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The Impact of Work Environment and Competence on Employee Performance



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KEYWORDS	ABSTRACT
<p>Keywords: Work Environment; Competence; Employee Performance</p> <p>Conflict of Interest Statement: The author(s) declares that the research was conducted in the absence of any commercial or financial relationships that could be construed as a potential conflict of interest.</p> <p>Copyright © 2023 AHRMR. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>Purpose: This study aims to empirically examine the impact of the work environment and employee competence on employee performance at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Tana Toraja Regency. The research hypothesizes that both the work environment and competence positively and significantly affect employee performance.</p> <p>Research Design and Methodology: The study employed a saturated sampling method involving all 40 employees from the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Tana Toraja Regency. Primary data was collected directly from the respondents through questionnaires. Data analysis included descriptive statistics, validity and reliability tests, and hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression, t-tests, f-tests, and the coefficient of determination.</p> <p>Findings and Discussion: The findings indicate that both the work environment and employee competence positively and significantly affect employee performance, individually and collectively. This suggests that a supportive work environment and high employee competence are crucial for enhancing performance at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in Tana Toraja Regency.</p> <p>Implications: The results highlight the importance of fostering a positive work environment and enhancing employee competencies to improve performance. This study provides practical insights for public sector organizations and suggests that future research should explore additional factors and settings to gain a more comprehensive understanding of employee performance determinants.</p>

Introduction

Human resources are the most critical asset in human resource management (HRM). Effective HRM involves strategically placing employees according to their skills and responsibilities to maximize their productivity and contribution to achieving organizational goals (Mangkunegara, 2014). The balance between utilizing human resources and managerial capabilities is crucial for any organization to grow productively and sustainably. Developing a productive workforce requires a structured approach to employee management, encompassing recruitment, selection, classification, and placement based on individual abilities, expertise, and skills (Parashakti et al., 2020). This is especially pertinent for public servants, given their dual role as state employees and public servants responsible for implementing government duties and national development. To support this, the government enacted Law No. 5 of 2014 on the Civil Service (ASN) to ensure a professional public service workforce, emphasizing continuous development and competency enhancement through education and training (Handayani, 2019).

Recent studies have highlighted the importance of developing human resources to improve operational performance in the government and private sectors. According to Sinaga (2018), improving the quality of human resources must be planned, targeted, and sustainable to enhance capabilities and professionalism. The Indonesian government has prioritized enhancing the competencies of civil servants through a structured approach that includes technical, managerial, and socio-cultural competencies (Peraturan Pemerintah No. 11, 2017). These competencies are critical for fostering a workforce capable of meeting public service demands and supporting national unity. Mangkunegara (2016) identified five core competencies for human resources: knowledge, skills, self-concept and values, personal characteristics, and motives. These competencies are necessary for creating a dedicated and service-oriented public servant workforce. However, there are challenges. The reality only sometimes meets public expectations for high-quality service delivery from civil servants. There is a gap between increasing public awareness and education levels and the readiness of government apparatus to meet these expectations. Consequently, special attention is needed to enhance the competencies of civil servants, mainly through training and development programs aligned with competency standards required by ongoing reforms and globalization (Cahyono, 2019). Competence is directly linked to performance, which includes knowledge, skills, abilities, and personal characteristics that affect job performance (Hasibuan & Hasibuan, 2016). The work environment is critical in influencing organizational performance. A conducive work environment enhances employee comfort, reduces fatigue, and improves job satisfaction, leading to higher performance. Suhardi (2019) emphasizes that physical and non-physical work environments significantly impact employee performance. A well-managed work environment that fosters safety, comfort, and security can increase employee productivity and, ultimately, organizational effectiveness. However, if the work environment is supportive, it can positively impact employee concentration and performance (Stewart, 2019).

Despite extensive research on the impact of work environment and competencies on employee performance, there are inconsistencies in the findings. For example, studies by Elizar & Tanjung (2018) and Triastuti (2019) suggest that both work environment and competencies positively influence employee performance. Conversely, Pasaribu (2019) found that the work environment does not significantly affect employee performance. Similarly, Ratnasari (2016) concluded that competencies do not significantly influence employee performance. These mixed findings highlight a gap between theoretical assumptions and empirical evidence regarding the role of work environment and competencies in enhancing employee performance. This gap suggests a need for further research, the results of which could significantly impact our understanding of the role of work environment and competencies in enhancing employee performance.

Based on the identified gaps, this study examines the influence of work environment and competencies on employee performance in a specific organizational context. The research questions focus on whether a conducive work environment and high competency levels significantly improve employee performance. The study aims to provide a comprehensive understanding of these factors in enhancing performance, particularly in the public sector, and to offer practical recommendations for policymakers and organizational leaders. The novelty of this research lies in its integrated approach, which examines both environmental and competency factors and their combined impact on employee performance, thereby contributing to a more nuanced understanding of HRM practices in public administration.

Literature Review

Human Resources as the Key Asset in Organizations

Human resources (HR) are often regarded as the most critical asset in any organization, whether a government institution or a private company. HR represents productive individuals who drive organizational activities, functioning as assets that need continuous development and training (Mangkunegara & Agustine, 2016). The concept of HR can be broadly divided into two perspectives: the macro and the micro. At a macro level, HR encompasses the entire working-age population within a specific geographical area. This includes all individuals capable of contributing to economic activities, thus forming the labor market and influencing national productivity and economic

development. At a micro level, HR refers to the individuals employed within an organization. These employees considered the organization's workforce, directly contribute to achieving the company's objectives by effectively performing their roles and responsibilities.

The centrality of HR in an organization is not just a matter of staffing but also of strategic importance. HR serves as the key determinant in an organization's development and competitiveness. Employees are the ones who execute the organization's strategic plans, think creatively to solve problems, and make decisions that influence the organization's direction. Therefore, managing human resources effectively is about fulfilling staffing needs, achieving individual goals with organizational objectives, and fostering an environment that encourages innovation, collaboration, and high performance. Hasibuan (2016) defines human resource management (HRM) as the science and art of managing the relationships and roles of employees in a way that effectively and efficiently helps achieve the goals of the company, its employees, and society. This definition emphasizes the dual role of HRM in balancing the needs of the organization with the aspirations of its workforce.

The Scope of Human Resource Management and Its Importance

As discussed by Chandra (2016), the scope of HRM covers a range of activities designed to enhance employee capabilities and performance. These activities are categorized into three main stages: Pre-Service Training, In-Service Training, and Post-Service Training. Pre-service training involves providing foundational skills and knowledge to new or prospective employees, ensuring they are adequately prepared to assume their roles. This phase is crucial for setting the tone for future performance, as it equips employees with the tools to succeed from the outset. In-service training focuses on current employees, aiming to enhance their skills and competencies while actively engaging in their roles. This continuous learning process is vital for adapting to changes in the workplace, such as new technologies or processes. Lastly, Post-Service Training is geared toward employees nearing retirement, helping them transition smoothly out of the workforce. This structured approach to training reflects a strategic perspective on HRM, emphasizing the need for continuous development throughout an employee's career. It acknowledges the dynamic business environment, requiring ongoing adaptation and learning. Such training programs are designed not just to improve individual employee performance but also to foster organizational resilience by maintaining a skilled, knowledgeable, and adaptable workforce.

Factors Influencing Effective Leadership and Employee Performance

Effective leadership is another critical component in the HR management framework, influencing employee morale, job satisfaction, and overall performance. According to John Frech and Betram Raven, as cited in Hasibuan (2016), several factors enable managers to lead their subordinates effectively. These factors include the basic needs of employees (such as the need for food, social interaction, and job satisfaction), the limitations that drive people to collaborate, and the desires to survive, gain power, receive praise, and gain recognition. Leaders who understand these factors are better equipped to create a conducive work environment that fosters collaboration, enhances job satisfaction, and motivates employees to perform at their best. Leadership styles, particularly transformational leadership, are vital in shaping organizational culture and influencing employee behavior. A transformational leader inspires and motivates employees to exceed their expectations by fostering an environment of trust, encouragement, and respect. This leadership style is particularly effective when employees must be highly engaged and committed to achieving organizational goals. It encourages innovation and creativity by allowing employees to explore new ideas and approaches.

Work Environment and Its Impact on Employee Performance

The work environment significantly impacts employee productivity and job satisfaction. A conducive work environment provides employees the necessary tools, resources, and conditions to perform their tasks efficiently. According to Tulenan (2015) and Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017), a good work environment encompasses the physical setup, such as tools and materials, and the broader organizational context, including work methods and interpersonal relationships. An optimal work environment promotes productivity, enhances job satisfaction, and reduces turnover rates by creating

a space where employees feel safe, comfortable, and valued. Conversely, a poor work environment can lead to decreased motivation, increased absenteeism, and reduced productivity. Agbozo et al. (2017) found that employees working in suboptimal conditions often experience stress and burnout, negatively affecting their performance. Therefore, maintaining a healthy work environment is critical for sustaining high performance and ensuring employee well-being.

Hypotheses

Relationship Between Work Environment and Employee Performance

The work environment refers to the physical and non-physical conditions that surround employees during their work. It includes physical aspects such as office layout, lighting, temperature, noise levels, and ergonomic design, as well as non-physical elements like organizational culture, leadership style, team dynamics, and communication patterns (Tulenan, 2015; Al-Omari & Okasheh, 2017). A positive work environment can create a conducive atmosphere for employees to perform their tasks effectively, leading to higher job satisfaction, reduced absenteeism, and improved performance. Conversely, a negative work environment can lead to stress, decreased motivation, and poor performance.

According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, factors in the workplace that cause satisfaction (motivators) and dissatisfaction (hygiene factors) play a crucial role in influencing employee motivation and performance (Herzberg, 1966). A conducive work environment, which addresses both motivators (recognition and achievement) and hygiene factors (such as safe working conditions and adequate lighting), can enhance employee performance by increasing job satisfaction and reducing job-related stress. Moreover, the Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model posits that a favorable work environment provides necessary resources (e.g., support from colleagues and adequate equipment) that help employees manage their job demands, thereby reducing burnout and enhancing performance (Bakker & Demerouti, 2007).

Numerous studies have provided empirical support for the positive impact of the work environment on employee performance. For instance, Agbozo et al. (2017) found that a well-structured work environment significantly enhances employee productivity and reduces organizational turnover rates. Similarly, a study by Chandrasekar (2011) revealed that a positive work environment positively affects employees' motivation and productivity, boosting overall organizational performance. The findings suggested that employees are more likely to be engaged and perform better when they perceive their work environment as supportive and conducive. Furthermore, Al-Omari and Okasheh (2017) examined the impact of workplace design on employee performance. They found that ergonomic office designs, adequate lighting, and reduced noise levels significantly improve employee concentration and efficiency. Their study concluded that a well-designed work environment minimizes physical strain and enhances psychological well-being, leading to higher performance levels. A study by El-Zeiny (2013) indicated that the physical work environment significantly affects employee satisfaction and performance in governmental organizations. The study highlighted that adequate office space, ventilation, and lighting are essential to creating a productive work environment. Employees who perceive their work environment as well-organized and comfortable tend to perform better, as they are less distracted and more focused on their tasks.

H₁: The work environment has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Relationship Between Employee Competence and Employee Performance

Employee competence refers to the combination of skills, knowledge, abilities, and attitudes that an individual possesses that are necessary for effectively performing job tasks (Wibowo, 2008; Sutrisno, 2016). Competence is critical in determining employee performance because it directly impacts an employee's ability to complete tasks accurately, efficiently, and to the required standard. Competent employees are more likely to understand their job roles, apply their skills effectively, and adapt to changing job demands, contributing to higher performance levels. Competence can be broken down into various components: technical skills, problem-solving abilities, interpersonal skills, and organizational knowledge. According to the Human Capital Theory, employees' skills and knowledge

are forms of capital that can be developed and invested in to improve productivity (Becker, 1964). This theory suggests that organizations that invest in developing their employees' competencies through training, education, and professional development will likely see significant returns regarding enhanced employee performance and organizational effectiveness. The competency-based approach emphasizes aligning employee competencies with organizational goals to achieve optimal performance. This approach posits that employees with the required competencies are better equipped to meet organizational expectations, leading to improved performance outcomes (Boyatzis, 1982). The firm's Resource-Based View (RBV) also highlights that employee competencies are valuable, rare, and difficult-to-imitate resources that can provide a competitive advantage (Barney, 1991). Thus, enhancing employee competencies can lead to superior organizational performance.

Several studies have demonstrated the positive impact of employee competence on performance. For example, a study by Cacciattolo (2015) found that employees with higher levels of competence were more likely to demonstrate higher job performance and contribute positively to organizational outcomes. The study emphasized the importance of continuous training and development programs to enhance employee competencies, which, in turn, improves performance. Similarly, a study conducted by Ahmad and Schroeder (2003) in the manufacturing sector revealed that employees' technical competencies significantly affect their ability to perform tasks efficiently and effectively. The study suggested that organizations that invest in training programs to enhance employees' technical skills are more likely to achieve higher levels of performance and productivity. Furthermore, a study by Armstrong and Baron (1998) highlighted the critical role of competencies in performance management systems. Their research demonstrated that competency frameworks are practical tools for assessing employee performance, identifying skill gaps, and providing targeted training interventions. The findings indicated that employees with the necessary competencies for their roles are more likely to meet or exceed performance expectations, resulting in better organizational performance. Choo et al. (2017) found that clinical competence among healthcare professionals significantly impacts patient care quality and organizational efficiency. The study emphasized the need for continuous professional development to maintain high competence levels and improve healthcare outcomes. This evidence suggests that competence is crucial for individual performance and achieving broader organizational goals.

H₂: Employee competence has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Research Design and Methodology

This type of research is quantitative descriptive research, which aims to determine the degree of relationship and influence between two or more variables. The respondents in this study were employees of the Ministry of Religion of Tana Toraja Regency, totaling 40 employees. The side technique used in this research is nonprobability sampling, namely saturated sampling. Sugiyono (2015) states that saturated sampling is a sampling technique that uses all population members as samples. The data source used is primary data, namely data obtained directly from the respondents by distributing questionnaires (research questionnaires) to the object to be studied, in this case, employees of the Ministry of Religion Office of Tana Toraja Regency and filled in directly. To measure each variable indicator in this study, a Likert scale was used with five alternative answers, namely: Strongly agree (SS) with a score of 5, Agree (S) with a score of 4, Disagree (KS) with a score of 3, Disagree (TS) with a score of 2 and Strongly Disagree (STS) with a score of 1. The data that has been collected will be analyzed through several stages of testing. The first stage is to conduct a descriptive statistical test. The second stage is the research data instrument test (validity test, reliability test). The third stage is the classic assumption test (normality, autocorrelation, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity tests). The fourth stage tests all hypotheses proposed in this study, which will be proven through a partial test (t-test), simultaneous test, and coefficient of determination test.

Table 1. Operational Definition and Measurement

Variable	Code	Indicator	Major Reference
Work Environment	X1.1	Facility	(Manurung, 2019; Yulius, 2019)
	X1.2	Comfort	
	X1.3	Hygiene	
	X1.4	Safety	
Competence	X2.1	Skills	(Syam et al., 2021; Yuningsih, 2019)
	X2.2	Knowledge	
	X2.3	Personality characteristics	
	X2.4	Motivation	
	X2.5	Self-concept	
Employee Performance	Y1.1	Service orientation	(Agung, 2021; Suhardi, 2019)
	Y1.2	Integrity	
	Y1.3	Commitment	
	Y1.4	Discipline	
	Y1.5	Cooperation	

Source: Data analyzed, 2023

Findings and Discussion

Findings

Respondent characteristics are used to determine the diversity of respondents based on gender, age, education, and length of service. This is expected to provide a relatively clear picture of the respondents' condition and relationship to the study's problems and objectives. Table 2 shows that the majority of respondents who participated were male. The relationship between male employees tends to have high morale and hard work, and responsibility for work is very high even though they do not have much experience in their work. In addition, employees can be more creative and productive at a young age by creating new ideas to improve their performance. Based on age, the respondents of the Ministry of Religion Employees of Tana Toraja Regency are most respondents, with an average age of 26-30 years old, which is a productive age. This shows that in that age range, the spirit of work. Based on education, D3 education respondents were five respondents or 12.50%, most respondents were S1 as many as 28 respondents or 70.00%, > S2 as many as seven respondents or 17.50%. This indicates that the average education is S1. Based on the length of work, respondents have worked for less than 2 to 5 years as many as 27 respondents or 67.50%; this means that employees are considered to have mastered their work and are accustomed to the work environment so that the performance of employees is good.

Table 2. Respondent Demographic Data

Variable	Measurement	n	%
Gender	Man	26	65.00
	Woman	14	35.00
Age (Years)	<25 Year	8	20.00
	26-30 Year	19	47.50
	31-40 Year	11	27.50
	>41 Year	2	5.00
Education Level	Diploma	5	12.50
	Bachelor	28	70.00
	Master	7	17.50
Work-length (Years)	<1 Year	1	2.50
	2-5 Year	27	67.50
	>6 Year	12	30.00

Source: Source: Data analyzed, 2023

The second stage is a data quality test consisting of validity and reliability tests. This test is carried out to test the validity and reliability of each statement item when measuring variables. The validity test is calculated by looking at the corrected item-total correlation number, provided that the condition is said to be valid if it has a corrected item-total correlation value > 0.30. Reliability testing in this study uses Cronbach's alpha formula. The test results can be seen in Table 3.

Table 3. Validity and Reliability Test Results

Variable	Instrument	r-calculated	Cronbach Alpha	Result
X1	X1.1	0.723	0.602	Valid dan reliable
	X2.2	0.725		Valid dan reliable
	X2.3	0.747		Valid dan reliable
	X2.4	0.477		Valid dan reliable
X2	X2.1	0.701	0.601	Valid dan reliable
	X2.2	0.718		Valid dan reliable
	X2.3	0.567		Valid dan reliable
	X2.4	0.541		Valid dan reliable
	X2.5	0.578		Valid dan reliable
Y	Y1.1	0.705	0.793	Valid dan reliable
	Y1.2	0.723		Valid dan reliable
	Y1.3	0.884		Valid dan reliable
	Y1.4	0.771		Valid dan reliable
	Y1.5	0.603		Valid dan reliable

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

The data in Table 3 shows that all indicators used to measure the variables used in this study have a correlation coefficient or corrected item-total correlation value greater than 0.30, so all indicators of this research variable are valid. Meanwhile, the reliability test results in the table show that all variables in the study, namely price and promotion on customer satisfaction, have a reasonably significant alpha coefficient of > 0.600, so it can be said that all concepts measuring each variable from the questionnaire are reliable, which means that the questionnaire used in this study is reliable.

The third stage is testing all hypotheses through multiple linear regression analysis. Multiple regression analysis is a linear relationship between two or more independent variables and dependent variables. Table 4 presents the results of multiple linear regression testing on work environment variables (X1), competence (X2), and employee performance (Y).

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	-.819	.284		-2.886	.006
	X1	.283	.104	.258	2.737	.009
	X2	.906	.118	.722	7.669	.000

a. Dependent Variable: Y

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

From the results of the analysis with the help of SPSS 25.0 in Table 4, the regression equation can be written as follows:

$$Y = -0,819 + 0,283X1 + 0,906X2 + ei$$

The constant value (α) is 0.081, which means that if there is no change in the independent variable, the Employee Performance (Y) is -0.819. The regression coefficient value for the work environment variable (X1) is 0.283. In this study, it can be stated that the work environment (X1) has a positive effect on employee performance (Y); this indicates that when the work environment (X1) increases by one unit (1%), employee performance (Y) will increase by 0.283. The regression coefficient value for the competency variable (X2) is 0.906. In this study, it can be stated that Kaizen Culture (X2) has a positive effect on Employee Performance (Y); this indicates that when Competence (X2) increases by one unit (1%), then Employee Performance (Y) will increase by 0.906.

Furthermore, the partial test is used to determine whether the independent variable (X) significantly affects the dependent variable (Y). The test is done with a significance level of 0.05. Table 4 shows that the significance level of the dependent variable's independent variable is known. The following will explain partially the effect of each variable in the study. The partial test results show that the Work Environment has a positive effect on Employee Performance, which shows a t-count of 2.737, which indicates that the direction of the coefficient is positive, while the probability

of the Work Environment is $0.009 < 0.05$, causing H_0 to be rejected and H_a is accepted. This means that the Work Environment positively and significantly affects Employee Performance. Competence has a positive effect on Employee Performance, which shows a t-count of 7.669, indicating that the coefficient's direction is positive. In contrast, the probability of Competence of $0.000 < 0.05$ causes H_0 to be rejected and H_a to be accepted. This means that Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance.

The F statistical test basically shows whether all independent or independent variables included in the model have a joint influence on the dependent/dependent variable. The F test measures the ability of independent variables, namely work environment, and Competence, to explain variations in the dependent variable, namely employee performance. The test results for the F test (simultaneous) can be seen in Table 5.

Table 5. F Test Results - Simultaneous (ANOVA^a)

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	6.074	2	3.037	155.068	.000 ^b
	Residual	.725	37	.020		
	Total	6.799	39			

a. *Dependent Variable:* Y

b. *Predictors:* (Constant), X2, X1

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

The calculated F value is 155.068 with a significance value of 0.000 or smaller than the probability value (p-value) 0.05 ($0.000 < 0.05$). The results of hypothesis testing show that the influence of work environment and competence together (simultaneously) significantly influences employee performance. Furthermore, the coefficient of determination analysis was carried out to determine the percentage of the independent variables' influence on the independent variable. The analysis results are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Model Determination Test Results (Summary^b)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.945 ^a	.893	.888	.13995

a. *Predictors:* (Constant), X2, X1

b. *Dependent Variable:* Y

Source: SPSS Output, 2023

Based on the results of the determination coefficient test in Table 6, the R square value obtained is 0.950, which indicates that 89.3% of employee performance in this study is influenced by the work environment and competence, and the remaining 10.7% is influenced by other variables that have not been examined in this study.

Discussion

The work environment is an essential factor that influences employee performance. Based on Herzberg's (1959) two-factor theory, the work environment falls into the category of hygienic motivational factors. Although this factor does not directly increase employee motivation, the work environment can cause dissatisfaction if not appropriately managed. A positive work environment, as outlined by Handoko (2012), helps improve work comfort and safety, improving employee performance. This theory suggests that a supportive work environment is essential in creating a productive work atmosphere and motivating employees to perform better. In addition, Robbins (2013), Situation Strength Theory, emphasizes the importance of a clean environment with strict rules and established behavioral guidelines to guide employees toward desired behaviors. In this context, a good work environment provides parameters and structure that help employees focus on tasks, minimize distractions, and encourage productive behavior. This structured work environment helps create conditions where employees can work calmly and efficiently, achieving optimal performance. Previous research also supports the importance of the work environment in influencing employee performance. Agustita (2017) found that a good work environment significantly affects job satisfaction. High job

satisfaction, in turn, improves employee performance as employees feel more motivated and committed to their tasks. This is consistent with the findings of Runtunuwu et al. (2015), which showed that a conducive work environment positively and significantly influences employee performance at the Manado City Integrated Licensing Service Agency. Both studies emphasize that a positive work environment increases job satisfaction and encourages better performance.

However, not all studies show the same results. Sari (2018) found that the work environment had no significant effect on employee performance at the Ministry of Culture's Employee Education and Training Center. These results suggest that the impact of the work environment on employee performance may vary depending on the organizational context and work culture. For example, in some organizations, other factors, such as leadership or career development, may be more influential than the physical or social environment of the workplace. This suggests that while the work environment is an essential factor, its influence on performance may only sometimes be direct or uniform across all contexts.

The explanation for why the work environment significantly influences employee performance can be seen from several perspectives. First, a safe and comfortable work environment reduces stress and fatigue, allowing employees to focus on their tasks without being distracted by physical discomfort or risk. When employees feel safe and comfortable, they are more likely to work calmly and efficiently, improving their performance. Secondly, adequate facilities and a clean work environment improve operational efficiency, as employees can access all the tools and resources needed to complete their jobs effectively. Good facilities and a clean environment also create a pleasant working atmosphere, boosting employee morale and productivity. A positive work environment also creates a supportive work atmosphere, which can influence employee attitudes and behaviors. Employees who feel valued and supported in the workplace demonstrate positive attitudes and a higher commitment to their work. In the context of the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Tana Toraja Regency, a good work environment makes employees feel more motivated and productive, improving their performance. Therefore, creating and maintaining a good work environment is essential for organizations that want to improve their employees' performance.

Competence is an important aspect that affects employee performance. Based on the Human Capital theory proposed by Becker (1964), individual competencies, including skills, knowledge, and abilities, are considered a form of capital that can affect organizational productivity. High competencies enable employees to carry out tasks more efficiently and effectively, improving their performance. This theory asserts that investment in employee competency development is an essential strategy for organizations to improve the quality of human resources and achieve competitive advantage. This view is in line with the theory put forward by Wibowo (2008), which states that competence is an ability based on skills and knowledge and supported by work attitudes required in carrying out tasks and jobs. Good competence allows employees to cope with job challenges better and achieve the results expected by the organization. With adequate competence, employees can work independently, make better decisions, and solve problems more effectively, improving organizational performance.

Previous research supports the results of this study. For example, Sinaga (2018) found that competence significantly influences employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. This finding shows that employees with higher skills and knowledge tend to perform better than those with lower competencies. Competence enables employees to do their jobs better, reduce errors, and improve work efficiency. In other words, more competent employees can better meet their jobs' demands and adapt to workplace changes.

However, other research shows that the effect of competence on employee performance may vary depending on the organizational context and other related factors. For example, Yudi Supiyanto (2015) found that competence does not always have a significant effect on employee performance partially. However, it has an influence when considering other factors, such as compensation and organizational commitment. This finding suggests that while competencies are essential, their effectiveness in influencing performance may depend on how the organization supports and rewards them. In some

cases, other factors such as managerial support, career development opportunities, and reward systems also play an essential role in determining practical competencies in improving performance.

The explanation of why competencies significantly influence employee performance can be seen from various perspectives. Employee competence reflects an individual's ability to complete job tasks effectively. Competent employees have the knowledge and skills to do the job well, reduce errors, and improve work efficiency. In addition, competent employees can better adapt to changes and new challenges in the workplace, which is critical in a dynamic work environment. At the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Tana Toraja Regency, highly competent employees can perform their duties and responsibilities better, positively impacting their overall performance. Competence enables employees to work more independently and productively and to solve problems more effectively. With high competence, employees can also better deal with job pressures and challenging situations, increasing productivity and overall organizational performance. In this context, employees' competencies relate to technical skills and interpersonal and managerial abilities, enabling them to cooperate with colleagues and manage their tasks more efficiently. Therefore, improving employee competencies through proper training and development is crucial to improving organizational performance. With the right strategy, organizations can ensure that their employees' competencies continue to evolve according to the needs and demands of the market, ultimately contributing to the organization's long-term success.

Conclusion

The study findings indicate that the work environment and employee competence significantly and positively impact employee performance at the Ministry of Religious Affairs of Tana Toraja Regency. A positive work environment, characterized by safety, comfort, and adequate facilities, reduces stress and enhances employees' focus on their tasks, thereby improving their performance. Similarly, high employee competence, including skills, knowledge, and abilities, enables employees to perform their duties more efficiently and effectively, further boosting their performance. These findings are consistent with several theoretical frameworks, such as Herzberg's two-factor theory and Human Capital theory, which highlight the importance of environmental factors and employee competence in driving organizational productivity.

The research contributes to both scientific understanding and practical applications by providing evidence on the significant roles of the work environment and employee competence in enhancing employee performance. From a scientific perspective, this study adds to the body of literature by confirming and extending the applicability of established theories in the context of public sector organizations. From a practical standpoint, the study offers valuable insights for organizational leaders and policymakers, emphasizing the need to create supportive work environments and invest in employee development as effective strategies for improving employee performance. These findings underline the importance of a holistic approach to human resource management that balances environmental factors with individual competencies.

However, the study has several limitations that must be acknowledged. First, the findings are based on a specific organizational context and may not be generalizable to other settings or industries. Additionally, the study's cross-sectional design limits the ability to draw causal inferences. Future research should consider using longitudinal designs to explore the dynamic relationships between the work environment, employee competence, and performance over time. It would also be beneficial to investigate other factors that may interact with the work environment and competence, such as leadership style, organizational culture, or employee engagement, to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the determinants of employee performance. By addressing these limitations, future studies could build on this research to develop more robust and context-sensitive models for enhancing employee performance in various organizational settings.

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