

## Professional Competence and Career Development in Enhancing Human Resource Performance: the Mediating Role of Need for Achievement

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**Abstract.** *This study aims to examine human resource (HR) performance, which is enhanced through achievement motivation, influenced by professional competence and optimal career development. The respondents in this study were measured using a Likert Scale ranging from 1 to 5, with a population consisting of all employees at the Central Java and Yogyakarta Customs and Excise Regional Office, totaling 168 individuals. The sampling method used was the census method, meaning the sample size was equal to the total population. Data analysis in this study was conducted using the Partial Least Square (PLS) method to examine the relationships between the variables studied. The results indicate that career development has a positive and significant impact on achievement motivation and HR performance. Additionally, professional competence also has a positive and significant effect on both achievement motivation and HR performance. Achievement motivation itself is proven to have a positive and significant influence on HR performance. These findings suggest that enhancing career development and professional competence can increase achievement motivation, which ultimately has a positive impact on HR performance. The implications of these research findings can serve as a foundation for designing more effective HR management policies and strategies within the Supervision and Service Office of Customs and Excise.*

**Keywords:** *Achievement Motivation; Career Development; HR Performance; Professional Competence.*

## 1. Introduction

Human resources constitute the most vital element within any organization. Despite the presence of various organizational factors, operations cannot proceed effectively without the contribution of human capital (Hani Al-Kassem, 2021). Humans serve as the primary drivers and key determinants of an organization's strategic direction (Bakirova Oynura, 2022). Consequently, career development emerges as an essential process for both private and public sector organizations, as it aligns with future business challenges and competitive demands (Permata Sari et al., 2020). When implemented in a planned and sustainable manner, career development positively influences organizational outcomes (Pramukti, 2019). The fundamental basis for organizational success and competitiveness in facing future challenges lies in the effective and efficient management of human resources (Garavan, 2007). Career development is frequently utilized as a mechanism to bridge the gap between current and future employee performance (Febrianti et al., 2020). Organizations with high performance place significant emphasis on the validity of employee selection and career development processes to ensure that employees can achieve optimal performance levels now and in the future (Raihan & Sumartik, 2022).

To maximize employee potential, organizations must manage career development processes that enable employees to acquire capabilities beyond their existing competencies. This development allows employees to better understand their roles, functions, and responsibilities within the work environment (Silaban et al., 2021). Furthermore, career development is linked to higher job satisfaction levels and provides clarity regarding attainable career paths (Shaito, 2019). In the public sector, political developments and regulatory changes substantially impact the career development of Civil Servants (ASN). These dynamics reflect governmental efforts to enhance professionalism and accountability in public service (Mahendra et al., 2021). Bureaucratic reform and merit system implementation represent critical steps in ensuring career advancement is competency- and performance-based (Erman, 2020). Competency training and development programs are continually reinforced by institutions such as the National Institute of Public Administration (LAN) and the Human Resource Development Agency (BPSDM). To promote broad experience and prevent career stagnation, job promotions and rotations are systematically conducted. Additionally, objective, results-oriented performance evaluations encourage more effective work behaviors among ASN. The integration of digital technology and innovations in public service further facilitates opportunities for ASN to develop new skills (Erman, 2020). Nevertheless, challenges such as rigid bureaucracy, nepotism, and competency gaps persist. The acceleration of digitalization and remote work practices following the COVID-19 pandemic introduces both opportunities and challenges. Thus, although career development among ASN has seen considerable advancement, ongoing attention is necessary to ensure effective adaptation to evolving public service needs.

Research reveals a gap in understanding the relationship between career development and employee performance. While Widisono et al. (2021) found that career development positively affects overall employee performance, Pronajaya et al. (2021) reported no significant effect on nurse performance. This discrepancy indicates the need for further investigation into potential moderating or intervening factors influencing this relationship. Achievement motivation is proposed as one such intervening variable. Achievement motivation, or need for achievement, is a critical factor supporting employee performance (Arif Safaludin, 2020). Initially conceptualized by David McClelland, this intrinsic drive reflects an individual's desire to meet challenging goals and demonstrate competence (McClelland, 1955). Individuals with a high need for achievement tend to set ambitious objectives, accept personal accountability for outcomes, and actively seek feedback to improve performance (Jaquays, 2018). These individuals often outperform peers by being more productive, innovative, and contributing significantly to organizational goals (McClelland, 2014). High human resource performance not only enhances operational efficiency but also fosters a competitive and collaborative organizational culture. Therefore, the need for achievement plays a vital role in overall organizational success (Daumiller et al., 2022).

Within this context, the Directorate General of Customs and Excise (DJBC) under the Ministry of Finance is mandated to formulate and implement policies relating to supervision, law enforcement, service delivery, facilitation, and optimization of customs and excise revenues in accordance with prevailing laws. DJBC aims to provide excellent public services in export-import activities, safeguard society from hazardous goods, and support state revenue optimization. Achieving these objectives necessitates a focus on the quality and development of human resources, emphasizing effective employee selection and robust career development programs. Based on the research problems outlined above, this study aims to analyze the effects of career development on the Need for Achievement, the impact of career development on human resource performance improvement, and the influence of the Need for Achievement on enhancing human resource performance.

## 2. Research Methods

This research aims to test hypotheses in order to validate or strengthen the underlying theories. Accordingly, the research type applied is explanatory research, which focuses on explaining the relationships between variables by testing hypotheses, with descriptions that emphasize these variable relationships (Singarimbun, 1982). The *career development* variable is measured using indicators such as fair treatment in career advancement, attention from supervisors, information about promotion opportunities, interest in being promoted, and level of satisfaction (Siagian, 2014). *Professional competence* is reflected in the ability to collaborate, communicate, demonstrate creativity and innovation, solve problems, think critically, and exhibit cultural competence (Fregnan et al., 2020; Salman et al., 2020). Meanwhile, *achievement motivation* is measured through indicators including achiever, motivation, competitiveness, and goal orientation (Smith, 2015). Lastly, *human resource performance* is assessed using indicators that include quality, quantity, timeliness, cost effectiveness, and interpersonal relationships (Bernardin & Russel, 2013).

The data sources consist of primary data—collected directly from respondents through questionnaires and observations related to variables such as career development, need for achievement, and human resource performance—and secondary data, which include relevant journals, articles, and scientific books. Data collection methods involve literature review as supporting data and questionnaire distribution, using a Likert scale to measure respondents' opinions. The population comprises all employees at the Tanjung Emas Customs and Excise Office totaling 203 people, with a census sampling method where the sample size equals the population. Data analysis consists of descriptive analysis to describe respondent answers qualitatively and Partial Least Squares (PLS) analysis to examine relationships between variables.

## 3. Results and Discussion

Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is a fundamental step in PLS analysis, aimed at assessing the validity and reliability of indicators that measure latent variables. Validity is evaluated through *convergent validity* and *discriminant validity*, while construct reliability is assessed using *composite reliability*, *Average Variance Extracted (AVE)*, and *Cronbach's Alpha*.

The measurement model for reflective latent variables is evaluated based on the *convergent validity* of each indicator, which in PLS is assessed through the *outer loading* values.

Table 1 Outer Loading

No	Variable/Indicator	Outer Loading	Result
	<b>Career Development</b>		
X1_1	Fair treatment in career advancement	0.710	Valid

X1_2	Attention from direct supervisor	0.883	Valid
X1_3	Information about promotion opportunities	0.894	Valid
X1_4	Interest in being promoted	0.886	Valid
X1_5	Level of satisfaction	0.722	Valid
<b>Professional Competence</b>			
X2_1	Collaboration ability	0.749	Valid
X2_2	Communication capability	0.860	Valid
X2_3	Creativity and innovation skills	0.812	Valid
X1_4	Problem-solving ability	0.733	Valid
X1_5	Critical thinking skills and cultural competence	0.867	Valid
<b>Achievement Motivation</b>			
Y1_1	Achiever;	0.840	Valid
Y1_2	Motivation;	0.897	Valid
Y1_3	Competitiveness	0.896	Valid
Y1_4	Goal Orientation	0.811	Valid
<b>Employee Performance</b>			
Y2_1	Quality	0.761	Valid
Y2_2	Quantity	0.709	Valid
Y2_3	Timeliness	0.725	Valid
Y2_4	Cost effectiveness	0.832	Valid
Y2_5	Interpersonal impact	0.731	Valid

The table above illustrates that all factor loading values for the Human Resource Performance (HRP) indicators exceed the critical threshold of 0.700. According to Ghazali (2011), an outer loading value above 0.70 is strongly recommended. Based on the results of the convergent validity testing for each variable, it can be concluded that all indicators are valid and therefore appropriate for measuring the variables in this study.

Discriminant validity refers to the extent to which a latent variable is distinct from other constructs or variables, both theoretically and as demonstrated empirically through statistical testing. It is assessed using the Fornell-Larcker Criterion, Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT), and cross-loading analysis.

**Table 2 Fornell-Larcker Criterion**

	HR Performance	Professional Competence	Achievement Motivation	Career Development
HR Performance	0.753			
Professional Competence	0.546	0.806		
Achievement Motivation	0.618	0.376	0.862	

Career Development	0.569	0.448	0.564	0.823
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Table 2 shows that the square root of AVE values exceeds the correlations between constructs, indicating good discriminant validity. This means the measurement instruments used for all latent variables in the study are valid.

Validity testing using the Heterotrait-Monotrait ratio (HTMT) criterion was conducted by examining the HTMT matrix.

**Table 3 Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)**

Variabel	HR Performance	Professional Competence	Achievement Motivation	Career Development
HR Performance				
Professional Competence	0.649			
Achievement Motivation	0.731	0.427		
Career Development	0.674	0.512	0.621	

Table 3 shows that the values in the HTMT matrix are all below 0.9. This means the model demonstrates acceptable discriminant validity. Based on the discriminant validity tests, it is evident that the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and HTMT requirements have been met, indicating that all constructs in the estimated model satisfy good discriminant validity criteria and the data analysis results are acceptable.

The results of the analysis regarding the correlation of constructs with their own indicators or with other indicators can be presented in the cross-loading table section.

**Table 4 Cross Loading**

	HR Performance	Professional Competence	Achievement Motivation	Career Development
X1_1	0.409	0.388	0.299	<b>0.710</b>
X1_2	0.480	0.354	0.568	<b>0.883</b>
X1_3	0.523	0.406	0.509	<b>0.894</b>
X1_4	0.483	0.379	0.486	<b>0.886</b>
X1_5	0.441	0.329	0.415	<b>0.722</b>
X2_1	0.429	<b>0.749</b>	0.267	0.257
X2_2	0.458	<b>0.860</b>	0.380	0.439
X2_3	0.442	<b>0.812</b>	0.272	0.415
X2_4	0.382	<b>0.733</b>	0.269	0.259
X2_5	0.485	<b>0.867</b>	0.314	0.411
Y1_1	0.554	0.284	<b>0.840</b>	0.462
Y1_2	0.521	0.352	<b>0.897</b>	0.542



Y1_3	0.565	0.344	<b>0.896</b>	0.559
Y1_4	0.487	0.313	<b>0.811</b>	0.355
Y2_1	<b>0.761</b>	0.471	0.468	0.437
Y2_2	<b>0.709</b>	0.399	0.433	0.323
Y2_3	<b>0.725</b>	0.372	0.445	0.482
Y2_4	<b>0.832</b>	0.482	0.506	0.454
Y2_5	<b>0.731</b>	0.319	0.475	0.439

Based on the cross-loading analysis, the criterion for testing discriminant validity is met if the correlation between a construct and its own indicators is greater than the correlation between those indicators and other constructs. The data processing results presented in the cross-loading table show that this requirement has been fulfilled, indicating that all constructs in the estimated model meet the criteria for good discriminant validity, meaning the data analysis results are acceptable.

Reliability testing is a statistical method used to assess the consistency and stability of a measurement instrument in measuring a specific variable or construct. In this case, reliability measurement is conducted using three methods: Cronbach's Alpha, composite reliability, and AVE between constructs and their indicators.

Table 5 Realibility

	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	<i>Composite reliability (rho_c)</i>	<i>Average variance extracted (AVE)</i>
HR Performance	0.808	0.867	0.567
Professional Competence	0.864	0.902	0.650
Achievement Motivation	0.884	0.920	0.742
Career Development	0.879	0.912	0.678

Table 5 shows that the AVE values for each construct are greater than 0.5, and the composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha values for each construct are greater than 0.7. Therefore, the reliability test results for each construct can be considered good, allowing their use in further analysis. Based on the evaluation results of convergent validity, discriminant validity, and variable reliability, it can be concluded that the indicators used are valid and reliable measures of the research variables.

Model fit testing in PLS analysis is used to evaluate the extent to which the structural model supports the proposed hypotheses and has good predictive ability for the dependent variables. Statistical measures used to determine model fit include R square and Q square (Hair et al., 2019). R square indicates the amount of variation in the endogenous variables explained by exogenous or other endogenous variables in the model. According to Chin

(1998), as cited by Abdillah and Hartono (2015), the interpretation of R square values is: 0.19 (low effect), 0.33 (moderate effect), and 0.67 (high effect). The following table presents the coefficient of determination ( $R^2$ ) for the endogenous variables.

Table 6 R-Square

	R-square
Achievement Motivation	0.337
HR Performance	0.526

The determination coefficient (R-square) obtained from the Achievement Motivation model is 0.337, meaning that the Achievement Motivation variable can be explained by 33.7% through the Career Development and Professional Competence variables. The remaining 66.3% is influenced by other variables outside the study. This R-square value (0.337) falls within the range of 0.33 – 0.67, indicating that Career Development and Professional Competence have a moderate influence on Achievement Motivation. The R-square value for Human Resource Performance is 0.526, meaning that Human Resource Performance can be explained by 52.6% through Career Development, Professional Competence, and Achievement Motivation variables, while the remaining 47.4% is influenced by variables outside the study. This R-square value (0.526) also falls within the 0.33 – 0.67 range, indicating that Career Development, Professional Competence, and Achievement Motivation have a moderate influence on Human Resource Performance.

Structural model testing (inner model) involves examining the relationships between latent constructs by looking at the estimated path coefficient values and their significance levels (Ghozali, 2011). Data processing was performed using the Smart PLS v4.1.0 software. The results of the data processing are shown in the following figure:

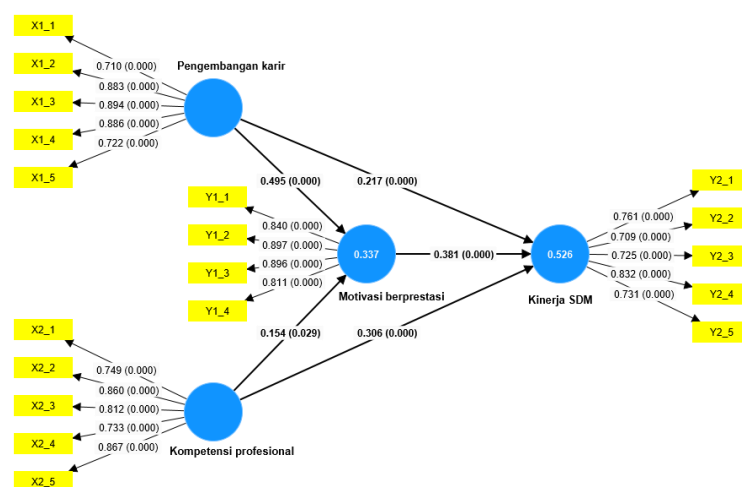


Figure 1 Full Inner Model SEM-PLS



To determine whether a hypothesis is accepted or rejected, the calculated t-value (t-count) is compared with the critical t-value (t-table); if  $t\text{-count} > t\text{-table}$ , the hypothesis is accepted. The t-table value for a 5% significance level is 1.96. More details are provided below. The results of testing the influence of each research variable are presented as follows

Tabel 7 Path Coefficients

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( $ O/STDEV $ )	P values
Professional Competence -> HR Performance	0.306	0.309	0.053	5.781	0.000
Professional Competence -> Achievement Motivation	0.154	0.155	0.071	2.184	0.029
Achievement Motivation -> HR Performance	0.381	0.381	0.046	8.203	0.000
Career Development -> HR Performance	0.217	0.217	0.062	3.488	0.000
Career Development -> Achievement Motivation	0.495	0.495	0.058	8.532	0.000

The results show that professional competence has a positive and significant effect on HR performance, with an original sample value of 0.306, a t-statistic of 5.781, and a p-value of 0.000. Professional competence also significantly influences achievement motivation, indicated by a coefficient of 0.154, a t-statistic of 2.184, and a p-value of 0.029. Achievement motivation strongly affects HR performance, with a coefficient of 0.381, a t-statistic of 8.203, and a p-value of 0.000. Additionally, career development positively impacts HR performance (coefficient 0.217, t-statistic 3.488, p-value 0.000) as well as achievement motivation (coefficient 0.495, t-statistic 8.532, p-value 0.000). These findings confirm that all tested paths are statistically significant.

The test of indirect effects aims to determine whether career development and professional competence influence HR performance through achievement motivation as a mediating variable. The results of the indirect effect test are presented in the following table.

Tabel 8 Indirect Effect

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics ( $ O/STDEV $ )	P values
Career Development -> Achievement Motivation -> HR Performance	0.188	0.189	0.033	5.667	0.000
Professional Competence -> Achievement Motivation -> HR Performance	0.059	0.059	0.028	2.076	0.038

The results show that the indirect effect of Career Development on HR Performance through Achievement Motivation is positive and significant, with an original sample estimate of 0.188, a t-statistic of 5.667, and a p-value of 0.000. Similarly, the indirect effect of Professional Competence on HR Performance through Achievement Motivation is also positive and significant, with an original sample estimate of 0.059, a t-statistic of 2.076, and a p-value of 0.038. These findings indicate that Achievement Motivation significantly mediates the relationship between both Career Development and Professional Competence on HR Performance.

Research proves that career development has a positive and significant effect on achievement motivation, supported by previous studies stating that career development significantly influences employee achievement motivation (Lee et al., 2024). The highest outer loading for the career development variable is the indicator "Information about promotion opportunities," while for achievement motivation, the highest outer loading is the "Motivation" indicator. This indicates that the more information employees receive about promotion opportunities, the higher their motivation to achieve. When employees have a clear understanding of career paths and promotion chances, they are more driven to improve performance and reach higher targets. Information about promotion opportunities clarifies the requirements and competencies needed, enabling employees to plan self-development strategies aligned with their career goals. The lowest outer loading for career development is "Fair treatment in career progression," and for achievement motivation, it is "Goal Orientation." This shows that the higher the perceived fairness in career treatment, the stronger the employees' goal orientation. When employees feel the career development system in the organization is fair and transparent, they focus more on setting and achieving higher work targets. Career fairness includes equal opportunities for all employees to grow, get promoted, and receive recognition for their performance without discrimination or ambiguity in the process.

The study proves that career development has a positive and significant effect on HR performance, supported by Yusuf Iis et al. (2022), who found that career development and work environment directly impact performance. The highest outer loading indicator for career development is information about promotion opportunities, while for HR performance it is cost effectiveness. This suggests that greater transparency in promotion opportunities leads to higher cost efficiency in HR performance, as clear career paths motivate employees to work more efficiently, optimizing operational costs. The lowest outer loading for career development is fair treatment in career progression, and for HR performance, it is quantity of output. This indicates that fair career treatment increases employee productivity, as perceived fairness in promotion and development motivates employees to produce more work.

Furthermore, the study shows professional competence positively and significantly influences achievement motivation, supported by Mendy Andrian & Ardi (2022), who state that innovative employees are more motivated to achieve better results. The highest outer loading for professional competence is critical thinking ability, and for achievement motivation, it is motivation. This means individuals with strong critical thinking skills tend to have higher motivation to achieve, as they can analyze problems deeply, find innovative solutions, and strategize effectively. The lowest outer loading for professional competence is problem-solving ability, and for achievement motivation, it is goal orientation. This suggests that better problem-solving skills correlate with stronger goal orientation, indicating that individuals who effectively address challenges also maintain clear focus and determination toward achieving targets.

The study proves that professional competence has a positive and significant effect on HR performance, supported by Chikamai & Makhamara (2021), who also found a significant positive influence of competence on performance. The highest outer loading indicator for professional competence is critical thinking ability, while for HR performance it is cost effectiveness. This suggests that individuals with strong critical thinking skills contribute to greater cost efficiency in organizations by deeply analyzing situations, identifying the most efficient solutions, and making decisions that optimize resource use, thereby reducing waste and improving operational efficiency. The lowest outer loading for professional competence is problem-solving ability, and for HR performance it is quantity. This indicates that higher problem-solving skills correlate with increased quantity of work output, as individuals who are adept at solving problems tend to overcome obstacles effectively and complete more tasks within a given timeframe.

Furthermore, achievement motivation also shows a positive and significant effect on HR performance, consistent with previous research (Damanik et al., 2020). The highest outer loading for achievement motivation is motivation itself, and for HR performance again, cost effectiveness. This means that highly motivated employees tend to work more efficiently, utilize resources optimally, and minimize waste, which enhances cost effectiveness. Strong motivation drives individuals to be proactive in completing tasks, seek productive work methods, and avoid inefficiencies. The lowest outer loading for achievement motivation is goal orientation, while for HR performance it remains quantity. This reveals that individuals with a strong goal orientation complete a higher volume of work, demonstrating greater productivity by focusing clearly on objectives, managing time well, prioritizing tasks, and avoiding distractions that hinder goal achievement.

#### 4. Conclusion

This study aimed to examine the influence of career development and professional competence on achievement motivation and their subsequent impact on human resource

(HR) performance. The findings confirm that career development significantly enhances achievement motivation and HR performance, highlighting the importance of fair treatment, managerial support, access to promotion opportunities, and job satisfaction. Similarly, professional competence including collaboration skills, effective communication, creativity, problem-solving ability, critical thinking, and cultural awareness was found to be a key driver of both motivation and performance. Furthermore, achievement motivation itself, driven by factors such as competitiveness, goal orientation, and personal drive, plays a crucial role in elevating HR performance. Theoretically, this research contributes to the literature by reinforcing the idea that transparent and fair career advancement systems, as well as strong cognitive and interpersonal capabilities, are essential to building a motivated and high-performing workforce. Practical implications suggest that the Customs and Excise Office of Tanjung Emas Semarang should implement merit-based career development systems, enhance problem-solving training, foster critical thinking, and establish goal-oriented performance environments to sustain employee excellence. However, this study has several limitations. The relatively low R-square value for achievement motivation suggests that other unmeasured factors—such as leadership, organizational culture, work environment, and individual psychological aspects—may also influence motivation levels. Similarly, the moderate explanatory power for HR performance indicates that important determinants such as job satisfaction, incentive policies, and leadership style were not captured. Additionally, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to observe variable dynamics over time. Future research should consider a more comprehensive model that integrates additional variables such as job satisfaction, leadership style, organizational climate, and reward systems. A longitudinal approach is also recommended to explore causal relationships and variable evolution over time. Expanding the study across different sectors or institutions may also enhance generalizability and provide deeper insights into strategies for sustainable human resource development.

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