

HUMAN RESOURCE COMPETENCE, WORK ABILITY, WORKLOAD, AND EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE IN A LOCAL GOVERNMENT AGENCY

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Abstract. Examining employee performance in government agencies is crucial, as it plays a pivotal role in determining the quality of government task execution and public service delivery. This study aims to analyze the influence of human resource competence, work ability, and workload on employee performance at the National Unity and Politics Agency of North Konawe Regency. A quantitative approach with a survey design was employed. The study population—which also served as the sample—consisted of 49 employees selected via a census technique. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire and analyzed through descriptive statistics and multiple linear regression. The results indicate that human resource competence, work ability, and workload simultaneously exert a positive and significant influence on employee performance ($F = 570.496$; $p < 0.001$), with an R^2 value of 0.974. Individually, human resource competence ($B = 0.435$; $t = 6.272$; $p < 0.001$), work ability ($B = 0.427$; $t = 7.313$; $p < 0.001$), and workload ($B = 0.266$; $t = 8.237$; $p < 0.001$) all demonstrated a positive and significant effect. The research model exhibits a very strong relationship ($R = 0.987$) and explains 97.4% of the variation in employee performance.

Keywords: Employee Performance, Human Resource Competence, Local Government, Public Sector, Workload.

Abstrak. Kinerja pegawai pada instansi pemerintah penting dikaji karena berperan dalam menentukan kualitas pelaksanaan tugas pemerintahan dan pelayanan publik. Penelitian ini bertujuan menganalisis pengaruh kompetensi sumber daya manusia, kemampuan kerja, dan beban kerja terhadap kinerja pegawai pada Badan Kesatuan Bangsa dan Politik Kabupaten Konawe Utara. Penelitian menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain survei. Populasi sekaligus sampel penelitian berjumlah 49 pegawai yang ditentukan melalui teknik sensus. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner terstruktur dan dianalisis dengan statistik deskriptif serta regresi linear berganda. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa kompetensi sumber daya manusia, kemampuan kerja, dan beban kerja secara simultan berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja pegawai ($F = 570,496$; $p < 0,001$), dengan nilai R^2 sebesar 0,974. Secara parsial, kompetensi sumber daya manusia ($B = 0,435$; $t = 6,272$; $p < 0,001$), kemampuan kerja ($B = 0,427$; $t = 7,313$; $p < 0,001$), dan beban kerja ($B = 0,266$; $t = 8,237$; $p < 0,001$) berpengaruh positif dan signifikan. Model penelitian memiliki hubungan sangat kuat ($R = 0,987$) dan menjelaskan 97,4% variasi kinerja pegawai.

Kata Kunci: Beban Kerja, Instansi Pemerintah, Kemampuan Kerja, Kinerja Pegawai, Kompetensi SDM.

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INTRODUCTION

Employee performance is a central concern in public-sector human resource management because government agencies are expected to deliver services that are effective, accountable, and responsive to citizens. Performance is generally understood as a multidimensional construct encompassing task, contextual, and adaptive behaviors that contribute to organizational goals (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Carpini et al., 2017; Koopmans et al., 2014). In public organizations, however, performance is influenced not only by employees' individual capabilities but also by the organizational conditions under which work is performed, including workload, work design, and opportunities to use and develop existing capabilities (Kim et al., 2013; Kroll, 2015; Meier & O'Toole, 2013; Ritz et al., 2016).

Human resource competence is one of the individual factors that can support employee performance. Competence encompasses knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behavioral capabilities that enable employees to perform their responsibilities effectively. Le Deist and Winterton (2005) conceptualize competence as a combination of technical, cognitive, social, and behavioral capabilities rather than merely technical knowledge. From an HRM perspective, competence can also be developed through training, learning opportunities, and strategic human resource practices that align employee capabilities with organizational requirements (Farndale et al., 2020; Jiang & Messersmith, 2018; Knies et al., 2018; Noe et al., 2014). Employees with adequate competence are therefore expected to have greater capacity to understand job requirements, solve work-related problems, and perform tasks effectively.

Work ability represents another important factor because competence does not necessarily translate into performance unless employees have the capacity to apply their capabilities to actual work demands. Within the Ability-Motivation-Opportunity framework, employee ability constitutes an important prerequisite for performance because employees require sufficient physical, cognitive, and job-related capacity to execute their responsibilities (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Kellner et al., 2019). Differences in work ability may therefore help explain variations in employee performance, particularly when employees face changing tasks, digital administrative requirements, and demands for problem solving. Research has also associated individual ability with higher performance and adaptive work behaviors (Aguinis & O'Boyle, 2014; Miao et al., 2018; Tims et al., 2015).

In addition to individual capabilities, workload can shape how effectively employees perform their responsibilities. Job Demands-Resources theory explains that workload represents a job demand whose effects depend on the resources available to employees. Manageable demands can support effort and performance, whereas excessive demands may

consume employees' physical and psychological resources and ultimately impair performance (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Bakker et al., 2023; Lesener et al., 2019). This relationship becomes increasingly relevant in contemporary public organizations where employees may simultaneously deal with administrative requirements, digital systems, interdependent tasks, and changing work arrangements (Chong et al., 2020; Parker & Grote, 2022; Wang et al., 2021). Adequate organizational resources and support can nevertheless buffer the negative consequences of demanding work conditions (Demerouti et al., 2015; Nielsen et al., 2017).

Although previous research has established theoretical relationships between competence, work ability, workload, and employee performance, the empirical evidence does not provide a uniformly consistent explanation of how these factors operate together. Existing studies frequently examine competence, ability, or workload as separate predictors of performance, making it difficult to determine their relative and simultaneous contribution within a single analytical model. Moreover, studies based on performance-management and HRM perspectives indicate that the relationship between employee characteristics and performance can be affected by intervening conditions such as engagement, leadership, work design, and employee well-being (Aguinis & Burgi-Tian, 2021; Decuyper & Schaufeli, 2020; Franco-Santos & Otley, 2018; Guest, 2017; Saks, 2022). Thus, the existing literature provides substantial evidence that each factor may be relevant, but it does not sufficiently establish whether human resource competence, work ability, and workload simultaneously and independently contribute to employee performance when examined within the same organizational model.

The inconsistency is also theoretically important. Competence represents what employees know and are capable of doing, work ability reflects their capacity to apply those capabilities in performing job demands, while workload represents the intensity and volume of demands that employees must manage. These constructs are conceptually related but are not interchangeable. Examining them simultaneously can therefore provide a more complete explanation of performance than examining any single factor in isolation. The present study addresses this research gap by testing both the simultaneous and partial effects of human resource competence, work ability, and workload on employee performance.

The contextual gap concerns the limited evidence regarding how these relationships operate in local government agencies, particularly in regional Indonesian institutions with specific administrative responsibilities and resource constraints. Public-sector employees work within institutional environments that differ from private organizations in terms of bureaucratic procedures, accountability requirements, role structures, and service responsibilities. The

National Unity and Political Agency of North Konawe Regency is responsible for functions related to public administration, social-political coordination, and support for regional governance. Preliminary observations in this agency identified several performance-related conditions, including delays in completing tasks, differences in employees' ability to manage digital administration, uneven mastery of job-related responsibilities, and workload pressure associated with task complexity and limited staffing.

These conditions make the agency a relevant setting for examining the relationship among competence, work ability, workload, and employee performance. The contextual issue is not simply that the agency has performance problems, but that employees are required to perform within a combination of individual capability differences and workload conditions that may influence how effectively their responsibilities are carried out. Evidence from this setting can therefore complement existing research by showing whether relationships established in broader HRM and organizational-behavior literature are also observable within a local government institution in North Konawe Regency.

Based on these research and contextual gaps, this study aims to analyze the simultaneous and partial effects of human resource competence, work ability, and workload on employee performance at the National Unity and Political Agency of North Konawe Regency. Specifically, the study examines whether human resource competence, work ability, and workload jointly affect employee performance and whether each variable has a significant individual effect. By integrating the three factors within a single model, the study seeks to provide empirical evidence for public-sector human resource management and to identify factors that can be considered in efforts to improve employee performance in local government institutions.

METHOD

This study used a quantitative explanatory design to test the relationships among human resource competence, work ability, workload, and employee performance. The research was conducted at the National Unity and Political Agency of North Konawe Regency. The population consisted of all 49 employees, and because the population was relatively small, the study used a census technique by including all employees as respondents. This approach ensured that the findings reflected the whole employee population in the agency rather than a sampled subset.

Data were collected through a structured questionnaire using a Likert-type scale. Human resource competence was measured through items reflecting knowledge, technical skills, work attitudes, and adaptability. Work ability was measured through items capturing employees' capacity to complete work efficiently, accurately, and according to job standards. Workload was measured through task volume, task complexity, time pressure, and responsibility load. Employee performance was measured through quality of work, quantity of work, timeliness, responsibility, and cooperation, consistent with individual work performance measurement literature (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015; Carpini et al., 2017; Koopmans et al., 2014).

The data were analyzed using SPSS 25. Prior to hypothesis testing, the instrument was examined through validity and reliability tests, followed by classical assumption tests to ensure that the data met the requirements for multiple linear regression. Normality was assessed using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, multicollinearity was examined using tolerance and variance inflation factor (VIF) values, and heteroskedasticity was assessed using the Glejser test. A significance level of 5% ($\alpha = 0.05$) was used as the basis for statistical decision-making. Multiple linear regression was employed to examine the effects of human resource competence (X1), work ability (X2), and workload (X3) on employee performance (Y). The regression model was specified as follows:

$$Y = a + b_1X_1 + b_2X_2 + b_3X_3 + e$$

where Y represents employee performance, a represents the constant, b_1 , b_2 , and b_3 represent the regression coefficients of human resource competence, work ability, and workload, respectively, X_1 , X_2 , and X_3 represent the independent variables, and e represents the error term.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using the partial t-test and simultaneous F-test. The t-test was used to determine whether each independent variable had a statistically significant effect on employee performance individually. A hypothesis was supported when the p-value was less than 0.05, whereas a p-value greater than or equal to 0.05 indicated that the hypothesis was not supported. The F-test was used to determine whether human resource competence, work ability, and workload jointly had a significant effect on employee performance. The regression model was considered statistically significant when the F-test produced a p-value below 0.05. The coefficient of determination (R^2) was also examined to determine the proportion of variation in employee performance explained jointly by the three independent variables. In addition, the possibility of common method bias was considered because the data were collected through self-reported questionnaires, following the recommendations of

Podsakoff et al. (2012). Overall model assessment followed established procedures in quantitative business and management research (Hair et al., 2020; Sarstedt et al., 2020).

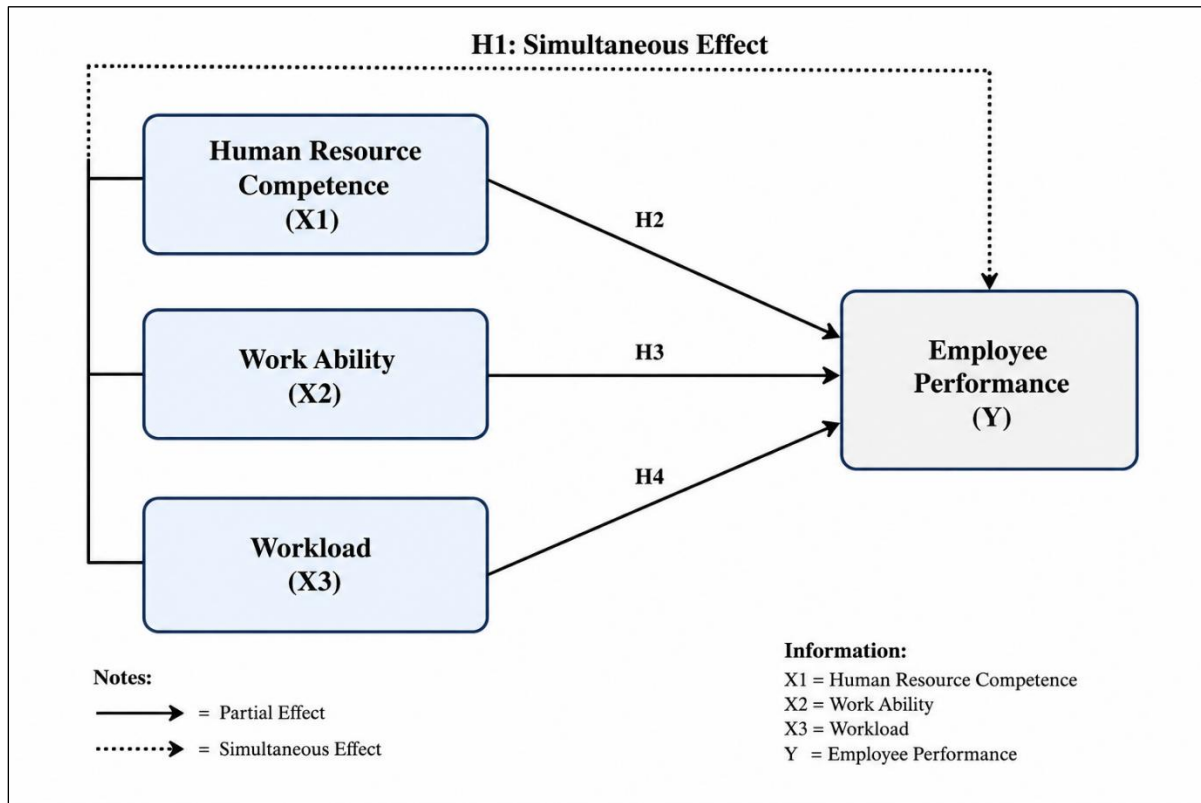


Figure 1. Research framework

RESULTS

The classical assumption tests indicate that the regression model met the necessary assumptions for further analysis. The Kolmogorov-Smirnov test produced an Asymp. Sig. value of 0.200, indicating that the residuals were normally distributed. The multicollinearity test showed tolerance values above 0.10 and VIF values below 10 for all independent variables. The Glejser test also showed significance values above 0.05, indicating that the model did not experience heteroskedasticity. The results are summarized in Table 1.

Table 1. Classical assumption test results

Test	Indicator	Result	Decision
Normality	Kolmogorov-Smirnov Asymp. Sig.	0.200	Normal residual distribution
Multicollinearity	Tolerance: X1 = 0.126; X2 = 0.273; X3 = 0.256	All > 0.10	No multicollinearity problem
Multicollinearity	VIF: X1 = 7.952; X2 = 3.662; X3 = 3.912	All < 10	No multicollinearity problem
Heteroskedasticity	Sig.: X1 = 0.146; X2 = 0.066; X3 = 0.380	All > 0.05	No heteroskedasticity detected

The multiple regression analysis produced the following equation: $Y = 11.050 + 0.435X_1 + 0.427X_2 + 0.266X_3$. All regression coefficients were positive, indicating that increases in human resource competence, work ability, and proportionally managed workload were associated with higher employee performance. The coefficient of determination was high ($R^2 = 0.974$), meaning that 97.4% of the variance in employee performance was explained by the three predictors included in the model. The remaining 2.6% was explained by factors outside the model.

Table 2. Multiple regression results

Predictor	B	t	p-value	Decision
Constant	11.050	-	0.000	-
Human Resource Competence (X1)	0.435	6.272	0.000	Supported
Work Ability (X2)	0.427	7.313	0.000	Supported
Workload (X3)	0.266	8.237	0.000	Supported

Table 3. Model summary and simultaneous test

Statistic	Value	Interpretation
R	0.987	Very strong relationship between predictors and employee performance
R Square	0.974	The model explains 97.4% of employee performance variance
F-statistic	570.496	The regression model is statistically significant
F significance	0.000	The simultaneous effect is significant at $p < 0.05$

The simultaneous test showed an F-statistic of 570.496 with a significance value of 0.000. This result indicates that human resource competence, work ability, and workload simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Therefore, H1 is supported. The partial test also showed that human resource competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($B = 0.435$; $t = 6.272$; $p = 0.000$), supporting H2. Work ability has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($B = 0.427$; $t = 7.313$; $p = 0.000$), supporting H3. Workload also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($B = 0.266$; $t = 8.237$; $p = 0.000$), supporting H4. These results indicate that each predictor contributes to improving employee performance in the agency.

Table 4. Summary of hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	HR competence, work ability, and workload simultaneously affect employee performance.	Supported
H2	HR competence positively affects employee performance.	Supported
H3	Work ability positively affects employee performance.	Supported
H4	Workload positively affects employee performance.	Supported

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that human resource competence, work ability, and workload jointly contribute to employee performance at the National Unity and Political Agency of North Konawe Regency. Rather than functioning as isolated determinants, the three factors appear to operate in relation to the characteristics of work in the agency, which involves administrative coordination, preparation of official documents, data management, program implementation, and support for regional social-political governance. These tasks require employees to understand administrative procedures, process information accurately, coordinate with different parties, and complete assignments within specified deadlines. The simultaneous effect therefore suggests that employee performance in this setting is closely related to the alignment between employees' capabilities and the demands attached to their administrative and coordination responsibilities. This interpretation extends the AMO perspective by showing that ability-related factors become meaningful when they are matched with the actual work demands encountered in a local government agency (Bos-Nehles et al., 2023; Kellner et al., 2019).

Human resource competence had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. In this agency, competence is particularly relevant because employees perform tasks that require familiarity with government procedures, administrative documentation, reporting requirements, and digital information systems. Errors in preparing documents, recording data, or following administrative procedures can affect the completion of programs and coordination with other government units. Employees with stronger knowledge and technical skills are therefore better positioned to complete administrative work accurately and respond to changing procedural requirements. Competence is also important because the agency's responsibilities involve issues that may change according to regional political and social conditions. Employees need not only procedural knowledge but also the ability to adapt their work to emerging institutional demands.

This finding is consistent with competence-based HRM research, which emphasizes that knowledge, skills, and behavioral capabilities provide the foundation for effective task execution (Le Deist & Winterton, 2005; Farndale et al., 2020; Noe et al., 2014). However, the present finding provides a more specific interpretation for the local-government context. Competence matters not simply because competent employees are generally more productive, but because the agency's work requires employees to translate regulatory requirements and organizational instructions into concrete administrative outputs. Training in digital

administration, document management, reporting procedures, and task-specific regulations may therefore have a direct relevance to performance improvement in this agency.

Work ability also showed a positive and significant effect on employee performance. The finding can be understood from the practical nature of employees' responsibilities. Employees are required to complete several interconnected activities, such as preparing correspondence and reports, entering and processing administrative data, coordinating activities, responding to requests from internal units, and supporting field or program-related activities. The ability to prioritize tasks, use digital applications, maintain accuracy under time constraints, and coordinate with colleagues allows employees to convert their knowledge into actual work results. Thus, work ability represents more than the possession of competence; it concerns whether employees can effectively mobilize their capabilities while performing daily responsibilities.

This distinction is particularly relevant in an administrative government environment. An employee may understand a reporting procedure but still experience difficulty completing the report when several assignments arrive simultaneously, digital systems change, or information from other units is incomplete. The positive relationship between work ability and performance therefore suggests that practical capacity is important for dealing with the operational complexity of the agency. This finding is compatible with the AMO framework, but it also indicates that ability should be understood in relation to actual task execution rather than as an abstract individual characteristic.

Workload had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding requires a contextual interpretation because workload is not necessarily harmful. In the National Unity and Political Agency of North Konawe Regency, employees may handle multiple administrative and coordination responsibilities simultaneously. When the volume and complexity of these assignments remain within employees' capacity, workload may provide clear work priorities, encourage employees to complete assigned responsibilities, and increase their involvement in organizational activities. The positive coefficient can therefore be interpreted as evidence that the workload experienced by employees in this setting may, within the observed range, be associated with greater work engagement and task completion rather than representing predominantly excessive demands.

This interpretation is consistent with the Job Demands-Resources perspective, which distinguishes between manageable job demands that can stimulate effort and excessive demands that consume employee resources (Bakker & de Vries, 2021; Bakker et al., 2023; Lesener et al., 2019). The finding should therefore not be interpreted to mean that increasing

employees' workload will automatically improve performance. For this agency, the more relevant managerial issue is whether task volume, task complexity, deadlines, and employee capacity are appropriately balanced. When several administrative assignments depend on information from other units, for example, workload can become more difficult to manage because delays outside an employee's control can compress the time available for completing the final task. Workload management should consequently consider not only the number of assignments but also their complexity, deadlines, interdependence, and staffing adequacy.

The simultaneous relationship among the three variables provides an important interpretation of performance in this agency. Competence enables employees to understand what must be done and how tasks should be performed; work ability enables them to apply those capabilities in actual situations; and workload determines the demands under which those capabilities must be mobilized. Performance problems may therefore emerge when one of these elements is misaligned. For example, employees may possess adequate administrative knowledge but experience declining performance when they lack the practical ability to manage multiple digital tasks simultaneously. Conversely, employees with sufficient ability may still experience difficulty when task volume and deadlines exceed available staffing. The findings consequently suggest that performance improvement cannot rely solely on training but requires the simultaneous development of employee capabilities and the management of work demands.

The high explanatory power of the model should nevertheless be interpreted cautiously. The three predictors explained 97.4% of the variance in employee performance in the observed data. Because the study involved all 49 employees in one agency and relied on self-reported questionnaire responses, the magnitude of this explanatory power should not be generalized directly to other government institutions. The result is best interpreted as evidence of a strong relationship within the organizational setting studied. Future research involving larger samples and multiple government agencies could determine whether the same pattern remains when organizational differences, leadership, work environment, motivation, organizational culture, and job satisfaction are taken into account.

The practical implications should therefore be aligned with each finding. For human resource competence, the agency should prioritize training and continuous development related to government administration, digital systems, reporting, document management, and regulations directly associated with employees' duties. For work ability, development should emphasize practical task management, problem solving, digital administration, coordination, and knowledge sharing so that employees can apply their competence effectively in daily work.

For workload, managers should conduct periodic workload analysis by considering task volume, complexity, deadlines, interdependence, and staffing availability. These interventions are more appropriate than simply increasing workload because the positive relationship identified in this study does not establish that excessive workload improves performance. Taken together, the findings indicate that improving employee performance in the agency requires an integrated approach that strengthens employee capability while ensuring that work demands remain compatible with available human resources and organizational support.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that human resource competence, work ability, and workload simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the National Unity and Political Agency of North Konawe Regency. The findings indicate that employee performance improves when employees possess relevant competence, have the ability to perform job responsibilities, and receive workloads that are managed proportionally. Partially, human resource competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Work ability also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Workload has a positive and significant effect on employee performance when it is aligned with employee capacity and organizational needs. These findings strengthen the argument that public-sector performance depends on the integration of competence development, ability enhancement, and workload management.

RECOMMENDATIONS

The agency should strengthen employee competence through continuous training, technical skill development, and adaptive capability building. Work ability should be improved through coaching, mentoring, digital administration training, and opportunities for employees to handle tasks that develop practical experience. Workload should be managed through periodic workload analysis, fair distribution of assignments, realistic target setting, and monitoring of task complexity. Future research should expand the model by including motivation, leadership, organizational culture, work environment, and job satisfaction, and should use larger samples across multiple public-sector agencies.

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