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Job Satisfaction Mediation in the Relationship between Competence, Work Environtment, Workload and Employee Performance

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Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the effects of competence, work environment, and workload on employee performance by considering job satisfaction as a mediating variable in a local government institution.

Research Methodology: This study employed a quantitative approach involving 43 employees of the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Probolinggo City, Indonesia. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS.

Results: The findings show that competence, work environment, workload, and job satisfaction have positive and significant effects on employee performance. Competence, work environment, and workload also significantly influence job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationships between competence, work environment, workload, and employee performance.

Conclusions: Job satisfaction serves as an important mechanism connecting organizational factors with employee performance. Strengthening employee competence, improving workplace conditions, and managing workload effectively can enhance satisfaction and performance in public sector organizations.

Limitations: This study is limited to one local government institution with a small sample size, which may affect the generalizability of the findings.

Contribution: This study contributes theoretically by expanding understanding of how individual and organizational factors influence employee performance through job satisfaction. Practically, the findings provide insights for government institutions in developing competency improvement programs, supportive work environments, and effective workload management strategies.

Keywords: *Competence, Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, Work Environment, Workload*

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1. Introduction

Human resources represent a strategic asset that determines organizational effectiveness, particularly in the public sector where employee performance directly influences the quality of public services and administrative effectiveness. Government institutions are increasingly required to optimize employee capabilities and organizational conditions to achieve sustainable performance outcomes (Nathania et al., 2026). Therefore, identifying the determinants of employee performance remains a central issue in human resource management research (Robbins & Judge, 2024; Ali et al., 2024). Employee performance refers to the extent to which employees successfully execute their responsibilities and achieve organizational objectives. In public organizations, high employee performance contributes not only to operational effectiveness but also to institutional credibility and public service quality. Consequently, understanding the mechanisms that shape employee performance requires examining both individual and organizational factors.

Human Capital Theory provides a theoretical foundation for explaining the role of competence in influencing employee performance. The theory emphasizes that employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities represent valuable resources that enhance productivity and organizational outcomes (Becker, 1993). Employees with higher competence are expected to demonstrate better problem-solving abilities, adaptability, and task effectiveness, which ultimately improve performance. In addition, competence may increase job satisfaction because employees who possess adequate capabilities tend to experience greater confidence and control in completing their work. Previous studies support the positive relationship between competence, job satisfaction, and employee performance (Almulhim, 2023; Al-Harazneh et al., 2024). However, inconsistent findings suggest that competence alone may not directly determine performance, indicating the importance of examining mediating mechanisms such as job satisfaction (Mayasari, 2022; Sulastri et al., 2026).

The influence of organizational conditions on employee outcomes can be explained through Organizational Behavior Theory, which highlights the importance of workplace factors in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors. A supportive work environment, including effective communication, organizational support, and adequate facilities, can enhance employees' psychological comfort and motivation. These positive experiences may increase job satisfaction and encourage employees to achieve higher performance levels. Previous research has demonstrated that work environment conditions influence employee satisfaction and performance; however, variations across organizational contexts indicate the need for further empirical examination (Meitiana, 2022; Flannero et al., 2022; Nuraini et al., 2025).

Furthermore, Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory explains how workload influences employee performance through the balance between work demands and available resources. Appropriate workloads may encourage employees to utilize their abilities effectively and achieve optimal performance, whereas excessive workload may create stress and fatigue that reduce job satisfaction and performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Taris et al., 2023). Thus, workload is not merely a quantitative measure of tasks but also a factor affecting employees' psychological responses toward their work. Previous studies have confirmed the relationship between workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance, although differences in organizational settings have produced varied findings (Febriyanto et al., 2023; Hermawan et al., 2024).

Based on these theoretical perspectives, job satisfaction is positioned as a key psychological mechanism connecting competence, work environment, and workload with employee performance. Social and organizational factors influence employees' perceptions and attitudes toward their jobs, which subsequently affect motivation, commitment, and behavioral outcomes. Employees who experience higher job satisfaction are more likely to demonstrate positive work behaviors and improved performance (Robbins & Judge, 2024; Ali et al., 2024). Therefore, examining job satisfaction as a mediating variable provides a more comprehensive explanation of how organizational and individual factors contribute to employee performance (Haeruddin et al., 2026).Despite extensive research on employee performance, several theoretical and empirical gaps remain. First, previous studies have produced inconsistent findings regarding the effects of competence, work environment,

and workload on performance, suggesting that these relationships may depend on contextual factors and intervening mechanisms. For example, Mayasari (2022) found an insignificant relationship between competence and job satisfaction, while Peny et al. (2025) reported a significant effect.

Similar inconsistencies have been identified in studies examining work environment and employee performance (Nuraini et al., 2025; Rahman et al., 2025). Second, previous research has predominantly focused on private-sector organizations, resulting in limited understanding of public-sector contexts. Third, studies integrating competence, work environment, and workload within a single model with job satisfaction as a mediator remain limited (Yasa et al., 2021; Dewi & Harwiki, 2026). The Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency / *Badan Kepegawaian dan Pengembangan Sumber Daya Manusia* (BKPSDM) of Probolinggo City provides an appropriate research context because the institution is responsible for managing civil servant development, competency improvement, and human resource administration. Employee performance within this institution is closely related to the effectiveness of public administration and the quality of government services.

This study contributes to human resource management literature by developing an integrated model that combines Human Capital Theory, Organizational Behavior Theory, and Job Demands-Resources Theory to explain employee performance mechanisms in the public sector. Specifically, this study examines how competence, work environment, and workload influence employee performance directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. The findings are expected to provide theoretical insights into the role of psychological mechanisms in performance formation and practical implications for government institutions in developing effective human resource management strategies. Therefore, this study aims to analyze the effects of competence, work environment, and workload on employee performance through the mediating role of job satisfaction among employees of the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency of Probolinggo City.

2. Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

2.1 Human Capital Theory

Human Capital Theory, introduced by Becker (1993), explains that employees' knowledge, skills, and abilities represent strategic resources that enhance organizational productivity and performance. The theory assumes that investment in employee development increases individual capabilities, which subsequently improves work effectiveness and organizational outcomes. Therefore, employee competence is not only an individual attribute but also a critical resource that determines how effectively employees perform their roles. Within this framework, competence influences employee performance because employees with higher knowledge, skills, and problem-solving abilities are better equipped to complete tasks, adapt to organizational changes, and achieve performance targets. In addition, competent employees are more likely to experience higher job satisfaction because they possess greater confidence, autonomy, and perceived ability to handle work demands effectively. Thus, Human Capital Theory provides a theoretical basis for explaining the direct relationship between competence and employee performance, as well as the indirect relationship through job satisfaction (Becker, 1993; Almulhim, 2023; Simbolon, 2024). In public sector organizations, competence becomes particularly important because government employees are expected to deliver effective and accountable public services. Accordingly, improving employee competence through training and development programs may strengthen both psychological work experiences and performance outcomes.

2.2 Organizational Behavior Theory

Organizational Behavior Theory emphasizes that employee attitudes, perceptions, and behaviors are shaped by interactions between individuals and their organizational environment. The theory suggests that organizational conditions influence employees' psychological responses, which subsequently affect their motivation, commitment, and performance. Among these psychological responses, job satisfaction represents an important mechanism explaining how workplace experiences are translated into behavioral outcomes (Robbins & Judge, 2024). In this study, the work environment is positioned as an organizational factor that influences employee performance through job satisfaction.

A supportive work environment characterized by effective communication, organizational support, and adequate facilities can create positive employee experiences and increase satisfaction. Employees who perceive their workplace positively are more likely to demonstrate higher motivation, engagement, and performance. Conversely, an unfavorable work environment may reduce satisfaction and negatively affect performance outcomes. Therefore, Organizational Behavior Theory supports the proposed role of job satisfaction as a mediator between organizational conditions and employee performance. The theory explains that competence, work environment, and workload do not influence performance solely through objective conditions but also through employees' psychological evaluations of their work experiences (Agustian & Maryadi, 2026; Ali et al., 2024).

2.3 Job Demands-Resources Theory

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory explains that employee outcomes are determined by the interaction between job demands and available resources. Job demands refer to aspects of work that require physical or psychological effort, while job resources refer to factors that support employees in achieving work goals and maintaining well-being (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Within this study, workload represents a major job demand that may influence employee performance and job satisfaction. A manageable workload can encourage employees to utilize their abilities effectively, maintain motivation, and achieve better performance. However, excessive workload without sufficient resources may increase stress, fatigue, and dissatisfaction, which can reduce performance. Thus, the effect of workload depends not only on the amount of work assigned but also on employees' perceptions and ability to manage work demands (Taris et al., 2023).

JD-R Theory provides a foundation for explaining why workload may affect employee performance both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction. When workload is balanced with adequate support and resources, employees are more likely to experience satisfaction and demonstrate improved performance. Therefore, this theory supports the inclusion of workload and job satisfaction within the proposed research model (Pratiwi & Fathurahman, 2026).

2.4 Competence and Employee Performance

Competence represents the knowledge, skills, abilities, and behavioral capabilities that enable employees to perform their responsibilities effectively. Based on Human Capital Theory, employees are considered strategic resources whose accumulated capabilities determine their productivity and contribution to organizational outcomes (Becker, 1993). Therefore, competence is not merely an individual characteristic but a critical capability that allows employees to transform knowledge and skills into effective work performance. Employees with higher competence are more capable of understanding job requirements, solving problems, making appropriate decisions, and adapting to organizational changes. These capabilities reduce errors and improve task effectiveness, which ultimately contributes to higher employee performance. In public sector organizations, competent employees are particularly important because the quality of government services depends heavily on employees' ability to execute administrative responsibilities effectively. Empirical studies support this theoretical argument by demonstrating that competence improves employee productivity, service quality, and task achievement (Almulhim, 2023; Wulandari et al., 2024; Sari et al., 2026). Therefore, employees with stronger competencies are expected to demonstrate better performance outcomes.

H_1: Competence positively affects employee performance

2.5 Work Environment and Employee Performance

The work environment represents the physical and social conditions surrounding employees during work activities. Organizational Behavior Theory suggests that employee behavior and performance are influenced by how individuals perceive and interact with their organizational environment. A supportive work environment provides resources that enable employees to perform effectively and maintain positive work attitudes. A favorable work environment, including adequate facilities, effective communication, supportive leadership, and positive interpersonal relationships, can reduce work barriers and encourage employees to focus on achieving organizational goals. When employees perceive that their organization provides sufficient support, they are more likely to demonstrate

commitment, motivation, and higher work effectiveness. Previous studies confirm that a supportive work environment enhances employee performance by improving motivation, comfort, and organizational attachment (Meitiana, 2022; Rohmatullah et al., 2025). Thus, a positive work environment is expected to strengthen employees' ability to achieve superior performance.

H_2: Work environment positively affects employee performance

2.6 Workload and Employee Performance

According to Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Theory, workload represents a job demand that can influence employee outcomes depending on its intensity and available resources (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017). Workload does not always produce negative consequences; an appropriate workload can function as a challenge that encourages employees to utilize their abilities and achieve higher performance. When workload is aligned with employees' capabilities and supported by adequate resources, employees are more likely to experience meaningful work, increased responsibility, and stronger motivation. These conditions encourage employees to optimize their efforts and improve performance. However, excessive workload without sufficient support may reduce effectiveness by causing fatigue and psychological pressure. Previous findings indicate that properly managed workload contributes positively to employee effectiveness and performance (Tyas & Prasetyo, 2024; Hermawan et al., 2024). Therefore, workload is expected to influence employee performance depending on employees' ability to manage work demands.

H_3: Workload positively affects employee performance

2.7 Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

Job satisfaction refers to employees' positive evaluation of their work experiences, including their perceptions of tasks, workplace conditions, and organizational support. Organizational Behavior Theory explains that employees' attitudes toward their jobs influence their motivation and behavioral responses within organizations. Employees who experience higher job satisfaction are more likely to demonstrate stronger commitment, greater engagement, and willingness to contribute beyond formal responsibilities. Positive feelings toward work encourage employees to invest greater effort, maintain better work quality, and achieve organizational objectives. Empirical evidence shows that job satisfaction significantly improves employee performance because satisfied employees tend to exhibit higher motivation and productivity (Ali et al., 2024; Nuraini et al., 2025). Therefore, job satisfaction is expected to be an important determinant of employee performance.

H_4: Job satisfaction positively affects employee performance

2.8 Competence and Job Satisfaction

Human Capital Theory suggests that employee capabilities influence not only performance outcomes but also employees' psychological experiences at work. Employees with adequate competence are more confident in handling tasks, overcoming challenges, and achieving work goals. This sense of capability reduces work-related uncertainty and increases feelings of accomplishment. When employees perceive that they are capable of performing their responsibilities effectively, they are more likely to experience positive emotions toward their jobs, resulting in higher job satisfaction. Thus, competence may influence satisfaction because employees with stronger capabilities experience greater control and success in their work. Previous studies demonstrate that competence contributes positively to job satisfaction, particularly in organizations where employees' capabilities are closely related to work effectiveness (Peny et al., 2025; Al-Harazneh et al., 2024).

H_5: Competence positively affects job satisfaction

2.9 Work Environment and Job Satisfaction

Organizational Behavior Theory emphasizes that employees develop attitudes toward their jobs based on organizational experiences and workplace conditions. A supportive work environment provides employees with psychological safety, social support, and resources needed to perform their duties effectively. When employees perceive their workplace as supportive and comfortable, they are more

likely to develop positive feelings toward their jobs. Conversely, poor workplace conditions may create dissatisfaction by increasing stress and reducing employees' sense of organizational support. Previous research confirms that workplace quality significantly influences employee satisfaction through improved comfort, motivation, and organizational support (Flannero et al., 2022; Meitiana, 2022).

H_6: Work environment positively affects job satisfaction

2.10 Workload and Job Satisfaction

JD-R Theory explains that workload affects employee well-being through the interaction between job demands and available resources. A balanced workload can provide employees with meaningful challenges and opportunities to demonstrate their abilities, thereby increasing satisfaction. However, excessive workload may exceed employees' resources and create stress, reducing satisfaction. Therefore, workload influences job satisfaction not only through the amount of work assigned but also through employees' perceptions of fairness, manageability, and organizational support. When workload is appropriately distributed, employees are more likely to experience positive work conditions and satisfaction. Previous studies indicate that effective workload management contributes to employee satisfaction and engagement (Febriyanto et al., 2023; Taris et al., 2023).

H_7: Workload positively affects job satisfaction

2.11 The Mediating Role of Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction functions as a psychological mechanism that explains how organizational and individual factors are transformed into employee performance outcomes. Based on Organizational Behavior Theory, employees do not respond directly to workplace conditions; rather, their attitudes and perceptions mediate how these conditions influence their behaviors. First, competence may improve performance indirectly through job satisfaction. Employees with higher competence tend to feel more confident and capable, which increases satisfaction. Higher satisfaction then encourages stronger motivation, commitment, and effort, resulting in improved performance. Second, a supportive work environment may enhance performance through job satisfaction. Positive workplace conditions create favorable employee experiences that strengthen satisfaction. Satisfied employees are more likely to engage actively in their work and demonstrate better performance.

Third, workload may influence performance through satisfaction because workload determines employees' psychological responses toward their jobs. A manageable workload can create a sense of achievement and satisfaction, which subsequently improves performance. Conversely, excessive workload may reduce satisfaction and weaken performance outcomes. Previous studies support the mediating role of job satisfaction in explaining the relationship between organizational factors and employee performance (Peny et al., 2025; Flannero et al., 2022; Rahayu et al., 2025). Therefore, job satisfaction is proposed as an important mechanism within the research model.

H_8: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between competence and employee performance

H_9: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between work environment and employee performance

H_{10}: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workload and employee performance

Based on the theoretical framework and hypotheses development, this study proposes a conceptual framework illustrating the relationships among competence, work environment, workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance. The framework explains that competence, work environment, and workload are considered as antecedent factors that may directly influence employee performance and indirectly affect performance through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The proposed conceptual framework is presented in Figure 1.

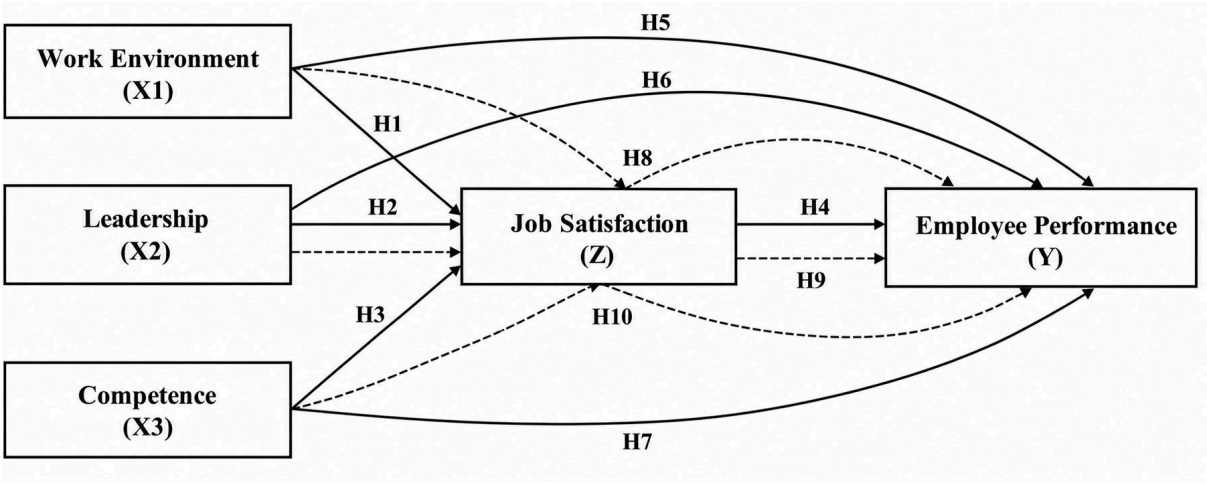


Figure 1. Conceptual framework of the study

Figure 1 illustrates the conceptual framework developed in this study. The framework proposes that competence (X_1), work environment (X_2), and workload (X_3) influence employee performance (Y), both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction (Z). Job satisfaction is positioned as a mediating variable that explains the mechanism through which organizational factors affect employee performance. The direct relationships are represented by the paths from the independent variables to employee performance, while the indirect relationships are represented through job satisfaction. This framework provides the basis for testing the proposed hypotheses regarding the influence of competence, work environment, and workload on employee performance within the local government organizational context.

3. Research Methodology

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative research approach to examine the relationships among competence, work environment, workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance. A quantitative approach was selected because it enables objective measurement of constructs and statistical testing of hypothesized relationships using empirical data (Aditya & Pringgabayu, 2026). This study adopted an explanatory research design to investigate causal relationships among variables and explain the mechanisms through which competence, work environment, and workload influence employee performance, both directly and indirectly through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. The research was conducted at the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Probolinggo City, Indonesia. This research setting was selected because the institution has a strategic role in managing government human resources, where employee competence, workplace conditions, and workload management are important factors affecting organizational effectiveness and public service quality.

3.2 Population and Sample

The population of this study consisted of all employees working at the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Probolinggo City. Due to the limited population size, this study employed a census sampling technique, in which all members of the population were included as respondents. Therefore, the final sample consisted of 43 employees.

The use of census sampling was considered appropriate because the research objective was to obtain a comprehensive understanding of employee perceptions within a specific government institution rather than to generalize findings to a larger population. Furthermore, including the entire population reduces sampling error and provides more accurate representation of organizational conditions.

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using structured questionnaires as the primary data collection instrument. The questionnaire was developed based on previously validated measurement scales from relevant

literature and adapted to the public sector context. All items were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Before data collection, the questionnaire was reviewed to ensure clarity, relevance, and suitability for respondents. Respondents were informed about the purpose of the study and assured that their responses would be used only for academic purposes. Supporting information was also obtained through observation and documentation to provide contextual understanding regarding organizational conditions, employee characteristics, and human resource management practices at BKPSDM Probolinggo City.

3.4 Measurement of Variables

This study examined five latent constructs: competence, work environment, workload, job satisfaction, and employee performance. All measurement items were adapted from previous studies to ensure content validity and consistency with established theoretical frameworks. Competence was measured based on employees' knowledge, skills, and behavioral abilities that support effective job execution. The indicators included understanding of work procedures, technical skills, problem-solving ability, and the ability to complete assigned tasks effectively (Becker, 1993; Almulhim, 2023). Work environment was assessed through both physical and non-physical workplace conditions, including workplace facilities, work comfort, communication quality, organizational support, and interpersonal relationships among employees (Meitiana, 2022; Urfa & Tarigan, 2026).

Workload was measured based on employees' perceived work demands, including workload quantity, task complexity, time pressure, and the alignment between assigned responsibilities and employee capacity (Bakker & Demerouti, 2017; Taris et al., 2023). Job satisfaction was evaluated through employees' positive perceptions of their work experiences, including satisfaction with job responsibilities, workplace conditions, organizational support, and overall job satisfaction (Robbins & Judge, 2024). Meanwhile, employee performance was measured based on employees' ability to achieve work targets and fulfill organizational responsibilities, with indicators covering work quality, work quantity, task completion, effectiveness, and responsibility in carrying out duties (Dessler, 2020).

3.5 Validity and Reliability Testing

The quality of the measurement model was evaluated through validity and reliability assessments using the PLS-SEM approach. Convergent validity was assessed by examining outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicators were considered acceptable when factor loadings exceeded 0.70 and AVE values were above 0.50, indicating that constructs adequately explained the variance of their measurement items. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell-Larcker criterion and cross-loading assessment. A construct was considered to have adequate discriminant validity when the square root of AVE was higher than its correlations with other constructs and each indicator showed the highest loading on its associated construct. Reliability was assessed using Cronbach Alpha and Composite Reliability (CR). Values exceeding 0.70 indicated satisfactory internal consistency among measurement items. These procedures ensured that the research instruments were valid and reliable before hypothesis testing was conducted.

3.6 Data Analysis Technique

The data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. PLS-SEM was selected because it is suitable for exploratory and predictive research models involving multiple latent constructs, mediation analysis, and relatively small sample sizes (Hair et al., 2021).Unlike covariance-based SEM, PLS-SEM does not require strict assumptions of multivariate normality and is considered appropriate when research focuses on prediction and theory development. Given that this study involved a small sample of 43 respondents and examined a complex model containing direct and indirect relationships, PLS-SEM was considered an appropriate analytical approach. The analysis consisted of two stages.

First, the measurement model (outer model) was evaluated to assess construct validity and reliability. Second, the structural model (inner model) was analyzed to test hypothesized relationships among variables. The structural model evaluation included the coefficient of determination (R^2) to assess

explained variance, predictive relevance (Q^2) to evaluate model predictive capability, and effect size (f^2) to determine the contribution of each predictor variable. Hypothesis testing was conducted using the bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples. Relationships were considered statistically significant when the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 and the p-value was below 0.05.

4. Results and Discussions

4.1 Outer Model Evaluation and Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed by examining the outer loading values and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) of each construct. According to Hair et al. (2022), an indicator is considered valid when its outer loading exceeds 0.70. indicating that the indicator adequately represents the latent construct. Furthermore, a construct is considered to possess satisfactory convergent validity when its AVE value exceeds 0.50. Table 1 presents the results of the outer loading analysis. The findings show that all indicators used in this study have loading factor values above the recommended threshold of 0.70. ranging from 0.721 to 0.981.

The highest loading value was observed for indicator X3.1.1 of the workload construct (0.981), while the lowest loading value was found for indicator Y1.3.1 of the employee performance construct (0.721). Despite being the lowest, this value still exceeds the minimum acceptable threshold, indicating adequate indicator reliability. These results demonstrate that all indicators have strong correlations with their respective latent constructs and are capable of explaining the underlying variables effectively. Therefore, all measurement items meet the criteria for convergent validity and were retained for further analysis. The findings indicate that the measurement model is satisfactory and suitable for subsequent evaluation of discriminant validity, reliability, and structural model assessmen

Table 1. Outer loading results

Variables	statement	Loading Factor	information
Competence	X1.1.1	0.870	Valid
	X1.1.2	0.915	Valid
	X1.2.1	0.855	Valid
	X1.2.2	0.848	Valid
	X1.3.1	0.816	Valid
	X1.3.2	0.814	Valid
Work Environment	X2.1.1	0.776	Valid
	X2.1.2	0.800	Valid
	X2.2.1	0.796	Valid
	X2.2.2	0.831	Valid
	X2.3.1	0.770	Valid
	X2.3.2	0.774	Valid
	X2.4.1	0.807	Valid
	X2.4.2	0.788	Valid
	X2.5.1	0.775	Valid
	X2.5.2	0.841	Valid
	X2.6.1	0.781	Valid
	X2.6.2	0.784	Valid
	X2.7.1	0.862	Valid
	X2.7.2	0.865	Valid
	X2.8.1	0.779	Valid
	X2.8.2	0.819	Valid
	X2.9.1	0.829	Valid

Variables	statement	Loading Factor	information
Work Environment	X2.9.2	0.802	Valid
	X2.10.1	0.825	Valid
	X2.10.2	0.805	Valid
Workload	X3.1.1	0.981	Valid
	X3.1.2	0.905	Valid
	X3.2.1	0.955	Valid
	X3.2.2	0.917	Valid
	X3.3.1	0.817	Valid
	X3.3.2	0.879	Valid
	X3.4.1	0.877	Valid
	X3.4.2	0.959	Valid
Employee Performance	Y1.1.1	0.826	Valid
	Y1.1.2	0.894	Valid
	Y1.2.1	0.904	Valid
	Y1.2.2	0.894	Valid
	Y1.3.1	0.721	Valid
	Y1.3.2	0.767	Valid
Job Satisfaction	Z1.1.1	0.966	Valid
	Z1.1.2	0.885	Valid
	Z1.2.1	0.940	Valid
	Z1.2.2	0.858	Valid
	Z1.3.1	0.909	Valid
	Z1.3.2	0.897	Valid
	Z1.4.1	0.936	Valid
	Z1.4.2	0.901	Valid
	Z1.5.1	0.855	Valid
	Z1.5.2	0.923	Valid

Based on Table 1, all indicators demonstrate loading factor values above 0.70. ranging from 0.721 to 0.981. According to Hair et al. (2022), indicators with loading values greater than 0.70 indicate adequate reliability and strong representation of the underlying construct. These findings suggest that all indicators contribute significantly to their respective latent variables and meet the criteria for convergent validity. Consequently, all indicators were retained for subsequent analyses, indicating that the measurement model is both valid and reliable.

Table 2. Results of Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variables	AVE	Standard	Information
Competence (X_1)	0.729	>0.5	Valid
Work Environment (X_2)	0.649	>0.5	Valid
Work Load (X_3)	0.833	>0.5	Valid
Employee Performance (Y)	0.701	>0.5	Valid
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.824	>0.5	Valid

Based on Table 2 , all constructs exhibit Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above the recommended threshold of 0.50. According to Hair et al. (2022), an AVE value greater than 0.50 indicates that a construct is able to explain more than 50% of the variance of its indicators. Therefore, all constructs in this study satisfy the convergent validity criterion and can be considered valid. These

findings demonstrate that the indicators within each construct adequately represent and measure their respective latent variables.

4.2 Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the cross-loading values and the Fornell-Larcker criterion. Cross-loading analysis evaluates whether each indicator has a higher loading on its respective construct than on other constructs. An indicator is considered to have adequate discriminant validity when its loading on the intended construct exceeds its loadings on all other latent constructs. In addition, the Fornell-Larcker criterion was employed by comparing the square root of the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) for each construct with the correlations between constructs. Discriminant validity is established when the square root of the AVE of a construct is greater than its correlations with other constructs. This indicates that the construct shares more variance with its own indicators than with other constructs in the model. Furthermore, construct reliability was evaluated to assess the internal consistency of the measurement indicators. The results of the reliability assessment are presented in Table 3.

Table 3. Discriminant validity test (Fornell-Lacker Creterium & cross loading)

Variables	Statement	X1	X2	X3	Y	Z	X1	X2	X3	Y	Z
Competence	X1.1.1	0.870	0.129	0.193	0.540	0.433	0.854				
	X1.1.2	0.915	0.313	0.250	0.669	0.519	0.854				
	X1.2.1	0.855	0.234	0.312	0.635	0.526	0.854				
	X1.2.2	0.848	0.184	0.295	0.580	0.384	0.854				
	X1.3.1	0.816	0.254	0.597	0.731	0.665	0.854				
	X1.3.2	0.814	0.168	0.334	0.575	0.437	0.854				
Work Environment	X2.1.1	0.232	0.776	0.472	0.551	0.546	0.258	0.806			
	X2.1.2	0.053	0.800	0.399	0.424	0.461					
	X2.2.1	0.382	0.795	0.552	0.689	0.691					
	X2.2.2	0.228	0.831	0.447	0.554	0.539					
	X2.3.1	0.354	0.769	0.509	0.644	0.685					
	X2.3.2	0.104	0.774	0.312	0.392	0.448					
	X2.4.1	0.239	0.807	0.515	0.594	0.583					
	X2.4.2	0.299	0.788	0.505	0.589	0.574					
	X2.5.1	0.025	0.775	0.224	0.379	0.356					
	X2.5.2	0.169	0.841	0.337	0.521	0.537					
	X2.6.1	0.046	0.782	0.221	0.371	0.354					
	X2.6.2	0.085	0.784	0.362	0.441	0.526					
	X2.7.1	0.311	0.862	0.457	0.620	0.587					
	X2.7.2	0.158	0.865	0.362	0.487	0.462					
	X2.8.1	0.235	0.779	0.544	0.587	0.581					
	X2.8.2	0.226	0.819	0.365	0.552	0.497					
	X2.9.1	0.028	0.829	0.259	0.362	0.356					
	X2.9.2	0.184	0.802	0.365	0.489	0.452					
	X2.10.1	0.284	0.824	0.307	0.520	0.457					
	X2.10.2	0.150	0.805	0.271	0.432	0.400					
Workload	X3.1.1	0.430	0.507	0.981	0.790	0.794	0.403	0.505	0.913		
	X3.1.2	0.390	0.474	0.905	0.755	0.778	0.403	0.505	0.913		
	X3.2.1	0.403	0.533	0.955	0.797	0.788	0.403	0.505	0.913		
	X3.2.2	0.357	0.469	0.917	0.720	0.692	0.403	0.505	0.913		
	X3.3.1	0.353	0.359	0.817	0.634	0.625	0.403	0.505	0.913		
	X3.3.2	0.317	0.453	0.879	0.636	0.664	0.403	0.505	0.913		
	X3.4.1	0.260	0.433	0.877	0.650	0.674	0.403	0.505	0.913		
	X3.4.2	0.412	0.442	0.959	0.771	0.772	0.403	0.505	0.913		
Employee Performance	Y1.1.1	0.700	0.665	0.567	0.813	0.773	0.739	0.654	0.792	0.844	
	Y1.1.2	0.704	0.543	0.706	0.897	0.806	0.739	0.654	0.792	0.844	
	Y1.2.1	0.622	0.602	0.803	0.908	0.839	0.739	0.654	0.792	0.844	
	Y1.2.2	0.677	0.592	0.683	0.899	0.767	0.739	0.654	0.792	0.844	
	Y1.3.1	0.480	0.416	0.608	0.762	0.718	0.739	0.654	0.792	0.844	
	Y1.3.2	0.530	0.466	0.631	0.769	0.685	0.739	0.654	0.792	0.844	
Job Satisfaction	Z1.1.1	0.588	0.579	0.831	0.902	0.966	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.1.2	0.465	0.555	0.712	0.769	0.885	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.2.1	0.505	0.609	0.758	0.828	0.940	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.2.2	0.630	0.587	0.624	0.821	0.858	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.3.1	0.477	0.607	0.677	0.783	0.887	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905

Variables	Statement	X1	X2	X3	Y	Z	X1	X2	X3	Y	Z
Job Satisfaction	Z1.3.2	0.500	0.662	0.739	0.819	0.897	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.4.1	0.593	0.507	0.744	0.837	0.936	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.4.2	0.521	0.652	0.749	0.828	0.900	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.5.1	0.580	0.510	0.583	0.777	0.854	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905
	Z1.5.2	0.511	0.596	0.769	0.848	0.924	0.593	0.648	0.796	0.908	0.905

The cross-loading analysis demonstrates that all indicators load more strongly on their respective constructs than on any other constructs. This result confirms that each indicator adequately represents its intended latent variable and supports the establishment of discriminant validity. In addition, the Fornell-Larcker assessment shows that the square root of the AVE for each construct exceeds the corresponding inter-construct correlations. According to Hair et al. (2022), this condition indicates that each construct possesses sufficient uniqueness and is empirically distinguishable from the other constructs in the model. Consequently, the measurement model satisfies the discriminant validity criteria and is suitable for further structural model evaluation.

Based on Table 4, all variables achieved Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values greater than 0.70. exceeding the recommended threshold. These findings indicate satisfactory internal consistency and confirm that the measurement instruments are reliable in assessing their respective constructs. Consequently, all constructs meet the reliability requirements for subsequent analysis.

Table 4. Reliability test results

Variables	Cronbach Alpha	Composite Reliability	Standard	Information
Competence (X_1)	0.926	0.941	>0.7	Reliable
Work Evironment (X_2)	0.972	0.974	>0.7	Reliable
Work Load (X_3)	0.971	0.975	>0.7	Reliable
Employee Performance (Y)	0.913	0.933	>0.7	Reliable
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.976	0.979	>0.7	Reliable

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was assessed to evaluate the predictive accuracy of the structural model. The R^2 value indicates the proportion of variance in the endogenous construct that can be explained by its predictor variables. As presented in Table 5, the R^2 value for Employee Performance is 0.930. with an adjusted R^2 of 0.922. This result indicates that 93.0% of the variance in employee performance can be explained by competence, work environment, workload, and job satisfaction, while the remaining 7.0% is explained by factors outside the model.

Table 5. R-Square

Variables	R-Square	R-Square Adjusted
Employee Performance (Y)	0.930	0.922
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.798	0.782

According to Hair et al. (2022), this value can be categorized as substantial, indicating a strong explanatory power of the model. Furthermore, the R^2 value for Job Satisfaction is 0.798, with an adjusted R^2 of 0.782. This finding suggests that 79.8% of the variance in job satisfaction is explained by competence, work environment, and workload, whereas the remaining 20.2% is influenced by other factors not included in the study. This result also indicates a substantial level of explanatory power. Overall, the structural model demonstrates strong predictive capability, as evidenced by the high R^2 values obtained for both endogenous constructs.

Table 6. Effect size test results

No	Connection	F-Square
1.	Competence → Employee Performance	1.292
2.	Work Environment → Employee Performance	0.313
3.	Work Load → Employee Performance	0.320
4.	Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.335
5.	Competence → Job Satisfaction	0.392
6	Work Environment → Job Satisfaction	0.328
7..	Work Load → Job Satisfaction	0.904

Effect size (f^2) was assessed to determine the magnitude of the contribution of each exogenous construct to the endogenous constructs. According to Hair et al. (2022), f^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large effect sizes, respectively. As presented in Table 6, Competence demonstrates a large effect on Employee Performance ($f^2 = 1.292$), indicating that competence is the most influential predictor of employee performance in the proposed model. Likewise, Work Environment ($f^2 = 0.313$), Workload ($f^2 = 0.320$), and Job Satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.335$) exhibit moderate to substantial effects on Employee Performance, suggesting that these variables make meaningful contributions to explaining employee performance.

Regarding Job Satisfaction, Competence shows a large effect ($f^2 = 0.392$), indicating that employee competence substantially contributes to enhancing job satisfaction. Similarly, Workload exhibits the strongest effect on Job Satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.904$), highlighting the critical role of workload management in shaping employees' satisfaction levels. Meanwhile, Work Environment also demonstrates a moderate to large effect on Job Satisfaction ($f^2 = 0.328$), indicating its significant contribution to employees' positive work experiences. Overall, the results indicate that all exogenous variables make meaningful contributions to the endogenous constructs, with Competence and Workload emerging as the strongest predictors in the structural model.

Table 7. Q-Square test results

Variables	Q-Square
Employee Performance (*Y*)	0.602
Job Satisfaction (*Z*)	0.598

Predictive relevance (Q^2) was assessed using the blindfolding procedure to evaluate the predictive capability of the structural model. According to Hair et al. (2022), a Q^2 value greater than zero indicates that the model has predictive relevance for a particular endogenous construct. Furthermore, Q^2 values of 0.02, 0.15, and 0.35 indicate small, medium, and large predictive relevance, respectively. As presented in Table 7, the Q^2 value for Employee Performance is 0.602, while the Q^2 value for Job Satisfaction is 0.598. Both values exceed the recommended threshold and are substantially higher than 0.35, indicating strong predictive relevance. These findings suggest that the structural model has a high capability to predict variations in Employee Performance and Job Satisfaction. Overall, the results confirm that the proposed model possesses substantial predictive accuracy and is capable of explaining and predicting the endogenous constructs effectively.

4.3 Hypotheses Testing

The proposed hypotheses were assessed through the evaluation of path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values obtained from the bootstrapping procedure. Following the recommendations of Hair et al. (2022), a relationship is considered statistically significant when the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05 at the 5% significance level. Hypothesis testing was performed for both direct and indirect relationships among the constructs. The direct effects analysis was conducted to examine the influence of competence, work environment, and workload on job satisfaction and employee performance. Furthermore, the indirect effects analysis was carried out to investigate the mediating

role of job satisfaction in the relationships between the independent variables and employee performance.

Table 8. Results of direct effects test

Hypotheses	Effects	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Information
H_1	$X_1 \rightarrow Y$	0.390	6.296	0.000	Sig.
H_2	$X_2 \rightarrow Y$	0.199	3.143	0.002	Sig
H_3	$X_3 \rightarrow Y$	0.254	3.556	0.000	Sig.
H_4	$Z \rightarrow Y$	0.341	3.475	0.001	Sig.
H_5	$X_1 \rightarrow Z$	0.309	3.944	0.000	Sig.
H_6	$X_2 \rightarrow Z$	0.300	3.020	0.003	Sig.
H_7	$X_3 \rightarrow Z$	0.525	6.183	0.000	Sig.

Based on Table 8, the results of the direct effect test indicate that all proposed hypotheses regarding the direct relationships among the research variables are supported. Competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, as indicated by an original sample value of 0.390, a t-statistic value of 6.296 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). Therefore, H1 is accepted, confirming that higher employee competence contributes to improved performance. Similarly, the work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.199, a t-statistic value of 3.143 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.002 (<0.05), supporting H2. Furthermore, workload also demonstrates a positive and significant influence on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.254, a t-statistic value of 3.556 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), indicating that H3 is accepted.

In addition, job satisfaction has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, with an original sample value of 0.341, a t-statistic value of 3.475 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05). Thus, H4 is supported, suggesting that higher levels of job satisfaction contribute to better employee performance. The analysis also reveals that competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, as shown by an original sample value of 0.309, a t-statistic value of 3.944 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05), supporting H5. Moreover, the work environment significantly influences job satisfaction, with an original sample value of 0.300, a t-statistic value of 3.020 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.003 (<0.05), confirming H6. Finally, workload has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction, with an original sample value of 0.525, a t-statistic value of 6.183 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.000 (<0.05). Therefore, H7 is accepted, indicating that appropriate workload management plays an important role in enhancing employee job satisfaction.

Table 9. Indirect effects

Hypotheses	Effect	Original Sample (O)	T Statistics	P Values	Information
H_8	$X_1 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	0.105	2,645	0.008	Sig.
H_9	$X_2 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	0.102	2,153	0.032	Sig.
H_{10}	$X_3 \rightarrow Z \rightarrow Y$	0.179	3,236	0.001	Sig.

Based on Table 9, the results of the indirect effects analysis demonstrate that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationships between competence, work environment, workload, and employee performance. The indirect effect of competence on employee performance through job satisfaction shows an original sample coefficient of 0.105, a t-statistic value of 2.645 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.008 (<0.05). These results indicate that the indirect relationship is statistically significant, confirming that job satisfaction positively and significantly mediates the relationship between competence and employee performance. Therefore, H8 is supported.

Furthermore, the indirect effect of the work environment on employee performance through job satisfaction produces an original sample coefficient of 0.102, a t-statistic value of 2.153 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.032 (<0.05). The findings confirm that job satisfaction acts as a significant mediating

variable in the relationship between work environment and employee performance. Thus, H9 is accepted, indicating that a supportive work environment can improve employee performance through increased job satisfaction.

Similarly, the indirect effect of workload on employee performance through job satisfaction generates an original sample coefficient of 0.179, a t-statistic value of 3.236 (>1.96), and a p-value of 0.001 (<0.05). These results demonstrate that job satisfaction significantly mediates the relationship between workload and employee performance. Therefore, H10 is supported, suggesting that effective workload management contributes to higher employee performance by enhancing employees' job satisfaction. Overall, the mediation analysis confirms that job satisfaction serves as an important mechanism that explains how competence, work environment, and workload influence employee performance. This finding highlights that organizational factors do not only affect performance directly but also operate indirectly by shaping employees' satisfaction levels.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

This study examined the effects of competence, work environment, and workload on employee performance with job satisfaction as a mediating variable among employees of the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Probolinggo City. The findings demonstrate that competence, work environment, and workload positively and significantly influence employee performance. These results indicate that improving employee capabilities, providing supportive workplace conditions, and managing work demands effectively are important factors in enhancing performance within public-sector organizations.

Furthermore, this study confirms that competence, work environment, and workload significantly influence job satisfaction, while job satisfaction positively affects employee performance. The mediation analysis provides an important contribution by demonstrating that job satisfaction functions as a psychological mechanism that explains how individual capabilities and organizational conditions are transformed into performance outcomes. Employees who possess adequate competence, experience supportive working conditions, and perceive their workload as manageable are more likely to develop positive job attitudes, which subsequently encourage higher motivation, commitment, and effectiveness in performing their duties.

The findings extend the application of Human Capital Theory, Organizational Behavior Theory, and Job Demands–Resources Theory by showing that employee performance in the public sector is shaped not only by employees' capabilities and organizational resources but also by their psychological evaluation of work experiences. Thus, job satisfaction should be considered a strategic element in public-sector human resource management because improving satisfaction can strengthen the effectiveness of competency development, workplace improvement, and workload management initiatives.

5.2 Research Limitations

This study has several limitations. First, the research was conducted in a single local government institution, namely BKPSDM of Probolinggo City, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other public-sector organizations with different institutional characteristics. Second, the study involved a relatively small sample size of 43 employees because the research applied a census approach within a limited population. Although this approach represents the entire organization under investigation, future studies with broader samples may provide stronger empirical validation. Third, this study employed a cross-sectional design, which limits the ability to examine changes in employee perceptions and behaviors over time. Future research using longitudinal approaches may provide deeper insights into the dynamic relationship between organizational factors, job satisfaction, and performance. Finally, the study relied on self-reported questionnaire data, which may introduce potential response bias.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Future research is encouraged to examine similar models across multiple government institutions, regions, or public-sector organizations to improve external validity. Researchers may also consider longitudinal designs and larger samples to further investigate how job satisfaction develops as a mediating mechanism between organizational factors and employee performance. From a practical perspective, public-sector managers should implement targeted human resource strategies based on the findings of this study. First, competency development programs should be strengthened through continuous training, technical skill development, and capacity-building initiatives that improve employees' knowledge, problem-solving abilities, and confidence in performing their responsibilities.

Second, workload management should be optimized through balanced task distribution, periodic workload evaluations, and alignment between job demands and employee capacity to prevent excessive pressure while maintaining productivity. Third, government institutions should create supportive work environments by improving workplace facilities, strengthening internal communication, encouraging collaborative relationships, and providing organizational support for employees. Future studies may also incorporate additional factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, employee engagement, organizational commitment, psychological well-being, and digital competency to provide a more comprehensive understanding of employee performance determinants. Comparative studies between public and private organizations are also recommended to identify differences in the mechanisms through which competence, work environment, workload, and job satisfaction influence performance outcomes.

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Author Contributions

MSB contributed to the conceptualization of the research, development of the theoretical framework, methodology design, data analysis, interpretation of findings, and preparation of the manuscript. ANC contributed to data collection, research administration, literature review development, and manuscript revision. NPAN contributed to data validation, analysis support, visualization of research findings, and critical review of the manuscript. All authors have read and approved the final version of the manuscript.

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