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The Influence of Competence and Career Development on the Performance of Functional Officials in Position Equalization

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Abstract

The purpose of this study is to ascertain how competency and career development affect functional officials' performance in the wake of administrative posts within the Pariaman City Government becoming equalised. The transition to functional positions was implemented as part of bureaucratic simplification efforts. However, the performance of these officials from 2020 to 2023 has shown inconsistent patterns, prompting an investigation into contributing factors. Using a structured questionnaire distributed to 118 respondents, the data were analyzed through Structural Equation Modeling—Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS). The findings indicate that competency and career development have a positive and statistically significant effect on performance, with an influence of competence of 0.567 and career development of 0.203. Simultaneously, the model explains approximately 43,36% of the variance in performance. The results suggest that higher levels of professional competency, when paired with structured career development initiatives, contribute substantially to improving the effectiveness and productivity of functional officials. These findings underline the importance of integrated human resource strategies in sustaining public service performance post-equalization and offer empirical support for policy reinforcement in capacity building and career path clarity within the civil service system.

Keywords: Competence, Career Development, Performance, Functional Officials Equalization of Positions

INTRODUCTION

By implementing the equalisation of administrative positions to functional positions in accordance with the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment & Bureaucratic Reform Number 28 of 2019 concerning the Equalisation of Administrative Positions into Functional Positions, which has been amended by the Regulation of the Minister of State Apparatus Empowerment & Reform Bureaucracy Number 17 of 2021, the Central Government and Regional Governments, including the Pariaman City Government, are accelerating the simplification of bureaucratic reform (Dharmawan et al., 2023; Kossay, 2022; Sukarno et al., 2024).

The process of equalizing positions in the Pariaman City Government aims to improve bureaucratic efficiency. Still, in its implementation, the equalization of positions is carried out without a competency test, does not consider the needs/formation, technical considerations of the supervisory agency, and does not require a position map. The Pariaman City Government's ASN Professionalism Index data shows fluctuating values from 2020 to 2023. In 2020 and 2021, it was in the very low category (45.79% and 45.87%), increasing significantly to the high category in 2022 (85.96%), decreasing in 2023 to the medium category (78.65%). Fluctuating values are in the dimensions of performance, competence, and qualifications. Therefore, it can be directly seen that there are obstacles/challenges related to the performance, qualifications, and competence of ASN in the Pariaman City Government, including functional officials for equalization of positions.

Many factors affect employee performance. From previous studies by Indiyati et al. (2021; Wulansari, 2019, Nabila&Wulansari, 2024) It is known that competence affects employee performance. Meanwhile, the results of the studies by DM & J. (2021; Marnisah et al., 2022; Nabila & Danny, 2021) explain that career development is a factor that affects employee performance.

The implementation of equalization of positions of the Pariaman City Government related to competency variables is known to have inconsistencies in several qualifications and competencies with equivalent positions. For the variable of career development of functional officials, the equalization of positions is not optimal because there is no higher position formation after equalization (Ahmad & Puspita, 2024; Bima & Fetty, 2019; Kang et al., 2024). This is supported by Fatimah's study, which states that the implementation of equalization of positions by Government Agencies does not consider needs/formations, equalization without a competency test, technical considerations of the supervisory agency, and does not require the existence of a position map, in line with the results of a study by Susanto & Sangkut, which explains that the policy of equalization of positions in promoting career development has not been effective, due to the mismatch of qualifications and competencies of positions and work mechanisms that have not been harmonized after position adjustments.

Based on the phenomenon mentioned above, this study aims to see the influence of competence and career development on the performance of functional officials for partial and simultaneous equalization of positions, especially in the Pariaman City Government. The results of the study are expected to provide strategic recommendations for organizations related to the development of human resource policies within local governments, especially in the context of equalization of basic positions, and this study can be a reference for further studies related to personnel, especially related to performance, competence, and career development.

The core bureaucratic issue in the Pariaman City Government lies in the mismatch between the strategic intent of position equalization and its operational implementation. Although the regulation promotes efficiency, its application has neglected essential HR principles such as competency-based placement and structured career pathways. The absence of a comprehensive competency evaluation and position mapping has led to role misalignment and stagnation in career development. These issues are not isolated; they reflect broader structural gaps in public sector HR management. In this context, examining the influence of individual competencies and career

development frameworks becomes highly relevant. Without addressing these foundational elements, the goal of performance enhancement through structural reform may remain unattainable. Therefore, this study seeks to measure the impact of competency and career development on performance and provide empirical insights into how human resource policies can be recalibrated to support better post-equalization functional roles.

Variable Relationships

1. Competencies and Performance

A person's competence and appropriate job placement will influence their performance (Ardan & Jaelani, 2021). Structured personnel management, with recruitment, education, and training as well as employee performance assessment, so that their competencies become more optimal, can improve employee performance. Competency is a component of employee quality that has a substantial impact on a person's performance in carrying out work that affects organizational performance (Riana et al., 2020). Previous research has shown the differences in the influence of competency on performance. Research by Nazifah et al. (2024) explains that competence has a strong influence on employee performance. Meanwhile, the research of Fitri & Hesty (2024) explained that competence does not affect employee performance.

2. Career Development and Performance

Career development programs help employees improve their performance and increase their chances of getting promoted to reach the next career level in a targeted manner (Nabila & Danny, 2021). Previous research has shown the differences in the influence of career development on performance. The results of the research of Mukramin & Muhammad (2024) explain that career development has a significant effect on performance. Meanwhile, the findings of Zuhri *et al* (2023) show that career development has less impact on performance.

METHOD

Because of its capacity to manage intricate interactions between latent variables and accurately model measurement errors, structural equation modelling (SEM), more especially the partial least squares (PLS) technique, was selected as the analytical method in this work. Unlike traditional regression analysis, SEM allows simultaneous testing of multiple dependent and independent variables, particularly useful in studies involving behavioral constructs such as competence, career development, and performance. In the context of local government performance, where constructs are often interrelated and influenced by both observable and latent factors, SEM-PLS provides a robust analytical framework. Moreover, SEM-PLS is suitable for research with a relatively small sample size, as in this study with 118 respondents, while yielding valid and reliable results. The method is also advantageous for exploratory studies that validate theoretical models and test causal relationships within public sector environments where data distribution may not be normal. Therefore, SEM-PLS was selected to provide a comprehensive and nuanced understanding of how competence and career development collectively impact the performance of functional officials in the Pariaman City Government.

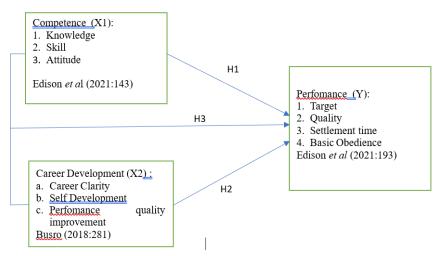


Figure.1 Research Framework

- H1: Competence influences performance
- H2: Career development influences performance
- H3: Competencies and career development influence performance

The researcher used the Structural Equation Model Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) in Smart PLS version 4 for data analysis to support this research process. With the population taken, namely functional officials for equalization of positions in the Pariaman City Government, which amounted to 166 people, and the number of samples was 118.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

1. Evaluation of the Outer Model

a. Convergent Validity

The loading factor value of the indicators in a variable is used to calculate the value of convergent validity. The better the indicator's association with the loading factor value criterion > 0.7, the higher the loading factor value. Figure 1 shows the path analysis model used in this investigation.

According to Figure 1, every indication in the variable has a loading factor value higher than 0.7, indicating that they are all potentially convergent.

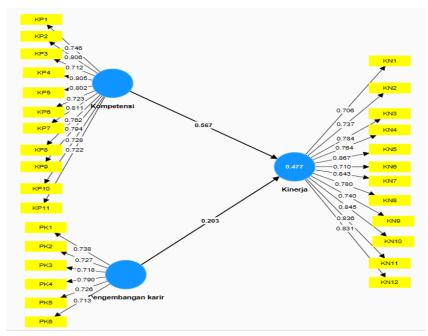


Figure 1. Model Path Diagram

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS ver. 4, 2025

b. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

For all questionnaire items or indicators of a variable, which is the total of convergent indicators, AVE is the average percentage of the Variance Extracted value. If the AVE is more than 0.5, it is deemed good.

Table 1. Outer Loading Test Results

-		able 1. Outer Loading Test I	tesuits		
Variable			Outer	Average variance	
Latent	Dimension	Indicator	Loading	extracted (AVE)	Ket
		I have a good knowledge of			
		the work done	0,746		Valid
		I have knowledge gained			
		from formal education	0,806		Valid
		The knowledge I have is			
		gained from the training			
		organized by the organization	0,712	_	valid
		I have knowledge and			
		understanding of the			
		procedures performed in the			
		job completion process	0,805		valid
		I have knowledge and			
		understanding of the work			
	Knowledge	tools used in the work	0,802		valid
		The technical expertise I			
		have is in line with my			
		current field of work	0,723		valid
		I feel able to identify			
Competence	Skill	problems at work	0,811	0,586	valid

Variable Latent	Dimension	Indicator	Outer Loading	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Ket
		I feel able to find a solution to			
		the problem quickly	0,762	-	valid
		I feel that I am able to deal			
		with problems wisely	0,794	-	valid
		I highly uphold			
		organizational ethics	0,728	<u>-</u>	valid
		I am polite to my colleagues			
	Attitude	when carrying out my work	0,722		valid
		My agency has explained the procedure for promotion and			
		position	0,738	-	valid
		My agency has provided the			
		opportunity to occupy a			
		specific position within the			
		existing organizational			
	Career clarity	structure	0,727	<u>-</u>	valid
		My agency has provided			
		opportunities to participate in	0.710		1. 1
		various trainings	0,718		valid
	G 10	My institution has provided			
	Self-	the opportunity to continue	0.700		1. 1
	Development	my education	0,790		valid
	D. C	I hold fast to the vision and	0.726		1. 1
C	Performance	mission of the organization	0,726	-	valid
Career	Quality	I try not to make mistakes at	0.712	0.541	1: 4
Development	Improvement	work	0,713	0,541	valid
		I always do my job guided by	0.706		v. 1; 4
		the targets that must be met The job target I received was	0,706	•	valid
	Target	very challenging but realistic	0,737		valid
	Target	The quality of the work I	0,737	•	valiu
		produce is by the standards			
		that have been set	0,784		valid
		For me, the quality of work is	0,707	-	vanu
		an absolute thing to be			
		fulfilled	0,764		valid
		I always work based on the	0,701	•	·
		established procedures to			
		meet good quality,	0,867		valid
		Stakeholders are satisfied		-	
		with the quality of the work I			
	Quality	produce	0,710		valid
	· · · · · ·	I am always on time in	·	•	
		completing my work targets	0,843		valid
		Stakeholders are satisfied	·	-	-
		with the timeliness of the			
		completion of the work I do	0,780		valid
	Completion	Getting the job done on time			
Performance	Time	is important to me	0,740	0,622	valid

Variable Latent	Dimension	Indicator	Outer Loading	Average variance extracted (AVE)	Ket
		I carry out the work process			
		based on the correct			
		procedures	0,845		valid
		I do the job with transparent			
		procedures	0,836		valid
		I do work with accountable		•	
	Obey the Basics	procedures	0,831		valid

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS ver. 4, 2025

Every variable has an AVE value larger than 0.5, and all indicators have loading factor values greater than 0.7, according to the results in Table 1 above. Therefore, it can be said that every indicator of performance, career development, and competence satisfies the requirements for good validity in representing each variable.

c. Discriminant Validity

Evaluated using each item's cross-loading and heterotrait-monotrait (HTMT) values. If the HTMT is less than 0.9 Ghozali (2021) and/or the Cross Loading value of each variable statement item against the variable itself is higher than the correlation of the value to other variables, then discriminant validity is met.

Table 2. HTMT Discrimination Validity Test Results

	Performance C	Development Career		
Performance				
Competence	0,702			
Career development	0,531	0,543		

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS ver. 4, 2025

d. Reliability Test

It was done in order to verify that the information gathered from each respondent was consistent. A composite reliability test with a Cronbach's alpha of at least 0.7 and a value greater than 0.7 was employed in the test research.

Table 3. Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability Test Results

	Cronbach's	Composite reliability	Composite reliability	Average variance	
Variable	alpha	(rho_a)	(rho_c)	extracted (AVE)	Conclusion
Performance	0,944	0,946	0,952	0,622	Reliable
Competence	0,929	0,931	0,940	0,586	Reliable
Development	0,831	0,842	0,876	0,541	Reliable
Career					

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS ver. 4, 2025

All variables had composite reliability values with magnitudes larger than 0.7, according to the findings of the composite reliability test in Table 3, and all variables had Cronbach's alpha values greater than 0.7. The variable's AVE value is more than 0.5. Thus, it may be said that every variable has a high degree of convergent validity and can be regarded as dependable.

2. Evaluation of the Inner model

a. R–R-squared

Describing the variation from exogenous variables to endogenous variables, with the criteria: if R square is 0.67, it means strong, 0.33 means moderate, and 0.19 means weak (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 4. R Square Test Results

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Performance	0.477	0.468

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS ver. 4, 2025

The test results showed an R-squared *adjusted* value of the performance variable of 0.468 (moderate). This value illustrates the percentage of competency and career development variables that can affect or explain performance variables: 46.8%, while 53.2% are influenced by other variables outside the research model.

b. Effect Size (F Square)

It is helpful to know the change *in the R square* in the endogenous construct, with the criteria for the value of the small *category f-square*, which is 0.02, the medium category 0.15, and the large category 0.35.

Table 5. F Square Test Results

Variable	Performance		
Competence	0,467		
Career Development	0,060		

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS ver. 4, 2025

The test results showed that the value of F-squared in the competency variable had a significant influence (0.467) on performance, while the career development variable had a negligible effect (0.060) on performance.

c. Prediction Relevance (O square)

Aim to determine the prediction's ability. A q-square value of 0.02 is categorized as small, 0.15 as medium, and 0.35 as large.

Table 6. Q Square Test Results

Endogenous Variable	Q^2		
Performance	0.288		

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS ver. 4, 2025

According to the test results, the performance variable's Q-squared value was 0.288, which is considered modest. This indicates that the model's capacity to predict performance variables is moderate. A result of 0.288 means that the model under test can explain or predict roughly 28.8% of the variation in performance. Although there are roughly 71.2% of variations that the model is unable to explain or predict, this indicates that the model is rather good at predicting these variables.

3. Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis tests were carried out to answer research questions. In SmartPLS, hypothesis testing is carried out using *bootstrapping* for hypothesis 1 and hypothesis 2. As for hypothesis 3, the F-test is used in SmartPLS. A hypothesis is declared proven/accepted if the statistical T value \geq T table 1.96 (α 5%) (Ghozali, 2021).

Table 7. Hypothesis Test Results with Bootstrapping

• I			11 0		
Original T statistics		P values	Result	Conclusion	
sample (O)	(O/STDEV)				
0.567	8.360	0.000	Signifikan	Accepted	
				hypotheses	
0.203	2.776	0.006	signifikan	Accepted	
				hypotheses	
	sample (O) 0.567	sample (O) (O/STDEV) 0.567 8.360	sample (O) (O/STDEV) 0.567 8.360 0.000	sample (O) (O/STDEV) 0.567 8.360 0.000 Signifikan	

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS, 2025

The test results show that:

- a. Hypothesis 1 (H1): Competence influences the performance of functional officials equalizing positions in the Pariaman City Government is acceptable, because it has a statistical T value of 8.360 (>1.96) and a p value of 0.000 (<0.05), with a coefficient value of 0.567 (positive).
- b. In hypothesis 2 (H2): career development influences the performance of functional officials equalizing positions in the Pariaman City Government is acceptable, because it has a statistical T value of 2.776 (>1.96) and a p value of 0.006 (<0.05), with a coefficient value of 0.203 (positive).

Meanwhile, to test hypothesis 3 (H3), namely, that competence and career development influence performance, it was carried out with the F-test on Smart PLS, and the following results were obtained:

Table 8. Results of Hypothesis 3 Test with F test

	Sum square	df	Mean square	F	P value	Result	Conclusion
Total	26,580	117	0,000	0,000	0,000		
Error	15,152	115	0,132	0,000	0,000		
Regression	11,428	2	5,714	43,369	0,000	Signifikan	Accepted
							hypotheses

Source: Data that has been processed by SmartPLS, 2025

The test results for hypothesis 3 (H3), namely competence and career development, influence the performance of functional officials for equalization of positions in the Pariaman City Government, and can be accepted. This is seen from the value of f, which is 43.36 or greater than 1.96, with a p-value of 0.000 or less than 0.05. So it can be concluded that Hypothesis 3 (H3), namely competence and career development simultaneously, influences performance. This means that changes in competencies and career development can significantly affect performance.

4. The Influence of Competency on Performance

From the study results, competencies were obtained that had a positive and significant effect on the performance of functional officials in the Pariaman City Government. This can be seen from the results of the t-statistical hypothesis test, which is greater than the t-table (1.96), which is 8.36 with a magnitude of 0.567. And the p-value < 0.05 is 0.000. These results confirm that competence plays an important role, contributing 56.7% to the performance of functional officials in the Pariaman City Government. When competence increases, performance will also increase. Based on the F-square test results, it is known that the competence has a large number of performance variables of 0.467.

The results of this study support several previous studies from , Indiyati et al. (2021; Wulansari, 2019; Wigastianto&Wahyuningtyas, 2020), who explained that competence has a strong influence on employee performance. If employees develop their competencies, it significantly influences employee performance in achieving organizational goals.

5. The Influence of Career Development on Performance

Career development has a favourable and significant impact on functional officials' performance for equalisation of posts in the Pariaman City Government, according to the data analysis results. The statistical T value of 2.776, which is greater than the T table's value of 1.96, the p value of 0.006, which is less than 0.05, and the coefficient value of 0.203, which indicates a positive result, all demonstrate this. The performance of functional officials for equalisation of positions in the Pariaman City Government is therefore found to be positively and significantly impacted by career development.

6. The Influence of Competency and Career Development on Performance

The data analysis results support Hypothesis 3 (H3), which states that career development and competence have an impact on the performance of functional officials in Pariaman City Government equalising positions. With a p-value of 0.000 or less than 0.05 and an F-value of 43.36 or larger than 1.96 in the simultaneous test (F-test), this is evident. Thus, it may be said that performance is impacted by Hypothesis 3 (H3), which states that career development and competence occur at the same time. This implies that performance can be greatly impacted by changes in competency and career growth at the same time.

The results of this study support the findings of previous research submitted by Afriana (2021; Arifhan & Wahdaniah, 2022; Esti & Hartono, 2024; Nazifah et al., 2024; Wulansari, 2019) which stated that competency and career development simultaneously significantly impact performance.

CONCLUSION

The study concludes that both competence and career development have a positive and significant impact on the performance of functional officers of equalization, both partially and simultaneously. In terms of recommendations, it is necessary to provide special training to improve problem-solving skills and career development, along with access to relevant tools for functional officers. Additionally, realistic adjustments to work targets, even distribution of workloads, and sufficient resource support should be made to help employees achieve targets efficiently. Improving time management and fostering more effective communication with stakeholders are also essential to enhance satisfaction in completing work on time. The author acknowledges the limitations and weaknesses of the study, which could influence how readers interpret the results, particularly regarding the selection of factors affecting performance. Further research could be carried out using other methods beyond SEM PLS, and future studies on factors influencing performance could expand their research through various theories and additional variables. Future research is also suggested to explore broader research objectives while considering the same variables.

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