Sosioedukasi
JURNAL ILMIAH ILMU PENDIDIKAN DAN SOSIAL
ISSN: 2086-6135 E-ISSN: 2541-612x
Volume 15 No. 4 Desember 2026 https://ejournal.unibabwi.ac.id/index.php/sosioedukasi/index

THE EFFECT OF COMPETENCE AND WORKLOAD ON EMPLOYEE WORK PRODUCTIVITY AT THE DEPARTMENT OF EDUCATION OF SOUTH BURU REGENCY

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ARTICLE HISTORY
Received : 19-05-2026
Revised : 21-07-2026
Accepted : 27-09-2026

KEYWORDS
Competence; Employees; Public Sector; Work Productivity; Workload

ABSTRACT

Employee productivity in local education administration may depend on both the capabilities staff bring to their jobs and the demands they are expected to meet. This study assessed those relationships among personnel of the Department of Education of South Buru Regency, where dispersed service locations create particular coordination needs. Using a quantitative associative-causal design, the researchers analyzed questionnaire responses from 62 of the institution's 166 employees; the sample size was calculated with the Slovin formula. The analysis comprised instrument validity and reliability checks, regression diagnostics, multiple linear regression, individual t tests, an overall F test, and model-fit statistics processed in SPSS. Competence was positively associated with productivity ($t = 3.330$; $p = 0.002$), as was workload ($t = 2.774$; $p = 0.007$). The joint model was significant ($F = 88.105$; $p < 0.001$), with R Square = 0.749 and Adjusted R Square = 0.741. Accordingly, the two predictors accounted for approximately 74.1% of the observed variation in productivity scores after adjustment. The standardized coefficient for competence exceeded that for workload, indicating a stronger relative association in this model. The findings support attention to job-relevant skills, clear task assignments, and proportionate distribution of duties. Because the evidence comes from a single questionnaire-based study, the reported associations should not be interpreted as experimental proof of causal effects.

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INTRODUCTION

In a government office, productivity is reflected in the ability to deliver accurate services within reasonable time and resource constraints. Assessing employees solely by the number of assignments they finish would overlook other essential outcomes, including the reliability of administrative records, responsiveness to service users, and compliance with work schedules. These aspects are particularly relevant to education administration, where delays or mistakes in internal processes can affect the delivery and coordination of educational programs. Employee productivity therefore deserves

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attention as a measure of how effectively an institution converts its available resources into public-service outputs (Robbins, 2020; Wahyuningsih, 2018).

The analysis draws on two perspectives that explain different sides of employee productivity. Within human capital theory, expertise acquired through knowledge and practical skills is treated as an organizational resource with productive value (Becker, 1993). The job demands-resources perspective, in contrast, examines how task requirements shape employee outcomes in relation to the resources available to meet them (Demerouti & Bakker, 2017). Viewed together, these perspectives suggest that the benefits of employee capability depend partly on the conditions under which work is assigned. Competence determines how prepared staff members are to perform their roles, whereas workload concerns the level and organization of the demands placed upon them.

Competence is one component of this relationship. Rather than being limited to formal qualifications, it encompasses the practical knowledge, task-specific skills, judgment, attitudes, and other attributes used in carrying out an assigned role. An employee who understands work procedures and can respond to unexpected problems is better positioned to complete assignments accurately and adjust to changing administrative requirements. In public organizations, these capabilities also inform staff development and evaluations of work quality. On this basis, the study expects stronger competence to be associated with more productive performance (Spencer & Spencer, 2008; Moeheriono, 2009).

A second consideration is the burden and arrangement of assigned work. Workload includes the volume of duties, required standards, and time available for their completion. Its relationship with productivity is not necessarily linear: clear, achievable assignments can provide structure and focus, while demands that exceed an employee's capacity may contribute to exhaustion, errors, and delayed output. Very limited demands may likewise leave working capacity underused. Consequently, the relevance of workload lies not merely in the number of duties assigned but in whether those duties are consistent with employee capacity and institutional support (Munandar, 2010; Gibson et al., 2012).

These issues acquire a distinctive administrative dimension in geographically dispersed regions. The Department of Education of South Buru Regency coordinates school-related services, educational personnel, program administration, and institutional oversight across locations that are not always easy to reach. Its employees must address routine office requirements while also supporting services delivered over a broad and dispersed area. Differences in accessibility, available facilities, and coordination needs can make seemingly similar assignments more demanding. For this reason, understanding staff productivity requires consideration of both individual capabilities and the way the office organizes its work.

South Buru offers a relevant setting for examining that relationship. Education-office employees undertake documentation, maintain educational information, assist school supervision, and respond to administrative requests from service units. Geographic separation creates additional coordination requirements, while the availability of facilities may vary among service locations. These circumstances make it useful to ask whether employees possess the skills needed to complete assignments and whether the amount and structure of those assignments support their output. The present study examines these two dimensions rather than assuming that an increase in work targets alone will improve the delivery of administrative services.

Existing literature provides evidence for considering both explanatory variables. Research attributed to Wahyudi (2021) connects technical competence with the productivity of public employees, and Lestari (2022) relates staff capability to more effective public-service provision. Studies of work demands have likewise reported associations with productivity: Hidayat (2020) addresses workload in public institutions, whereas Safitri (2023) considers the implications of assigning tasks proportionately. Yani (2022) and Giotopoulos et al. (2025) further indicate the relevance of examining employees' capabilities alongside organizational resources and work requirements. These contributions provide a basis for testing the variables within one empirical model.

Nevertheless, conclusions derived from other organizational environments cannot automatically describe an education office serving a dispersed island region. Differences in access, administrative arrangements, and the mix of staff responsibilities may influence how capability and workload relate to output. The specific contribution of this research is therefore contextual and empirical: it evaluates competence and workload together among employees of the Department of Education of South Buru Regency. The analysis seeks to establish the direction and statistical significance of their

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relationships with work productivity and to identify implications for personnel development and the distribution of administrative tasks.

METHOD

A quantitative, associative-causal design was adopted to investigate the statistical relationships between employee competence, workload, and work productivity. This approach enabled the two predictor variables to be evaluated separately and within the same regression model. The investigation focused on personnel working at the Department of Education of South Buru Regency, with questionnaire responses serving as the principal source of measurable information. Although the design was framed as associative-causal, the findings are interpreted as relationships estimated from the observed data rather than proof of causation through an experiment.

The setting was the Department of Education of South Buru Regency in Maluku Province, Indonesia. Its workforce comprised 166 people across civil-service, government contract, and temporary employment categories. Applying the Slovin sample-size formula with a 10% error tolerance resulted in a target of 62 respondents. Data from these 62 employees were used for the subsequent analyses. The calculation specifies the required sample size; it does not, by itself, establish a particular probability-based procedure for selecting individuals.

Information was obtained from two types of sources. A structured questionnaire provided the primary data on the three research variables, while organizational documents and relevant scholarly publications supplied contextual and conceptual material. Questionnaire statements were prepared around the indicators defined for competence, workload, and productivity. Responses were recorded on a five-category Likert scale, allowing the resulting scores to be summarized descriptively and used in statistical testing.

The response options extended from 1 (strongly disagree) through 2 (disagree), 3 (neutral), and 4 (agree) to 5 (strongly agree). For descriptive interpretation, the study grouped variable scores into low, moderate, and high classifications using their mean-score ranges. A larger score denotes greater agreement with statements representing the respective construct; its substantive meaning must therefore be read in relation to the wording of the workload, competence, or productivity items rather than treated as an identical judgment across all three variables.

The regression specification included two independent variables—competence (X1) and workload (X2)—and one outcome variable, employee work productivity (Y). Table 1 identifies the indicators used to operationalize each construct and the corresponding measurement scale.

Table 1. Operationalization of Research Variables

Variable	Indicators	Measurement Scale
Competence (X1)	Task skills; task management skills; contingency management skills; job role environment skills; transfer skills	Likert scale 1–5
Workload (X2)	Work targets; working conditions; work standards	Likert scale 1–5
Work Productivity (Y)	Ability to perform tasks; improvement of work results; work spirit; self-development; quality; efficiency	Likert scale 1–5

Source: Developed by the researcher, 2026.

The data preparation sequence consisted of distributing the questionnaires, collecting completed forms, and organizing responses for analysis. Instrument adequacy was assessed before estimating the main model. The study used Pearson Product-Moment item correlations to examine validity and Cronbach's Alpha coefficients to assess internal consistency. Model diagnostics covered residual normality, heteroscedasticity, multicollinearity, and autocorrelation. These checks were intended to assess whether the available data were reasonably consistent with the assumptions required for interpreting the regression estimates.

Multiple linear regression was applied to estimate the associations of competence and workload with the productivity score. Individual regression coefficients were assessed using t statistics, while an F test evaluated the model's joint significance. The R Square and Adjusted R Square statistics were used to describe the proportion of observed outcome

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variation accounted for by the predictors. Data processing and the reported statistical procedures were conducted in SPSS, version 26.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Of the 62 respondents, 36 (58.1%) were women. The largest age category was 31–40 years (22 employees; 35.5%). A bachelor's degree was held by 44 participants (71.0%), and 20 employees (32.3%) reported 5–10 years of service, the most frequent tenure group. The profile in Table 2 therefore includes many university-educated staff with several years of institutional experience who could report on administrative competence, workload, and productivity.

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	26	41.9
	Female	36	58.1
Age	20–30 years	14	22.6
	31–40 years	22	35.5
	41–50 years	18	29.0
	>50 years	8	12.9
Education	Senior High School	6	9.7
	Bachelor's Degree	44	71.0
	Postgraduate Degree	12	19.3
Length of Service	<5 years	17	27.4
	5–10 years	20	32.3
	11–20 years	15	24.2
	>20 years	10	16.1

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

Table 3 summarizes the observed score distributions. Mean competence was 21.06 (SD = 2.553), with recorded scores ranging from 15 to 25. The workload measure averaged 12.60 (SD = 1.476; range 9–15), while the productivity measure averaged 25.21 (SD = 2.747; range 18–30). Under the study's classification rules, all three measures fell within the high category. These values describe respondents' reported perceptions; by themselves, they do not establish that every employee experienced the same workload or achieved identical levels of output.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics of Research Variables

Variable	N	Minimum	Maximum	Mean	Std. Deviation	Category
Competence	62	15	25	21.06	2.553	High
Workload	62	9	15	12.60	1.476	High
Work Productivity	62	18	30	25.21	2.747	High

Source: Processed primary data, 2026.

All 14 questionnaire items passed the study's validity criterion: item-total correlation coefficients ranged from 0.705 to 0.855, compared with a critical value of 0.250. Cronbach's Alpha was 0.841 for competence, 0.650 for workload, and 0.825 for productivity. Thus, internal consistency was stronger for competence and productivity than for the workload scale, although the latter met the criterion used in the study. Table 4 presents the instrument statistics.

As summarized in Table 4, the residual histogram and P–P plot were considered compatible with normality, and the scatterplot showed no obvious heteroscedasticity pattern. Tolerance was 0.200 and VIF was 4.992 for each predictor, indicating some shared predictor variance but remaining within the adopted threshold. The Durbin–Watson value was 1.700. These assessments support cautious interpretation of the fitted model without ruling out all sources of statistical uncertainty.

Table 4. Instrument and Regression Diagnostic Summary

Aspect	Indicator	Result	Conclusion

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Validity	Item-total correlation	0.705–0.855	All items valid
Reliability: Competence	Cronbach's Alpha	0.841	Very reliable
Reliability: Workload	Cronbach's Alpha	0.650	Reliable
Reliability: Work Productivity	Cronbach's Alpha	0.825	Very reliable
Normality	P–P Plot and Histogram	Residuals followed normal pattern	Normal
Heteroscedasticity	Scatterplot	Random distribution of points	No heteroscedasticity
Multicollinearity	Tolerance / VIF	0.200 / 4.992	No serious multicollinearity
Autocorrelation	Durbin–Watson	1.700	No autocorrelation

Source: Processed SPSS data, 2026.

The estimated unstandardized regression model was expressed as follows:

$$Y = 4.746 + 0.522X1 + 0.752X2$$

Here, Y is the productivity score, while X1 and X2 represent competence and workload. Holding workload constant, a one-point higher competence score corresponded to an estimated 0.522-point increase in productivity. With competence held constant, a one-point higher workload score corresponded to an estimated 0.752-point increase. Both regression coefficients were positive in this sample (Table 5).

Table 5. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
Constant	4.746	1.558	–	–	–
Competence (X1)	0.522	0.157	0.485	3.330	0.002
Workload (X2)	0.752	0.271	0.404	2.774	0.007

Source: Processed SPSS data, 2026.

The separate coefficient tests produced statistically significant results for both predictors. Competence was associated with productivity at t = 3.330 and p = 0.002; workload yielded t = 2.774 and p = 0.007. The corresponding standardized beta coefficients were 0.485 and 0.404. Thus, although workload has the larger unstandardized B coefficient, competence has the higher standardized coefficient within this model. This distinction matters because unstandardized estimates are expressed in the original score units and should not be used alone to rank the predictors' relative contributions. The overall regression was statistically significant (F = 88.105; SPSS significance = 0.000, equivalent to $p < 0.001$). Model fit statistics were R = 0.866 and R Square = 0.749, with Adjusted R Square = 0.741. After adjustment for the number of predictors, the model accounted for approximately 74.1% of the observed variation in the productivity scores of the respondents. The remaining 25.9% was not accounted for by these predictors in the adjusted model and may reflect other influences or measurement variation. Table 6 displays the full summary of model statistics.

Table 6. Model Fit and Simultaneous Test

Model Statistic	Value
R	0.866
R Square	0.749
Adjusted R Square	0.741
Std. Error of the Estimate	1.399
F-value	88.105
Significance	0.000

Source: Processed SPSS data, 2026.

Discussion

The competence coefficient provides evidence of a positive relationship between employee capability and reported productivity in the South Buru education office. The competence construct encompasses performing core tasks, organizing work, dealing with contingencies, operating within one's role environment, and applying skills across situations. Higher scores on these dimensions were associated with higher productivity scores after workload was included in the analysis. This

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pattern corresponds with the competency-oriented perspectives of Spencer and Spencer (2008) and Moeheriono (2009), which place the capabilities used in actual work at the center of effective task performance.

For this institution, the result has a direct administrative interpretation. Employees handle educational records, prepare documents, coordinate services, and respond to requests connected with schools across a dispersed service area. Completing these functions requires more than familiarity with regulations: personnel must organize information, resolve practical problems, and adjust procedures when circumstances change. Staff with a broader repertoire of work skills may therefore be better equipped to sustain output under these conditions. The association is compatible with the findings cited from Wahyudi (2021) and Lestari (2022), while remaining specific to the respondents studied here.

The same result can be considered through human capital theory. Becker (1993) treats accumulated knowledge and skill as resources that can enhance productive activity. In public administration, the value of these resources may appear in fewer processing errors, better coordination, and more dependable responses to service requests—not only in the amount of paperwork completed. Handayani (2018) similarly connects public-sector productivity with the correspondence between employee capabilities and organizational needs. The current estimates are consistent with that reasoning, although the cross-sectional questionnaire cannot establish which particular competency improvement would yield the largest productivity gain. Workload exhibited a positive coefficient as well. This does not imply that increasing the number of assignments will invariably improve performance. In the present data, higher scores on the workload measure were linked with higher productivity after competence was controlled for. Such a relationship may occur when work targets are clearly defined, expectations are understandable, and assigned responsibilities remain achievable. Munandar (2010) addresses the importance of how work demands are managed, while Gibson et al. (2012) relate job requirements to the capacity and resources available for carrying them out. The positive estimate should be interpreted within those conditions.

The three workload indicators—work targets, working conditions, and work standards—are especially pertinent to an education office. Administrative staff must process educational data, assist school services, and meet organizational deadlines while communicating with units in different locations. Well-specified assignments can help coordinate these activities and reduce uncertainty about priorities. Consequently, the positive association observed here may reflect the role of organized demands in directing employees' effort. The study did not directly test whether all workloads were objectively moderate, so that interpretation remains a plausible explanation rather than a demonstrated mechanism.

Findings discussed by Hidayat (2020) and Safitri (2023) likewise connect workload arrangements with public-employee outcomes. The South Buru case adds evidence from a local education institution whose administrative reach extends across an island setting. However, the contribution should be understood as a setting-specific result, not as evidence that employees in every archipelagic office respond in the same manner. Individual job assignments, supervisory arrangements, and differences in accessible resources may modify the relationship and merit examination in subsequent studies.

Particular care is needed when translating the workload result into policy. A positive coefficient at the observed range of scores offers no basis for raising duties indefinitely. If new assignments are added without suitable equipment, time, staffing arrangements, or opportunities for recovery, employee fatigue and mistakes may increase. The present model also does not estimate a threshold beyond which workload becomes harmful or track changes in performance over time. Workload management should therefore focus on proportionality and clarity rather than treating a higher numerical workload as an automatic route to better productivity.

This qualification aligns with the job demands-resources approach outlined by Demerouti and Bakker (2017). The effect of demanding work cannot be separated from the technical, organizational, and social resources employees can draw upon. Competence is one such resource, but infrastructure, guidance, and procedural support may matter as well. Giotopoulos et al. (2025) provide a further basis for considering workload management within public-sector organizational systems. For South Buru, the implication is to examine assignments and available support together, including the coordination needs generated by dispersed educational services.

The joint model offers an additional perspective. With an Adjusted R Square of 0.741, the two predictors jointly accounted for a substantial share of the variability in reported productivity. Their statistically significant coefficients indicate that each contributed information to the model after the other was included. This does not mean that an interaction between

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competence and workload was statistically demonstrated: no interaction term was estimated. Instead, the findings support considering both factors in personnel-management decisions. Skilled employees may face avoidable obstacles under poorly organized assignments, while well-defined tasks can remain difficult when the relevant capabilities are lacking.

Competence had the larger standardized coefficient (beta = 0.485 versus 0.404 for workload). Within this sample and model, it therefore showed the stronger standardized association with productivity. A reasonable administrative response would be to assess which skills are required for recurring functions, identify development needs, and provide training linked to actual duties. Education-data handling, administrative documentation, digital procedures, and interunit communication are relevant examples drawn from the office's responsibilities. The analysis does not establish a causal training effect, but it identifies competence development as a justified area for institutional attention.

Personnel development should be accompanied by regular reviews of how responsibilities are allocated. Geographic dispersion may increase the time required for coordinating with educational units, even when the nominal number of assignments appears comparable. Managers can therefore examine task complexity, deadlines, and access to supporting facilities alongside the volume of work. The objective is to prevent responsibilities from accumulating disproportionately in a few positions and to set expectations that staff can realistically meet while maintaining service quality.

The combined evidence can be positioned alongside the studies cited earlier. Wahyudi (2021) and Lestari (2022) address employee competence in relation to public-sector outcomes; Hidayat (2020) and Safitri (2023) focus attention on work demands. Rather than isolating one explanation, this analysis evaluates the two constructs within a single regression for a regional education office. Its contribution lies in showing how both variables were associated with productivity in South Buru, where distance and coordination are salient features of administrative work. Further comparative studies would be required to determine whether this pattern differs systematically from other regions.

From an organizational perspective, employee capability and task design describe different but connected aspects of productive work. Human capital considerations direct attention to what personnel can do, while workload arrangements influence the demands through which those capabilities are applied. This interpretation is compatible with Becker (1993), Handayani (2018), and Gibson et al. (2012). It should not, however, be taken as evidence that the present model captures every determinant of productivity. Leadership, incentives, the quality of facilities, and organizational practices were not measured as predictors in the reported regression.

These findings suggest a coordinated approach to human-resource management at the Department of Education of South Buru Regency. A competency inventory could first identify the skills required by each unit and the areas where additional guidance or training is needed. Managers could then compare work targets with employees' responsibilities, available tools, and service locations. Periodic reviews would help detect uneven task allocation and assess whether support arrangements remain adequate. Such actions are consistent with the observed associations, while their actual effectiveness would require separate evaluation after implementation.

CONCLUSION

Among 62 respondents at the Department of Education of South Buru Regency, competence and workload were both positively associated with the employee productivity measure. The partial tests returned $t = 3.330$ ($p = 0.002$) for competence and $t = 2.774$ ($p = 0.007$) for workload. The overall regression was significant ($F = 88.105$; $p < 0.001$), and the Adjusted R Square was 0.741. Thus, the two variables accounted for approximately 74.1% of the observed differences in productivity scores after the model adjustment. Competence had the higher standardized beta coefficient, indicating the stronger standardized association in the specified model. These results describe the sampled employees and do not independently establish causality.

The theoretical value of the study is its examination of human capital and work demands within the same public-administration setting. Employee skills and knowledge represent productive resources, whereas workload measures the requirements and conditions under which those resources are used. The observed positive workload coefficient is consistent with the possibility that clearly organized, achievable duties accompany higher productivity, but it should not be interpreted as an unlimited benefit of greater demands. The island-region setting also makes the findings relevant to discussions of personnel management where administrative coordination is geographically dispersed.

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For the education office, one priority is to align employee development with day-to-day administrative responsibilities. This may involve mapping staff capabilities and offering targeted support in digital administration, management of educational records, document preparation, and coordination of school-related services. Competency assessments could also inform task placement and decisions about additional training. The purpose of these measures would be to strengthen employees' ability to perform the functions already assigned to them rather than to introduce training without a clear connection to institutional needs.

A parallel priority is to review the distribution and organization of work across units. Managers could examine actual assignments, adjust concentrations of responsibility, and set deadlines and performance targets that reflect task complexity. They should also consider access to equipment, information systems, and administrative support when allocating duties. The positive workload coefficient does not justify expanding duties without limits; manageable demands and adequate working conditions remain important considerations for maintaining productivity.

Several boundaries to interpretation should be acknowledged. Data were collected from one education office, so the observed pattern cannot be assumed to hold for other regional institutions. The statistical model included only competence and workload, leaving factors such as leadership, motivation, organizational culture, compensation, workplace conditions, and information technology outside the analysis. Moreover, questionnaire-based, cross-sectional evidence does not reveal changes over time or employees' detailed experiences of job pressure. Future studies could examine other education offices, incorporate additional predictors, and combine quantitative measures with interviews. Such extensions would help clarify the conditions under which work demands and employee capabilities are associated with more effective public administration.

ACKNOWLEDGMENT

During the preparation of this work the authors used Artificial Intelligence (AI) in order to improve the language and readability of the manuscript. After using this tool, the authors reviewed and edited the content as needed and take full responsibility for the content of the publication.

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