

Career Development Model on Adaptive Performance Mediated by Work Motivation in the Merauke Judicial Institution

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Abstract. *This study aims to analyze the influence of Career Development on Adaptive Performance among employees of judicial institutions in Merauke, with Work Motivation as a mediating variable. The research was conducted at two judicial institutions in Merauke, namely the Religious Court (Religious Court/PA) Merauke and the District Court (District Court/PN) Merauke. A quantitative approach with an explanatory research design was employed. Data were collected through a structured Likert-scale questionnaire distributed to the entire population of 89 permanent employees, of which 85 questionnaires were returned and deemed valid for analysis. Data analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method via SmartPLS 4.0 software. Hypothesis development was grounded in Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan) and Human Capital Theory. The findings reveal that all four hypotheses proposed in this study were accepted. First, career development has a positive and significant effect on employees' adaptive performance ($\beta = 0.422$, $t = 3.493$, $p = 0.000$). Second, work motivation has a positive and significant effect on adaptive performance ($\beta = 0.483$, $t = 3.872$, $p = 0.000$). Third, career development has a positive and significant effect on work motivation ($\beta = 0.806$, $t = 12.192$, $p = 0.000$), representing the largest coefficient in the model and indicating the dominant role of career development as a motivational predictor in the border-region judicial context. Fourth, work motivation was proven to partially mediate the effect of career development on adaptive performance (indirect effect $\beta = 0.389$, $t = 3.379$, $p = 0.001$). This partial mediation finding confirms that career development enhances adaptive performance through two simultaneous pathways: a direct pathway through technical competency acquisition, and an indirect pathway through the reinforcement of employees' intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, and work engagement. This study contributes theoretically as the first empirical evidence integrating these three variables within the context of judicial institutions in Eastern Indonesia's border region, while offering managerial implications for PA and PN Merauke leadership in designing motivation-based human resource development programs to promote optimal adaptive performance.*

Keywords: Career; Development; Institutions; Judicial; Performance.

1. Introduction

Indonesia's judicial institutions, consisting of Religious Courts (PA) and District Courts (PN), are key pillars of the justice system, playing a strategic role in providing legal services to the public. The PA handles Islamic family cases, while the District Court handles general civil and criminal cases. In the context of bureaucratic reform and digital transformation, both types of courts face increasing pressure to continuously develop the adaptive capacity of their staff to respond to changing regulations, technology, and dynamic societal demands. Adaptive performance, namely the ability of staff to adapt effectively to changes and unforeseen situations, is the foundation of the successful transformation of modern judicial institutions. However, the phenomenon of performance fluctuations remains a problem that requires a comprehensive human resource management approach.

Detailed statistical data from the Merauke Religious Court caseloads show significant fluctuations in monthly case intake and settlement patterns. Statistical data analysis (Table 1.1) shows that in 2022, the Merauke Religious Court received 499 cases, with 487 cases resolved, leaving a backlog of 12 cases. 2023 demonstrated the organization's ability to overcome challenges by resolving 455 cases out of 450 new cases plus the remainder from the previous year. However, 2024 again presented challenges in performance consistency, with 464 cases received and 447 cases resolved.

Monthly fluctuations indicate inconsistencies in workload distribution and resolution capacity. For example, in January 2024, 70 cases were received, but only 38 were resolved, while in July 2024, only 33 cases were received, but 48 were resolved. This imbalance indicates issues with workload management, resource distribution, and the efficiency of the case resolution process, which require a more systematic approach to human resource management.

Table Statistical Analysis of Merauke PA Cases 2022-2024

Year	Total Cases Incoming	Total Cases Completed	Completion Level	Monthly Average
2022	499	487	97.6%	41.6 cases/month
2023	450	450	100%	37.5 cases/month
2024 (Jan – Nov)	464	447	96.3%	42.2 cases/month

Source: Merauke PA Statistical Data, 2025

Table shows the dynamics of case handling at the Merauke Religious Court during the period 2022 to 2024. The data indicates fluctuations in the volume of incoming cases, where 2022 recorded 499 cases, decreased to 450 cases in 2023, then increased again to 464 cases in the period January to November 2024. The case resolution rate showed a relatively consistent performance with an achievement of 97.6% in 2022, reaching 100% in 2023, but decreased to 96.3% in 2024. The average number of cases handled per month ranged from 37.5 to 42.2 cases, with 2024 recording the highest average even though the resolution rate decreased compared to the previous year.

Although statistical data indicates a relatively high completion rate, the decline from 100% in 2023 to 96.3% in 2024 indicates a gap between workload and employees' adaptive capacity in handling case dynamics. This phenomenon demonstrates that employees are required not only to be able to work routinely but also to possess adequate adaptive capabilities to respond to changes in work volume, regulatory developments, and the transformation of the judicial administration system. This situation emphasizes the urgency of research into career development and work motivation as variables that have the potential to improve employee adaptive performance.

The characteristics of the judicial institution in Merauke, a border region in South Papua, add to the complexity of the problem. Limited infrastructure, difficult access, socio-cultural challenges, and limited qualified human resources are factors that impact organizational performance. These unique geographic and social conditions further require adaptive staff, capable of operating in uncertain conditions, utilizing limited technology, and proactively developing innovative work solutions. This situation demands an HR management strategy that is not only adaptive but also able to motivate staff in both types of courts to deliver optimal performance in challenging situations.

Adaptive performance in the context of judicial institutions includes the ability of employees to adapt to changes in work procedures, learn new technologies and systems quickly, cope with unexpected work situations, and continuously develop relevant competencies. Pulakos et al. (2000) define adaptive performance as an individual's ability to effectively adjust behavior to the demands of a new environment, task, or situation. Seo and Park (2025) in their study showed that in a smart work environment, the psychological distance between the evaluator and the evaluated influences performance assessments, indicating that employee adaptive capacity is highly relevant in the era of digitalization of judicial services. Jia and Zhang (2025) in their study of 2,357 Chinese government employees found that psychological capital significantly influenced work performance through work engagement as a mediator, a finding relevant to the context of improving adaptive performance in the public sector.

Empirical studies identify career development as a key factor influencing employee performance, including its adaptive dimension. El Zein et al. (2025), in a study in the Lebanese banking sector, found that training and development positively impacted employee performance through the mediation of motivation and career development. Similarly, Prasetya et al. (2024) confirmed a very strong correlation ($r = 0.988$) between career development and employee performance at PT. Unilever. Muthumbi and Kamau (2021) at Deloitte Kenya also found a positive and significant relationship between career development and employee performance through training, mentoring, and mobility programs. Planned career development directly improves employees' adaptive competencies by equipping them with the knowledge, skills, and experience needed to navigate changing work environments.

However, these research findings are inconsistent across contexts. La'bi' et al. (2024) in a study at the Ministry of Religious Affairs Office in South Papua Province found contradictory results, where career development did not significantly affect employee performance (coefficient 0.095, not significant), although the work environment and workload had a significant effect. This finding indicates that geographic context and organizational characteristics influence the effectiveness of career development in improving performance. Ituma et al. (2024) in a study in Nigeria revealed that although career development generally had a positive effect, insufficient funding and poor salary packages had a negative impact on career development and employee performance, indicating that contextual factors in the public sector have different dynamics than in the private sector.

Work motivation is thought to act as a mediating mechanism linking career development to employee adaptive performance. Masjutina and Stearns (2025) in their qualitative study revealed that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation interact to influence engagement and performance. El Zein et al. (2025) demonstrated that employee motivation mediates the relationship between training and development and performance. Wider et al. (2025) demonstrated that work engagement mediates the relationship between online social capital and innovative work performance in the Malaysian public sector, which is conceptually in line with the mediating mechanism of motivation in generating adaptive performance. Intrinsically motivated employees tend to be more proactive in learning new things, more flexible in dealing with change, and more persistent in overcoming challenges, which are the core of adaptive performance.

Human Capital Theory states that investment in career development will increase employee capacity and motivation to perform better, including in the adaptive dimension. Meanwhile, Self-Determination Theory (Deci and Ryan, 1985) explains that employees who feel the fulfillment of their needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness through career development programs will develop intrinsic motivation which in turn drives higher adaptive performance. Wu et al. (2025) in their study of 968 managers in the Chinese textile industry found that career advancement significantly influenced work performance, both directly and through work-family practices and recognition as mediators. Thaiduong (2025) identified that skills development and mentoring support are key factors that increase motivation and career engagement, both of which are closely related to employee adaptive capacity.

A thorough analysis of recent empirical research (2021 to 2025) reveals several significant gaps. First, no research has specifically examined adaptive performance in judicial institutions, particularly in border regions with unique geographic and socio-cultural characteristics such as Merauke. All previous studies were conducted in the private sector, educational institutions, or general government agencies. Second, inconsistent findings regarding the effectiveness of career development, particularly in regions with characteristics similar to South Papua, indicate the need for more in-depth contextual research. Third, the mediating role of work motivation in linking career development to adaptive performance

has not been comprehensively tested within a single integrated model within the judicial context.

This research gap has significant practical implications. Without a deep understanding of the dynamics of the relationship between career development, work motivation, and employee adaptive performance in the context of judicial institutions in border regions, efforts to improve organizational performance will be trial and error and less effective. The unique characteristics of Merauke as a border region with limited infrastructure and socio-cultural challenges require specific, evidence-based HR management strategies, particularly in building employee adaptive capacity, which is a competitive advantage for judicial organizations in the era of digital transformation.

This research is important because it integrates career development, work motivation, and adaptive performance variables into a comprehensive model that is appropriate to the context of judicial institutions in border regions. The novelty of this research lies in examining the mediating role of work motivation in the relationship between career development and adaptive performance, specifically in the context of the Religious Court and the Merauke District Court. Seo and Park (2025) emphasize the importance of understanding the dynamics of performance evaluation in a technology-integrated work environment, which is relevant to the conditions of digital transformation in judicial institutions. Abid et al. (2025) in their study of 346 faculty members at six universities confirmed that job satisfaction plays a critical mediator in the relationship between constructive leadership styles and teaching performance, which strengthens the argument for the importance of work motivation as a mediating mechanism in improving adaptive performance.

Wider et al. (2025) demonstrated that work engagement mediates the relationship between online social capital and innovative work performance in the Malaysian public sector, further strengthening the argument for the importance of examining motivational mediation mechanisms in public organizations. The research findings are expected to contribute theoretically to the development of human resource management science while also providing practical solutions to improve the adaptive performance of judicial institutions in Merauke in particular and similar judicial institutions in border regions in general.

2. Research Methods

This study uses a quantitative approach with a positivist paradigm that aims to objectively test hypotheses and measure causal relationships between variables. This type of research is explanatory research designed to explain the causal relationship between career development, work motivation, and the adaptive performance of judicial institution employees in Merauke. The research design uses a cross-sectional survey that collects data at a specific point in time to test the structural relationship model between variables. This approach was chosen because it is in accordance with the research objective of testing the theory and hypotheses that have been formulated based on a comprehensive literature review. This study adopts a survey research strategy using a structured questionnaire as the

main instrument for data collection. The analytical method used is Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with a Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach to test the simultaneous relationship between variables and analyze the mediating role of work motivation. The choice of this quantitative approach is based on the need to generalize research findings to a wider population and provide empirically measurable recommendations. The positivist paradigm supports the objectivity of the research and allows for hypothesis testing with a high degree of confidence.

3. Results and Discussion

3.1. Variable Description

This section presents a description of the research variables, beginning with the respondents' identity profiles as a basis for understanding the sample characteristics. Following the presentation of the respondents' profiles, each research variable is described: Career Development, Work Motivation, and Adaptive Performance. The descriptions not only present quantitative information in the form of frequencies and averages but also provide interpretations and explanations of why these conditions occur in the field, allowing for a more comprehensive and contextual understanding of the empirical findings.

1) Respondent Identity

This study involved all active employees at two judicial institutions in Merauke: the Merauke District Court and the Merauke Religious Court. Questionnaires were distributed to 89 employees, representing the total identified population. Of these, 85 were returned and declared complete and suitable for analysis, resulting in a 95.5% response rate. Four questionnaires were not returned, likely due to employee absence during data collection.

With 85 valid respondents, this sample meets the minimum requirements for PLS-SEM analysis as recommended by Hair et al. (2022), where the minimum sample size is ten times the largest number of paths leading to a single construct in the model. Thus, the data obtained are deemed sufficient and suitable for use in further analysis. The complete demographic profile of the 85 valid respondents is presented in Table 4.1 below.

Table Characteristics of Research Respondents (N = 85)

Respondent Characteristics	Frequency (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Man	53	62.35%
Woman	32	37.65%
Age		
20–30 Years	17	20.00%
31–40 Years	33	38.82%
41–50 Years	27	31.76%
< 50 Years	8	9.41%
Last education		
High School/Vocational School	5	5.88%

Diploma	8	9.41%
S1	55	64.71%
S2	16	18.82%
S3	1	1.18%
Years of service		
1–5 Years	19	22.35%
6–10 Years	24	28.24%
11–15 Years	21	24.71%
16–20 Years	13	15.29%
> 20 Years	8	9.41%
Position		
Judge	11	12.94%
Clerk/Deputy Clerk	14	16.47%
Bailiff/Substitute Bailiff	17	20.00%
Administrative staff	37	43.53%
Other	6	7.06%
Work unit		
Merauke Religious Court	30	35.29%
Merauke District Court	55	64.71%
Employee Status		
Civil Servant Class I	3	3.53%
Civil Servant Class II	21	24.71%
Civil Servant Class III	50	58.82%
Civil Servant Class IV	11	12.94%
Total Valid Respondents	85	95.5%

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on Table the majority of respondents were male (53 respondents, 62.45%), and 32 were female (37.65%). This composition reflects the historical reality of judicial institutions, which are structurally dominated by men, particularly in technical judicial positions. Nevertheless, the proportion of women approaching 40% indicates a trend of increasing gender equality in judicial recruitment.

In terms of age distribution, the largest group is 31–40 years old, with 33 people (38.82%), followed by 27 people (31.76%) between 41–50 years old, and 17 people (20.00%). This composition reflects employees in a productive and mature career phase. Employees in this age range generally have sufficient work experience and remain highly motivated for self-development and adaptation to changes in the work environment.

The education level of 55 (64.71%) was dominated by undergraduate degrees, followed by 16 (18.82%) with postgraduate degrees. The high proportion of undergraduate and postgraduate employees reflects the high competency demands of judicial work, given that judicial technical functions require a deep understanding of the law. This adequate educational background is essential for employees to understand and adapt to developments in regulations and judicial service technology.

In terms of length of service, the largest group is employees with 6–10 years of experience, totaling 24 people (28.24%), followed by 11–15 years with 21 people (24.71%), and 1–5 years with 19 people (22.35%). This even distribution indicates a diverse composition of employees in terms of seniority, so that knowledge transfer between senior and junior employees can take place dynamically within the organization. The most frequently filled position is Administrative Staff with 37 people (43.53%), who are the spearhead of daily judicial operational services. In terms of work units, the Merauke District Court contributed slightly more with 55 respondents (64.71%) compared to the Merauke Religious Court with 30 respondents (35.29%). In terms of employee status, Group III dominates with 50 people (58.82%), in accordance with the characteristics of functional technical employees in the judicial environment.

2) Description of Career Development Variables

Career Development variables are measured through 16 statements divided into four dimensions: (1) Career Planning, (2) Development Programs, (3) Organizational Support, and (4) Promotion and Recognition Systems. All items use a 5-point Likert scale. Interpretation of the average category refers to the intervals: 1.00–1.80 (Very Low), 1.81–2.60 (Low), 2.61–3.40 (Fair), 3.41–4.20 (High), and 4.21–5.00 (Very High). The results of the description per dimension are presented in Table.

Table Description of Career Development Variables (N = 85)

No.	Dimensions	Average	Category
1	Career Planning	4.42	Very high
2	Development Program	4.47	Very high
3	Organizational Support	4.45	Very high
4	Promotion and Recognition System	4.45	Very high
Average Variable		4.45	Very high

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on Table, the Career Development variable obtained an overall average of 4.45, which falls into the Very High category. The Development Program dimension recorded the highest score of 4.47, indicating that the availability of judicial technical training programs, continuing education, and competency development facilitated by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia was considered very good by respondents. The Promotion and Recognition System and Organizational Support dimension obtained an average score of 4.45, while Career Planning recorded the lowest average score of 4.42, although it remained in the Very High category.

The relatively small difference in average scores between the four dimensions (4.42–4.47) indicates that employee perceptions of all aspects of career development are fairly even and consistent. The slightly lower Career Planning score is understandable considering Merauke's geographical location as a border region with limited access to face-to-face career counseling services, so that individual employee involvement in career path planning still requires further strengthening.

3) Description of Work Motivation Variables

The Work Motivation variable is measured through 19 statements divided into four dimensions based on Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000): (1) Intrinsic Motivation, (2) Extrinsic Motivation, (3) Work Involvement, and (4) Motivation for Adaptation and Learning. The descriptive results per dimension are presented in Table.

Table Description of Work Motivation Variables (N = 85)

No.	Dimensions	Average	Category
1	Intrinsic Motivation	4.44	Very high
2	Extrinsic Motivation	4.45	Very high
3	Job Engagement	4.43	Very high
4	Motivation for Adaptation and Learning	4.40	Very high
Average Variable		4.43	Very high

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on Table the Work Motivation variable obtained an overall average of 4.43, which falls into the Very High category. The Extrinsic Motivation dimension recorded the highest value of 4.45, followed by Intrinsic Motivation at 4.44 and Work Engagement at 4.43. The Motivation for Adaptation and Learning dimension obtained the lowest value of 4.40, although it is still in the Very High category.

The high level of extrinsic motivation reflects that the remuneration system, performance allowances, and recognition for achievements in the judicial system are able to effectively encourage employee morale. Meanwhile, the high level of intrinsic motivation confirms that work in the judicial sector has a high social significance—upholding the law and ensuring justice for the community—thus generating a strong sense of dedication and inner satisfaction in employees. The slightly lower Adaptation Motivation score indicates that employee motivation to proactively learn to deal with technological and regulatory changes still requires additional stimulation, especially in the Merauke environment where digital infrastructure is still in its infancy.

4) Adaptive Performance Variable Description

Adaptive Performance Variables are measured through 18 statements divided into six dimensions adapted from the Pulakos et al. (2000) framework: (1) Learning and Mastery of New Technologies, (2) Handling Unexpected Situations and Uncertainty, (3) Creative Problem Solving, (4) Managing Work Stress, (5) Interpersonal and Cultural Adaptation, and (6) Flexibility of Working Conditions. The descriptive results per dimension are presented in Table.

Table Description of Adaptive Performance Variables (N = 85)

No.	Dimensions	Average	Category
1	Learning and Mastery of New Technologies	4.38	Very high
2	Handling Unexpected Situations and Uncertainty	4.36	Very high
3	Creative Problem Solving	4.45	Very high

4	Work Stress Management	4.36	Very high
5	Interpersonal and Cultural Adaptation	4.38	Very high
6	Flexibility of Working Conditions	4.41	Very high
Average Variable		4.39	Very high

Source: Processed primary data, 2026

Based on Table, the Adaptive Performance variable obtained an overall average of 4.39, which falls into the Very High category. The Creative Problem-Solving dimension recorded the highest score of 4.45, indicating that judicial officials in Merauke have excellent abilities in identifying innovative solutions to the legal and administrative problems they face. Working conditions in border areas that inherently demand creativity and improvisation in problem-solving due to limited resources encourage the organic growth of these abilities.

The Unexpected Situation Handling and Work Stress Management dimensions each received the lowest scores of 4.36, although they were still in the Very High category. This condition is understandable considering that the judicial institution in Merauke faces complex multicultural challenges in serving the indigenous Papuan community, combined with a trend of increasing case volume that has the potential to cause higher work pressure. Overall, the very high perception across all Adaptive Performance dimensions reflects that the Merauke judicial institution employees have a strong adaptive capacity to face the dynamics of their work environment.

Overall, the three research variables are in the Very High category: Career Development (4.45), Work Motivation (4.43), and Adaptive Performance (4.39). These descriptive findings provide a positive picture of the condition of human resources in the Merauke judicial institution and serve as the foundation for the inferential analysis presented in Sub-Chapter.

3.2. Discussion

This sub-chapter describes the data analysis, which includes validity and reliability testing of the research instruments, evaluation of structural model assumptions, and hypothesis testing. The analysis was conducted using the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) method with SmartPLS 4.0 software. The PLS-SEM approach was chosen because of its ability to handle mediation models with complex latent variables and its independence from the assumption of data normality.

1) Instrument Validity and Reliability Test

Evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) is conducted through two main stages: validity testing, which includes convergent validity and discriminant validity, and construct reliability testing. Meeting all measurement criteria at this stage is a prerequisite for proceeding to the structural model evaluation analysis.

a) Convergent Validity

Convergent validity is assessed through two main indicators: the outer loading value of each indicator and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value at the construct level. According to Hair et al.'s (2022) guidelines, a suitable outer loading is ≥ 0.70 , while an adequate AVE value is ≥ 0.50 . The output of the SmartPLS measurement model (outer model) is presented in Figure 4.1, while detailed test results are presented in Table 4.4 below.

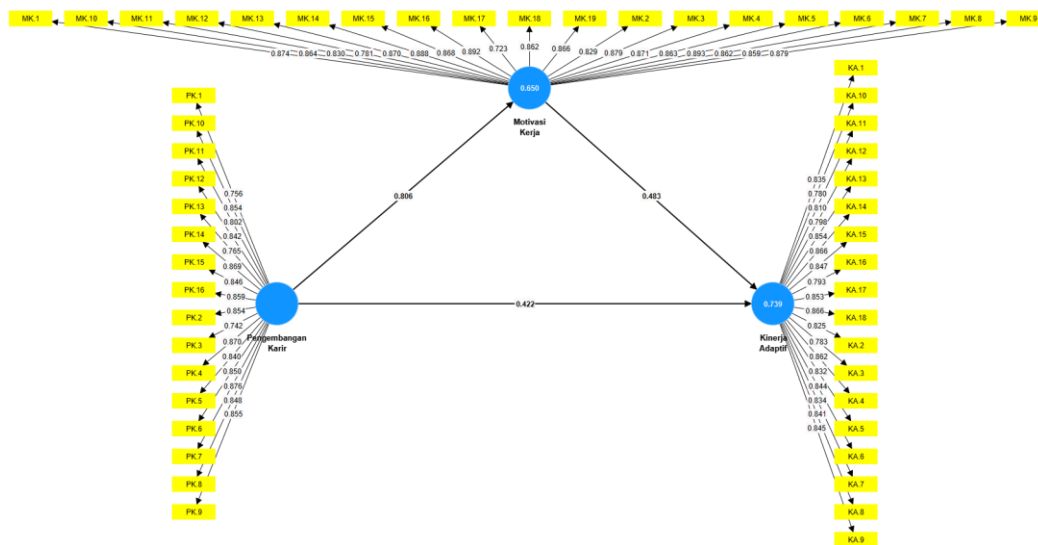


Figure Output of Outer Model and Inner Model PLS-SEM

(Source: SmartPLS output, processed 2026)

b) Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was evaluated through three complementary approaches: (1) HTMT (Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio), (2) Fornell-Larcker Criterion, and (3) Cross Loading. The first approach: HTMT. As recommended by Hair et al. (2022), an HTMT value below 0.90 indicates that two constructs are empirically different from each other. The test results are presented in Table.

Table HTMT Test Results

Construct	Adaptive Performance	Work motivation	Career Development
Adaptive Performance	—		
Work motivation	0.839	—	
Career Development	0.831	0.822	—

Source: SmartPLS output, processed 2026

All HTMT values are below the critical limit of 0.90. The HTMT value between Work Motivation and Adaptive Performance is 0.839, between Career Development and Adaptive Performance is 0.831, and between Career Development and Work Motivation is 0.822. These

findings confirm that each pair of constructs in the model has adequate conceptual separation, so there is no overlap between constructs.

The second approach: the Fornell-Larcker Criterion. This criterion requires that the AVE root value of a construct must be greater than the correlation of that construct with other constructs. The test results are presented in Table 4.6.

Table Fornell-Larcker Test Results

Construct	Adaptive Performance	Work motivation	Career Development
Adaptive Performance	0.832		
Work motivation	0.823	0.856	
Career Development	0.811	0.806	0.834

Source: SmartPLS output, processed 2026

The AVE root values (main diagonal, marked in green) are all greater than the correlation values with other constructs. The AVE root value of Adaptive Performance (0.832) exceeds its correlation with Work Motivation (0.823) and Career Development (0.811). Similarly, Work Motivation (0.856) is higher than its correlation with Adaptive Performance (0.823) and Career Development (0.806). Career Development (0.834) is also greater than its correlation with Adaptive Performance (0.811) and Work Motivation (0.806). Thus, the Fornell-Larcker criteria are met.

The third approach: Cross-Loading. Discriminant validity is also verified by ensuring that each indicator's loading on its own construct is higher than its loading on other constructs. Table presents a representation of the cross-loadings of a number of selected indicators.

c) Reliability Test

Construct reliability was evaluated using three measures: Cronbach's Alpha, Composite Reliability (rho_a), and Composite Reliability (rho_c). The recommended minimum threshold for all three measures is 0.70 (Hair et al., 2022).

Table Construct Reliability Test Results

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability (rho_a)	Composite Reliability (rho_c)
Career Development (X)	0.971	0.972	0.973
Work Motivation (M)	0.980	0.981	0.981
Adaptive Performance (Y)	0.974	0.974	0.976
Minimum Value	> 0.70	> 0.70	> 0.70

Source: SmartPLS output, processed 2026

Based on Table, all constructs obtained very high Cronbach's Alpha, rho_a, and rho_c values, namely: Career Development ($\alpha = 0.971$; rho_a = 0.972; rho_c = 0.973), Work Motivation ($\alpha = 0.980$; rho_a = 0.981; rho_c = 0.981), and Adaptive Performance ($\alpha = 0.974$; rho_a = 0.974; rho_c = 0.976). All values are well above the minimum limit of 0.70, so it can be concluded

that the research instrument has very good reliability and is consistent in measuring its constructs.

2) Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

Structural model evaluation is conducted to assess the model's strength and predictive quality before hypothesis testing. This stage includes analysis of R-square, F-square (effect size), Q^2 predict (predictive relevance), Variance Inflation Factor (VIF), Goodness of Fit (GoF), and SRMR (model fit).

a) Coefficient of Determination (R-Square)

Table, the R^2 value of Adaptive Performance of 0.739 indicates that the Career Development and Work Motivation variables are able to explain 73.9% of the variation in Adaptive Performance, while the remaining 26.1% is explained by factors outside the model. Referring to Hair et al. (2019), an R^2 value of 0.75 is categorized as substantial, so the value of 0.739 is in the moderate category approaching substantial—reflecting the model's high explanatory power.

Table R-Square and Adjusted R-Square Values

Endogenous Variables	R-Square (R^2)	Adjusted R-Square
Adaptive Performance (Y)	0.739	0.733
Work Motivation (M)	0.650	0.646

Source: SmartPLS output, processed 2026

The R^2 value for Work Motivation of 0.650 indicates that Career Development is able to explain 65.0% of the variation in Work Motivation, which is included in the moderate category. The small difference between R^2 and Adjusted R^2 (difference ≤ 0.006 for both variables) indicates that the model does not experience overfitting and has good stability.

b) Effect Size (f-Square)

Referring to Cohen's (1988) criteria, the f^2 value is 0.02 (small effect), 0.15 (medium effect), and 0.35 (large effect). The effect of Career Development on Work Motivation shows a very large effect size ($f^2 = 1.859$), indicating Career Development as a dominant predictor in the model. The effect of Work Motivation on Adaptive Performance is in the medium category approaching large ($f^2 = 0.312$), while Career Development on Adaptive Performance is included in the medium effect ($f^2 = 0.238$). Overall, all three paths have effect sizes that are relevant and practically meaningful.

Table f^2 value

Track	f^2	Category
Work Motivation → Adaptive Performance	0.312	Medium–Large
Career Development → Adaptive Performance	0.238	Currently
Career Development → Work Motivation	1,859	Big

Source: SmartPLS output, processed 2026

3) Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing was conducted through a bootstrapping procedure with 5,000 resamples using SmartPLS 4.0. The hypothesis was accepted if the t-statistic value was > 1.96 and the p-value < 0.05 at the 5% significance level. The bootstrapping output from SmartPLS is presented in Figure while a summary of the results of all hypothesis testing is presented in Table below.

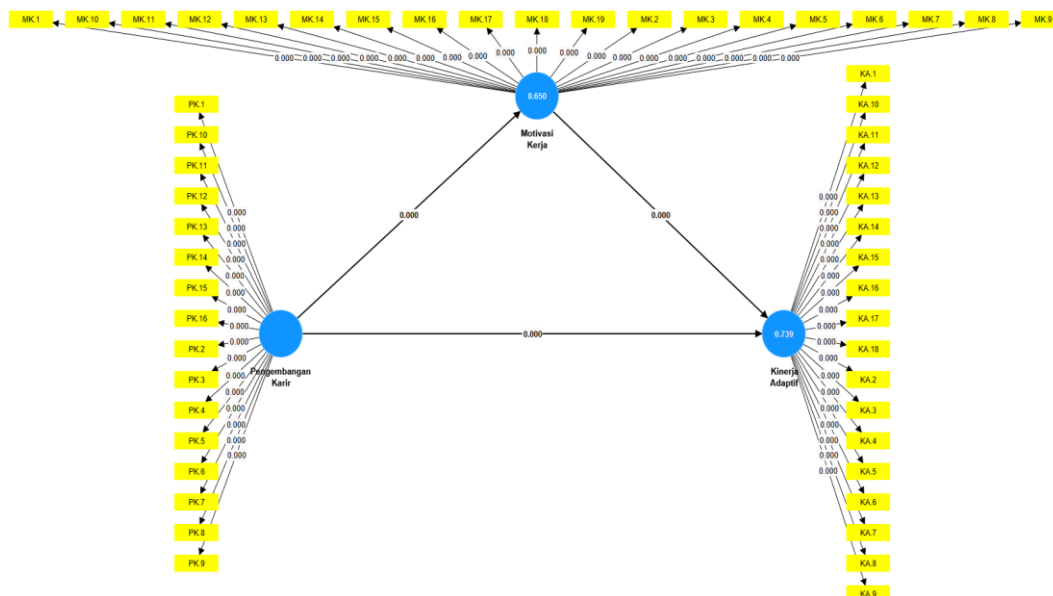


Figure Output of PLS-SEM Hypothesis Test Results (Bootstrapping)

Source: SmartPLS output, processed 2026

Table Summary of Hypothesis Testing Results

H	Track	β (O)	Mean (M)	STDEV	t-stat	P-value
H1	Work Motivation → Adaptive Performance	0.483	0.484	0.125	3,872	0.000
H2	Career Development → Adaptive Performance	0.422	0.420	0.121	3,493	0.000
H3	Career Development → Work Motivation	0.806	0.815	0.066	12,192	0.000
H4	Career Development → Work Motivation → Adaptive Performance	0.389	0.395	0.115	3,379	0.001
Information	All Hypotheses Accepted ($t > 1.96$ & $p < 0.05$)					

H1: The Influence of Work Motivation on Adaptive Performance

The test results show that Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Adaptive Performance with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.483$, t -statistics = 3.872, and p -value = 0.000. Since t -statistics > 1.96 and p -value < 0.05, H1 is accepted.

This finding is consistent with the empirical evidence outlined in the literature review in Chapter 2. Dinibutun (2024) in his study of 475 respondents from four service sectors in Turkey using covariance-based SEM found that employee motivation had a positive and significant effect on adaptive performance ($\beta = 0.2181$, $p = 0.0000$). Although the coefficient found in that study was smaller than the findings of this study ($\beta = 0.483$), the direction of the effect and its significance were consistent, confirming that work motivation is a reliable predictor of adaptive performance across organizational contexts. The difference in coefficient magnitude is understandable considering the context of the Merauke judicial institution has unique characteristics such as geographical challenges, fluctuating workloads, and multicultural adaptation demands that make motivation a more crucial psychological resource than the commercial service sector work environment. In line with this, Palefi, Agustina, and Jamali (2024) in a study of 150 employees of the production division of PT X, Tbk using SEM with AMOS 23 proved that work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.224$, $CR = 2.562$, $p = 0.010$), while confirming that motivation is an internal mechanism that converts external drives into actual performance. These findings confirm that motivated employees are more autonomy-oriented, more productive, and better able to adapt to changing job demands—characteristics that are inherently relevant to the context of adaptive performance in judicial institutions.

The positive coefficient of 0.483 in this study indicates that each one-unit increase in work motivation contributes to a 0.483-unit increase in adaptive performance, surpassing the findings of Dinibutun (2024) and Palefi et al. (2024), which suggest that the context of judicial institutions in border regions actually strengthens the relevance of motivation as a driver of adaptive performance. Within the framework of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 2000) as discussed in Chapter 2, employees who feel the fulfillment of basic psychological needs—autonomy in carrying out judicial duties, competence in handling cases, and connectedness with colleagues and superiors—will develop autonomous motivation that encourages deeper involvement in the work and in turn increases their adaptive capacity. In the context of the Merauke judicial institution, employees who are highly motivated, both intrinsically through a sense of devotion and responsibility to uphold the law, and extrinsically through the remuneration system and recognition for achievement, have been shown to be better able to adapt to regulatory changes, case dynamics, and the demands of excellent service to a multicultural society.

H2: The Effect of Career Development on Adaptive Performance

The test results show that Career Development has a positive and significant effect on Adaptive Performance with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.422$, t -statistics = 3.493, and p -value = 0.000. Thus, H2 is accepted.

This finding directly confirms and strengthens the empirical evidence that has been built in the literature review of Chapter 2. Iskandar, Abdul Rahim, and Arham (2020) in a study at a public university in Malaysia found a positive and significant correlation between career development and employee adaptive performance ($r = 0.355$, $p < 0.05$), with the assertion that career development functions as a personal resource that encourages employees to behave adaptively to maintain their career relevance. The coefficient obtained in this study ($\beta = 0.422$) exceeds the findings of Iskandar et al. (2020), which suggests that in the context of judicial institutions in border areas, the pressure to adapt is much higher so that career development programs have a greater impact on adaptive performance. Ituma et al. (2024) in a study of 382 Nigerian civil service employees also found a significant relationship between career development and employee performance (Chi-Square = 237.382, $p = 0.000$), where training programs, work experience, and coaching were proven to improve employee ability to adapt to information technology and changing public policies: a dimension that is highly relevant to the reality of the ongoing digital transformation in the Merauke judicial institution. The study also identified that limited funding and inadequate compensation can hinder the effectiveness of career development, a contextual challenge also faced by judicial institutions in border regions.

The findings of this study also provide a mechanistic explanation for the inconsistencies found in previous literature reviews. Mursidah, Khoiruddin, and Septantri (2024) in a study at UNNES found that career development partially had no significant effect on employee performance ($t = 1.464$, $\text{sig} = 0.146$), but simultaneously, together with career adaptability, it explained 70.2% of the performance variation ($R^2 = 0.702$). These differences in findings indicate that the effectiveness of career development is highly dependent on the contextual conditions of the organization, including the program's relevance to actual employee needs and adequate management support. In the context of the Merauke judicial institution, these conditions are met because the development program organized by the Supreme Court of the Republic of Indonesia (including judicial technical training, mentoring, and a merit-based promotion system) is directly relevant to adaptive work demands in the field. This is in line with Human Capital Theory, which emphasizes that investment in human resource development will result in increased capabilities that directly impact performance, including in its adaptive dimension, especially when the development program is designed according to the actual demands of the organization.

H3: The Influence of Career Development on Work Motivation

The test results show that Career Development has a positive and significant effect on Work Motivation with a path coefficient of $\beta = 0.806$, t -statistics = 12.192, and p -value = 0.000. This very high t -statistics value indicates that H3 is accepted with a very high level of confidence.

The path coefficient of 0.806 is the largest in the model and is consistent with the convergence of the three empirical studies identified in Chapter 2. Hidayat and Heryjanto (2024) in a study of 105 employees of PT Global Loyalty Indonesia using SEM-PLS SmartPLS found a positive

and significant effect of career development on work motivation ($\beta = 0.323$, $t = 3.627$, $p = 0.000$). Kodija, Ardhusyarif, Sidiq, and Tembo (2026) in a study of 115 employees in the cosmetics sector in Cirebon found a stronger effect ($\beta = 0.389$, $t = 5.600$, $p = 0.000$), explaining that career development programs create a sense of appreciation in employees so that motivation increases because employees see the organization's real commitment to providing opportunities for advancement. Most relevant to the context of this study, Arsyad, HS, and Sriekaningsih (2024) who studied 85 personnel from the Pangkalpinang Police—a law enforcement institution with similar characteristics to the judiciary—found an even stronger effect ($\beta = 0.549$, $p = 0.000$), explaining that a clear career path and opportunities for promotion were powerful catalysts that encouraged personnel to deliver their best performance. The coefficient found in this study ($\beta = 0.806$) surpassed the overall findings of the three studies, which can be explained by two contextual factors: first, the conditions in the Merauke border region that structurally enhance the psychological significance of organizational career support for employees serving far from the center; and second, the dominance of group III (58.4% of respondents), which is the group with the most active career development orientation in the judicial personnel system.

The magnitude of this coefficient is further confirmed by the very large effect size ($f^2 = 1.859$), confirming that Career Development is the most dominant predictor of Work Motivation in this research model. Within the framework of Self-Determination Theory (Deci & Ryan, 1985) as outlined in Chapter 2, the mechanism can be explained systemically: when organizations provide judicial technical training programs, transparent career paths, mentoring support from superiors, and merit-based promotion systems, employees feel the simultaneous fulfillment of three basic psychological needs: competence through skill enhancement, autonomy through involvement in career planning, and relatedness through meaningful mentoring relationships. The integrative fulfillment of these three needs activates intrinsic autonomous motivation while strengthening extrinsic motivation through recognition and tangible promotion prospects, resulting in a much greater motivational strengthening effect than if only one need dimension were met.

H4: The Mediating Role of Work Motivation in the Relationship between Career Development and Adaptive Performance

The results of the indirect effect test show that Career Development has a positive and significant effect on Adaptive Performance through Work Motivation with an indirect effect coefficient of $\beta = 0.389$, t -statistics = 3.379, and p -value = 0.001. Thus, H4 is accepted.

This partial mediation finding directly confirms and extends the empirical evidence identified in the literature review in Chapter 2. Hidayat and Heryjanto (2024) in a study of 105 employees of PT Global Loyalty Indonesia using SEM-PLS SmartPLS proved that work motivation significantly mediated the influence of career development on employee performance, with the direction and pattern of mediation identical to the findings of this study. Kodija, Ardhusyarif, Sidiq, and Tembo (2026) in a study of 115 employees in the

cosmetics sector in Cirebon using a similar method also confirmed that work motivation was proven to mediate the relationship between career development and employee performance, explaining that career development programs create a sense of appreciation in employees that drives motivation, which is then converted into actual performance. Most relevant to the context of this research, Arsyad, HS, and Sriekaningsih (2024) who studied 85 Pangkalpinang Police personnel using SEM SmartPLS found that work motivation was proven to mediate the influence of career development on the performance of police personnel (a finding from a law enforcement institution that shares bureaucratic characteristics and a public service orientation with the judiciary) so that its generalization to the context of Merauke judicial employees has a strong empirical basis. The convergence of these three studies, which include the context of private companies, the cosmetics industry, and the police institution, is now complemented by this study as the first confirmation in the context of a judicial institution in a border region, strengthening the external validity of the mediation mechanism of work motivation across organizational contexts.

Since the direct effect of Career Development on Adaptive Performance ($\beta = 0.422$) was also proven to be significant, Work Motivation functions as a partial mediator. This partial mediation pattern has important theoretical significance and is in line with the mechanistic explanation developed in Chapter 2 based on the integration of Human Capital Theory and Self-Determination Theory. Career development influences adaptive performance through two parallel and complementary pathways: a direct pathway through the acquisition of technical competencies and adaptive capabilities obtained from training, mentoring, and job rotation; and an indirect pathway through strengthening intrinsic and extrinsic motivation and work engagement, which ultimately leads to higher adaptive behavior. This partial mediation finding also provides a mechanistic explanation for the inconsistency found by La'bi' et al. (2024) at the South Papua Ministry of Religious Affairs Office, where career development had no significant effect on performance (coefficient 0.095, not significant): if the career development program fails to foster work motivation as a psychological intermediary (for example, because the program is not relevant to the real needs of employees or is not accompanied by a transparent promotion system) then the indirect path is broken so that the overall impact on performance is weakened. Thus, the indirect effect of $\beta = 0.389$ found in this study is not merely a statistical confirmation, but rather a substantive explanation of how organizational career investment is converted into employee adaptive capacity through underlying motivational mechanisms—a theoretical contribution that has not been available in the previous literature on judicial institution HR management.

4. Conclusion

Career development has a positive and significant effect on adaptive performance (H1 is accepted). The path coefficient $\beta = 0.422$ ($T = 3.493$; $p = 0.000$) indicates that transparent training, mentoring, and promotion programs directly improve employees' adaptive abilities in facing changes in judicial regulations and technology. Career development has a positive and significant effect on work motivation (H2 is accepted). The path coefficient $\beta = 0.806$ ($T =$

12.192; $p = 0.000$; $f^2 = 1.859$) is the largest in the model, proving that career path clarity and organizational support are the main drivers of employee intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on adaptive performance (H3 is accepted). The path coefficient $\beta = 0.483$ ($T = 3.872$; $p = 0.000$) proves that highly motivated employees are more adaptive in facing case dynamics and service demands in border areas. Work motivation partially mediates the influence of career development on adaptive performance (H4 is accepted). The indirect effect $\beta = 0.389$ ($T = 3.379$; $p = 0.001$) with the direct effect remaining significant confirms partial mediation—career development influences adaptive performance through two simultaneous pathways: direct (technical capability) and indirect (strengthening work motivation). The research model explains 73.9% of the variation in adaptive performance ($R^2 = 0.739$) and 65.0% of the variation in work motivation ($R^2 = 0.650$), with $GoF = 0.700$ and $SRMR = 0.047$ confirming good model fit.

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