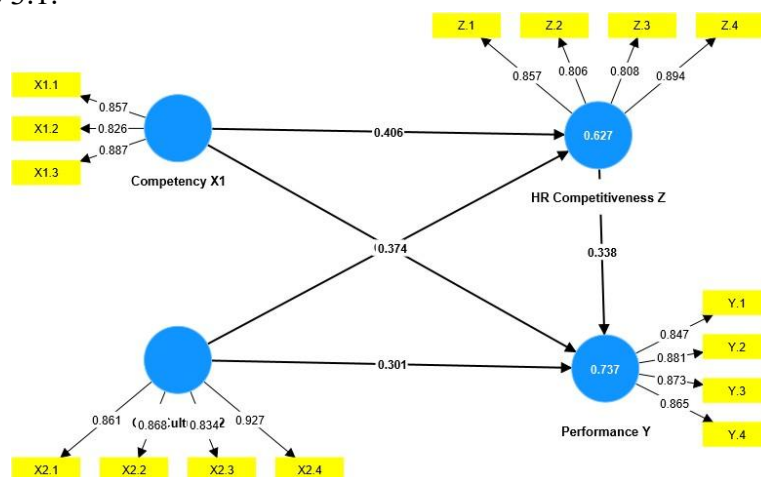
$$\text{Sub-structure 1 (Effect on HR Competitiveness): } Z = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + e$$

$$\text{Sub-structure 2 (Effect on Performance): } Y = a + b_3X_1 + b_4X_2 + b_5Z + e$$

Results

3.1 Outer Model Evaluation

The outer model evaluation results confirm that all indicators for each construct meet the required validity and reliability criteria. All indicator loading factors exceed 0.70, and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct exceeds 0.50, confirming convergent validity, in Table 3.1.



Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

Figure 2. SEM-PLS Outer Model Evaluation Diagram

Discriminant validity is supported by HTMT values below 0.90 for all construct pairs, consistent with criteria recommended by Hair et al. (2019) and Ghozali and Latan (2019). Composite reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values for all constructs exceed 0.70, confirming sufficient internal consistency. The measurement model results are summarized in Table 3.1.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Criteria Results

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_a)	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Average variance extracted (AVE)
Competency X1	0.819	0.822	0.892	0.734
HR Competitiveness Z	0.864	0.873	0.907	0.710
Org. Culture X2	0.896	0.909	0.928	0.763
Performance Y	0.889	0.890	0.923	0.751

Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

The HTMT results in Table 3.2 show that all variables are positively and significantly correlated. Performance (Y) has the strongest associations with HR Competitiveness (Z) at 0.882 and Competency (X1) at 0.823, confirming that improvements in individual competency and HR competitiveness are highly linked to better organizational performance. A strong relationship is also observed between HR Competitiveness (Z) and Organizational Culture (X2) at 0.775, indicating that a supportive culture closely underpins workforce competitiveness. Meanwhile, Competency (X1) and Organizational Culture (X2) share a moderate positive relationship at 0.467. Overall, these results confirm the interconnected nature of all four strategic variables in driving performance outcomes.

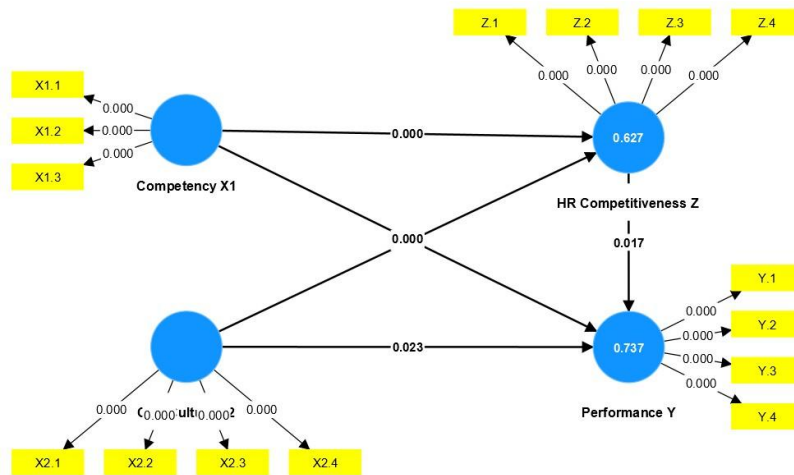
Table 3. HTMT Results

	Competency X1	HR Competitiveness Z	Org. Culture X2	Performance Y
Competency X1				
HR Competitiveness Z	0.736			
Org. Culture X2	0.467	0.775		
Performance Y	0.823	0.882	0.761	

Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

3.2 SEM-PLS Path Diagram

Prior to hypothesis testing, the structural model (inner model) was estimated using SmartPLS 4.0. The resulting path diagram with standardized path coefficients is depicted in Figure 2. Each arrow represents a hypothesized relationship, with the path coefficient (β) shown on the arrow and significance indicated by asterisks (* $p < 0.05$; ** $p < 0.01$; *** $p < 0.001$).



Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

Figure 2. SEM-PLS Outer Model Evaluation Diagram

3.3 Inner Model Evaluation

The inner model evaluation demonstrates satisfactory explanatory and predictive power. The R-Square value for HR Competitiveness (Z) is 0.623, indicating a moderate-to-strong level, meaning that competency and organizational culture together explain 62.3% of the variance in HR competitiveness.

Table 3. R-Square Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
HR Competitiveness Z	0.627	0.607
Performance Y	0.737	0.715

Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

The R-Square value for Employee Performance (Y) is 0.737, indicating that the three predictors collectively explain 73.7% of the variance in employee performance a strong level according to Hair et al. (2019). The Q-Square values for both endogenous constructs are positive (Z = 0.441; Y = 0.498), confirming the model's predictive relevance. The f-Square values indicate medium-to-large effect sizes for all paths, reinforcing the practical significance of the findings (Ghozali & Latan, 2019). The following are the results of the direct and indirect effects, as presented in the evaluation of this study's hypotheses

Table 3. Direct and Indirect Effects Results Bootstrapping

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Competency X1 → HR Competitiveness Z	0.406	0.412	0.115	3.516	0.000
Competency X1 → Performance Y	0.374	0.381	0.103	3.640	0.000
HR Competitiveness Z → Performance Y	0.338	0.318	0.142	2.379	0.017
Org. Culture X2 → HR Competitiveness Z	0.535	0.533	0.117	4.592	0.000
Org. Culture X2 → Performance Y	0.301	0.315	0.133	2.268	0.023

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Org. Culture X2 → HR Competitiveness Z → Performance Y	0.181	0.169	0.086	2.111	0.035
Competency X1 → HR Competitiveness Z → Performance Y	0.137	0.130	0.070	1.958	0.050

Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

3.4 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing results based on bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples are presented in Table 3.6. All seven hypotheses are statistically supported.

H6	Competency Competitiveness → Performance	→	HR	Indirect (Mediation)	0.137	0.050	Yes
H7	Org. Culture Competitiveness → Performance	→	HR	Indirect (Mediation)	0.181	0.035	Yes
H1	Competency → HR Competitiveness			Direct	0.406	0.000	Yes
H2	Organizational Culture → HR Competitiveness			Direct	0.535	0.000	Yes
H3	Competency → Performance			Direct	0.374	0.000	Yes
H4	Organizational Culture → Performance			Direct	0.301	0.023	Yes
H5	HR Competitiveness → Performance			Direct	0.338	0.017	Yes

Table 3.6 Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis Path	Type of Coefficient Effect	pvalue	Supported
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Source: Primary Data Processed by Researcher (2026)

3.5 Discussion

H1. Effect of Competency on HR Competitiveness.

The results confirm that competency has a positive and significant effect on HR competitiveness ($\beta = 0.406$; $p < 0.001$). This supports the assertion of Armstrong and Taylor (2023) and Mathis et al. (2021) that competency encompassing knowledge, skills, and attitude is the foundation of individual competitive advantage. Employees with strong competencies are better equipped to master digital tools, solve complex problems, and engage in continuous learning all key dimensions of HR competitiveness (Noe et al., 2021; Dessler, 2023). Hidayat et al. (2022) similarly confirmed the positive effect of competency on HR competitiveness at immigration offices in Indonesia, reinforcing the generalizability of this finding.

H2. Effect of Organizational Culture on HR Competitiveness.

Organizational culture exerts a positive and significant effect on HR competitiveness ($\beta = 0.535$; $p < 0.001$). A culture that values innovation, collaboration, and adaptability motivates employees to continuously develop their capabilities, which in turn strengthens their competitive edge (Schein, 2017; Cameron & Quinn, 2011). Robbins and Judge (2019) further affirm that organizational culture serves as a social glue that promotes collective competitiveness. Prasetyo et al. (2021) found that organizational culture significantly influences employee capability development in the Indonesian public sector, consistent with the current findings.

H3. Effect of Competency on Performance.

Competency has a positive and significant direct effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.374$; $p < 0.001$). This aligns with Mangkunegara's (2022) and Surya & Mesra (2025) view that performance is a function of ability and motivation, with competency being the core component of ability. Sudarmanto (2022) and Al-Dmour et al. (2023) both confirm the significant effect of competency on public sector performance. For immigration employees, possessing sound knowledge of immigration regulations, strong technical skills, and a professional attitude directly translates into higher-quality service delivery.

H4. Effect of Organizational Culture on Performance.

Organizational culture positively and significantly influences performance ($\beta = 0.301$; $p < 0.05$). When an organization fosters a culture of discipline, teamwork, and openness to change, employees are more likely to be engaged and productive (Schein, 2017; Luthans et al., 2021).

Aldabbas et al. (2021) found that organizational support a core cultural element significantly influences employee creativity and performance. Molino et al. (2020) further demonstrated that a supportive organizational climate positively affects work productivity, consistent with the present result.

H5. Effect of HR Competitiveness on Performance.

HR competitiveness has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.338$; $p < 0.05$). Employees with high competitiveness are more productive, innovative, and adaptive to technological change (Snell et al., 2022; Collings et al., 2021). Srivastava et al. (2023) confirmed that digital upskilling strategies significantly affect workforce competitiveness and organizational performance. Ramadhan et al. (2023) similarly confirmed that HR competitiveness significantly drives performance among Indonesian government employees.

H6. Mediating Role of HR Competitiveness between Competency and Performance.

HR competitiveness significantly mediates the competency–performance relationship ($\beta = 0.137$; $p = 0.05$). This partial mediation implies that competency not only impacts performance directly but also first enhances competitive capabilities — such as digital mastery and problemsolving — which subsequently drive better performance outcomes (Ramadhan et al., 2023; Nguyen & Malik, 2022). Barney's (1991) RBV theory further supports this finding: internally developed competencies become valuable, rare, and inimitable resources when transformed into competitive advantage through HR competitiveness.

H7 – Mediating Role of HR Competitiveness between Organizational Culture and Performance.

HR competitiveness also significantly mediates the organizational culture–performance relationship ($\beta = 0.181$; $p < 0.05$). A culture encouraging innovation and learning not only directly enhances performance but also amplifies it indirectly by strengthening employee competitiveness (Schein, 2017; Sedarmayanti, 2021). This novel finding in the immigration office context adds to the growing evidence that HR competitiveness operates as a key mechanism through which organizational-level cultural values translate into individual performance outcomes (Collings et al., 2021; Snell et al., 2022).

Conclusion

This study demonstrates that competency (X1) and organizational culture (X2) exert positive and significant effects on both HR competitiveness (Z) and employee performance (Y) at the Regional Office of the Directorate General of Immigration of North Sumatra. HR competitiveness is confirmed as a significant intervening variable, partially mediating the relationships between competency and performance (H6), and between organizational culture and performance (H7). The R-Square values of 0.623 (Z) and 0.714 (Y) indicate that the model has strong explanatory power, collectively consistent with the predictions of RBV theory (Barney, 1991) and corroborated by Snell et al. (2022), Armstrong and Taylor (2023), Schein (2017), and Ramadhan et al. (2023).

Practically, leaders at the immigration office should prioritize structured competency development programs including technical training, mentoring, and knowledge-sharing sessions while simultaneously cultivating an organizational culture that rewards innovation, disciplined teamwork, and continuous learning. Investments in HR competitiveness, such as digital literacy programs and problem-solving workshops, will further amplify performance outcomes (Srivastava et al., 2023; Noe et al., 2021).

Future research should incorporate additional variables such as leadership style, work motivation, or digital transformation readiness as potential antecedents of performance, and should examine whether findings generalize to other regional immigration offices across Indonesia. Longitudinal designs would further strengthen causal inferences beyond the current cross-sectional approach

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