

Factors Affecting the Competence of Employees at the ASN Land Office at the Ministry of ATR/BPN

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ABSTRACT

This research examines the factors that affect the competence of employees at the ASN Land Office at the Ministry of ATR/BPN. The variables tested in this study are transformational leadership and work environment as exogenous variables and employee competence as the endogenous variable. In contrast, work motivation serves as a mediator, and work stress as a moderator, which fits the empirical data on Land Office employees at the Ministry of ATR/BPN. The study's respondents were 319 employees who had taken the competency assessment at the Administrator, Supervisory, and Executive position levels. Data analysis used structural equation modeling (SEM) with SmartPLS software. Based on the hypothesis test results, the average loading factor value was > 0.70 , the composite reliability > 0.70 , and the t -statistic > 1.96 (or p -value < 0.05 at 5%), which can be interpreted as a significant influence between the independent and dependent variables. The results showed that transformational leadership, work environment, and work motivation affect employee competence. Work motivation mediated the influence of transformational leadership and work environment on employee competence, while work stress weakened the influence of the work environment on employee competence.

Keywords: *transformational leadership; work environment; employee competence; work motivation; job stress.*

INTRODUCTION

Quality human resources (*HR*) are a prerequisite for improving the quality of state administration and government services to the community (Mle & Ngumbela, 2020; Qutni et al., 2021; Tung, 2023). Competent *HR* will enhance organizational performance and service quality (Abdussamad, 2017). ASN play a vital role as elements of the state apparatus tasked with carrying out government and development duties to achieve national goals. Given their substantial contribution to the success of government objectives, internal improvements are essential, particularly through *HR* development. Therefore, organizations must implement appropriate strategies and programs to develop ASN competencies as needed (Firdausijah, 2022; Kusuma et al., 2023; Panggabean et al., 2025; Paroli, 2023). The success of agencies in enhancing their performance depends heavily on the quality of their *HR*. Improvements in this internal condition must strengthen organizational resilience amid increasingly intense local and global competition.

However, the current phenomenon reveals that ASN competency levels remain below expectations (Kurniawan et al., 2020; Rengen et al., 2025; Rosyida et al., 2021). As stated by the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform, out of 4.7 million ASN, 95% are incompetent, with only 5% demonstrating competence in their work (Nurjaman, 2019). Incompetent ASN adversely affect public services, resulting in delays, frequent errors, suboptimal outcomes, inefficiencies, and results that deviate from established standard operating procedures (*SOPs*). This underscores the critical importance of competence for ASN.

This issue also affects employees at the Land Office under the Ministry of ATR/BPN. Data from the Data and Information Center of the Ministry of ATR/BPN indicate that 20 land offices exhibit low performance (Akib et al., 2024; Hasibuan et al., 2024; Laksono et al., 2025; Wibawa & Karjoko, 2024). Yet, when cross-referencing employee competency data via the *Human Resources Development Center (PPSDM)* of the Ministry of ATR/BPN, many employees appear optimal. Notably, several employees have undergone assessment at the assessment center, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Competency Data for Land Office Employees at the Ministry of ATR/BPN in 2020 – 2022

Work Units	Number of Employees	Level III	Level II	Level I
Bandung Regency Land Office	31	0	6	25
West Bandung Regency Land Office	29	0	4	25
Bogor Regency Land Office I	40	1	6	33
Bogor Regency Land Office II	19	1	0	18
Garut Regency Land Office	23	0	5	18
Indramayu Regency Land Office	20	0	6	14
Pangandaran Regency Land Office	11	0	5	6
Banjar City Land Office	9	0	6	3
Sukabumi City Land Office	19	1	5	13
Pontianak City Land Office	18	1	6	11
Pulang Pisau Regency Land Office	10	1	3	6
Land Office of Polewali Mandar Regency	12	1	4	7
Palopo City Land Office	10	1	4	5
Land Office of Dharmasraya Regency	12	1	3	8
West Pasaman Regency Land Office	9	1	4	4
South Pesisir Regency Land Office	8	3	2	3
South Solok Regency Land Office	6	1	4	1
Bukittinggi City Land Office	8	1	2	5
Land Office of Empat Lawang Regency	8	1	3	4
Ogan Ilir Regency Land Office	17	1	4	12
Total	319	16	82	221

Source: Ministry of ATR/BPN in 2020-2022

Table 1 presents data on the number of suboptimal employees based on the lowest rankings across 20 Land Offices throughout Indonesia. There are 485 Land Offices under the Ministry of ATR/BPN, ranked according to their performance levels in the Ministry's work programs, particularly the Complete Systematic Land Registration Program (PTSL). This is juxtaposed with employee competency data from the Center for Human Resource Development, which—per the Regulation of the Minister of Agrarian and Spatial Planning/Head of the National Land Agency Number 16 of 2020 concerning Organization and Work Procedures of the Ministry of ATR/BPN—has duties including competency assessments across the Ministry.

Referring to the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment and Bureaucratic Reform Number 38 of 2017 concerning Competency Standards for State Civil Apparatus Positions and State Civil Service Agency Regulation Number 26 of 2019 concerning the Development of the Implementation of Competency Assessments for Civil Servants, employee competency assessments are divided into three position levels: Level 3 (Administrator Position), Level 2 (Supervisory Position), and Level 1 (Executive Position). Employee competence is measured across nine aspects of managerial and socio-cultural competency: Integrity, Cooperation, Communication, Result Orientation, Public Service, Self and Other Individual Development, Managing Change, Decision Making, and Gluing the

Nation. Based on data from the Human Resources Development Center of the Ministry of ATR/BPN, 319 employees are suboptimal.

One factor affecting ASN competence is transformational leadership. Transformational leadership influences ASN competence, as Bass (1985) states that transformational leaders enhance employee awareness of task value and importance; direct focus toward group and organizational goals over personal interests; and optimally develop employee potential.

Work environment factors also affect employee competence, as the work environment positively influences competence, which in turn mediates its effect on performance. This is supported by Sukardi et al. (2021), who found a positive relationship between work motivation and employee competence.

Afsar and Umrani (2019) found that transformational leadership positively affects work motivation, which mediates its influence on innovative behavior. Polychroniou (2010) reported that emotional intelligence components—social skills, motivation, and empathy—positively relate to transformational leadership. Effective leaders influence subordinates positively; one adaptive style relevant to current employee conditions is the transformational leadership concept from Bass and Avolio, where optimal leaders exhibit this style.

Transformational leadership entails proactive behavior that heightens focus on the common good and helps followers achieve higher goals, thereby motivating employees to continually enhance competencies. Kusmaningtyas (2020) confirms that transformational leadership positively affects employee competence.

Leaders must foster an excellent work climate where individuals feel comfortable yet responsible, addressing the common challenge of creating conducive environments. Frequent employee mutations at the Ministry of ATR/BPN require rapid adaptation, often leading to stress, reduced work motivation, and diminished competence due to diverted focus on adjustment rather than skill development.

This is reinforced by Rizany et al. (2017), who demonstrated that the work environment positively affects employee competence. Sukardi et al. (2021) emphasize work motivation's mediating role between transformational leadership, work climate, and employee competence, as high work ethic drives knowledge and skill improvement to meet organizational standards. Work motivation similarly mediates the effects of transformational leadership and work environment on competence.

This research was conducted at Land Offices of the Ministry of ATR/BPN. Prior studies typically examined only direct effects of transformational leadership and work environment on competence; however, this study addresses the gap by incorporating employee work motivation as a mediator and work stress as a moderator to assess whether stress strengthens or weakens the work environment's influence on competence.

The purpose of this study is to analyze the influence of transformational leadership and work environment on employee competence, with work motivation as a mediator and work stress as a moderator, at Land Offices of the Ministry of ATR/BPN. It offers practical benefits through strategic recommendations for leaders on employee competency policies and theoretical contributions by enriching literature on ASN competence dynamics in Indonesian government bureaucracy.

METHOD

This study employed quantitative research via surveys using the scale method. The research subjects, who served as the data sources, were employees who had participated in the assessment center at the Administrator (Level 3), Supervisory (Level 2), and Executive (Level 1) position levels at Land Offices in the Ministry of ATR/BPN. The research sampled the entire population using a census technique, resulting in 319 employees as the sample size. Primary data were obtained from scales distributed directly to employees at the Land Offices. Secondary data consisted of competency profiles for land office employees who had participated in the assessment center at position levels matching the population criteria: Administrator (Level III), Supervisor (Level II), and Executive (Level I).

This study measured five variables: transformational leadership, work environment, work motivation, work stress, and employee competence. Data analysis utilized the structural equation model (SEM) to test hypotheses, as it estimates multiple interrelated relationships while accounting for measurement errors. Beyond unidirectional causal relationships, SEM also enabled analysis of bidirectional relationships common in social and behavioral sciences (Hair et al., 2018).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Research Subjects and Data

An overview of the research respondents based on age, gender, education level, length of employment, position and function can be seen in tables 2,3,4 and 5 below:

Table 2. Overview of Respondents by Age (n=319)

Age	Frequency	Percent
20 - 24 Years	14	4,4%
25 – 30 Years	82	25,7%
31 – 35 Years	58	18,2%
> 35 Years Old	165	51,7%
Total	319	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Table 2 above explains the age of more respondents at the age of > 35 years, which is 51.7%. It can be concluded that employees in land offices who already have more competency profiles in the age range of >35 years than in other age ranges.

Table 3. Overview of Respondents Based on Education (n=319)

Education	Frequency	Percent
High school or equivalent	18	5,6%
Diploma	48	15%
Bachelor	172	54%
Postgraduate (S2)	81	25,4%
Total	319	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Table 3 illustrates that the last education of the respondents is more dominant at the undergraduate level, which is as much as 54%, so it can be concluded that employees in land offices are more dominant at the undergraduate level of education compared to others.

Table 4. Respondent Overview by Length of Service (n=319)

Tenure	Frequency	Percent
< 3 years	42	13,2%
3 – 6 years	86	26,9%

Tenure	Frequency	Percent
6 years – 12 years	50	15,7%
> 12 years old	141	44,2%
Total	319	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2023

Table 4 shows that the respondents in this study were more dominant in the working period >12 years, which was 44.2%. This can be interpreted that employees in land offices are more dominant with a working period of >12 years compared to other working hours.

Table 5 Description of Respondents by Gender (n=319)

Gender	Frequency	Percent
Man	213	66,8%
Woman	106	33,2%
Total	319	100%

Source: Primary Data, 2023

From table 5 on the previous page, it can be described that respondents with male gender are more dominant than female gender, which is 66.8%. It can be concluded that employees in land offices who have a competency profile are dominated by men.

Table 6 Number of Employees with Employee Competency Criteria Based on Employee Position Level within the Ministry of ATR/BPN (n=319)

Employee Level	Employee Competency Criteria			Total
	Optimal	Quite Optimal	Less Than Optimal	
Level 1	195	10	16	221
Level 2	35	23	24	82
Level 3	8	3	5	16
Sum	238	36	45	319

Source: Center for Human Resource Development of the Ministry of ATR/BPN, 2023

Table 6 above shows that the competency criteria of employees of the Ministry of ATR/BPN are more dominant in the optimal criteria, namely 238 employees, this can be interpreted as employees at the land office with the lowest 20th performance rating in Indonesia in 2022 have optimal employee competencies.

The data of this study includes primary data and secondary data. Primary data is a source of data obtained directly in the field and collected by means of a survey, namely the scale method. Some of the variables that are carried out by the scale consist of transformational leadership variables, work environment, work motivation and work stress. Meanwhile, secondary data is a data source obtained directly from the Human Resources Development Center office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN. Secondary data is in the form of competency data for land employees who already have a competency profile or have participated in competency assessments at the position level in accordance with population criteria, namely the level of the position of Administrator (III), the level of the position of Supervisor (II) and the level of the position of Executive (I). The following is descriptive of research data and correlation between research variables as shown in table 7 on the next page.

Table 7 Descriptive Data and Intervariable Correlation

	Mean	Mean/Item	SD	KT	P.	MK	KP	CS
KT	50.197	4.183	8.098	1	0.730	0.667	0.656	0.205
P.	49.947	4.162	7.838		1	0.634	0.626	0.193
MK	53.357	4.446	5.400			1	0.645	0.199
KP	13.012	-	3.773				1	0.307
CS	45.846	3.527	14.606					1

Based on table 7 above, it is known that the variables of transformational leadership, work environment and work motivation based on mean/item are in the high category, while work stress is felt in the medium category. For employee competencies, categories are seen based on group norms and averages in the medium category. The highest correlation coefficient was in the correlation of transformational leadership and the work environment, which was 0.730, while the lowest correlation coefficient was found in the correlation between the work environment and work stress, which was 0.193.

Hypothesis Test Results

Through the results of data processing, the level of significance of the relationship was also obtained. The relationship between variables can be assessed through the path coefficient column, while the significance level can be assessed through the T-statistical or P-value column, in table 8 below.

Table 8 Path Coefficient, t-Statistics, and P-Values Results

	Original Sample	T Statistic	P-Values	Conclusion
Transformational Leadership → Motivation Work	0,437	6,007	0,000	(H0 Declined)
Work Environment → Motivation	0,315	4,490	0,000	(H0 Declined)
Transformational Leadership → Employee Competencies	0,278	3,534	0,000	(H0 Declined)
Employee Competency → Work Environment	0,213	2,981	0,003	(H0 Declined)
Employee Competence → Work Motivation	0,295	5,220	0,000	(H0 Declined)
Transformational Leadership → Work Motivation → Employee Competencies	0,129	3,553	0,000	(H0 Declined)
Work Environment → , Work Motivation → , Employee Competencies	0,093	3,199	0,001	(H0 Declined)
Work Stress Moderation → , Work Environment, → Employee Competencies	0,028	0,608	0,544	(H0 Accepted)

Source : Data Processing Results with SmartPLS 3.2.9 (2023)

Based on the results of the analysis, the results of the hypothesis test are explained as follows:

a) Hypothesis 1

Saturated Model	
SRMR	0.057

SRMR<0.10 result. Therefore, the theoretical model of the influence of transformational leadership and work environment on employee competence with work motivation as a mediator and work stress as a moderator in this study is fit with empirical data on Land Office Employees at the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

In this process, the basis for decision-making is determined on the value of t-count. Where t-count from the path coefficient analysis value, while t-table is obtained by looking at the percentage point table of the distribution t based on significant levels. In this study, for a confidence level of 95% (α 0.05), the t-table value for the two-tailed hypothesis is 1.96.

b) Hypothesis 2

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in table 8, the transformational leadership variable on work motivation has a path coefficient value of 0.437 with a calculated t-value of $6.007 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the first hypothesis is accepted. It was concluded that transformational leadership influences the work motivation of employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

c) Hypothesis 3

Based on the results of hypothesis testing in table 8, it is known that the work environment variable on work motivation has a path coefficient value of 0.315 with a calculated t-value of $4.490 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the second hypothesis is accepted. It was concluded that the work environment affects the work motivation of employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

d) Hypothesis 4

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in table 8, it is known that the transformational leadership variable on employee competence has a path coefficient value of 0.278 with a calculated t-value of $3.534 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted. It was concluded that transformational leadership affects the competence of employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

e) Hypothesis 5

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in table 8, it is known that the work environment variable on employee competence has a path coefficient value of 0.213 with a calculated t-value of $2.981 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.003 < 0.05$. It was concluded that the work environment affects the competence of employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

f) Hypothesis 6

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in table 8, it is known that the variable of work motivation to employee competence has a path coefficient value of 0.295 with a calculated t-value of $5.229 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is accepted. It was concluded that work motivation affects the competence of employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

g) Hypothesis 7

Based on the results of hypothesis testing in table 8, it is known that the transformational leadership variable on employee competence mediated by work motivation has a path coefficient value of 0.129 with a calculated t-value of $3.553 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.000 < 0.05$. Thus, the sixth hypothesis is accepted. It was concluded that transformational leadership

affects employee competence mediated by work motivation in employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

h) Hypothesis 8

Based on the results of hypothesis testing in table 8, it is known that the work environment variable on employee competence mediated by work motivation has a path coefficient value of 0.093 with a calculated t-value of $3.199 > 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.001 < 0.05$. Thus, the seventh hypothesis is accepted. It was concluded that the work environment affects employee competence mediated by work motivation in employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

i) Hypothesis 9

Based on the results of the hypothesis test in table 8, it is known that the variable of the work environment on employee competence moderated by work stress has a path coefficient value of 0.028 with a calculated t-value of $0.608 < 1.96$ and a p-value of $0.544 > 0.05$. Thus, the eighth hypothesis is rejected. It was concluded that work stress could not moderate the influence of the work environment on the competence of employees at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

The results of this study illustrate the influence of transformational leadership on employee work motivation at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN. Transformational leadership in this study illustrates that there is a significant influence between transformational leadership and work motivation. The better the transformational leadership style of the leader, the more it can arouse the work spirit of employees so that they are expected to develop and achieve the level of competence expected by the organization. Furthermore, in this study, it was also found that the influence of transformational leadership on employee competence was mediated by the work motivation of employees of the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN.

The results of this study also found that the lack of employee work motivation is caused by the lack of the role of leaders who have a transformational leadership style to improve the performance of the Land Office, so that even though employees in the Land Office have optimal competence, the work motivation of employees is very low, so that leadership plays a very important role in motivating employees, and employee motivation has an impact on employee competence which can improve performance of the Land Office.

In this study, the work environment had a significant influence on the work motivation of employees of the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN. It was found that the conditions of the work environment were less conducive so that it affected the work motivation of employees to be low. This explains that if the organization has a good and conducive work environment, then employees will always be able to provide optimal work results for the organization.

Transformational leadership has an influence on the competence of employees of the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN. In this study, it can be interpreted that the better the transformational leadership style of the leader, the more it can help employees to think critically and creatively, provide effective solution proposals to solve problems and generate new ideas to improve competence and be able to compete in improving organizational performance. The better the transformational leadership, the higher the level of employee work motivation.

Based on the results of the study, it was found that the work environment in this study can affect the competence of employees of the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN. A comfortable work environment can affect the physical and mental well-being of employees and

increase employee morale in self-development so as to produce employees who have optimal competence.

For work stress in the results of this study, it contradicts the findings of Kusmaningtyasi (2020) that work stress has a significant effect on employee competence. However, the results of this study found that work stress cannot moderate the influence of the work environment on employee competence at the Land Office of the Ministry of ATR/BPN, so work stress cannot strengthen but weaken the influence of the work environment on employee competence.

In the implementation of employee competency assessment, the Ministry of ATR/BPN measures managerial and socio-cultural competencies as well as technical competencies, but the scope of this research is focused on the results of managerial and socio-cultural competencies where these competencies are competencies that cannot be observed and assessed directly but have an influence on organizational success.

The results of hypothesis testing that have been carried out from several variables that form employee competence, namely transformational leadership, work environment and work motivation, obtained the results that transformational leadership is the most dominant variable affecting employee competence. However, building an ideal transformational leadership style is not easy and requires time and consistency, commitment, and effective communication, so that it can affect positive changes and have a significant impact on the organization and civil servants. Some of the things that need to be done in order to achieve effective transformational leadership include leaders need to have a clear vision that can be described to subordinates and also a measurable mission and have specific goals.

While in this study, the average age category of employees in land offices is more vulnerable to age more than 35 years, this is an issue that employee performance decreases with age. Employees who are getting older and have a long working period, which is on average over 12 years old, lack flexibility and often reject new technologies. Furthermore, the frequency of education of the respondents is S1 and S2, the educational background of the employee certainly affects the level of knowledge.

Conveying the vision and mission to all ASN must be done clearly and informatively and involve ASN, especially young ASN, in the decision-making process and listening to input and ideas from the team. Leaders also need to provide the necessary direction and support to develop ASN skills. In addition, transformational leaders need to encourage innovation and creativity, by providing space for ASN members to innovate and create, encouraging ASN to think outside the box and seek innovative solutions to the challenges faced and reward successful efforts and continue to encourage ASN to improve their competence.

CONCLUSION

This study concludes that transformational leadership positively influences employee competence, as stronger leadership styles foster critical and creative thinking, effective problem-solving, innovative ideas, and competitive organizational performance. The work environment also enhances competence by supporting physical and mental well-being, boosting morale, and enabling optimal self-development, though work stress does not moderate this relationship. Among the variables examined—transformational leadership, work environment, and work motivation—transformational leadership emerges as the most dominant factor; thus, leaders in the Ministry of ATR/BPN should promote innovation, out-of-the-box thinking,

achievement rewards, and competency-building opportunities for ASN members. For future research, longitudinal studies could explore how sustained transformational leadership interventions over time impact long-term competence retention amid frequent employee mutations.

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