

Research Article

The Effect of Competence and Self-Efficacy on Performance Moderated by Transformational Leadership (A Study of The Regional Secretariat of Batang Regency)

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Abstract: This study aims to examine and analyze the influence of competence and self-efficacy on employee performance, with transformational leadership acting as a moderator, in the Regional Secretariat of Batang Regency. Data collection was conducted by distributing questionnaires to 109 respondents, selected from a total population of 189 employees. The data analysis was performed using SPSS version 27, employing descriptive statistical tests, validity tests, reliability tests, and regression analysis to determine the relationships between the variables. The results of the study revealed several key findings. First, competence was found to have a negative and significant effect on employee performance. This suggests that higher levels of competence do not necessarily lead to improved performance, possibly due to other factors, such as organizational culture or work environment, that may counterbalance the effects of individual competence. Second, self-efficacy was found to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This indicates that employees who believe in their ability to perform tasks are more likely to achieve better results. Moreover, transformational leadership was found to strengthen the effect of competence on employee performance. This suggests that leaders who inspire and motivate their employees, encourage innovation, and provide a supportive work environment can enhance the positive impact of competence on performance. However, transformational leadership was also found to weaken the effect of self-efficacy on employee performance. This could be due to the fact that transformational leadership provides external motivation and guidance, which may reduce the reliance on employees' self-confidence in achieving performance goals. In conclusion, the study highlights the complex relationships between competence, self-efficacy, and performance, with transformational leadership playing a significant moderating role in these dynamics. The findings provide valuable insights for organizations seeking to enhance employee performance through leadership strategies.

Keywords: Competence, Employee performance, Performance, Self-efficacy, Transformational leadership

1. Introduction

In order to realize clean and authoritative governance, one of the priorities of development in the field of governance is always directed at efforts to improve bureaucratic performance so as to create an atmosphere conducive to meeting the needs of the community through improved service quality and reducing the level of abuse of authority within the government apparatus. This aligns with the provisions of Law Number 9 of 2015 on Regional Government, which emphasizes the need for optimal performance through capacity building to enhance the competencies of government officials, making them more professional, responsive, and transparent. This is aimed at supporting the smooth and integrated execution of government functions and development tasks, thereby realizing good governance (Good Governance).

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The important role of human resources (HR) in developing an organization that will give it an advantage and competitiveness. Human resources themselves consist of various levels and encompass all individuals within an organization who are involved in both internal and external activities, from the lowest to the highest levels. All these levels share the same objective: to advance and ensure the sustainability of the organization. It can be said that the success or failure of an organization is influenced by the competence of the human resources within it.

Employee performance is one of the key factors in the success or failure of an organization's sustainability in the implementation of local government. According to Sonnentag and Frese (2020), performance is defined as the outcome of an individual's actions or behavior that is relevant to the organization's objectives and can be measured or evaluated. There are numerous factors that influence the quality or level of employee performance within a local government organization, including competence, self-efficacy, and the leadership style of supervisors within the organization. Mangkunegara (2016) states that performance is the quality and quantity of work achieved by an employee in carrying out their duties in accordance with the responsibilities assigned to them.

Robbins and Judge (2013) explain that performance is influenced by, among other things, cognitive ability, technical ability, and interpersonal skills. Cognitive ability encompasses the mental abilities needed to perform various thinking activities, such as reasoning, problem solving, decision making, and learning. Technical ability is the ability to understand and master the knowledge and skills needed to perform technical tasks effectively. Another factor is having good interpersonal skills, demonstrated by the ability to build relationships, communicate, collaborate, and effectively resolve conflicts. Bandura (1997) states that one aspect influencing cognitive ability, technical ability, and interpersonal skills is self-efficacy, which is an individual's belief in their ability to perform a specific task. Boyatzis (1982) states that competence is the tangible form of cognitive, technical, and interpersonal abilities. Some research findings indicate that self-efficacy and competence influence performance, but there are also differing results, as shown in the following table.

Table 1. Research Gap

No	Author(s)	Research Topic
1	Arfan et al. (2021); Dilla Nuriyah et al. (2022); Ni Wayan Sri et al. (2023); Santi Sulastri et al. (2023); Samsul Hidayat et al. (2019)	"Competence has a positive and significant impact on employee performance."
2	Nur Fitriya et al. (2023)	"Competence has a negative and significant impact on employee performance."
3	Jane Margaretha Sembiring (2022); Ernawati, Ramli, Arafah (2021); Marlina, Elvieda (2021)	"Work discipline positively and significantly affects employee performance."
4	Tohardi (2021); Yosafati Agus Siregar (2021); Cholid Sundani, Yohanes Oktavianus, Yoyo (2021)	"Work discipline does not have a significant effect on employee performance."

Bass & Avolio (1994) define transformational leadership as a process in which leaders inspire, motivate, and develop followers through the influence of vision, individual attention, and intellectual stimulation. The results of Walumbwa et al.'s (2008) research state that transformational leaders increase self-efficacy, which then positively influences performance. Bass & Riggio (2006) explain that transformational leaders promote competency development through Intellectual Stimulation and Individualized Consideration. Bass & Avolio (1994) also explain that transformational leadership has been proven to influence employee and organizational performance. Based on these findings, this study positions transformational leadership as a moderating variable in the influence of self-efficacy and competence on performance.

Performance trends at the Batang Regency Secretariat show a decline in 2022 and 2023, with the same target calculation based on the number of civil servants (ASN) totaling 95 ASN. For the “very good” performance evaluation category, the percentage was 97% in 2022 and 96% in 2023. For the “good” performance evaluation category, the percentage was 94% in 2022 and 91% in 2023. For the “adequate” performance evaluation category, the percentage was 130% in 2022 and increased to 140% in 2023, indicating a decline in employee performance. Meanwhile, the percentage of employees in the “poor” performance evaluation category was 167% in 2022, while in 2023 it increased to 200%, indicating that the performance of Regional Secretariat employees is not yet optimal and tends to decline. Based on the research gap and the aforementioned phenomena, the influence of self-efficacy and competence on performance will be examined, with transformational leadership as a moderating variable.

2. Literature Review or Related Research

Competency

Competency is widely understood as a foundational quality within an individual that enables effective performance in specific job roles or work environments. It encompasses more than just technical knowledge or personal traits; it reflects how these attributes are mobilized in real-life work settings. Rather than being a static attribute, competency reflects the dynamic ability to respond to various demands and challenges at work. According to Lucia and Lepsinger (1999), competency is a basic characteristic of an individual that is related to effective or superior performance in a particular job or situation. Competency is not only about what a person has, but how a person uses what they have in the context of work to produce superior performance that has cognitive, affective, interpersonal, and technical/professional dimensions with 11 indicators.

An individual's capability in a professional context is shaped by a combination of internal characteristics and external behaviors that align with job expectations. This includes the capacity to apply relevant knowledge, exercise sound judgment, communicate effectively, and interact productively with others. Competency is demonstrated through consistent actions that lead to desired work outcomes, particularly in complex or demanding situations.

From a practical standpoint, competency can be broken down into multiple dimensions. These often include cognitive abilities (such as reasoning and problem-solving), affective traits (like motivation and emotional intelligence), interpersonal skills (communication, teamwork), and technical or field-specific expertise. Each dimension contributes uniquely to how a person performs and adapts in their role.

In the context of performance management, competency serves as a framework to assess how well an employee aligns with organizational goals. It is not merely about possessing skills or knowledge, but about effectively deploying them to achieve high standards of work. When evaluated properly, competency becomes a strategic tool for talent development, succession planning, and improving organizational effectiveness.

Understanding competency as a multidimensional construct helps organizations foster a workforce that is not only capable but also agile in the face of change. Employees who exhibit strong competencies tend to demonstrate better problem-solving abilities, greater adaptability, and more proactive attitudes. Thus, cultivating competency goes beyond training it's about enabling employees to translate their potential into impactful performance.

Self-Efficacy

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's internal judgment about their capability to perform actions required to accomplish particular tasks or goals. It is not merely about having skills but about believing in the ability to apply those skills effectively in specific contexts. This belief system influences the choices people make, the effort they invest, and their persistence in facing challenges.

According to psychological theory, self-efficacy shapes how individuals approach obstacles and setbacks. People with strong self-efficacy are more likely to see difficulties as opportunities to learn rather than threats to avoid. They tend to set higher goals, commit to them more firmly, and recover more quickly from failures.

Bandura (1977) conceptualized self-efficacy with three central dimensions. The first is Magnitude, which reflects the perceived level of difficulty an individual believes they can manage. The second is Strength, which denotes how strongly an individual holds this belief. The third is Generality, representing how broadly this self-belief extends across various tasks and situations.

In practical terms, self-efficacy can be observed through several indicators, such as confidence in decision-making, resilience in task completion, willingness to take on new challenges, and the ability to cope with stress. These indicators collectively offer insight into how individuals evaluate their own effectiveness, which in turn affects motivation and performance.

Self-efficacy plays a vital role in personal development and achievement. It is a foundational factor in various domains, including education, work performance, leadership, and health behavior. Encouraging self-efficacy through supportive feedback, goal-setting, and mastery experiences can significantly enhance individual and organizational outcomes.

Transformational Leadership

Transformational leadership is characterized by a leader's ability to drive significant positive change among team members by encouraging them to exceed their usual performance standards. This approach involves inspiring individuals to align their personal goals with the broader mission of the organization, fostering a shared vision and collective commitment to success.

Leaders who adopt this style focus on building trust and modeling ethical behavior, which cultivates respect and admiration from their followers. They go beyond simply directing tasks; instead, they aim to elevate followers' values, develop their potential, and stimulate them to think innovatively. The emphasis lies not only in achieving objectives but also in transforming the attitudes and assumptions of team members.

This leadership model is composed of four main elements. The first is Idealized Influence, where the leader acts as a role model. The second is Inspirational Motivation, which involves communicating high expectations and creating meaning around work. The third is Intellectual Stimulation, encouraging creativity and new perspectives. Lastly, Individual Consideration refers to offering personalized support and development for each team member.

Each of these dimensions is expressed through specific behaviors that can be measured using 14 indicators, such as demonstrating confidence, fostering optimism, encouraging risk-taking, and acknowledging individual contributions. These indicators help in evaluating how effectively a leader embodies the transformational style in practical settings.

Transformational leadership is widely recognized for its positive influence on employee engagement, organizational innovation, and overall performance. By focusing on emotional connection, vision alignment, and individual growth, this leadership approach has become a critical component in building adaptive, future-ready organizations.

Performance

Employee performance is generally defined as the result of an individual's efforts in completing assigned tasks. It includes both the quantity and quality of the outcomes produced in the workplace. Performance reflects how well an employee meets the expectations set by the organization. It also demonstrates the ability of individuals to fulfill their duties in line with their job descriptions. This definition highlights that performance is not only about working hard but also working effectively.

The concept of performance goes beyond simply completing tasks. It also encompasses how responsibly and consistently those tasks are carried out. Responsible task management involves meeting deadlines and ensuring accuracy in the work performed. Employees are expected to show accountability in how they approach their responsibilities. This accountability is a reflection of their professional ethics and commitment to the organization.

One way to evaluate performance is through five main dimensions that are widely used in management theory. These dimensions include quality, quantity, responsibility, cooperation, and initiative. Quality refers to the accuracy and excellence of work output. Quantity deals with the number of tasks completed in a given period. Together, these dimensions offer a balanced perspective on how performance can be measured.

Responsibility is a key indicator of how independently and reliably an employee handles their duties. It includes aspects such as punctuality, meeting commitments, and taking ownership of tasks. Responsibility also means the ability to perform without constant supervision. This trait is essential for building trust between employees and management. Employees who demonstrate high responsibility are typically more valued in the workplace.

Cooperation is another fundamental dimension of performance. It reflects how well an individual works with others in a team or group setting. Effective cooperation involves active communication, mutual respect, and shared problem-solving. Employees who collaborate well contribute to a positive organizational climate. Teams with high cooperation levels often achieve better outcomes.

Initiative is measured by how proactive an employee is in performing duties beyond what is expected. Taking initiative means identifying opportunities for improvement without being told. It shows creativity, motivation, and a desire to help the organization grow. Employees with strong initiative often take on leadership roles in projects. This trait is especially valued in dynamic and competitive work environments.

Each of these five dimensions can be further broken down into measurable indicators. For example, quality might be assessed through error rates or client satisfaction scores. Quantity can be evaluated by tracking completed reports or output volume. Responsibility indicators may include attendance, time management, and dependability. These indicators provide a more detailed and practical approach to evaluating performance.

According to Mangkunegara's framework, there are fourteen performance indicators used to assess employee effectiveness. These include punctuality, teamwork, attention to detail, innovation, and problem-solving skills. Such indicators help organizations make objective and consistent evaluations. They also guide managers in identifying areas where improvement is needed. With clear metrics, performance reviews become more reliable and actionable.

Understanding performance comprehensively allows organizations to align individual efforts with broader goals. It enables managers to develop fair and transparent appraisal systems. By focusing on both results and behavior, organizations can support professional development. Constructive feedback based on performance data helps employees grow in their roles. Ultimately, this contributes to a more effective and motivated workforce.

In conclusion, employee performance is a multi-dimensional concept that requires thoughtful evaluation. It encompasses task output, responsibility, collaboration, and innovation. Organizations that effectively measure performance can make informed decisions about promotion, training, and rewards. A well-structured performance framework leads to higher productivity and employee satisfaction. Therefore, performance assessment is a vital tool in achieving organizational success.

3. Proposed Method

Population And Sample

In research, a population refers to the entire group of individuals or elements that share specific characteristics determined by the researcher as relevant to the study. According to Sugiyono (2016), a population is defined as a generalization area consisting of objects or subjects that possess particular qualities and traits which are established by the researcher to be studied and from which conclusions will be drawn. In this study, the population consists of 189 civil servants employed at the Regional Secretariat of Batang Regency. This group was selected as the population because it represents the total number of individuals who are relevant to the scope and objectives of the research.

A sample, on the other hand, is a subset of the population that is selected for direct observation, measurement, and analysis to address the research problem more efficiently. The use of samples allows researchers to gather meaningful data without the need to examine the entire population, provided that the sample accurately represents the population as a whole. In this research, the sample includes 109 civil servants from the Regional Secretariat who were selected based on specific criteria to ensure proportional representation. This sampling approach enables the findings to be generalized to the entire population while maintaining

hypothesis

Based on previous theories and research findings, the hypothesis in this study is

a The Relationship between Competence and Employee Performance

According to Robbins & Judge (2013), competence is an individual's ability to perform tasks or jobs effectively based on a combination of technical skills, knowledge, and interpersonal skills. If an employee possesses competent competencies, it will create an ideal organizational sustainability. Thus, high competencies possessed by each employee can influence employee performance and impact work productivity.

Previous studies have shown varying outcomes regarding the relationship between competency and employee performance. One study conducted by Maryusis (2017) focused on teaching staff at several state senior high schools in Semarang City. The findings from this research revealed that an individual's level of competence plays a vital role in determining their overall performance within the institution.

The study emphasized that teachers who demonstrated a high level of professional competency tended to fulfill their responsibilities more effectively, contributing positively to their work outcomes. This indicates a significant association between the mastery of skills and the level of productivity exhibited by educators in academic settings.

Similar conclusions were drawn by Shervaneela (2022) in her research on government-employed teachers working in public junior high schools in Pekalongan City. According to her findings, competency remained a strong predictor of enhanced performance, suggesting that well-trained educators are more capable of achieving institutional goals and maintaining classroom efficiency.

Her study supports the argument that professional expertise not only enhances the quality of education delivered but also improves a teacher's confidence and commitment to their tasks. Competency, in this regard, is closely linked to both qualitative and quantitative measures of job effectiveness.

In contrast, Rahmat Hidayat (2021), who studied employees at PT. Surya Yoda Indonesia, arrived at a different conclusion. His analysis revealed no statistically significant relationship between the level of competence and the performance of workers in the industrial sector, suggesting that other factors might play a more dominant role in influencing performance in that context.

This discrepancy in findings highlights the complexity of the competency-performance relationship, which may be influenced by differences in organizational environment, industry type, employee roles, and management practices. Thus, it becomes important to reexamine this relationship within varied institutional settings.

In light of the differing perspectives presented by prior studies, the present research seeks to verify the extent to which competency influences employee performance in its own specific context. Therefore, the hypothesis proposed in this study is:

H 1: Competence affects employee performance

b The Relationship Between Self-Efficacy and Employee Performance

According to Schunk (2012), self-efficacy is a person's perception of their ability to succeed in a particular task. This belief influences activity choices, effort expended, persistence, and achievement. Self-efficacy refers to a person's belief in their ability to face challenges, overcome obstacles, and achieve specific goals. Self-efficacy is not only about technical abilities but also includes emotional and cognitive beliefs for achieving high performance.

The concept of self-efficacy has been widely examined in organizational and psychological research, especially in relation to its influence on employee performance. Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to successfully complete tasks and overcome challenges in the workplace.

Sarjani (2021) explored this relationship and discovered a meaningful connection between self-efficacy and performance outcomes. The findings indicated that employees who possess strong confidence in their abilities are more likely to exhibit superior work performance.

Such individuals tend to be more persistent in the face of difficulties, more proactive in executing tasks, and more resilient under pressure. These psychological strengths directly translate into higher levels of effectiveness and productivity in the workplace.

Similar results were found in the study by Jane Margarentha (2022), which was conducted at the Food Security and Livestock Service Office in North Sumatra Province. Her research also concluded that self-efficacy is a contributing factor to improved job performance among public sector employees.

Employees with high self-efficacy in that context demonstrated greater initiative and motivation to fulfill their duties, suggesting that personal belief systems play a crucial role in shaping work outcomes, especially in environments that require autonomy and problem-solving.

These consistent findings from different studies highlight the importance of psychological attributes in enhancing organizational performance. They underscore the need for managers and institutions to cultivate environments that support the development of employees' self-belief and internal motivation.

Drawing from the above literature, this study proposes the following hypothesis is :

H2: Self-efficacy influences employee performance

c The Relationship between Competence and Employee Performance Moderated by Transformational Leadership

According to Robbins & Judge (2013), competence is defined as an individual's ability to perform tasks or jobs effectively based on a combination of technical skills, knowledge, and interpersonal skills. Competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, and personal attributes (such as attitudes, values, and behavior) that enable a person to perform tasks or jobs effectively. Competence is not only related to technical abilities but also encompasses emotional and interpersonal dimensions that influence an individual's performance in a specific context. In this regard, there is a factor that can strengthen the relationship between competence and performance: transformational leadership. This leadership style focuses on empowering, inspiring, and motivating followers to achieve shared goals and positive change. Transformational leaders influence followers through a strong vision, attention to individuals, and encouragement for innovation.

Transformational leadership has become a central topic in leadership studies, especially concerning its moderating role in enhancing the impact of individual competencies on performance outcomes. This leadership style emphasizes inspiration, intellectual stimulation, individualized consideration, and idealized influence, all of which contribute to fostering a high-performing work environment.

Within educational institutions, transformational leaders play a crucial role in optimizing the potential of their staff by not only guiding them toward shared goals but also by reinforcing the effective application of their competencies. Through this leadership approach, employees often feel empowered and more committed to achieving organizational success.

Empirical evidence supports this view. For instance, Endah (2016), in her research on Madrasah Aliyah in the Winong District of Pati Regency, found that transformational leadership strengthens the influence of professional competence on teacher performance. The presence of leaders who practice transformational behaviors enhanced the ability of educators to utilize their skills effectively.

In a similar vein, Shervanela Devina (2022) examined public junior high schools in Pekalongan City and found that transformational leadership acted as a moderating variable in the relationship between competence and performance. Her study demonstrated that even when individual competencies are present, the effectiveness of those competencies is significantly enhanced under transformational leadership.

These findings underscore the importance of leadership style as not merely a background factor, but as a critical moderator that shapes how competencies are expressed in practice. Leaders who demonstrate transformational behaviors can elevate the capacity of their team members to meet complex challenges and achieve performance targets.

In contexts where tasks are dynamic and require adaptive thinking, the role of transformational leadership becomes even more prominent. Employees guided by such leaders tend to display greater initiative, innovation, and dedication—qualities that directly contribute to improved job outcomes, especially when aligned with existing competencies.

Based on this conceptual and empirical review, this study proposes the following hypothesis:

H3: Competence influences employee performance, moderated by transformational leadership

d The Relationship between Self-Efficacy and Employee Performance moderated by Transformational Leadership

According to Pajares (2002) Self-efficacy is a person's belief in his or her ability to organize and take the necessary actions to manage certain situations. Pajares also points out that self-efficacy affects how a person views success and failure. A person's belief in his or her ability to organize, carry out, and complete certain tasks or actions to achieve desired results. Self-efficacy is not only related to technical ability but also to the cognitive, emotional and motivational dimensions that influence employee performance. Through this, there are important factors in achieving the goal of high employee performance, namely transformational leadership that can strengthen self-efficacy towards employee performance.

This is in accordance with Slamet's research (2017) on State Vocational Schools in Pematang Rejang Regency which shows that the principal's transformational leadership strengthens competence on teacher performance. This research is reinforced by the results of research conducted by Aziz Effendhi (2018) at junior high schools in Tambakromo Sub-district, Pati Regency, which shows that the transformational leadership of principals strengthens the influence of teacher self-efficacy on teacher performance.

Based on the description above, the hypotheses proposed in this study are

H4: Self-efficacy affects employee performance moderated by transformational leadership.

The mathematical model used in this study aims to describe the direct and indirect relationships between the variables of competence (X1), self-efficacy (X2), and employee performance (Y), as well as the moderating influence of transformational leadership (Z). The first equation, $Y = Q + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$, explains that performance is directly affected by competence and self-efficacy. The coefficients β_1 and β_2 respectively indicate the magnitude of the contribution of competence and self-efficacy to the increase or decrease in performance. The value of Q is a constant, while e is an error term that represents other variables outside the model that also affect performance.

Furthermore, the moderating effect of transformational leadership is analyzed through two interaction equations: $Y_1 = Q_1 + \beta_3 X_1 + \beta_4 X_1 Z + e$ and $Y_2 = Q_2 + \beta_5 X_2 + \beta_6 X_2 Z + e$. The first equation (Y1) shows that the effect of competence on performance depends not only on the value of β_3 , but also influenced by the interaction between competence and transformational leadership ($X_1 Z$) with the coefficient β_4 . Similarly, in the second equation (Y2), the interaction between self-efficacy and transformational leadership ($X_2 Z$) is represented by the coefficient β_6 . If this interaction is significant, then transformational leadership is proven to strengthen or weaken the influence of competence and self-efficacy on employee performance, so that it can provide strategic insights for human resource development in the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat.

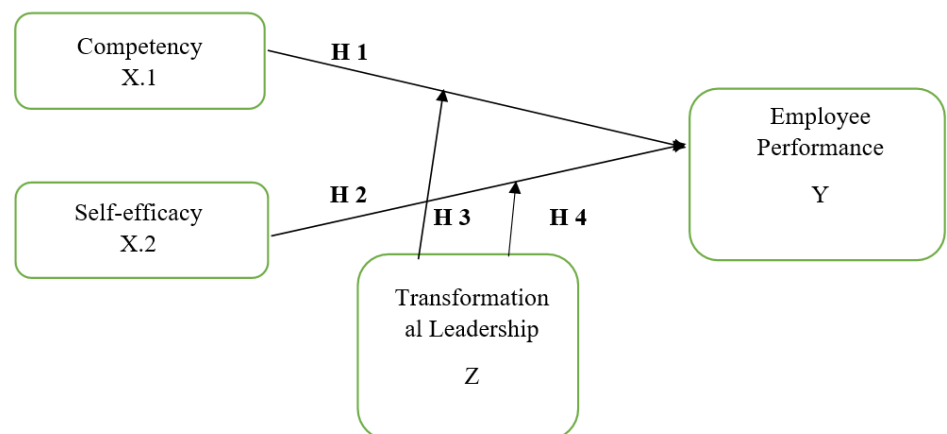


Figure 1 Model Graph

4. Results and Discussion

Validity Test

Table 2. Validity Test Result

No.	Variabel	Indikator	KMO	Loading Factor	Ket
1.	Kompetensi	X1.1	0,902	0,774	Valid
		X1.2		0,850	Valid
		X1.3		0,828	Valid
		X1.4		0,763	Valid
		X1.5		0,845	Valid
		X1.6		0,740	Valid
		X1.7		0,786	Valid
		X1.8		0,833	Valid
		X1.9		0,761	Valid
		X1.10		0,737	Valid
2.	Efikasi Diri	X2.1	0,862	0,654	Valid
		X2.2		0,675	Valid
		X2.3		0,742	Valid
		X2.4		0,677	Valid
		X2.5		0,819	Valid
		X2.6		0,798	Valid
		X2.7		0,857	Valid
		X2.8		0,815	Valid
		X2.9		0,670	Valid
3.	Kinerja	Z.1	0,901	0,798	Valid
		Z.2		0,747	Valid
		Z.3		0,713	Valid
		Z.4		0,513	Valid
		Z.5		0,817	Valid
		Z.6		0,746	Valid
		Z.7		0,829	Valid
		Z.8		0,661	Valid
		Z.9		0,662	Valid
		Z.10		0,717	Valid
		Z.11		0,751	Valid
		Z.12		0,762	Valid
		Z.13		0,808	Valid
		Z.14		0,800	Valid
4.	Kinerja	Y.1	0,929	0,716	Valid
		Y.2		0,848	Valid
		Y.3		0,784	Valid
		Y.4		0,860	Valid
		Y.5		0,846	Valid
		Y.6		0,796	Valid
		Y.7		0,844	Valid
		Y.8		0,779	Valid
		Y.9		0,825	Valid
		Y.10		0,844	Valid
		Y.11		0,859	Valid
		Y.12		0,835	Valid
		Y.13		0,854	Valid
		Y.14		0,835	Valid

Source: Source: SPSS 2025 output data

Based on Table 2, it is known that the competency variable (X1) has a KMO value of 0.902. The self-efficacy variable (X2) has a KMO value of 0.862 and the transformational leadership variable (Z) has a KMO value of 0.901 and the performance variable (Y) has a KMO value of 0.929. This means that all variables have met the proposed requirements of > 0.5 . While for the Loading factor value on the four variables also exceeds the proposed requirements of > 0.4 on each indicator, so it is declared all valid. The high KMO value also reflects that there is an adequate correlation between items in each variable, so that the variables have a solid internal structure. This is an early indicator that the instruments in this study have good construct validity. Construct validity is very important in ensuring that each indicator truly represents the theoretical concept being measured, such as competence, self-efficacy, transformational leadership, and employee performance.

In addition to the KMO value, another indicator of validity is the loading factor value, which in this study all exceed the minimum required value of 0.4. This indicates that each question item or indicator has a strong contribution to the latent variable it represents. In other words, each question item on the questionnaire has an adequate ability to measure the dimensions of the variables that have been formulated from the start. Overall, these findings strengthen the validity of the measuring instruments used in the study and provide confidence that the data obtained is representative enough to be analyzed further. Strong instrument validity is an important foundation in producing valid and reliable conclusions, especially when the relationship between variables is tested through an inferential statistical approach. Thus, the results of further analysis can be interpreted more convincingly in the context of the influence of competence and self-efficacy on performance, with the moderating role of transformational leadership.

Reliability Test

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

No	Variables	Cronbach's Alpha	Score	Description
1.	Competence	0,932	$> 0,7$	Reliabel
2.	Self-Efficacy	0,897		Reliabel
3.	Transformational Leadership	0,936		Reliabel
4.	Performance	0,963		Reliabel

Sumber : Data output SPSS Versi 27 Tahun 2025

Based on Table 3, it is known that all variables have a Cronbach Alpha value > 0.7 . This means that all items are declared reliable or reliable.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Tabel 4. Summary of Multiple Linear Regression Test

No	Variable Relationship	Regression Model Equation							
		Model Test			Hypothesis Test				
		<i>Adjusted R Square</i>	F	Sig.	B	t	Sig.	Ket	
Model 1 $Y = a + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$									
1	The Effect of Competence on Performance	0,567	36,367	0,001	-2,321	-2,972	0,004	Hypothesis Rejected	1
2	The Effect of Self-Efficacy on Performance				2,776	3,488	0,001	Hypothesis Accepted	2
Model 2 $Y = \alpha_2 + \beta_3 X_1 + \beta_4 X_1.Z + e_2$									
1	Interaction of Competence with Transformational Leadership - Performance				0,451	3,499	0,001	Hypothesis 3 Accepted	
Model 3 $Y = \alpha_3 + \beta_5 X_2 + \beta_6 X_2.Z + e_3$									
2	Interaction of Self-Efficacy with Transformational Leadership - Performance				-0,422	-3,244	0,002	Hypothesis 4 Accepted	

Source: SPSS 2025 output data

Based on Table 6.3, the mathematical equation can be prepared as follows:

$$Y = \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + e$$

$$Y = -2.321 X_1 + 2.776 X_2 + e$$

Based on this equation can be explained as follows:

a The Effect of Competence on Performance

Based on Table 4, it is known that the beta coefficient of competence on performance is -2.321 with a significance of 0.004 smaller than 0.5. This means that competence has a positive effect on performance, meaning that the more often you increase competence, the performance will increase.

b Development of Self-Efficacy on Performance

Based on Table 4, it is known that the beta coefficient of self-efficacy on performance is 2.776 with a significance of 0.001 smaller than 0.5. This means that self-efficacy has a positive effect on performance, meaning that the better self-efficacy can improve performance.

Determination Coefficient Test

The coefficient of determination, also known as the R square value, is one of the statistical indicators used to measure the extent to which the independent variables are able to explain the variations that occur in the dependent variable. This value gives an idea of the strength of the model in predicting the results, especially in the context of the cause-and-effect relationship between the variables studied. In practice, the coefficient of determination is in the range of 0 to 1, where the closer to 1, the higher the level of contribution of the independent variable in explaining the dependent variable.

If the R square value is close to zero, it indicates that the model's ability to explain the dependent variable is very limited. Conversely, a value close to one indicates that almost all of the variation in the dependent variable can be explained by the independent variables included in the model. Thus, R square is one of the important measures in evaluating the fit of a regression model, as well as a basis for assessing the effectiveness of independent variables in influencing outcomes.

Based on the analysis results shown in Table 4, it is known that the Adjusted R Square value is 0.567. This figure shows that about 56.7% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the two main variables in this study, namely competence and self-efficacy. In other words, more than half of the changes that occur in employee performance at the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat can be predicted through the level of competence and individual self-efficacy in completing tasks.

Meanwhile, the remaining 43.3% of performance variation is explained by other factors that are not included in the analysis model. These factors can include external and internal aspects of the organization such as the compensation system, job satisfaction, commitment to the organization, and the prevailing work culture. Therefore, although this model has been able to explain most of the variation in performance, there is still room for further research to explore other variables that might contribute to improving employee performance more comprehensively.

F Test

The coefficient of determination, often referred to as R square, serves as a key statistical metric used to assess the strength of the relationship between independent and dependent variables in a regression model. This value illustrates how well the independent variables account for the variance observed in the dependent variable. In simpler terms, it helps determine the extent to which a set of predictors is successful in explaining the behavior of the outcome variable under investigation.

The R square value ranges from 0 to 1. A value near zero suggests that the model has a weak explanatory power and that the independent variables included in the model contribute very little to the prediction of the dependent variable. Conversely, when the R square approaches one, it indicates that the predictors account for nearly all of the variation in the dependent variable. Thus, a higher R square reflects a stronger model fit and greater predictive relevance of the included variables (Ghozali, 2021).

According to the analysis presented in Table 4, the adjusted R square obtained is 0.567. This result means that 56.7% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by the variables of competence and self-efficacy included in the model. In this context, these two predictors play a substantial role in influencing employee performance within the

organizational setting examined. The adjusted R square value is considered more accurate than the regular R square, as it accounts for the number of predictors used, reducing the risk of overestimating the model's explanatory power.

The remaining 43.3% of the variation in performance is influenced by other factors that were not incorporated into this particular study. These may include aspects such as compensation systems, employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and workplace culture factors often identified in human resource and organizational behavior research. This indicates the need for future research to broaden the analytical framework by integrating additional variables to capture a more comprehensive picture of what drives employee performance in public sector institutions.

Hypothesis Test

The t test was conducted to test the partial effect of the independent variable on the dependent variable.

a Hypothesis 1. Competence affects performance

Based on Table 4, it is known that the beta value of competence is -2.321 with a significant $0.004 < 0.05$, meaning that competence has a negative and significant effect on performance. Thus Hypothesis 1 is rejected.

b Hypothesis 2. Self-efficacy affects performance

Based on Table 4, it is known that the beta value of self-efficacy is 2.776 with a significant $0.001 < 0.05$, meaning that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on performance. Thus Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

c Hypothesis 3. Competence Affects Performance Moderated by Transformational Leadership

Based on Table 4, it is obtained that the beta coefficient value of the interaction between competence and performance is 0.451 at a significant level of $0.001 < 0.05$. This shows that the transformational leadership variable is a moderating variable. The positive beta value indicates that the transformational leadership variable strengthens the effect of competence on performance. Thus Hypothesis 3 is accepted.

d Hypothesis 4. Self-Efficacy Affects Performance Moderated by Transformational Leadership

Based on Table 4, the beta coefficient value of the interaction between self-efficacy and performance is -0.422 at a significant level of $0.002 < 0.05$. This shows that the transformational leadership variable is a moderating variable. The negative beta value indicates that the transformational leadership variable weakens the effect of self-efficacy on performance. Thus Hypothesis 4 is accepted.

DISCUSSION

a The Effect of Competence on Performance

Competence refers to the fundamental capability that encompasses a person's knowledge, skills, attitudes, and behaviors required to perform tasks effectively and efficiently. Generally, it is widely assumed that higher levels of competence positively influence job performance. However, findings from the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat present an unexpected contrast. In this context, the data reveal that employees with higher competence tend to show lower levels of performance, indicating that competence alone may not be a sufficient predictor of success in the workplace.

This observation suggests that, within the organizational setting of the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat, competence is not a definitive benchmark for employee performance. Even when staff members possess strong educational backgrounds and work experience, these qualities do not necessarily translate into improved work outcomes. This discrepancy highlights the potential role of other factors—whether internal, such as personal motivation, or external, such as leadership style or organizational culture—that may influence performance beyond the scope of competence alone.

Further examination of respondent demographics reinforces the idea that employees are generally well-qualified. Most participants in the study hold a bachelor's degree (64.27%) and have worked for 11 to 15 years (24.8%), suggesting a solid level of professional experience.

Additionally, a large proportion of employees fall within the 31–40 age group (33%), which, according to McKinsey (2021), often represents the peak of skill maturity and work efficiency. Despite these qualifications, performance levels appear to decline with higher competence, indicating an underlying issue affecting work outcomes.

The findings suggest a psychological or organizational imbalance that may be undermining performance, even among highly competent employees. In such cases, workplace pressure, lack of support, or excessive job demands could play a role. This points to the need to consider psychosocial variables such as emotional stress or burnout, which may explain why competence does not always correlate positively with performance in this particular setting.

This phenomenon aligns with the theory proposed by Maslach and Leiter (1997), which asserts that highly skilled employees are often burdened with greater responsibilities, increasing their susceptibility to burnout. Burnout is characterized by emotional exhaustion, depersonalization, and a reduced sense of personal accomplishment all of which can negatively impact job performance. This is reflected in the employee responses, where the average score on competence-related items, particularly the ability to work under pressure, was relatively low.

The performance-related responses from employees also received below-average scores, particularly in the area of problem-solving. This implies that even though employees are technically capable, they may struggle to apply their skills effectively in stressful or complex situations. Such challenges point toward emotional fatigue or a lack of resilience in high-pressure environments, which ultimately impairs overall productivity and effectiveness.

These results are consistent with previous studies conducted by Samsul Hidayat and Rahmat Abdullah (2019), as well as Karini and Pertiwi (2023), which also found a negative and significant relationship between competence and performance. Therefore, this study contributes to the growing body of evidence that competence, while important, is not the sole determinant of employee performance. A more comprehensive approach to human resource management is needed—one that considers workload balance, emotional well-being, and supportive leadership practices to maximize employee potential.

b The Effect of Self-Efficacy on Performance

This study shows that there is a significant influence between self-efficacy variables on performance partially. Bandura (1977) states that self-efficacy is a person's belief in the ability to organize and carry out the actions needed to achieve certain results.

Self-efficacy refers to an individual's belief in their own capability to accomplish specific tasks or overcome challenges. Unlike objective measures of ability, self-efficacy is rooted in perception and confidence, making it a central element in influencing human behavior. People with high self-efficacy are more likely to persist in the face of difficulty, approach tasks with confidence, and recover quickly from setbacks. As a result, self-efficacy has become a crucial psychological factor in understanding performance in various organizational settings.

In the context of the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat, self-efficacy plays a key role in driving employee behavior and work outcomes. Employees who believe in their own abilities are more likely to take initiative, adapt to changing demands, and maintain consistency in completing their responsibilities. The belief that one can succeed is often a stronger predictor of actual performance than skills alone. This highlights the importance of fostering positive self-perceptions within civil service institutions.

The findings of the study reveal that self-efficacy has a significant positive influence on employee performance. Employees at the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat with high levels of self-efficacy tend to perform better and contribute more effectively toward achieving organizational goals. This reinforces the idea that internal psychological resources, such as belief in one's competence, are just as critical as formal training or years of experience in determining job success. Employees who believe they can succeed are more engaged and willing to take ownership of their work.

One of the key indicators from respondent feedback that supports this conclusion is the highest mean response under the self-efficacy variable: *"I am motivated because I want to develop, not because of rewards."* This response illustrates that motivation driven by personal growth—also known as intrinsic motivation—is deeply connected to a strong sense of self-efficacy. Employees who are internally motivated tend to be more resilient and proactive in overcoming challenges, without relying solely on external incentives.

This finding is consistent with Bandura's (1997) theory, which suggests that individuals with high self-efficacy are more likely to be optimistic, resilient, and determined. They do not easily surrender in the face of adversity and are more committed to achieving their goals. Self-efficacy, according to Bandura, enhances one's ability to self-regulate, maintain enthusiasm under stress, and persevere in long-term objectives. This concept offers a powerful explanation for the positive association between belief in self and work performance.

Further evidence supporting the influence of self-efficacy is found in performance-related responses from employees. The highest mean for the performance variable was the statement: *"I am able to complete tasks on time."* This shows a clear connection between the belief in one's own ability and the actual completion of tasks. Employees who trust in their capabilities tend to approach deadlines with confidence, manage their time more effectively, and maintain focus even when under pressure.

The study confirms that self-efficacy serves as a fundamental psychological driver of performance among employees at the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat. It not only enhances individual motivation and perseverance but also translates into tangible organizational benefits, such as timely task completion and consistent productivity. These findings suggest that organizational leaders should invest in creating a supportive environment that builds employee confidence, reinforces intrinsic motivation, and recognizes self-driven growth, all of which are essential to sustaining high performance in the public sector.

The results of this study support research conducted by Jane and Margaretha (2022), Akhmad and Aprilia (2021), Sarjani and Elisabet (2021), Desti and Edy (2017), which state that self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on performance. In this case, the higher the self-efficacy of employees, the higher the performance of employees in the organization.

c The Effect of Competence on Performance Moderated by Transformational Leadership

This study shows that there is a significant influence between competency variables on performance moderated by transformational leadership partially. Sedarmayanti (2015) states that competence is a combination of knowledge, skills, and attitudes needed to complete tasks well. In organizations in the Regional Secretariat of Batang Regency, competence has an important role in achieving organizational goals in the Regional Secretariat of Batang Regency. The results showed that the more competent employees are, the more their performance will decrease. However, when transformational leadership acts as a moderating variable, transformational leadership strengthens the effect of competence on employee performance. This is indicated by the transformational leadership indicator which has the highest mean, namely my leader has confidence in dealing with every organizational problem. As Bandura (1997) states, a leader's belief in his or her abilities affects the motivation and performance of subordinates because employees feel confident that they are led by a strong and confident person.

Transformational leadership is a leadership style characterized by the ability to influence followers at a deeper, more intrinsic level. Rather than relying solely on authority or transactional rewards, transformational leaders inspire their followers by articulating a compelling vision, challenging assumptions, providing personal attention, and demonstrating high ethical standards. This form of leadership seeks to elevate both individual and collective performance by fostering a shared sense of purpose and encouraging personal growth among subordinates.

According to Yukl (2020), transformational leaders initiate meaningful change within organizations by shaping the attitudes, values, and behaviors of their followers. They do this not only through motivation and vision but also by acting as moral role models and intellectual stimulators. Such leaders are capable of transforming not only the organizational structure but also the mindset of their employees, leading to a work culture that values innovation, accountability, and dedication.

In the context of the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat, transformational leadership has emerged as a crucial moderating factor in the relationship between competence and employee performance. While competence alone may not always yield optimal performance outcomes, the presence of a transformational leader can help channel that competence toward meaningful and effective work results. This leadership style provides the necessary emotional and strategic support to ensure that employees use their capabilities to their fullest potential.

Transformational leadership enhances the impact of competence by aligning individual strengths with organizational goals. Through individualized support and intellectual stimulation, leaders can help employees better understand how their skills contribute to the larger mission. This sense of connection between personal ability and organizational vision can increase motivation, job satisfaction, and ultimately, performance outcomes.

Evidence from prior studies supports the moderating role of transformational leadership. Research by Shervanella and Agus (2022), Yohanes Suhari (2016), Hendri and Evi (2022), and Maryunis (2017) all found that transformational leadership strengthens the positive influence of competence on performance. These findings suggest that in environments where such leadership is present, competent employees are more likely to be productive, engaged, and aligned with organizational objectives.

Transformational leaders help reduce the risk of burnout among highly competent employees by providing continuous encouragement and recognition. This is particularly relevant in situations where competence alone may not be sufficient to ensure performance due to emotional fatigue or external stressors. By creating a supportive and empowering environment, transformational leaders buffer against negative outcomes and enhance the positive expression of employee capabilities.

Transformational leadership acts as a catalyst that maximizes the effectiveness of employee competence. By offering vision, guidance, and personal support, such leaders ensure that competence translates into actual performance. For public sector institutions like the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat, fostering transformational leadership can be a strategic approach to improving service quality, increasing employee engagement, and achieving long-term organizational success.

d The Effect of Self-Efficacy on Performance Moderated by Transformational Leadership

This study demonstrates that transformational leadership partially moderates the influence of self-efficacy on employee performance, specifically by weakening its positive effect. Self-efficacy, as defined by Bandura (1977), refers to an individual's belief in their capacity to organize and execute actions required to attain desired outcomes. This belief system rooted more in perceived ability than actual skill plays a vital role in shaping persistence, motivation, and ultimately performance.

In the organizational context of the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat, self-efficacy contributes significantly to the achievement of institutional goals. Empirical findings indicate that individuals with strong self-efficacy exhibit higher levels of engagement, accountability, and performance. However, when transformational leadership is introduced as a moderating variable, its influence appears to dampen the strength of this positive relationship.

Transformational leadership, as described by Bass and Avolio (1990), motivates subordinates through vision, inspiration, and individualized consideration. Yet, the findings suggest a counterintuitive dynamic: when leaders become overly directive or assume excessive control, they may unintentionally suppress employees' sense of autonomy and task ownership. Chen et al. (2011) argue that such conditions weaken the internal drivers of self-efficacy, thereby reducing its impact on performance outcomes.

Survey responses revealed that transformational leadership indicators such as listening to subordinates' aspirations and concerns—received low average ratings. This implies a lack of responsive leadership behavior, which may foster dependency rather than empowerment. As a result, employees' belief in their own competence is undermined, weakening their contribution to overall performance.

This dynamic reveals an important organizational insight: while transformational leadership is generally associated with positive outcomes, its effectiveness may vary depending on how it is practiced. When misaligned with employee needs particularly in contexts requiring autonomy and self-regulation such leadership can inadvertently hinder rather than enhance performance.

Therefore, it is essential to further investigate the underlying mechanisms of this moderation effect, especially in public institutions where hierarchical culture may shape leadership behavior and employee perceptions. Future research should explore whether other leadership styles or contextual factors might better support the development of self-efficacy without compromising the leader's role in guiding and inspiring the workforce.

This is in line with the results of research conducted by Tristiana Rijanti and Kis Indriyaningrum (2020), Aziz Efendhi (2018), Slamet Yohanes (2017), Lie Liana and Tristiana Rijanti (2016), which show that self-efficacy affects performance moderated by transformational leadership.

6. conclusion

This study aims to analyze the effect of competence and self-efficacy on employee performance, with transformational leadership as a moderating variable, in the Batang Regency Regional Secretariat. Respondents in this study amounted to 109 employees, and the data were analyzed using IBM SPSS version 27.0. The results showed that competence has a negative and significant effect on employee performance, which indicates that increasing competence does not always have a positive impact if it is not balanced with other supporting factors. In contrast, self-efficacy has a positive and significant effect on performance, which means that the higher the employee's belief in his ability, the higher the performance shown.

In addition, the results of the interaction analysis show that transformational leadership acts as a moderating variable that can strengthen the relationship between competence and employee performance. This means that in the context of a transformationally led organization, employee competence will have a more positive impact on improving performance. However, another interesting finding is that transformational leadership actually weakens the effect of self-efficacy on performance. This suggests that in leadership that emphasizes collective vision and shared inspiration, individual influences such as self-efficacy can be less dominant on performance achievement. This finding implies that HR development strategies in local government need to pay attention to the synergy between individual characteristics and the leadership style applied.

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