

The Influence of Artificial Intelligence Technology Utilization and Personnel's Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications on Work Performance in Local Administrative Organizations: A Case Study of Maha Sarakham Province

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Abstract

This research aimed to (1) examine the influence of Artificial Intelligence (AI) technology utilization on personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications within local administrative organizations in Maha Sarakham Province, (2) investigate the effect of professional competence on personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications, and (3) analyze the combined influence of AI technology utilization and professional competence on the work performance of local administrative personnel. A quantitative research design was employed using an online questionnaire distributed to 365 personnel from various local administrative organizations in Maha Sarakham Province. Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics—frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation—and inferential statistics through Multiple

Regression Analysis (MRA). The results indicated that AI technology utilization had a significant positive effect on personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications ($\beta = 0.19$, $p < 0.01$), while professional competence also showed a significant effect ($\beta = 0.21$, $p < 0.01$). Furthermore, the combined influence of AI technology utilization and professional competence demonstrated a statistically significant positive impact on overall work performance ($\beta = 0.45$, $p < 0.001$). These findings highlight the importance of integrating AI adoption with personnel competency development to enhance organizational efficiency and service delivery within local administrative organizations.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence Technology, Knowledge and Competency, Professional Competence, Local Administrative Organizations, Work Performance

Introduction

In the era of digital transformation, artificial intelligence (AI) has emerged as a transformative force reshaping organizational practices and decision-making processes across sectors worldwide, particularly within public administration (Johnson et al., 2022). In Thailand, the government has actively implemented the Digital Government Policy to promote the integration of digital technologies in public service delivery, with the goal of enhancing administrative efficiency and transparency (Khaenamkhaew et al., 2023). Consequently, the adoption of AI in local administrative organizations (LAOs) has become a crucial mechanism for modernizing local governance and improving service quality (Kinder et al., 2023). Local administrative organizations are at the forefront of Thailand's public service system, responsible for community welfare, infrastructure development, and local economic growth (Worapongpat, 2025e). However, the increasing volume of data, complex

operational procedures, and the demand for timely service delivery have imposed significant administrative burdens (Murire, 2024). AI technologies possess strong potential to mitigate these challenges by automating repetitive tasks, improving data accuracy, and enhancing service efficiency (Nua-amnat et al., 2021).

Despite these opportunities, the success of AI adoption in the public sector depends not only on technological availability but also on human readiness and competency (Worapongpat, 2025d). Personnel must possess adequate knowledge, digital literacy, and professional competence to effectively utilize AI tools (Parycek et al., 2024). Prior studies have highlighted that human factors—particularly knowledge and competency in AI applications—serve as key determinants of organizational performance (Worapongpat, 2025c). However, most existing research focuses on the adoption of AI technologies in national-level agencies or the private sector, leaving a notable research gap concerning how AI utilization and personnel competence interact to influence work performance in local administrative organizations, especially within the Thai context (Saman Siri Charoensuk, 2022). Maha Sarakham Province, a prominent educational and administrative center in the lower northeastern region of Thailand, provides an ideal setting for this investigation (Worapongpat, 2025b). Its diverse local administrative organizations, including provincial, municipal, and subdistrict entities, operate under varying responsibilities and complexities (Sirisawat & Chaiya, 2025). Exploring AI integration in this context can generate valuable insights for improving local governance across the nation (Yigitcanlar et al., 2024).

Therefore, this study aims to address the identified research gap by examining the influence of AI technology utilization and personnel's professional

competence on their knowledge and competency in AI applications, as well as the combined effect of these factors on work performance among local administrative personnel in Maha Sarakham Province. The findings are expected to contribute to both theoretical and practical advancements by informing future AI policy development, personnel training programs, and strategic technology implementation in local administrative organizations

Research Objectives

1. To examine the influence of AI technology utilization on personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications within local administrative organizations in Maha Sarakham Province.
2. To determine the influence of professional competence on personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications.
3. To analyze the combined and mediating effects of AI technology utilization and professional competence on work performance, through personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications.

Research Scope

1. Concepts and Relevant Theories

1.1 Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Artificial intelligence (AI) refers to technological systems capable of performing tasks that require human-like reasoning, learning, and decision-making (Yigitcanlar et al., 2023). In public administration, AI is applied to data analysis, automated service responses, decision support, and workflow optimization, thereby improving accuracy and reducing administrative burden (Sinjindawong et al., 2023).

1.2 Technology Acceptance Model (TAM)

The Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) explains how individuals adopt and use technology based on two perceptions: perceived usefulness and perceived ease of use (Thirawan, 2025; Worapongpat et al., 2024). This model underpins the present study in explaining how personnel perceive and utilize AI technologies in their work processes (Worapongpat, 2025a).

1.3 Digital Transformation Theory

Digital transformation theory emphasizes that organizational change is not driven by technology alone but by the integration of human competence, leadership, and innovation capacity (Worapongpat et al., 2025). Personnel readiness and professional competence are key success factors for leveraging technology to improve organizational performance (Vatamanu & Tofan, 2025).

2. Research Scope

This study focuses on personnel in local administrative organizations (LAOs) across Maha Sarakham Province, including the Provincial Administrative Organization, city and subdistrict municipalities, and subdistrict administrative organizations. The scope covers:

Content scope: Relationships among AI utilization, professional competence, AI-related knowledge and competency, and work performance.

Area scope: Maha Sarakham Province, Thailand.

Population scope: Government officials and staff working in LAOs.

Time scope: Fiscal year 2025.

3. Conceptual Framework

Independent Variables (IVs): AI Technology Utilization and Professional Competence

Mediating Variable (MV): Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications

Dependent Variable (DV): Work Performance

Research Methodology

1. Population and Sample

The population of this study comprised personnel employed in local administrative organizations (LAOs) across Maha Sarakham Province, Thailand. These included the Provincial Administrative Organization, municipalities, and subdistrict administrative organizations (SAOs).

The study targeted officials and staff directly responsible for administrative management and public service delivery. The sample size was determined using Yamane's (1967) formula, with a 95 % confidence level and a 5 % margin of error, resulting in a required sample of 360 respondents. To ensure representativeness, simple random sampling was applied based on the proportion of personnel in each LAO.

2. Research Instruments

A structured questionnaire was used as the main instrument for quantitative data collection. Its design was directly aligned with the research objectives and conceptual framework.

2.1 Questionnaire Structure

The questionnaire consisted of five sections: General Information – demographic data such as gender, age, education level, work experience, and position.

AI Technology Utilization – 15 items on the extent of AI use in work processes (e.g., data analysis, automated workflows, decision-support tools).

Professional Competence – 15 items assessing professional knowledge, skills, and adaptability in AI-related tasks.

Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications – 15 items evaluating understanding and practical ability to apply AI in organizational operations.

Work Performance – 20 items measuring efficiency, accuracy, timeliness, and service quality.

All items (Sections 2–5) used a five-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

2.2 Instrument Development and Validation

1) Item generation was based on prior studies and theoretical foundations, including the Technology Acceptance Model (TAM) and Digital Transformation Theory

2) Content validity was evaluated by three experts in public administration and digital governance. The Item-Objective Congruence (IOC) index for all items ranged between 0.80 and 1.00, exceeding the acceptable threshold.

3) Pilot testing was conducted with 30 LAO personnel from a neighboring province.

4) Reliability analysis using Cronbach's Alpha demonstrated high internal consistency across all constructs:

Table 1

Reliability Analysis of Research Instruments

Construct	Number of Items	Cronbach's α	Reliability Level
AI Technology Utilization	15	0.91	Excellent
Professional Competence	15	0.89	High
Knowledge & Competency in AI Applications	15	0.90	Excellent
Work Performance	20	0.92	Excellent

3. Data Collection

Data were collected via an online questionnaire distributed through the official communication channels of each LAO between May and July 2025. Participation was voluntary and anonymous. A total of 365 valid responses were obtained and used for analysis.

4. Data Analysis

Quantitative data were analyzed using Ready-made program

Descriptive statistics (frequency, percentage, mean, and standard deviation) summarized demographic and key variable characteristics.

Inferential statistics, specifically Multiple Regression Analysis (MRA), tested the hypothesized relationships among variables.

Model 1: Influence of AI technology utilization and professional competence on knowledge and competency.

Model 2: Combined effects of AI utilization, professional competence, and knowledge and competency on work performance.

Assumption tests for multicollinearity, normality, and autocorrelation were performed to ensure model validity.

5. Ethical Considerations

All participants were informed about the study objectives, and confidentiality was guaranteed. The research followed academic ethics guidelines approved by the Research Ethics Committee of Mahasarakham University

6. Expected Application of Findings

This study is expected to provide empirical evidence demonstrating how AI utilization enhances local government performance by improving accuracy, speed, and service quality. Furthermore, the findings will guide capacity-building programs, emphasizing AI training and professional development for local personnel; and Policy frameworks that support AI implementation and digital transformation in local administrative organizations.

Research Results

1. Descriptive Analysis

1.1 AI Technology Utilization

The overall mean score for AI technology utilization among personnel was 3.89 (S.D. = 0.31), indicating a high level of AI use. Respondents reported particularly strong skills in using AI software and applications ($\bar{x}$ = 3.92) and AI network utilization ($\bar{x}$ = 3.96). This shows that most personnel actively employ AI tools in routine administrative and data-driven tasks.

1.2 Professional Competence (Digital AI Skills)

The average score for professional competence was 3.85 (S.D. = 0.34), a high level. Personnel demonstrated solid knowledge and understanding

of AI technology ($\bar{x} = 3.85$) and effective application of AI in work tasks ($\bar{x} = 3.90$). These results suggest that LAO staff are well-prepared to integrate AI into their operational responsibilities.

1.3 Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications

The mean score for knowledge and competency was 3.92 (S.D. = 0.34), at a high level. Respondents scored highest in fundamental knowledge of AI ($\bar{x} = 4.01$). Personnel have adequate conceptual and applied knowledge for AI utilization.

1.4 Work Performance

Work performance was rated at a high level overall ($\bar{x} = 3.92$, S.D. = 0.30). The highest-rated aspect was efficiency of public service delivery ($\bar{x} = 3.95$), followed closely by user satisfaction ($\bar{x} = 3.93$). This implies that AI adoption may already be contributing to more efficient and user-friendly local services.

2. Inferential Analysis

2.1 Objective 1 – Influence of AI Technology Utilization on Knowledge and Competency

Table 2

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Influence of AI Technology Utilization on Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications

Variable	B	β	t	Sig.
Constant	2.045	–	6.534	0.000 **
AI Technology Utilization	0.189	0.123	2.673	0.008 **

AI technology utilization has a significant positive effect on personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications ($\beta = 0.123$, $p < 0.01$). This indicates that the more frequently personnel use AI tools in their daily tasks, the greater their AI-related knowledge and skill development.

2.2 Objective 2 – Influence of Professional Competence on Knowledge and Competency

Table 3

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Influence of Professional Competence on Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications

Variable	B	β	t	Sig.
Constant	0.711	–	3.493	0.001 **
Professional Competence	0.213	0.225	5.618	0.000 **

Professional competence significantly predicts knowledge and competency in AI applications ($\beta = 0.225$, $p < 0.001$). Personnel with stronger digital and analytical abilities tend to learn and apply AI technologies more effectively.

2.3 Objective 3 – Combined Influence on Work Performance

Table 4

Results of Multiple Regression Analysis for the Combined Influence of AI Technology Utilization, Professional Competence, and Knowledge & Competency in AI Applications on Work Performance

Independent Variable	B	β	t	Sig.
Constant	1.373	–	5.044	0.000 **
AI Technology Utilization	0.109	0.077	1.771	0.077

Independent Variable	B	β	t	Sig.
Professional Competence	0.244	0.257	4.816	0.000 **
Knowledge & Competency in AI Applications	0.517	0.433	8.013	0.000 **

Both professional competence and knowledge & competency in AI applications have statistically significant positive effects on work performance ($\beta = 0.257$ and 0.433 , respectively; $p < 0.001$).

Although AI technology utilization alone did not reach statistical significance ($p = 0.077$), its indirect influence through enhanced knowledge and competency is evident.

3. Summary of Hypothesis Testing

Table 5

Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Statement	Result
H1	AI technology utilization $\rightarrow$ knowledge & competency	Supported ($p < 0.01$)
H2	Professional competence $\rightarrow$ knowledge & competency	Supported ($p < 0.001$)
H3	AI utilization + professional competence $\rightarrow$ work performance (direct & indirect)	Partially supported (mediated by knowledge & competency)

4. Key Findings in Relation to AI Performance Improvement

4.1 AI enhances knowledge flow and operational learning. Routine use of AI systems leads to experiential learning, allowing personnel to refine technical and analytical competencies.

4.2 Professional competence is the main driver of performance gains. Personnel who possess critical thinking and digital problem-solving abilities translate AI utilization into tangible productivity improvements.

4.3 Knowledge and competency act as a bridge. AI tools alone do not automatically improve efficiency; human capability to interpret and apply AI outputs determines performance success.

5. Implications for Capacity Building and Policy

5.1 Capacity-building programs should emphasize AI literacy, data analytics, and problem-solving skills to strengthen personnel's ability to use AI effectively.

5.2 Local government AI policy should focus on continuous professional development, resource allocation for AI systems, and integration of AI into performance-based management frameworks

Discussion of Results

Objective 1: Influence of AI Technology Utilization on Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications The analysis revealed that AI technology utilization had a statistically significant positive effect on personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications ($\beta = 0.123$, $p < 0.01$). This result confirms that the more personnel engage with AI systems in their daily operations, the more proficient they become in understanding and applying such technologies. From the perspective of the Technology Acceptance Model (Budhwar et al., 2022), this finding reflects that increased perceived usefulness and ease of use of AI tools promote continuous adoption and learning behavior. As personnel repeatedly interact with AI applications, they develop stronger digital literacy and problem-solving abilities. This finding is

consistent with prior research indicating that AI adoption enhances operational efficiency and accelerates learning processes within organizations (Butt, 2023).highlighted that technological engagement stimulates knowledge acquisition and the ability to innovate in task performance.Interpretation: AI adoption not only improves technical efficiency but also acts as a practical learning mechanism that strengthens personnel competency an essential driver of sustainable digital transformation in local governance.

Objective 2: Influence of Professional Competence on Knowledge and Competency in AI Applications. The study found that professional competence significantly and positively influenced personnel's knowledge and competency in AI applications ($\beta = 0.225$, $p < 0.001$). Personnel who possessed strong analytical, cognitive, and technical skills exhibited greater adaptability and effectiveness in using AI systems.This aligns with Digital Transformation The theory posits that organizational innovation depends on both technological readiness and human capability (Butsara Phon Phuangpanya, 2024). Moreover, the Human Capital Theory supports that accumulated professional knowledge and digital literacy are key predictors of performance and innovation (Campion et al., 2022). Consistent with the findings of Chantarasombat (2021), personnel with high professional competence are more likely to effectively apply technology to improve organizational performance and innovation outcomes. are better positioned to integrate AI tools into their workflow, enhance decision-making, and ensure accuracy in service delivery. Interpretation: Competent personnel act as catalysts for successful AI adoption. Their proficiency transforms technology from a passive tool into an active enabler of knowledge creation and organizational improvement.

Objective 3: Combined Influence of AI Technology Utilization and Professional Competence on Work Performance. Results demonstrated that both AI technology utilization and professional competence jointly influenced work performance, with knowledge and competency in AI applications serving as a mediating variable ($\beta = 0.433$, $p < 0.001$). While AI utilization alone did not have a significant direct effect ($p = 0.077$), it indirectly improved performance through enhanced knowledge and competency. This supports the Digital Transformation Model, which emphasizes that technology alone does not generate performance improvement unless supported by skilled human capital and effective knowledge application (Chompotjananan & Vichit-Vadanan, 2022). AI acts as an enabler, while human expertise and competency determine the magnitude of performance outcomes. These findings are in line with those of Gqamane and Taylor (2013), who identified managerial support and human capability as critical drivers of successful technology implementation. Competency development as key factors linking technology implementation to work efficiency. The combination of AI utilization and professional competence therefore forms a dual mechanism—technological and human that drives improved efficiency, accuracy, and service quality in local administrative organizations. Interpretation: The results confirm a partial mediation effect, where personnel competency bridges the relationship between AI use and work performance, highlighting that human readiness determines the real value of AI investments.

Recommendations

1. Practical Recommendations

1.1 Based on Objective 1 – AI Technology Utilization and Personnel Competency

Since AI technology utilization showed a significant positive influence on personnel's knowledge and competency, local administrative organizations (LAOs) and related agencies should:

1) Provide continuous AI training and professional development programs.

Training should emphasize hands-on use of AI systems for data analysis, service automation, and decision support to strengthen personnel's digital capability.

2) Encourage managerial engagement and motivation mechanisms.

Executives should act as digital transformation leaders by fostering innovation-friendly environments, recognizing exemplary AI users, and linking AI utilization to performance appraisal systems.

3) Enhance digital and IT infrastructure.

Stable networks, data-security systems, and cloud-based AI platforms are essential for enabling personnel to apply AI tools effectively in their daily work.

1.2 Based on Objective 2 – Professional Competence and AI Utilization

Given that professional competence significantly affects personnel's ability to use AI, local agencies should:

1) Promote continuous learning and upskilling.

Develop structured career-development pathways focusing on AI literacy, data analytics, and digital problem-solving.

2) Create knowledge-sharing mechanisms.

Establish communities of practice, workshops, or online knowledge hubs for personnel to exchange AI experiences and success stories.

3) Integrate AI competency into human-resource management.

Incorporate AI-related skill standards into recruitment, performance evaluation, and promotion criteria to institutionalize digital professionalism.

1.3 Based on Objective 3 – Combined Influence on Work Performance

As both AI utilization and professional competence jointly enhance work performance through knowledge and competency, agencies should:

1) Adopt an integrated capacity-building model.

Combine technical AI training with leadership, change management, and ethical-AI awareness programs.

2) Develop local AI policy frameworks.

Establish guidelines for AI governance, data ethics, and resource allocation tailored to the local administrative context.

3) Use AI for evidence-based management.

Implement AI dashboards or analytics systems to monitor public-service efficiency, resource utilization, and citizen satisfaction.

2. Recommendations for Future Research

2.1 Explore contextual barriers and enablers of AI adoption in local government, such as organizational culture, leadership style, or budget allocation.

2.2 Examine the long-term impacts of AI implementation on administrative efficiency, transparency, and citizen service satisfaction at different administrative levels.

2.3 Develop localized frameworks or standards for AI implementation within LAOs that incorporate governance, ethics, and workforce-competency dimensions.

2.4 Investigate mediating or moderating roles of organizational factors such as digital leadership, organizational learning culture, or innovation climate on the relationship between AI use and work performance.

2.5 Conduct comparative studies between provinces or between Thailand and other ASEAN countries to identify best practices and policy implications for digital government development.

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