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The Effect of Digital Competence and Sispena System Quality on the Performance of Paud Assessors in Makassar City Through the Perception of Usefulness as a Mediation Variable in Ban-Pdm of South Sulawesi Province

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ABSTRACT

This study aims to analyze the influence of Digital Competence and SISPENA System Quality on the Performance of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) Assessors in Makassar City through Perceived Usefulness as a mediating variable at BAN-PDM South Sulawesi Province. The study used a quantitative approach with a population of 75 PAUD assessors in Makassar City. All population members were sampled through a saturated or census sampling technique. Data were collected using a questionnaire with a Likert scale and analyzed using the Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method with the help of SmartPLS. The results showed that Digital Competence had a positive but insignificant effect on Assessor Performance and Perceived Usefulness. SISPENA System Quality had a positive and significant effect on Assessor Performance and Perceived Usefulness. Perceived Usefulness also had a positive and significant effect on Assessor Performance. The results of the mediation test showed that Perceived Usefulness was unable to significantly mediate the effect of Digital Competence on Assessor Performance, while Perceived Usefulness was able to positively and significantly mediate the effect of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance. These findings indicate that the improvement in Assessor Performance is more determined by the quality of the system and the perceived benefits of using SISPENA than by Digital Competence directly.

Keywords: Digital Competence, SISPENA System Quality, Perceived Usefulness, Assessor Performance

INTRODUCTION

The development of digital technology has transformed the way organizations perform work, provide services, manage information, and make decisions. Information technology no longer functions merely as a supporting tool but has become an integral part of various organizational work processes. These changes have also occurred in the implementation of education, including quality assurance and accreditation activities for educational units. Digitalization enables administrative and assessment processes to be more structured, documented, transparent, and accessible to stakeholders.

The success of digital transformation is determined not only by the availability of technological applications or devices, but also by the readiness of the human resources who use them. Technology users need to have adequate knowledge, skills, and attitudes to be able to access information, operate applications, manage data, communicate through digital media, maintain information security, and resolve problems that arise during technology use. Vuorikari et al. (2022) explain that digital competencies include information and data literacy, communication and collaboration, digital content creation, security, and problem-solving. These competencies become increasingly important when work execution is highly dependent on information systems.

In education, digitalization is closely linked to efforts to improve quality through the accreditation process. Accreditation is a quality assurance instrument that provides an overview of the suitability and performance of educational units. Accreditation for early childhood education, primary education, and secondary education is carried out through the National Accreditation Board for Early Childhood, Primary Education, and Secondary Education (BAN-PDM). At the provincial level, BAN-PDM South Sulawesi Province plays a role in supporting the implementation of credible, accountable, transparent, and trustworthy accreditation.

The success of the accreditation process depends heavily on the performance of the assessors, the professionals who conduct the assessment of educational institutions. Assessors not only assign scores, but also review documents, observe the condition of the educational institution, conduct interviews, examine supporting evidence, triangulate information, compile visitation notes, and justify the assessment results. Therefore, assessor performance must be reflected in the quality of the assessment results, the timeliness of report completion, the consistency of evidence-based assessments, adherence to procedures, thoroughness, and responsibility in carrying out their duties.

Accreditation implementation is currently supported by the Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education Accreditation Assessment System (SISPENA-PDM). This system is used in various stages of the accreditation process, from uploading educational unit documents, reviewing data, conducting visits, inputting assessment results, managing supporting evidence, and processing accreditation results. The use of SISPENA is expected to improve the efficiency, transparency, consistency, and accountability of the accreditation process. Febriani and Warmansyah (2021) explain that the SISPENA-based PAUD accreditation process involves a series of assessment stages that must be completed, including validation and verification of results. Therefore, assessors are required to be able to manage digital information and evidence carefully.

Makassar City has a significant coverage of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) accreditation services. By 2026, there were 775 PAUD units in Makassar City and 75 PAUD assessors under the South Sulawesi Province National Accreditation Board (BAN-PDM). This situation demonstrates that accreditation implementation requires assessors who not only understand the assessment content but also possess the ability to use technology and are

supported by a quality information system to ensure the accreditation process can be completed effectively.

One factor thought to influence assessor performance is digital competence. Digital competence helps assessors access SISPENA, understand menus and features, manage electronic documents, upload evidence, input assessment results, communicate with team members, and overcome basic technical challenges. Adequate digital competence enables work to be completed more quickly, accurately, and efficiently. Conversely, limited digital competence can increase dependence on other users, slow work completion, and reduce the optimization of system functions.

Previous research on the influence of Digital Competence on performance has shown inconsistent results. Ochoa Pacheco and Coello-Montecel (2023) found that Digital Competence positively impacted job performance. Consistent results were also found by Sulaiman et al. (2025), who showed that Digital Competence significantly impacted employee performance, both directly and through specific psychological mechanisms. However, Garini and Muafi (2023) found that Digital Competence had no effect on employee service performance. This discrepancy indicates an empirical gap regarding the extent to which Digital Competence can directly improve performance.

In addition to individual capabilities, the quality of the SISPENA system is also estimated to be a significant factor in determining assessor performance. System quality relates to technical and operational characteristics, such as ease of use, response speed, stability, reliability, security, availability, flexibility, and the suitability of features to job requirements. A high-quality system can help assessors access data, review documents, input assessment results, upload evidence, and complete reports more effectively. Conversely, a system that is slow, unstable, difficult to access, or poorly suited to user needs can hinder the work process.

Rachman et al. (2024) found that information system quality significantly influences employee performance. Feryanto et al. (2024) also showed that system quality has a positive and significant effect on system effectiveness. However, Saputra et al. (2023) found that system quality does not have a significant direct effect on performance, but this influence may occur through user perceptions of the system's ease of use and usefulness. This inconsistency suggests that the relationship between System Quality and performance may not always be direct.

The quality of SISPENA itself remains an aspect that requires continuous evaluation. SISPENA updates in 2025 were implemented to improve assessors' efficiency and ease of work during the visitation process, including the provision of worksheets that can be used offline and a feature for comparing assessments between assessors. Lameriya et al. (2025) showed that the use of SISPENA can support the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of the accreditation process, but its implementation can still face obstacles such as limited internet connection and users' digital literacy skills. These conditions emphasize the importance of system quality and user readiness in supporting accreditation implementation.

The existence of a mandatory system does not necessarily mean that all users experience the same benefits. Therefore, Perceived Usefulness is an important variable in explaining the

relationship between Digital Competence, SISPENA System Quality, and Assessor Performance. Perceived Usefulness describes the assessor's belief that SISPENA use can improve effectiveness, productivity, speed, accuracy, and quality of work implementation. Fridkin et al. (2024) showed that Perceived Usefulness remains an important aspect even in information systems whose use is mandatory, because system use is not necessarily optimal if users do not experience real benefits for their work.

Research on the influence of Perceived Usefulness on performance also shows mixed findings. Saputra et al. (2023) found that Perceived Usefulness significantly influenced the performance of information system users. Unggu et al. (2025) also showed that Perceived Usefulness had a positive and significant effect on the performance of employees using applications. Conversely, Narulita et al. (2022) found that Perceived Usefulness of information technology use did not significantly influence performance. These differences in results indicate that the relationship between Perceived Usefulness and performance still needs to be tested in different user and system contexts.

Perceived Usefulness is also thought to be a mechanism that bridges the relationship between Digital Competence and Assessor Performance. Assessors with better Digital Competence will be better able to understand features, manage documents, and overcome technical obstacles, thus enabling them to use SISPENA more optimally. These abilities are thought to shape the belief that the system truly helps with work. Cattaneo et al. (2025) found that Perceived Usefulness mediated the relationship between digital competence and actual technology use, while Li et al. (2025) showed that Perceived Usefulness is part of the mechanism that links digital capabilities to adaptive technology use.

Perceived Usefulness is also thought to mediate the effect of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance. A system that is fast, stable, reliable, secure, easy to use, and appropriate to job requirements is more likely to be perceived as useful. Saputra et al. (2023) showed that Perceived Usefulness can mediate the effect of system quality on user performance. Consistent results were found by Yaputra et al. (2025), who showed that information system quality can influence job performance through perceived usefulness by users.

The empirical phenomena in this study are increasingly evident from the results of a pre-survey of 15 PAUD assessors in Makassar City. A total of 53.33% of respondents stated that they were unable to overcome basic technical obstacles when using SISPENA. Regarding System Quality, 66.67% of respondents stated that SISPENA could not be accessed quickly and stably. Furthermore, 60% of assessors stated that SISPENA had not helped expedite the completion of accreditation tasks, while 60% of respondents stated that they were unable to complete accreditation reports on time. Nevertheless, most assessors were able to maintain consistency in their assessments and carry out their tasks according to procedures.

The pre-survey findings indicate that the primary problem lies not in the low overall assessor performance, but rather in the timeliness of work completion and the experience of using SISPENA. The pattern of limited ability to overcome technical obstacles, suboptimal system speed and stability, system benefits that have not been fully realized, and delays in report

completion indicates that Digital Competence and System Quality may be related to assessor performance through Perceived Usefulness.

Based on this study, several research gaps are identified. First, there is an empirical gap because previous research on the influence of Digital Competence, System Quality, and Perceived Usefulness on performance still shows inconsistent results. Second, there is a mechanism gap because the relationship between Digital Competence and System Quality with performance is suspected to occur through Perceived Usefulness. Third, there is a contextual gap because research that simultaneously integrates Digital Competence, System Quality, Perceived Usefulness, and Assessor Performance in the context of PAUD assessors using SISPENA is still limited.

The novelty of this research lies in the integration of individual factors in the form of Digital Competence, technological factors in the form of SISPENA System Quality, psychological factors in the form of Perceived Usefulness, and individual outcomes in the form of Assessor Performance in one research model. Perceived Usefulness is placed as a mediating variable in two paths simultaneously, namely the relationship between Digital Competence and Assessor Performance and the relationship between SISPENA System Quality and Assessor Performance. The research was also specifically conducted on all PAUD assessors in Makassar City who are part of BAN-PDM South Sulawesi Province.

The study used a quantitative approach with all 75 PAUD assessors in Makassar City as respondents through a saturated or census sampling technique. The analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to test direct and indirect relationships between variables. Based on the description, this study aims to analyze the influence of Digital Competence and SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance, the influence of Digital Competence and SISPENA System Quality on Perceived Usefulness, the influence of Perceived Usefulness on Assessor Performance, and the role of Perceived Usefulness in mediating the influence of Digital Competence and SISPENA System Quality on the Performance of PAUD Assessors in Makassar City at BAN-PDM South Sulawesi Province.

RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory research method to analyze the causal relationship between Digital Competence, SISPENA System Quality, Perceived Usefulness, and Assessor Performance. The study employed a cross-sectional design, meaning data collection was conducted over a single research period to test both direct and indirect relationships between variables.

The research was conducted at the National Accreditation Board for Early Childhood, Elementary, and Secondary Education (BAN-PDM) of South Sulawesi Province in Makassar City in July–September 2026. The research population was all 75 PAUD assessors in Makassar City within the scope of BAN-PDM of South Sulawesi Province. Because all members of the population could be reached, the sampling technique used saturated or census sampling so that all 75 assessors were determined as research respondents.

Data collection was conducted through questionnaires and documentation. The questionnaire was used to obtain primary data on Digital Competence, SISPENA System Quality, Perceived Usefulness, and Assessor Performance. The questionnaire was distributed online via an electronic form. Each statement was measured using a five-level Likert scale: 1 for strongly disagree, 2 for disagree, 3 for neutral, 4 for agree, and 5 for strongly agree. Documentation was used to supplement information regarding BAN-PDM, the number of assessors, accreditation implementation, and SISPENA usage.

Table 1. Operationalization of research variables

Variables	Definition Operational	Indicator
Competence (X1)	Ability PAUD assessor in use digital technology in effective , critical , safe , and responsible answer For support implementation task accreditation through SISPENA	Literacy information and data; communication And digital collaboration ; creation And management digital content ; digital security ; breaking digital issues
Quality SISPENA System (X2)	Evaluation assessor to ability technical And SISPENA operations in provide easy system used , available when needed , fast , stable , reliable , safe , and in accordance with need work	Convenience use ; availability And accessibility ; reliability And stability ; speed response ; functionality And suitability task ; security system
Perception Benefit (Z)	Level of confidence assessor that use of SISPENA can make things easier work , speed up settlement tasks , as well as increase productivity And effectiveness implementation accreditation	Speed up settlement work ; improve performance work ; improve productivity ; increase effectiveness ; making things easier work ; giving benefit in a way overall
Performance Assessor (Y)	Success rate assessor in carry out task accreditation in a way accurate , objective , consistent , complete , responsible answer , according procedures , and appropriate time	Quality And accuracy results assessment ; accuracy time settlement task ; consistency And objectivity assessment ; compliance to procedure accreditation ; completion task And not quite enough answer ; coordination And Work The same

Digital Competence Indicators refer to Vuorikari et al. (2022), SISPENA System Quality refers to Gupta and Bhatt (2021), Perceived Usefulness refers to Davis (1989), while Assessor Performance refers to Ramos-Villagrasa et al. (2019).

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistical analysis and Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with the help of SmartPLS 4. Descriptive statistical analysis was used to describe the characteristics of respondents and the tendency of assessment towards each research variable. Respondent characteristics were analyzed based on gender, age, education, length of service as an assessor, and experience carrying out accreditation assignments.

SEM-PLS analysis was used to evaluate the measurement model and structural model and to test the research hypothesis. Evaluation of the measurement model or outer model was carried out through convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability testing. Convergent validity was assessed based on outer loading and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Indicators were declared to meet convergent validity if outer loading ≥ 0.70 and AVE ≥ 0.50. Construct reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability with a minimum value of 0.70. Discriminant validity was evaluated using the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) with a value criterion of <0.90.

Evaluation of the structural model or inner model is carried out through the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), coefficient of determination (R^2), effect size (f^2), and Q^2predict. The VIF value is used to detect potential collinearity between predictor variables. The R^2 value is used to assess the ability of Digital Competence and SISPENA System Quality in explaining Perceived Usefulness and the ability of all predictor variables in explaining Assessor Performance. The f^2 value is used to determine the contribution of each structural relationship, while Q^2predict is used to assess the predictive relevance of the model. The model is declared to have predictive relevance if Q^2predict > 0.

Hypothesis testing was conducted using a bootstrapping procedure on 5,000 subsamples with a 5% significance level and two-tailed testing. The hypothesis was accepted if the direction of the coefficient was consistent with the hypothesis, the t-statistic was > 1.96, the p-value was < 0.05, and the 95% confidence interval did not include the zero value.

Mediation testing is conducted by assessing specific indirect effects. Perceived Usefulness is declared capable of mediating if the indirect effect has a p-value <0.05 and the confidence interval does not include the zero value. If the indirect effect is significant while the direct effect is insignificant, then full mediation or indirect-only mediation occurs. If the direct and indirect effects are both significant in the same direction, then complementary partial mediation occurs.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study involved 75 assessors of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) in Makassar City, all of whom served as respondents. Based on the characteristics of the respondents, 51 people (68.00%) were female and 24 people (32.00%) were male. Respondents were predominantly in the 40–49 age group (41.33%), with 10–20 years of service (46.67%), and a master's degree (68.00%). This condition indicates that most respondents have a relatively mature working age, have a fairly long work experience, and a relatively high level of education.

Descriptive Analysis Results

Descriptive analysis shows that all research variables are in the very good category. A summary of the average values for each variable is presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Results of descriptive analysis of research variables

Variables	Mean	Category	Highest Mean	Lowest Mean

Digital Competence	4.45	Very Good	4.63	4.25
Quality SISPENA System	4.45	Very Good	4.71	4.31
Perception Benefits	4.42	Very Good	4.53	4.27
Performance Assessor	4.43	Very Good	4.63	4.31

Digital Competence received an average score of 4.45. The ability to use digital media to communicate during accreditation tasks received the highest score of 4.63. Meanwhile, the ability to overcome simple technical obstacles when using SISPENA received the lowest score of 4.25. This indicates that assessors generally possess excellent digital skills, although their technical problem-solving abilities still require improvement.

The SISPENA System Quality also received an average score of 4.45. The highest score was for ease of understanding, with a score of 4.71, while the system response speed received the lowest score of 4.31. This indicates that SISPENA is generally considered easy to use and suitable for job requirements, but improving response speed is still a concern.

Perceived Usefulness received an average score of 4.42. The highest score of 4.53 indicates that assessors overall considered SISPENA useful in supporting their work. Meanwhile, the system's ability to reduce the time required to complete the accreditation process received the lowest score of 4.27.

Assessor performance received an average score of 4.43, falling within the very good category. The aspect with the highest score of 4.63 relates to the ability to produce accurate accreditation assessments based on available evidence and information, while the aspect with the lowest relative score of 4.31 relates to the objectivity of evidence-based assessments. Nevertheless, all aspects of assessor performance remained within the very good category.

Evaluation of Measurement Model

The outer loading test results show that all indicators have values above 0.70. The outer loading values for Digital Competence are in the range of 0.735–0.810, SISPENA System Quality 0.720–0.897, Perceived Usefulness 0.714–0.859, and Assessor Performance 0.742–0.884. Thus, all indicators meet the convergent validity criteria and can be retained in the model.

Table 3. Results of convergent validity and construct reliability

Variables	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	Information
Digital Competence	0.587	0.823	0.826	0.876	Valid and Reliable
Quality SISPENA System	0.629	0.880	0.888	0.910	Valid and Reliable
Perception Benefits	0.637	0.885	0.888	0.913	Valid and Reliable
Performance Assessor	0.677	0.904	0.904	0.926	Valid and Reliable

All AVE values were above 0.50, while Cronbach's Alpha, rho_A, and Composite Reliability were all above 0.70. Thus, all constructs met the criteria for convergent validity and internal reliability.

Discriminant validity based on the Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was also met because all values were below 0.90. HTMT values ranged from 0.740–0.897. The highest value was found in the relationship between SISPENA System Quality and Digital Competence at 0.897, followed by the relationship between Perceived Usefulness and SISPENA System Quality at 0.896. Although relatively close to the 0.90 limit, all constructs still had adequate empirical differences.

Structural Model Evaluation

Structural model testing showed that the VIF values ranged from 2.421 to 3.697. All values were below the threshold of 5, indicating that the model did not exhibit serious multicollinearity problems.

Table 4. Results of structural model evaluation

Testing	Relationship / Variable	Mark	Information
R^2	Performance Assessor	0.780	Strong
R^2	Perception Benefits	0.644	Moderate
f^2	Competence → Performance Assessor	0.008	Very small
f^2	Digital Competence → Perception Benefits	0.030	Small
f^2	Quality SISPENA System → Performance Assessor	0.262	Currently
f^2	Quality SISPENA System → Perception Benefits	0.527	Big
f^2	Perception Benefit → Performance Assessor	0.441	Big

The R^2 value of Assessor Performance of 0.780 indicates that 78.0% of the variation in Assessor Performance can be explained by Digital Competence, SISPENA System Quality, and Perceived Usefulness, while the remaining 22.0% is explained by factors outside the model. Perceived Usefulness has an R^2 of 0.644, meaning that 64.4% of the variation can be explained by Digital Competence and SISPENA System Quality.

Based on the f^2 value, the largest contribution was from the Quality of the SISPENA System to Perceived Usefulness at 0.527, followed by Perceived Usefulness to Assessor Performance at 0.441. Conversely, Digital Competence to Assessor Performance had the smallest contribution, namely 0.008.

The Q^2predict test showed a value of 0.665 for Assessor Performance and 0.602 for Perceived Usefulness. Both values are greater than zero, indicating that the model has predictive relevance for both endogenous variables. The RMSE and MAE values for Assessor Performance were 0.595 and 0.413, respectively, while Perceived Usefulness had an RMSE of 0.653 and an MAE of 0.457.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the direct influence test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Results of direct influence testing

Hypothesis	Connection Intervariable	Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H1	Competence → Performance Assessor	0.067	0.909	0.363	Rejected
H2	Quality SISPENA System → Performance Assessor	0.462	2,635	0.008	Accepted
H3	Perception Benefit → Performance Assessor	0.522	3,184	0.001	Accepted
H4	Digital Competence → Perception Benefits	0.160	1,173	0.241	Rejected
H5	Quality SISPENA System → Perception Benefits	0.673	4,610	0,000	Accepted

The results indicate that of the five direct influences, H2, H3, and H5 are accepted, while H1 and H4 are rejected. The largest influence is found in the relationship between SISPENA System Quality and Perceived Usefulness with a coefficient of 0.673. Furthermore, Perceived Usefulness influences Assessor Performance by 0.522 and SISPENA System Quality influences Assessor Performance by 0.462. CHAPTER IV

The indirect effect test is presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Results of indirect influence testing

Hypothesis	Connection No Direct	Coefficient	T Statistics	P Values	Decision
H6	Digital Competence → Perception Benefit → Performance Assessor	0.084	1,216	0.224	Rejected
H7	Quality SISPENA System → Perception Benefit → Performance Assessor	0.352	2,324	0.020	Accepted

Perceived Usefulness was unable to significantly mediate the effect of Digital Competence on Assessor Performance. Conversely, Perceived Usefulness was proven to be able to positively and significantly mediate the effect of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance. Because the direct effect of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance remains significant and the indirect effect through Perceived Usefulness is also significant, the form of mediation in H7 is partial mediation. CHAPTER IV

Discussion

The Influence of Digital Competence on Assessor Performance

The results of the study indicate that Digital Competence has a positive but insignificant effect on Assessor Performance with a coefficient of 0.067, t-statistics of 0.909, and p-values of 0.363. Thus, H1 is rejected. The f^2 value of 0.008 also indicates that the direct contribution of Digital Competence to Assessor Performance is very small.

These findings indicate that digital skills are not yet a direct determinant of assessor performance. This is understandable, as assessors' digital competency is already in the very good category, with an average score of 4.45. When digital skills are relatively high and evenly distributed, variation is no longer a key differentiator in assessor performance.

Digital competency remains essential for assessors to search for and evaluate information, engage in digital communication and collaboration, manage documents, maintain data security, and resolve technological challenges. However, the success of accreditation tasks is also greatly influenced by the characteristics of the system used and the tangible benefits derived from it.

This finding aligns with Garini and Muafi (2023), who found that digital competence did not have a significant direct impact on service performance. However, the study's results differ from those of Ochoa Pacheco and Coello-Montecel (2023) and Sulaiman et al. (2025), who found that digital competence had a positive and significant impact on performance. This difference suggests that the influence of digital competence may depend on job characteristics, the systems used, and organizational conditions.

The Influence of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance

The Quality of the SISPENA System has a positive and significant effect on Assessor Performance with a coefficient of 0.462, t-statistics of 2.635, and p-values of 0.008. Thus, H2 is accepted. The f^2 value of 0.262 indicates that the Quality of the SISPENA System contributes in the moderate category to Assessor Performance.

A system that is easy to use, available when needed, stable, fast, reliable, secure, and has functions that are tailored to job requirements helps assessors complete various accreditation stages more effectively. SISPENA is used for document review, evidence management, assessment result input, and report completion, so the system's technical quality is closely linked to the assessor's work performance.

This finding aligns with Rachman et al. (2024), who found that information system quality significantly impacts employee performance. Similar results were also found by Feryanto et al. (2024), who showed that system quality had a positive and significant impact on the effectiveness of e-Kinerja use. However, the study's results differ from those of Saputra et al. (2023), who found that system quality did not have a significant direct impact on user performance.

Thus, improving Assessor Performance needs to be supported by maintaining and improving the quality of SISPENA, especially in aspects that receive relatively lower ratings, such as system response speed.

The Influence of Perceived Usefulness on Assessor Performance

Perceived Usefulness has a positive and significant effect on Assessor Performance with a coefficient of 0.522, t-statistics of 3.184, and p-values of 0.001. Thus, H3 is accepted. The f^2 value of 0.441 indicates that Perceived Usefulness has a significant contribution to Assessor Performance.

When assessors believe that SISPENA can expedite their work, increase productivity, improve effectiveness, simplify their work, and provide overall benefits, they will be better able to utilize the system to support the completion of accreditation tasks. Under these circumstances, the use of SISPENA is not seen merely as a procedural obligation, but as a tool that adds value to their work.

These findings align with those of Saputra et al. (2023), who found that Perceived Usefulness significantly impacted information system user performance. Similar results were also found by Unggu et al. (2025), who showed that the greater the perceived usefulness of an application, the better the resulting performance. However, these findings differ from those of Narulita et al. (2022), who found that Perceived Usefulness did not significantly impact performance.

The research results confirm that perceived benefits are one of the main factors in improving Assessor Performance, especially because SISPENA is used directly in various stages of accreditation work.

The Influence of Digital Competence on Perceived Usefulness

Digital Competence has a positive but insignificant effect on Perceived Usefulness with a coefficient of 0.160, a t-statistic of 1.173, and a p-value of 0.241. Thus, H4 is rejected. The f^2 value of 0.030 also indicates that the contribution of Digital Competence to Perceived Usefulness is in the small category.

These findings indicate that high digital skills do not automatically translate into assessors rating SISPENA as more useful. Digital Competence refers to an individual's ability to use technology, while Perceived Usefulness is more related to the user's experience regarding the system's ability to add value to their work.

Assessors with both high and relatively low digital skills still use the same system to complete the same accreditation stages. Therefore, the benefits of SISPENA are determined more by how the system supports their work than solely by the digital skills of its users.

These findings align with Ari et al. (2026) and Kim and Eom (2025), which showed that digital literacy did not significantly influence perceived usefulness. These results reinforce the view that the ability to use technology does not necessarily shape perceptions of usefulness if the system's characteristics and functions do not provide a significantly different user experience.

The Influence of SISPENA System Quality on Perception of Usefulness

The quality of the SISPENA system has a positive and significant effect on perceived usefulness with a coefficient of 0.673, a t-statistic of 4.610, and a p-value of 0.000. Thus, H5 is accepted. The f^2 value of 0.527 is the largest effect size in the research model.

These results indicate that the benefits of SISPENA are significantly influenced by the system's technical and operational quality. When a system is easy to use, accessible when

needed, stable, reliable, fast, secure, and has functions that meet job requirements, assessors are more likely to believe the system is capable of assisting in completing accreditation tasks.

These findings align with Saputra et al. (2023), who demonstrated that system quality has a significant relationship with perceived usefulness. Yaputra et al. (2025) also demonstrated that information system quality is related to perceived usefulness by users. Furthermore, Lameriya et al. (2025) demonstrated that the use of SISPENA can support the efficiency, effectiveness, transparency, and accountability of the accreditation process if supported by good technical conditions and user experience.

These results also indicate that Perceived Usefulness is more determined by the Quality of the SISPENA System than by Digital Competence. This is evident from the coefficient of System Quality on Perceived Usefulness of 0.673, while the coefficient for Digital Competence is only 0.160 and is insignificant.

The Role of Perceived Usefulness in Mediating the Effect of Digital Competence on Assessor Performance

Perceived Usefulness was unable to significantly mediate the effect of Digital Competence on Assessor Performance. The indirect effect obtained a coefficient of 0.084, a t-statistic of 1.216, and a p-value of 0.224. Thus, H6 was rejected.

The lack of a mediation effect was primarily due to the insignificant relationship between Digital Competence and Perceived Usefulness. Digital Competence also had no significant direct effect on Assessor Performance, while Perceived Usefulness had a significant effect on Assessor Performance. Thus, the weak point of the mediation pathway lies in the ability of Digital Competence to shape Perceived Usefulness.

These findings indicate that high assessor digital skills are not sufficient to improve assessor performance through the perceived benefits of SISPENA. Assessors may possess good technology skills, but the benefits of a system still depend heavily on whether it is easy, fast, stable, reliable, and appropriate to job requirements.

These findings align with Ari et al. (2026) and Kim and Eom (2025), who demonstrated a weak relationship between digital competence and perceived usefulness. Conversely, the study's findings differ from those of Cattaneo et al. (2025) and Li et al. (2025), who found that perceived usefulness may be part of the mechanism linking digital competence to technology use.

The Role of Perceived Usefulness in Mediating the Influence of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance

Perceived Usefulness is proven to be able to positively and significantly mediate the influence of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance with an indirect coefficient of 0.352, t-statistics of 2.324, and p-values of 0.020. Thus, H7 is accepted.

The Quality of the SISPENA System has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Usefulness of 0.673, while Perceived Usefulness has a positive and significant effect on

Assessor Performance of 0.522. At the same time, the direct effect of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance also remains significant at 0.462. Therefore, Perceived Usefulness acts as a partial mediator.

Substantively, a system that is easy to use, stable, fast, reliable, secure, and meets job requirements primarily creates a positive user experience. These conditions increase assessors' confidence that SISPENA can speed up work, increase productivity and effectiveness, and simplify task completion. These perceived benefits subsequently strengthen assessor performance.

These findings align with Saputra et al. (2023), who demonstrated that perceived usefulness mediates the effect of system quality on performance. Similar findings were also presented by Yaputra et al. (2025), who demonstrated that system quality can improve work outcomes through perceived usefulness.

Overall, the research results indicate that technological factors play a more dominant role than individual digital capabilities in explaining assessor performance. The quality of the SISPENA system not only directly improves assessor performance but also increases perceived usefulness, which in turn strengthens assessor performance. Conversely, digital competence has not provided a significant direct or indirect impact. These findings emphasize that improving assessor performance needs to be directed not only at developing user capabilities, but primarily at improving the quality of SISPENA and creating tangible benefits that can be felt in the accreditation process.

CONCLUSION AND SUGGESTIONS

Conclusion

The results of the study indicate that Digital Competence has a positive but insignificant effect on Assessor Performance, thus H1 is rejected. Digital Competence also has a positive but insignificant effect on Perceived Usefulness, thus H4 is rejected. These findings indicate that the high ability of assessors in using digital technology is not a direct factor determining the increase in Assessor Performance or the high perceived benefits of SISPENA.

The Quality of the SISPENA System is proven to have a positive and significant effect on Assessor Performance, so H2 is accepted. Perceived Usefulness also has a positive and significant effect on Assessor Performance, so H3 is accepted. In addition, the Quality of the SISPENA System has a positive and significant effect on Perceived Usefulness, so H5 is accepted. These results confirm that the better the ease of use, accessibility, reliability, stability, response speed, functionality, and security of SISPENA, the greater the system benefits perceived by assessors and the better their performance in carrying out accreditation tasks.

Perceived Usefulness was unable to significantly mediate the effect of Digital Competence on Assessor Performance, so H6 was rejected. Conversely, Perceived Usefulness was able to positively and significantly mediate the effect of SISPENA System Quality on Assessor Performance, so H7 was accepted. Because the direct effect of SISPENA System

Quality on Assessor Performance remained significant and the indirect effect through Perceived Usefulness was also significant, the mediation that occurred was partial.

Overall, this study shows that the performance of Early Childhood Education (PAUD) assessors in Makassar City is more determined by system quality and the tangible benefits perceived from using SISPENA than by direct digital competency. Therefore, improving performance is not sufficient simply through enhancing user skills; it needs to be supported by a high-quality SISPENA capable of providing convenience, efficiency, productivity, and effectiveness in carrying out accreditation tasks.

Suggestion

The South Sulawesi Provincial BAN-PDM needs to continue evaluating the experience of using SISPENA, particularly regarding response speed, which received relatively lower ratings compared to other aspects of system quality. Technical assistance to assessors also needs to be strengthened, particularly in improving their ability to overcome simple technical obstacles through practical, problem-based training.

SISPENA administrators and developers need to direct system improvements toward increasing response speed, stability, reliability, security, and feature alignment with assessors' work needs. System optimization also needs to be directed toward streamlining workflows and eliminating inefficient steps to ensure users experience the benefits of SISPENA in accelerating the accreditation process more effectively.

Makassar City's Early Childhood Education (PAUD) assessors need to maintain and continuously develop their Digital Competence, which is already in the excellent category. Competence improvement should not only focus on technology operation but also on utilizing technology to enhance accuracy, objectivity, consistency, and completion of accreditation tasks. Strengthening the objectivity of evidence-based assessments is also necessary through competency refreshment, strengthening evidence triangulation, and establishing interassessor calibration forums.

This study was limited to 75 early childhood education assessors in Makassar City, so further research can expand the sample to assessors in other districts/cities or throughout South Sulawesi Province. The research model can also be developed by including other variables such as Information Quality, Service Quality, Perceived Ease of Use, Organizational Support, technology experience, or User Satisfaction to obtain a more comprehensive understanding of the factors influencing Perceived Usefulness and Assessor Performance.

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