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Driving Police Service Performance through Digital Competence and Organizational Adaptability: The Mediating Role of Work Innovation in Police Clearance Services

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ABSTRACT: Digital transformation in police administration requires personnel capabilities and organizational responsiveness to be converted into reliable service performance. This study examines the effects of digital competence and organizational adaptability on police personnel performance and tests work innovation as a mediating mechanism in Police Clearance Certificate (SKCK) services. An explanatory quantitative design was applied to all 64 police personnel directly involved in SKCK services at the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Police and subordinate resort police units using saturated sampling. Data were analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Digital competence had a positive significant direct effect on personnel performance ($\beta = 0.224$, $p = 0.002$) but did not significantly affect work innovation ($\beta = 0.131$, $p = 0.281$). Organizational adaptability strongly affected work innovation ($\beta = 0.793$, $p < 0.001$) and directly affected performance ($\beta = 0.333$, $p = 0.007$). Work innovation positively affected performance ($\beta = 0.450$, $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of digital competence through work innovation was not significant ($\beta = 0.059$, $p = 0.329$), whereas the indirect effect of organizational adaptability was significant ($\beta = 0.357$, $p < 0.001$). The findings reveal two distinct performance mechanisms: digital competence primarily operates as an enabling capability for direct task effectiveness, while organizational adaptability is translated into performance through work innovation. The study extends digital transformation and dynamic capability arguments to a hierarchical, regulation-intensive police service context and highlights organizational adaptability as a critical condition for converting change capacity into innovative service practices.

1. INTRODUCTION

Digital transformation has shifted public-service reform from the simple adoption of information technology toward changes in organizational processes, capabilities, service delivery, and interaction with citizens. [Mergel et al. \(2019\)](#) describe public-sector digital transformation as an organization-wide process, while [Dunleavy et al. \(2006\)](#) and [Bertot et al. \(2010\)](#) emphasize that digital-era governance can improve integration, transparency, and responsiveness. Public organizations therefore need not only digital infrastructure but also employees who can use technology productively and organizations that can reconfigure routines when service conditions change.

The capability of employees to work effectively in digitally mediated environments has been conceptualized as digital competence. It extends beyond technical operation to information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, content creation, safety, and problem solving. This broader view is consistent with [Ferrari \(2013\)](#), [Ilomäki et al. \(2016\)](#), [Ng \(2012\)](#) and [Van Laar et al. \(2020\)](#). In public services, these competencies matter because personnel must combine accurate information processing, secure system use, communication, and rapid problem resolution under procedural constraints.

Yet competence alone does not guarantee innovation. Organizational innovation research distinguishes the ability to perform existing tasks from the generation, promotion, and implementation of new ideas. [Janssen \(2000\)](#) conceptualizes innovative work

behavior as a multistage process, and [Anderson et al. \(2014\)](#) as well as [Amabile and Pratt \(2016\)](#) stress that innovation requires ideas to move beyond creativity toward implementation. This distinction is especially important in highly formalized organizations, where digital competence may improve compliance, accuracy, and speed without automatically creating discretion to redesign work processes.

Organizational adaptability offers a complementary explanation. Adaptation concerns how organizations recognize environmental changes and modify resources, structures, routines, and responses. [Sarta et al. \(2021\)](#) synthesize organizational adaptation as intentional decision making directed toward reducing misfit, while dynamic capability theory explains how organizations sense change, seize opportunities, and reconfigure resources. [Teece et al. \(2016\)](#) further connect dynamic capabilities to organizational agility under uncertainty. Change-capacity research similarly indicates that the ability to mobilize and coordinate organizational resources is consequential for sustained transformation [Judge and Douglas \(2009\)](#).

Police services provide a theoretically demanding context for these relationships. Law-enforcement organizations must be adaptable while maintaining accountability, legal certainty, standardized procedures, information security, and hierarchical coordination. Research on workplace adaptability shows that adaptive performance involves cognitive, behavioral, interpersonal, and situational responses to change [Pulakos et al. \(2000\)](#); [Park and Park \(2021\)](#). Evidence concerning adaptable law-enforcement officers also underscores the importance of flexibility in complex operational environments [Oleszkiewicz et al. \(2022\)](#).

This tension is visible in the Police Clearance Certificate (Surat Keterangan Catatan Kepolisian, SKCK) service at the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Police. The source study records that SKCK digitalization has proceeded gradually: digital registration and early administration coexist with verification and service stages that still require operational personnel and organizational coordination. In mid-July 2025, increased application volume and a shortage of SKCK paper created service congestion, illustrating that technology availability alone cannot absorb demand shocks. The practical issue is therefore how digital competence and organizational adaptability are translated into personnel performance when digital and physical service processes remain intertwined.

The performance literature also supports a capability-process-outcome perspective. [Campbell \(1990\)](#) treats performance as behavior relevant to organizational goals, whereas [Blumberg and Pringle \(1982\)](#) argue that performance depends on interacting capacity, willingness, and opportunity conditions. Human-resource perspectives similarly emphasize that employee capability must be embedded in organizational systems to produce sustainable outcomes [Armstrong and Taylor \(2020\)](#); [Bernardin and Russell \(2013\)](#). From a resource-based perspective, valuable capabilities can support superior outcomes when effectively organized and deployed [Barney \(1991\)](#).

A further issue concerns the social and organizational conditions under which personnel use their capabilities creatively. The job demands-resources perspective suggests that resources can support motivated and effective work under demanding conditions [Bakker and Demerouti \(2007\)](#). Psychological safety can facilitate learning and experimentation [Edmondson \(2019\)](#), while organizational inducements and resources influence readiness to respond to change [Shin et al. \(2012\)](#). These arguments imply that innovative work is more likely when organizational conditions permit personnel to convert competence and adaptive capacity into workable improvements.

The research gap is threefold. First, studies of digital transformation often address public organizations broadly, leaving police administrative services less examined. Second, digital competence and organizational adaptability represent different capabilities and may reach performance through different mechanisms. Third, the mediating role of work innovation is theoretically plausible but cannot be assumed to operate identically for individual digital competence and organization-level adaptability. Public-service scholarship emphasizes citizen value and institutional responsiveness [Denhardt and Denhardt \(2015\)](#); [Criado and Gil-García \(2019\)](#), while innovation studies highlight the importance of converting knowledge and resources into implemented change [West and Farr \(1990\)](#).

Accordingly, this study investigates whether digital competence and organizational adaptability improve police personnel performance directly and whether work innovation mediates these relationships in SKCK services. Its contribution lies in distinguishing technology utilization from technology-enabled work innovation and in showing whether an adaptive organizational context is a stronger pathway for innovation than digital competence alone.

2. THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK AND HYPOTHESES

2.1 Digital competence and personnel performance

Digital competence integrates technical, cognitive, communicative, and problem-solving capabilities required to perform work through digital technologies. [Ferrari \(2013\)](#) provides a multidimensional competence framework, while [Ilomäki et al. \(2016\)](#) conceptualize digital competence as an evolving boundary concept combining skills, knowledge, attitudes, and contextual application. [Van Laar et al. \(2020\)](#) further show that digital skills at work combine core digital skills with contextual capabilities such as critical thinking, creativity, communication, and collaboration. In SKCK services, these competencies should increase accuracy, speed, secure information handling, and problem resolution. Hence, H1: Digital competence positively affects police personnel performance.

2.2 Digital competence and work innovation

Digital technologies expand access to information, communication channels, and problem-solving tools, potentially enlarging the opportunity set for innovation. However, innovation requires more than competent system use. [Amabile \(1988\)](#) links creativity to domain skills, creativity-relevant processes, and motivation, while [Janssen \(2000\)](#) identifies idea generation, promotion, and realization as distinct innovation activities. [Anderson et al. \(2014\)](#) similarly separate creativity from the implementation dimension of innovation. Digital competence can therefore enable innovation but may not be sufficient in a rule-bound setting. H2: Digital competence positively affects work innovation.

2.3 Organizational adaptability, work innovation, and performance

Organizational adaptability reflects the capacity to modify responses when technologies, demand, or environmental conditions change. Dynamic capability arguments emphasize the reconfiguration of resources and routines, whereas adaptation research focuses on deliberate responses to environmental misfit [Teece et al. \(2016\)](#); [Sarta et al. \(2021\)](#). Change-capacity research shows that organizational systems must support coordinated change rather than rely solely on individual flexibility [Judge and Douglas \(2009\)](#). When an organization can adjust procedures, coordinate resources, and learn from disruptions, personnel have a stronger platform for generating and implementing service improvements. H3: Organizational adaptability positively affects police personnel performance. H4: Organizational adaptability positively affects work innovation.

2.4 Work innovation and the mediating mechanism

Work innovation translates ideas into implemented improvements. The componential tradition views innovation as dependent on expertise, creativity processes, motivation, and the work environment [Amabile and Pratt \(2016\)](#). Innovative behavior research shows that idea generation must be followed by advocacy and realization to produce operational change [Janssen \(2000\)](#). Innovation can therefore improve performance by redesigning routines, solving bottlenecks, and making service delivery more responsive. H5: Work innovation positively affects police personnel performance.

Mediation is expected when a capability influences performance because it first changes how work is carried out. Digital competence may provide knowledge and tools that enable innovative behavior, while organizational adaptability may provide the structural and procedural latitude that allows ideas to be implemented. Organizational change research emphasizes the importance of supportive resources and change capacity [Shin et al. \(2012\)](#); [Shin and Konrad \(2017\)](#). Innovation climate research likewise indicates that organizational conditions shape innovative behavior [Afsar and Umrani \(2020\)](#). H6: Work innovation mediates the effect of digital competence on performance. H7: Work innovation mediates the effect of organizational adaptability on performance.

3. MATERIALS AND METHODS

3.1 Research design and participants

The study used a quantitative explanatory design to test causal relationships among latent constructs. This design is consistent with explanatory survey logic described by [Creswell \(2018\)](#) and business-research procedures outlined by [Sekaran and Bougie \(2020\)](#). The broader intelligence-function population comprised 702 personnel across the Southeast Sulawesi Regional Police and resort police units. The target population for the model, however, consisted of all 64 intelligence-function police personnel directly involved in SKCK services. Because this target population was limited and fully accessible, saturated sampling was used, resulting in 64 respondents.

Table 1. Distribution of the study sample

Unit	n
DitIntelkam Polda Sultra	9
Polresta Kendari	8
Polres Baubau	4
Polres Buton	5
Polres Buton Tengah	3
Polres Buton Utara	3
Polres Wakatobi	3
Polres Muna	5
Polres Bombana	3
Polres Konawe	3
Polres Konawe Selatan	4
Polres Konawe Utara	3
Polres Kolaka	4
Polres Kolaka Timur	3
Polres Kolaka Utara	4
Total	64

Source: Primary data, Ditintelkam Polda Sultra (2026), processed by the authors.

3.2 Measures

Digital competence was operationalized through five dimensions: information and data literacy, digital communication and collaboration, digital content creation, digital safety, and digital problem solving, consistent with multidimensional digital-competence approaches [Ferrari \(2013\)](#); [Ilomäki et al. \(2016\)](#). Organizational adaptability was represented by cognitive, behavioral, emotional, technological, and interpersonal adaptability, drawing conceptually on adaptive-performance research [Pulakos et al. \(2000\)](#); [Park and Park \(2021\)](#). Work innovation comprised idea generation, idea promotion, and idea realization, consistent with [Janssen \(2000\)](#). Personnel performance was measured through work behavior, recognition, rule compliance, work contract, and additional tasks as specified in the source study.

3.3 Data analysis

PLS-SEM was used to assess the measurement and structural models. Reliability was evaluated with Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability; convergent validity was assessed through outer loadings and average variance extracted (AVE); structural explanatory power was assessed using R^2 and predictive relevance using Q^2 . Hypotheses and indirect effects were tested through bootstrapping, with $t > 1.96$ and $p < 0.05$ used as the significance criteria, following PLS-SEM guidance [Hair et al. \(2017\)](#) and the 2023 analytical criteria applied in the source study [Hair et al. \(2023\)](#).

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Measurement and structural model

Table 2. Measurement model reliability and convergent validity

Construct	Loading range	CA	CR	AVE
Digital competence	0.603–0.871	0.839	0.887	0.614
Organizational adaptability	0.569–0.942	0.883	0.917	0.694
Work innovation	0.929–0.949	0.933	0.957	0.882
Personnel performance	0.839–0.934	0.929	0.947	0.781

Source: Authors' processing of SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026).

All constructs exceeded the reliability thresholds reported in the source study. Outer loadings were above 0.50, Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability exceeded 0.70, and AVE exceeded 0.50. These results support internal consistency and convergent validity and permit evaluation of the structural relationships.

Table 3. Structural model explanatory power and model fit

Endogenous construct	R ²	Adjusted R ²	Q ²
Work innovation	0.830	0.825	0.697
Personnel performance	0.936	0.933	0.648

Source: Authors' processing of SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026). Model fit: SRMR = 0.071; NFI = 0.755; d-ULS = 0.859; Chi-square = 348.457.

The model explains 83.0% of the variance in work innovation and 93.6% of the variance in personnel performance. Q² values of 0.697 and 0.648 indicate strong predictive relevance under the criteria used in the source analysis. The reported SRMR of 0.071 is below 0.08, and the NFI is 0.755.

4.2 Direct effects

Table 4. Direct-effect hypothesis testing

Hypothesis	Relationship	β	t	p	Decision
H2	Digital competence → Work innovation	0.131	1.078	0.281	Not supported
H1	Digital competence → Performance	0.224	3.127	0.002	Supported
H4	Organizational adaptability → Work innovation	0.793	7.885	<0.001	Supported
H3	Organizational adaptability → Performance	0.333	2.677	0.007	Supported
H5	Work innovation → Performance	0.450	3.862	<0.001	Supported

Source: Authors' processing of SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026).

Digital competence significantly improved personnel performance but did not significantly increase work innovation. This result supports the conceptual distinction between technology utilization and implemented innovation. Digital competence may increase accuracy, information processing, secure system use, and problem solving without necessarily changing established procedures. This interpretation aligns with the multidimensional nature of digital competence [Van Laar et al. \(2020\)](#) and with innovation theory, which requires idea implementation rather than competence alone [Anderson et al. \(2014\)](#). In a police service, procedural standardization can channel digital capability toward reliable execution rather than experimentation.

Organizational adaptability exerted the strongest direct effect on work innovation ($\beta = 0.793$). This finding is consistent with adaptation theory: when an organization can cognitively recognize change, behaviorally adjust routines, absorb emotional pressure, accommodate technological change, and coordinate interpersonally, it creates conditions in which new work practices

can be generated and implemented. This mechanism is compatible with [Sarta et al. \(2021\)](#) and the dynamic-capability view of organizational reconfiguration [Teece et al. \(2016\)](#). It is also relevant to law enforcement, where adaptability must operate within formal authority rather than through unconstrained individual discretion [Oleszkiewicz et al. \(2022\)](#).

Work innovation significantly improved personnel performance ($\beta = 0.450$). The result indicates that idea generation, promotion, and realization are not peripheral behaviors; they function as an operational pathway for resolving bottlenecks and improving service execution. This supports [Janssen \(2000\)](#) and the broader innovation synthesis of [Anderson et al. \(2014\)](#). It also complements public-service innovation arguments that organizational improvement depends on converting ideas and resources into changes that create service value [García-Goñi et al. \(2020\)](#).

4.3 Mediation effects

Table 5. Indirect effects of work innovation

Hypothesis	Indirect relationship	β	t	p	Decision
H6	Digital competence $\rightarrow$ Work innovation $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.059	0.976	0.329	Not supported
H7	Organizational adaptability $\rightarrow$ Work innovation $\rightarrow$ Performance	0.357	3.520	<0.001	Supported

Source: Authors' processing of SmartPLS 4.0 output (2026).

Work innovation did not mediate the digital competence–performance relationship. The direct effect of digital competence ($\beta = 0.224$) was substantially larger than its indirect effect ($\beta = 0.059$). This suggests that, in SKCK services, digital competence functions primarily as an enabling capability for executing existing digital procedures effectively. Personnel may be digitally capable yet remain bounded by standardized procedures, approval structures, and formal responsibilities that limit the conversion of individual digital capability into new work practices.

By contrast, work innovation significantly transmitted the effect of organizational adaptability to performance. The indirect effect ($\beta = 0.357$) was slightly larger than the direct effect ($\beta = 0.333$), indicating that innovation is a particularly important pathway through which adaptive organizational capacity becomes performance. The source study labels this relationship “full mediation,” although the reported direct path remains statistically significant; under contemporary mediation conventions this statistical pattern is more appropriately read as significant complementary/partial mediation. The substantive conclusion remains that the innovation pathway is dominant. This interpretation is consistent with organizational change capacity [Judge and Douglas \(2009\)](#) and resource-for-change arguments [Shin et al. \(2012\)](#).

4.4 Theoretical and managerial implications

The findings refine capability-based explanations of digital transformation. First, digital competence and organizational adaptability should not be treated as interchangeable antecedents. Digital competence is closer to an individual enabling resource, whereas adaptability is an organizational capability that changes the conditions under which work is coordinated. Second, work innovation is not an automatic consequence of digital capability; it emerges more strongly when the organization can adjust routines and resources. This distinction extends the resource-based logic of [Barney \(1991\)](#) by showing that valuable individual capabilities require an organizational conversion mechanism, and it is consistent with dynamic capability theory [Teece et al. \(2016\)](#).

For police management, the results imply that digital training should be maintained because it directly improves performance, but training alone is unlikely to produce innovation. Management should simultaneously strengthen adaptive coordination, rapid problem escalation, cross-unit learning, controlled discretion for process improvement, and mechanisms for proposing and implementing service ideas. In SKCK services, these practices are particularly important when demand spikes, digital and physical processes interact, or logistical constraints require rapid operational adjustment.

The results also have implications for public-sector digital transformation. Digital reform should be designed as an organizational change program rather than a technology installation project. This position is consistent with [Mergel et al. \(2019\)](#) and public-value perspectives [Criado and Gil-García \(2019\)](#). Effective transformation requires alignment among technology, employee capability, organizational adaptability, and innovation routines.

5. CONCLUSION

This study demonstrates that police personnel performance in digitalized SKCK services is shaped by two different capability pathways. Digital competence improves performance directly but does not significantly stimulate work innovation. Organizational adaptability improves both innovation and performance, and its indirect effect through work innovation is substantial and significant. Work innovation itself is a strong predictor of performance. The central contribution is therefore not merely that digital competence and adaptability matter, but that they operate differently: digital competence supports effective technology use, whereas organizational adaptability creates the organizational conditions through which innovative work practices can be translated into stronger service performance.

The study is limited to 64 personnel directly involved in SKCK services in Southeast Sulawesi and uses a cross-sectional self-report design. Future studies should test the model in other police services and provinces, incorporate citizen-level service outcomes, and use longitudinal or multilevel designs to separate individual digital competence from unit-level adaptability more explicitly.

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AUTHOR CONTRIBUTIONS

Usman: Conceptualization, investigation, data curation, formal analysis, and writing—original draft. Samdin: Supervision, conceptualization, and writing—review and editing. Sinarwaty: Supervision, methodology, and writing—review and editing. Muh. Masri: Supervision, validation, and writing—review and editing.

CONFLICT OF INTEREST

The authors declare that there is no conflict of interest.

ETHICS STATEMENT

The study involved an organizational survey of police personnel.

DATA AVAILABILITY STATEMENT

Data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to institutional and confidentiality requirements.

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