

The Effect of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Performance Through Critical Thinking in the Use of the MySIMKARI Application at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office has not yet reached an optimal level, reflecting challenges in digital system utilization, adaptability to technological change, and effective decision-making. These challenges are presumed to be associated with Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and Critical Thinking. This study examines the effects of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on employee performance through Critical Thinking as a mediating variable. A quantitative causal research design was employed using census sampling of 215 employees. Data were collected through interval-scale questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS 4.0. The findings reveal that Agile Leadership and Digital Competence positively and significantly influence both Critical Thinking and employee performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application. Critical Thinking also has a significant positive effect on employee performance and mediates the relationships between Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and employee performance. These findings suggest that strengthening agile leadership, enhancing digital competence, and fostering critical thinking can improve employees' effective utilization of the MySIMKARI application and, consequently, their overall performance

INTRODUCTION

Employee performance has become a strategic issue in public sector human resource management because it directly influences organizational effectiveness, service quality, accountability, and the successful implementation of digital government initiatives (Mathis & Jackson, 2022). As public organizations increasingly adopt digital technologies, employee performance is no longer evaluated solely based on task completion but also on employees' ability to utilize digital systems effectively, adapt to technological changes, make timely decisions, and support organizational objectives through digital innovation (Robbins & Judge, 2021). Within the Indonesian Prosecutor's Office, digital transformation has been accelerated through the implementation of the MySIMKARI (My Sistem Informasi Manajemen Kejaksaan Republik Indonesia) application, which integrates employee performance reporting, personnel administration, and organizational monitoring. Consequently, employee performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application has become an important determinant of organizational performance and digital governance.

Preliminary observations at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office indicate that employee performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application has not yet reached an optimal level. Although organizational performance indicators have generally achieved institutional targets, several employees continue to experience difficulties in utilizing digital features, adapting to changes in digital work processes, solving technical problems independently, and using information generated by the application to support work completion and decision-making. These conditions suggest that employee performance remains focused primarily on fulfilling administrative requirements rather than maximizing the strategic benefits of digital technology for improving work effectiveness and organizational productivity.

One important factor influencing employee performance is Agile Leadership. Agile Leadership refers to a leadership approach characterized by adaptability, flexibility, collaboration, rapid decision-making, and continuous learning in responding to organizational change. Agile leaders encourage innovation, empower employees, and facilitate organizational responsiveness in dynamic work environments (Joiner & Josephs, 2019). In the context of digital transformation, agile leadership is expected to strengthen employees' readiness to adopt new technologies and improve the effective utilization of digital applications. However, preliminary observations at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office indicate that employees often rely on direct supervision and instructions from their supervisors before completing work activities through MySIMKARI, suggesting that adaptive leadership practices have not yet been fully optimized.

Another determinant of employee performance is Digital Competence. Digital competence refers to employees' ability to access, understand, evaluate, and utilize digital technologies effectively to accomplish work-related tasks. Employees with strong digital competence are generally more capable of operating digital systems, solving technical problems, adapting to technological changes, and utilizing digital information for decision-making (van Laar et al.,

2020). Nevertheless, preliminary findings indicate that several employees still encounter difficulties in operating MySIMKARI independently, particularly in entering performance reports, utilizing application features, and resolving technical issues. Such limitations may reduce the effectiveness of digital system utilization and ultimately influence employee performance.

The relationship between Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and Employee Performance may not always occur directly. Critical Thinking is expected to serve as an important mechanism through which leadership and digital competence improve employee performance. Critical Thinking enables employees to analyze information objectively, evaluate available alternatives, solve work-related problems systematically, and make evidence-based decisions when utilizing digital systems (Facione, 2020). Employees with stronger critical thinking skills are more likely to optimize the use of MySIMKARI by interpreting digital information accurately, identifying operational problems, and improving work effectiveness. However, preliminary observations reveal that some employees still utilize the application primarily for administrative reporting purposes rather than as a strategic decision-support tool, indicating that critical thinking capabilities require further development.

Previous studies have reported that Agile Leadership and Digital Competence positively influence employee performance and Critical Thinking in various organizational settings. Agile leadership has been found to enhance organizational adaptability and employee performance, while digital competence improves employees' productivity and effectiveness in technology-based work environments. Likewise, Critical Thinking has been shown to strengthen problem-solving ability and decision quality, ultimately contributing to higher employee performance. Nevertheless, empirical findings remain inconsistent regarding whether the effects of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on employee performance occur directly or indirectly through mediating variables. Furthermore, studies investigating Critical Thinking as a mediating variable between Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and employee performance remain limited, particularly within public sector organizations implementing integrated digital applications such as MySIMKARI.

This study contributes theoretically by extending the human resource management and digital transformation literature through examining the mediating role of Critical Thinking in the relationship between Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and Employee Performance. Practically, the findings are expected to provide strategic implications for the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office in strengthening adaptive leadership, improving employees' digital competence, fostering critical thinking skills, and optimizing the utilization of the MySIMKARI application to improve employee performance. Therefore, this study aims to examine the influence of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Performance through Critical Thinking in utilizing the MySIMKARI application at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Agile Leadership on Critical Thinking

Agile Leadership refers to a leadership approach characterized by adaptability, flexibility, collaboration, rapid decision-making, and continuous learning in responding to organizational change (Joiner & Josephs, 2019). According to Agile Leadership Theory, leaders who encourage collaboration, learning, and empowerment create an environment that stimulates employees to analyze problems, evaluate information, and develop innovative solutions. Employees working under agile leaders are more likely to develop stronger Critical Thinking because they are encouraged to make decisions, solve problems, and continuously improve their work processes. Zhao and Krishna (2024), Pradhana and Sudjadi (2025), and Haru et al. (2026) found that Agile Leadership positively affects Critical Thinking. Therefore, stronger Agile Leadership is expected to improve Critical Thinking.

H1: Agile Leadership has a positive effect on Critical Thinking.

Digital Competence on Critical Thinking

Digital Competence refers to employees' knowledge, skills, and attitudes in utilizing digital technologies to access, evaluate, manage, and communicate information effectively (van Laar et al., 2020). According to the Digital Competence Framework (Vuorikari et al., 2022), digital competence includes information literacy, problem-solving, and critical evaluation of digital information. Employees with stronger digital competence are better able to analyze digital information, evaluate alternative solutions, and make effective decisions in technology-based work environments. Munawaroh et al. (2026), Subariyanti et al. (2025), and Lisa Septa Rani (2025) found that Digital Competence positively influences Critical Thinking. Therefore, higher Digital Competence is expected to improve Critical Thinking.

H2: Digital Competence has a positive effect on Critical Thinking.

Agile Leadership on Employee Performance

Agile Leadership refers to leadership that promotes flexibility, adaptability, collaboration, and continuous improvement in achieving organizational objectives (Joiner & Josephs, 2019). According to Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory proposed by Appelbaum et al. (2000), employees perform better when organizations develop their abilities, motivate them, and provide opportunities to contribute effectively. Agile leaders facilitate learning, empower employees, and support adaptation to organizational changes, thereby improving employee performance. Pratama and Almansur (2024), Porkodi (2024), and Tria et al. (2026) found that Agile Leadership positively affects Employee Performance. Therefore, stronger Agile Leadership is expected to improve Employee Performance.

H3: Agile Leadership has a positive effect on Employee Performance.

Digital Competence on Employee Performance

Digital Competence represents employees' capability to effectively utilize digital technologies in completing work responsibilities (van Laar et al., 2020). According to Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory proposed by Barney (1991), employees' competencies constitute valuable organizational resources that enhance organizational competitiveness and performance. Employees with stronger digital competence are more capable of utilizing digital applications, adapting to technological changes, and completing work efficiently. Munawaroh et al. (2026), Restika and Sulaeman (2025), and Wijaya et al. (2024) found that Digital Competence positively affects Employee Performance. Therefore, higher Digital Competence is expected to improve Employee Performance.

H4: Digital Competence has a positive effect on Employee Performance.

Critical Thinking on Employee Performance

Critical Thinking refers to employees' ability to analyze information, evaluate evidence, solve problems, and make logical decisions in performing work responsibilities (Facione, 2020). According to Human Capital Theory proposed by Becker (1964), employees' knowledge, skills, and cognitive abilities represent valuable organizational assets that improve productivity and work performance. Employees with stronger Critical Thinking are more capable of solving work-related problems, making better decisions, and improving work quality, particularly in digital work environments. Haru et al. (2026), Munawaroh et al. (2026), and David and Laura Lahindah (2025) found that Critical Thinking positively influences Employee Performance. Therefore, stronger Critical Thinking is expected to improve Employee Performance.

H5: Critical Thinking has a positive effect on Employee Performance.

Agile Leadership on Employee Performance through Critical Thinking

According to Social Cognitive Theory proposed by Bandura (1986), employees' cognitive processes are shaped by organizational environments and leadership practices. Agile Leadership encourages employees to analyze problems, evaluate information, and develop effective solutions, thereby strengthening their Critical Thinking. Enhanced Critical Thinking subsequently enables employees to make better decisions and improve work performance. Haru et al. (2026), Zhao and Krishna (2024), and David and Laura Lahindah (2025) found that Critical Thinking mediates the relationship between Agile Leadership and Employee Performance. Therefore, Critical Thinking is expected to mediate the relationship between Agile Leadership and Employee Performance.

H6: Critical Thinking mediates the positive effect of Agile Leadership on Employee Performance.

Digital Competence on Employee Performance through Critical Thinking

According to Knowledge-Based View Theory proposed by Grant (1996), organizational knowledge creates value when employees effectively transform knowledge into decisions and work outcomes. Digital Competence enables employees to acquire and utilize digital knowledge, while Critical Thinking

allows them to analyze information and solve work-related problems effectively. Employees with higher Digital Competence are more likely to develop stronger Critical Thinking, which subsequently enhances Employee Performance. Munawaroh et al. (2026), Subariyanti et al. (2025), and Haru et al. (2026) found that Critical Thinking mediates the relationship between Digital Competence and Employee Performance. Therefore, Critical Thinking is expected to mediate the relationship between Digital Competence and Employee Performance.

H7: Critical Thinking mediates the positive effect of Digital Competence on Employee Performance.

Based on the theoretical review, empirical evidence, and previous studies, this study proposes that Agile Leadership and Digital Competence have both direct and indirect effects on Employee Performance through Critical Thinking as an intervening variable. Agile Leadership is expected to foster an adaptive and collaborative work environment, while Digital Competence enhances employees' ability to utilize digital technologies effectively. These factors are expected to strengthen Critical Thinking, which subsequently improves Employee Performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application. Therefore, the conceptual framework of this study is presented as follows:

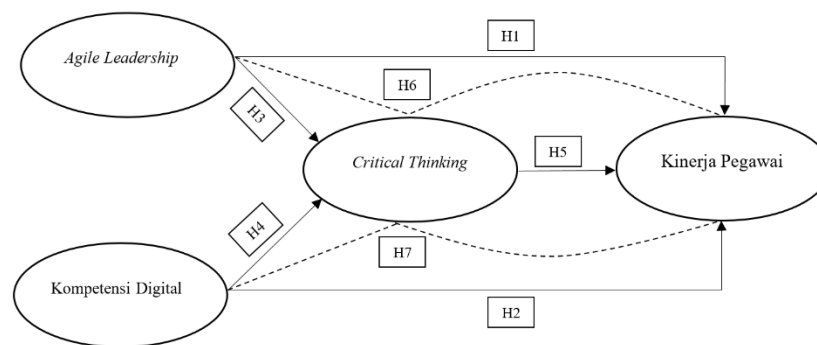


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

METHODOLOGY

This study employed a quantitative approach with an explanatory research design to examine the effects of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Performance through Critical Thinking as an intervening variable in utilizing the MySIMKARI application. The study was conducted from March to June 2026 at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office, located at Jl. Abdul Haris Nasution No. 1C, Pangkalan Masyhur, Medan Johor District, Medan City, North Sumatra, Indonesia. The population consisted of 464 employees who actively utilized the MySIMKARI application in performing their daily duties. The sample size was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 215 respondents. A proportionate stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure proportional representation of respondents based on gender and age groups.

Data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and documentation. Agile Leadership was measured using the dimensions of adaptability, responsiveness, collaboration, innovation, learning agility, and empowerment. Digital Competence was measured through information and data

literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, and problem-solving. Critical Thinking was measured using the dimensions of interpretation, analysis, evaluation, inference, explanation, and self-regulation. Employee Performance was measured using indicators of work quantity, work quality, timeliness, cost efficiency, and work behavior. All variables were measured using a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS version 4. The analysis included measurement model evaluation through convergent validity, discriminant validity, Composite Reliability, Average Variance Extracted (AVE), and Cronbach's Alpha. Furthermore, the structural model was evaluated using path coefficients, coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), predictive relevance (Q^2), and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping procedures to examine both direct and indirect effects among the study variables.

RESEARCH RESULTS

This section presents the findings of the study conducted to examine the effects of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Performance through Critical Thinking as a mediating variable in utilizing the MySIMKARI application at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office. Using the Partial Least Squares-Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, the analysis evaluates both the measurement model and the structural model to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs as well as the direct and indirect relationships among the study variables. The results provide empirical evidence regarding the roles of Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and Critical Thinking in enhancing Employee Performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application and serve as the basis for testing the proposed research hypotheses.

Validity and Reliability

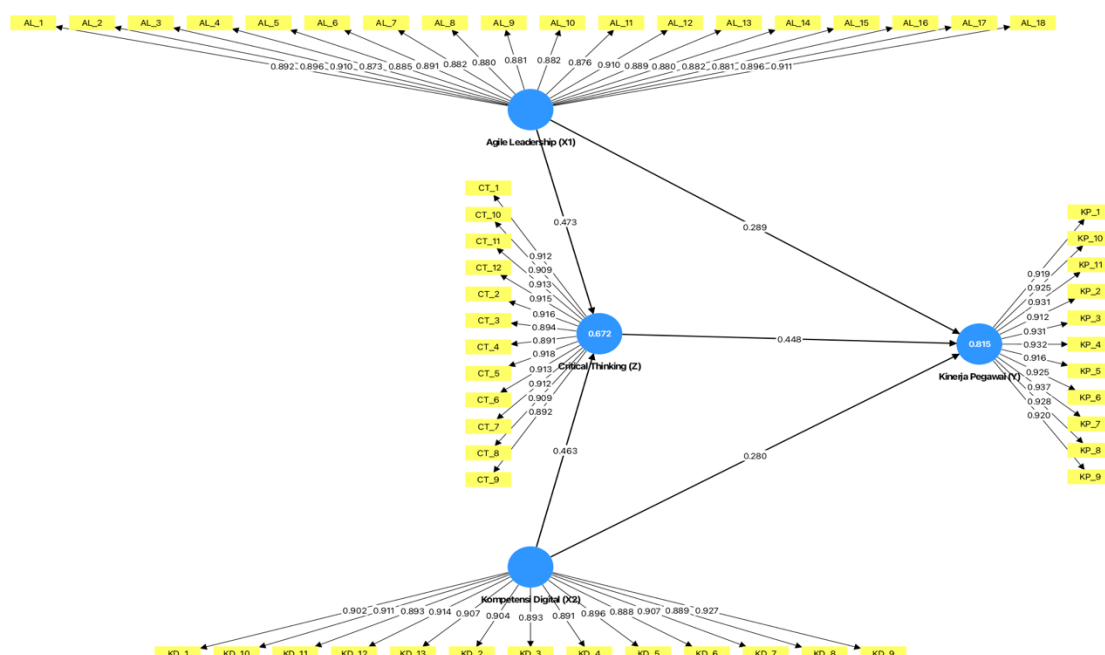


Figure 2. Loading Factor Full Model

Figure 2 presents the Full Model Loading Factor, illustrating the relationships between the latent variables and their respective indicators. The model consists of four latent variables, namely Agile Leadership (X1), Digital Competence (X2), Critical Thinking (Z), and Employee Performance (Y), each measured by multiple reflective indicators. The structural model depicts both the direct effects of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Performance as well as their indirect effects through Critical Thinking, which functions as the mediating variable. In addition, Agile Leadership and Digital Competence are hypothesized to have direct positive effects on Critical Thinking, while Critical Thinking directly influences Employee Performance. The loading factor values indicate the extent to which each indicator represents its corresponding latent construct, whereas the path coefficients illustrate the strength and direction of the relationships among the latent variables within the proposed research model..

Table 1. Validity and Reliability Test

Variabel	Indikator	AL	CT	KP	KD
Agile Leadership (X1)	AL_1	0,892			
	AL_2	0,896			
	AL_3	0,910			
	AL_4	0,873			
	AL_5	0,885			
	AL_6	0,891			
	AL_7	0,882			
	AL_8	0,880			
	AL_9	0,881			
	AL_10	0,882			
	AL_11	0,876			
	AL_12	0,910			
	AL_13	0,889			
	AL_14	0,880			
	AL_15	0,882			
	AL_16	0,881			
	AL_17	0,896			
	AL_18	0,911			
Critical Thinking (Z)	CT_1		0,912		
	CT_2		0,916		
	CT_3		0,894		
	CT_4		0,891		
	CT_5		0,918		
	CT_6		0,913		
	CT_7		0,912		
	CT_8		0,909		
	CT_9		0,892		
	CT_10		0,909		
	CT_11		0,913		
	CT_12		0,915		
Employee Performance (Y)	KP_1			0,919	
	KP_2			0,912	
	KP_3			0,931	

	KP_4			0,932	
	KP_5			0,916	
	KP_6			0,925	
	KP_7			0,937	
	KP_8			0,928	
	KP_9			0,920	
	KP_10			0,925	
	KP_11			0,931	
	<i>Digital Competence (X2)</i>				0,902
	KD_1				0,904
	KD_2				0,893
	KD_3				0,891
	KD_4				0,896
	KD_5				0,888
	KD_6				0,907
	KD_7				0,889
	KD_8				0,927
	KD_9				0,911
	KD_10				0,893
	KD_11				0,914
	KD_12				0,907
	KD_13				

The validity and reliability test results presented in Table 1 indicate that the measurement model demonstrates excellent psychometric properties. All indicators have outer loading values above the recommended threshold of 0.70, indicating strong convergent validity and satisfactory indicator reliability. The loading factor values for Agile Leadership range from 0.873 to 0.911, Critical Thinking range from 0.891 to 0.918, Employee Performance range from 0.912 to 0.937, and Digital Competence range from 0.888 to 0.927. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for Agile Leadership, Critical Thinking, Employee Performance, and Digital Competence exceed the recommended threshold of 0.50, confirming that each construct explains more than 50% of the variance of its corresponding indicators.

From the reliability perspective, the Cronbach's Alpha values for Agile Leadership, Critical Thinking, Employee Performance, and Digital Competence indicate high internal consistency and construct reliability. Furthermore, the Composite Reliability values for all constructs exceed the recommended threshold of 0.70, demonstrating satisfactory internal consistency across the measurement model. Likewise, the rho_A values further support the reliability of all latent constructs. Overall, these findings confirm that the measurement model satisfies the recommended validity and reliability criteria and is appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis.

Heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT)*Table 2. Discriminant validity - Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)*

Variable	Agile Leadership (X ₁)	Digital Competence (X ₂)	Critical Thinking (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)
Agile Leadership (X ₁)	–			
Digital Competence (X ₂)	0.543	–		
Critical Thinking (Z)	0.732	0.729	–	
Employee Performance (Y)	0.773	0.768	0.872	–

Based on Table 2, the discriminant validity test results indicate that all constructs demonstrate satisfactory discriminant validity, confirming that each latent construct is empirically distinct from the others. The correlation value between Agile Leadership and Digital Competence is 0.543, indicating a moderate relationship between the two constructs. Meanwhile, Agile Leadership shows correlations of 0.732 with Critical Thinking and 0.773 with Employee Performance, suggesting that Agile Leadership has a relatively stronger relationship with employees' critical thinking ability and performance. Furthermore, the correlation values between Digital Competence and Critical Thinking and Employee Performance are 0.729 and 0.768, respectively, indicating strong positive relationships among these constructs. The strongest relationship was observed between Critical Thinking and Employee Performance, with a correlation value of 0.872, suggesting that employees with higher critical thinking skills tend to demonstrate better performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application. Overall, these findings indicate that the constructs used in this study are conceptually and empirically distinct, with no evidence of excessive overlap among variables. Therefore, all constructs satisfy the discriminant validity criterion and are considered appropriate for subsequent structural model analysis to examine the direct and indirect relationships among Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, Critical Thinking, and Employee Performance.

R-Square*Table 3. R Square*

Research Variables	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Critical Thinking (Z)	0.672	0.669
Employee Performance (Y)	0.815	0.812

Based on Table 3, the structural model evaluation results indicate that the endogenous constructs demonstrate substantial explanatory power. The R² value for Critical Thinking is 0.672, with an Adjusted R² of 0.669, indicating that 67.2% of the variance in Critical Thinking is explained by Agile Leadership and Digital Competence, while the remaining 32.8% is explained by other factors outside the proposed research model. Meanwhile, the R² value for Employee Performance is 0.815, with an Adjusted R² of 0.812, indicating that 81.5% of the variance in Employee Performance is jointly explained by Agile Leadership, Digital

Competence, and Critical Thinking, whereas the remaining 18.5% is attributable to other variables not included in this study.

According to the recommended guidelines for PLS-SEM, an R^2 value of 0.672 indicates a substantial level of explanatory power for Critical Thinking, while the R^2 value of 0.815 demonstrates a very strong explanatory capability for Employee Performance. These findings suggest that Agile Leadership and Digital Competence play important roles in enhancing employees' Critical Thinking, and that the combined effects of Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and Critical Thinking provide a strong explanation of Employee Performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application. Overall, the structural model demonstrates high predictive accuracy and is therefore considered appropriate for subsequent hypothesis testing and mediation analysis.

F-Square

Table 4. F Square

Variable	Agile Leadership (X_1)	Digital Competence (X_2)	Critical Thinking (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)
Agile Leadership (X_1)	–	–	0.487	0.217
Digital Competence (X_2)	–	–	0.468	0.206
Critical Thinking (Z)	–	–	–	0.357
Employee Performance (Y)	–	–	–	–

Based on Table 4, Agile Leadership has the largest effect on Critical Thinking, with an f^2 value of 0.487, indicating a large effect size. Digital Competence also demonstrates a large effect on Critical Thinking, with an f^2 value of 0.468. Furthermore, Critical Thinking has a large effect on Employee Performance, with an f^2 value of 0.357. Meanwhile, Agile Leadership has a medium effect on Employee Performance, with an f^2 value of 0.217, while Digital Competence has a medium effect on Employee Performance, with an f^2 value of 0.206.

These findings indicate that Critical Thinking plays an important role in strengthening the relationship between Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and Employee Performance. The larger effects of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on Critical Thinking, compared with their direct effects on Employee Performance, suggest that Critical Thinking functions as an important mechanism through which both variables contribute to improving Employee Performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application.

Path Coefficients

Table 5. Path Coefficients

Research Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
Direct Effects						
Agile Leadership (X_1) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.289	0.289	0.045	6.483	0.000	Accepted

Digital Competence (X ₂) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.280	0.280	0.052	5.327	0.000	Accepted
Agile Leadership (X ₁) → Critical Thinking (Z)	0.473	0.473	0.048	9.927	0.000	Accepted
Digital Competence (X ₂) → Critical Thinking (Z)	0.463	0.464	0.046	10.129	0.000	Accepted
Critical Thinking (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.448	0.448	0.055	8.155	0.000	Accepted
Indirect Effects (Mediation)						
Agile Leadership (X ₁) → Critical Thinking (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.212	0.212	0.035	5.994	0.000	Accepted
Digital Competence (X ₂) → Critical Thinking (Z) → Employee Performance (Y)	0.208	0.208	0.031	6.606	0.000	Accepted

Based on the results presented in Table 5 (Path Coefficients), all proposed relationships among the study variables show positive and statistically significant effects. Agile Leadership positively affects Employee Performance, with a path coefficient of 0.289, a t-statistics value of 6.483, and a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, Digital Competence positively affects Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.280, a t-statistics value of 5.327, and a p-value of 0.000. Furthermore, Agile Leadership positively affects Critical Thinking, with a coefficient value of 0.473, a t-statistics value of 9.927, and a p-value of 0.000. Digital Competence also has a positive and significant effect on Critical Thinking, with a coefficient value of 0.463, a t-statistics value of 10.129, and a p-value of 0.000. In addition, Critical Thinking positively affects Employee Performance, with a coefficient value of 0.448, a t-statistics value of 8.155, and a p-value of 0.000.

Regarding the indirect effects, Agile Leadership positively affects Employee Performance through Critical Thinking, with a coefficient value of 0.212, a t-statistics value of 5.994, and a p-value of 0.000. Likewise, Digital Competence positively affects Employee Performance through Critical Thinking, with a coefficient value of 0.208, a t-statistics value of 6.606, and a p-value of 0.000. These findings indicate that Critical Thinking significantly mediates the relationships between Agile Leadership and Employee Performance, as well as between Digital Competence and Employee Performance. Since both the direct and indirect effects remain statistically significant, Critical Thinking functions as a partial mediating variable in the proposed research model.

DISCUSSION

The findings indicate that Agile Leadership has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office. This suggests that adaptive leadership enables employees to respond more effectively to digital transformation and organizational changes. Leaders who encourage collaboration, rapid decision-making, continuous learning, and employee empowerment create a work environment in which employees are more confident in utilizing MySIMKARI to complete their work responsibilities. The descriptive findings indicate that employees perceive leaders who provide clear direction, support innovation, and facilitate problem-solving as important in improving work effectiveness and the utilization of digital systems. These findings support Ability-Motivation-Opportunity (AMO) Theory, which explains that leadership enhances employee performance by developing employees' capabilities, motivation, and opportunities to perform effectively. The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Pratama and Almansur (2024), Porkodi (2024), and Tria et al. (2026), which reported that Agile Leadership positively influences Employee Performance.

The study also found that Digital Competence has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. Employees with stronger digital competence are better able to operate digital technologies, utilize MySIMKARI efficiently, and adapt to continuous technological developments. The descriptive results reveal that employees perceive digital literacy, information management, problem-solving, and technology utilization as essential competencies for completing work accurately and efficiently. In the context of the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office, employees with higher digital competence can process information more effectively, reduce administrative errors, and improve work productivity through the optimal utilization of MySIMKARI. These findings support the Resource-Based View (RBV) Theory, which considers employee competencies as valuable organizational resources capable of improving organizational performance. The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Munawaroh et al. (2026), Restika and Sulaeman (2025), and Wijaya et al. (2024), which found that Digital Competence positively affects Employee Performance.

Furthermore, Agile Leadership was found to have a positive and significant effect on Critical Thinking. Adaptive leadership encourages employees to evaluate information, discuss alternative solutions, and make evidence-based decisions when facing organizational challenges. Employees perceive that leaders who encourage open communication, knowledge sharing, and continuous learning foster analytical thinking and problem-solving capabilities. In the implementation of MySIMKARI, these leadership practices enable employees to interpret information more effectively and respond to operational issues more efficiently. These findings support Agile Leadership Theory, which emphasizes that adaptive leadership develops employees' learning capacity and cognitive capability in dynamic organizational environments. The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Zhao and Krishna (2024), Pradhana and Sudjadi (2025), and Haru et al. (2026).

The findings also demonstrate that Digital Competence positively and significantly affects Critical Thinking. Employees with stronger digital competence are more capable of accessing, evaluating, and interpreting digital information before making work-related decisions. In utilizing MySIMKARI, employees continuously interact with digital information that requires analytical evaluation and systematic problem-solving. Therefore, digital competence not only improves technical capability but also strengthens employees' critical thinking skills in responding to organizational demands. These findings support the Digital Competence Framework (DigComp), which explains that digital competence encompasses information evaluation, problem-solving, and decision-making in digital environments. The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Munawaroh et al. (2026), Subariyanti et al. (2025), and Lisa Septa Rani (2025).

The study further revealed that Critical Thinking has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. Employees with stronger analytical and problem-solving abilities tend to make better decisions, minimize work errors, and utilize MySIMKARI more effectively in completing their responsibilities. The descriptive findings indicate that employees who carefully evaluate available information and identify appropriate solutions demonstrate higher work quality and productivity. In the context of digital government, critical thinking enables employees to maximize the benefits of digital applications while maintaining service quality and organizational effectiveness. These findings support Human Capital Theory, which argues that employees' knowledge and cognitive abilities represent strategic organizational assets that improve performance. The findings are consistent with studies conducted by Haru et al. (2026), Munawaroh et al. (2026), and David and Laura Lahindah (2025).

The mediation analysis further revealed that Critical Thinking significantly mediates the relationships between Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, and Employee Performance. The findings indicate that Agile Leadership and Digital Competence become more effective in improving Employee Performance when they simultaneously strengthen employees' Critical Thinking. Adaptive leadership creates an environment that encourages analytical thinking, collaboration, and continuous learning, while digital competence enables employees to evaluate and utilize digital information effectively. Together, these capabilities enhance employees' ability to make accurate decisions and optimize the utilization of MySIMKARI in carrying out their work responsibilities. Therefore, Critical Thinking functions as an important mechanism linking Agile Leadership and Digital Competence with Employee Performance. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening adaptive leadership practices, improving employees' digital competence, and continuously developing critical thinking skills to enhance employee performance and support the successful implementation of digital transformation at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

Based on the findings of this study, Agile Leadership and Digital Competence have positive and significant effects on both Critical Thinking and Employee Performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office. Critical Thinking also has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. Furthermore, Critical Thinking significantly mediates the effects of Agile Leadership and Digital Competence on Employee Performance, indicating that stronger critical thinking enhances the positive contributions of adaptive leadership and digital competence to employee performance in utilizing the MySIMKARI application.

The findings suggest that the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office should strengthen Agile Leadership by encouraging adaptive decision-making, collaboration, continuous learning, and employee empowerment. In addition, the organization should improve employees' Digital Competence through continuous digital skills development, technology-based training, and effective utilization of the MySIMKARI application. These strategies are expected to enhance employees' Critical Thinking and ultimately improve Employee Performance in supporting the successful implementation of digital transformation within the Prosecutor's Office.

FUTURE RESEARCH

This study has several limitations that should be considered. First, the research was conducted only at the North Sumatra High Prosecutor's Office, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other public sector institutions or organizational settings. Second, this study focused only on Agile Leadership, Digital Competence, Critical Thinking, and Employee Performance, whereas other factors such as organizational culture, digital readiness, organizational support, innovation capability, employee motivation, and technology acceptance may also influence employee performance in digital work environments. Third, this study employed a cross-sectional research design, which limits the ability to examine changes in employees' perceptions, competencies, and performance over time.

Therefore, future research is recommended to involve broader research settings across different government institutions and public organizations to improve the generalizability of the findings. Future studies are also encouraged to incorporate additional organizational and technological variables, such as organizational support, digital innovation, technology acceptance, organizational agility, or knowledge sharing, and to employ longitudinal or mixed-method approaches to provide a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing employee performance in the utilization of digital government applications.

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