RESEARCH ARTICLE

THE INFLUENCE OF PERSONAL CHARACTER AND PERSONAL COMPETENCE ON LECTURER PERFORMANCE WITH CAREER DEVELOPMENT AS AN INTERVENING VARIABLE AT PRIVATE UNIVERSITIES IN WEST SULAWESI PROVINCE

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Abstract : This study aims to examine and analyze the influence of character and competence on lecturer performance at private universities in West Sulawesi Province, both directly and indirectly through career development as an intervening factor. Specifically, this study aims to determine the extent to which character influences career development and performance, and how competence plays a role in driving career development and performance. Furthermore, this study also aims to identify the direct influence of career development on performance improvement. This research is a fundamental study with an explanatory and causal approach that aims to develop a theoretical understanding of human resource management in higher education environments, particularly among lecturers at private universities in West Sulawesi Province. A sample of 300 lecturers was selected using a stratified random sampling technique. Data were collected through a survey using a five-point Likert-scale questionnaire that measured respondents' perceptions of the variables of character, competence, career development, and performance. Distribution was carried out via a Google Form link after the researcher contacted respondents directly to ensure participation and understanding. Data analysis used SEM with the assistance of AMOS software version 29. The results of the structural model test show that of the five direct influence paths tested, four are significant, namely: self-character and self-competence have a positive effect on career development; self-competence and career development have a positive effect on lecturer performance; while self-character does not have a significant effect on lecturer performance. In the mediation test, it was found that career development fully mediates the effect of self-character on lecturer performance, and partially mediates the effect of self-competence on lecturer performance. This finding confirms the importance of career development as a strategic path that connects individual character and competence in improving lecturer performance effectively.

Keyword: character, competence, career development, performance, private university

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Introduction

Human Resources (HR) are a crucial element in achieving an organization's strategic goals, including in the context of higher education, which holds a significant responsibility for creating an optimal learning environment. HR in higher education includes lecturers, administrative staff, and other support staff who work together to ensure the achievement of the institution's vision and mission (Jagdish et al., 2023). Effective HR management extends beyond recruitment and selection to encompass career development, training, and ongoing performance assessments to enhance lecturer competence and productivity (Temnova, 2023). Improving HR quality is becoming increasingly important given global competition, which demands high standards in higher education worldwide (Al-Twal et al., 2019).

In Indonesia, universities serve as centers for the development of science, technology, and the arts, contributing to human resource development (Rifani & Pohan, 2019). To improve educational quality and global competitiveness, effective management strategies, including strengthening human resource competencies, are key factors (Indriati et al., 2023). However, intense competition among universities, particularly in attracting students, encourages universities to continuously innovate in services and academic programs (Imaniyah, 2019). Based on data from the 2024 QS World University Rankings, the best universities in Indonesia are still dominated by institutions on the island of Java, such as the University of Indonesia (ranked 237), Gadjah Mada University (263), and the Bandung Institute of Technology (281), supported by greater access to resources and more advanced educational infrastructure (Muhibbin & Hendriani, 2021; Widiastuty & Rahayu, 2021).

The gap between universities in Java and outside Java is partly due to the greater concentration of funding and policy attention on universities in Java, enabling them to build international collaborations and improve the quality of teaching and research (Ahzan et al., 2023; Arwansyah, 2019). The main factors supporting this ranking are the quality and performance of lecturers, including educational attainment, research capabilities, and strategic international collaborations (Marlina & Fitriyah, 2022; Muhibbin & Hendriani, 2021). Human capital competencies, such as lecturers' skills and abilities in effectively transferring knowledge, also contribute positively to improving the quality of teaching and research (Dwita et al., 2022). This confirms that lecturer competency significantly influences the image of higher education institutions (Elmie, 2020).

However, a different phenomenon is observed in several private universities (PTS) in West Sulawesi. Initial surveys indicate disparities in lecturer performance, influenced by limited career development opportunities (Nestulya, 2021). Many lecturers feel they lack a clear career development path, resulting in low job satisfaction and overall performance (Ayu et al., 2023). This situation highlights the need for higher education management intervention to provide more targeted and structured career development programs.

To date, research on human resource management in Indonesian higher education has focused primarily on large universities in Java, which have better access to funding, infrastructure, and international collaboration (Muhibbin & Hendriani, 2021; Widiastuty & Rahayu, 2021). Meanwhile, studies on the disparity in human resource quality, particularly related to lecturer career development in private universities outside Java, remain very limited. Yet, this issue has significant implications for the quality of learning, research, and institutional competitiveness at the national and global levels.

This research offers novelty by highlighting the issue of lecturer career development in private universities (PTS) in West Sulawesi, a topic rarely explored in previous research. This study not only illustrates the inequality situation but also emphasizes the importance of targeted human resource management strategies to improve job satisfaction, lecturer performance, and institutional reputation. Thus, this research contributes to the growing literature on human resource management in higher education, particularly across diverse geographic and institutional contexts.

The urgency of this research lies in the pressing need for universities outside Java to improve the quality of their human resources to compete in the global era. The lack of career development programs for lecturers in private universities outside Java has the potential to widen the gap in the quality of higher education in Indonesia. Therefore, the results of this study are expected to form the basis for formulating more inclusive and equitable human resource management policies, thereby supporting equitable improvements in the quality of higher education throughout Indonesia.

This study aims to examine and analyze the influence of personal character and competency on lecturer performance at private universities in West Sulawesi Province, both directly and indirectly through career development as an intervening variable. Specifically, this study aims to determine the extent to which personal character influences lecturer career development and performance, and how competency plays a role in driving career development and performance. In addition, this study also aims to identify the direct influence of career development on improving lecturer performance in private universities. The results are expected to contribute to strategies for improving the quality of human resources in the private higher education sector.

Literature Study

Performance

The following is a more in-depth explanation of lecturer performance indicators based on Goal Setting Theory:

1. Effective teaching: The ability of lecturers to create an interactive and effective learning environment.
2. Research productivity: The number and quality of scientific publications and the contribution of lecturers to the development of science.
3. Community service: Lecturer involvement in community service activities that provide direct benefits to the community.
4. Personal competency development: Lecturers' efforts to improve their professional and personality abilities.
5. Discipline and work ethics: Lecturers' compliance with academic rules and norms and professional attitude in carrying out their duties.

Career Development

Following are some career development indicators based on Career Development Theory:

1. Career competencies: Lecturers' knowledge and skills in planning and exploring their careers.
2. Career adaptability: The ability of lecturers to adapt to changes and challenges in their career path.
3. Career support: Lecturers receive institutional guidance and support in career development.
4. Career maturity: The readiness of lecturers to make realistic and structured career decisions.
5. Career exploration and planning: Lecturers actively explore and plan steps to achieve their career goals.

Character

Personal character is measured based on indicators that reflect the moral values and ethical behavior of lecturers:

1. Sincerity or honesty: Lecturers are honest in assessing students and are open in every professional situation.
2. Compassion: Lecturers show empathy and concern for students, especially those experiencing difficulties.
3. Courage: Lecturers dare to uphold moral principles even when facing risks.
4. Compassion: Lecturers care about the well-being of students and the academic community.
5. Self-control: Lecturers are able to manage emotions and act professionally in difficult situations.
6. Collaboration: Lecturers collaborate effectively with colleagues and students.
7. Hard work: Lecturers show high dedication in carrying out academic tasks.

Competence

Lecturer competence is measured through several main dimensions:

1. Pedagogical competence: The ability of lecturers to plan and implement effective learning processes.
2. Personality competency: The lecturer's ability to demonstrate good, ethical and professional attitudes.
3. Social competence: The ability of lecturers to communicate and interact effectively with students and colleagues.
4. Professional competence: Lecturers' mastery of learning materials and the ability to develop them according to academic needs.

Conceptual Model

A conceptual model relates to the method used by researchers to logically formulate hypotheses based on several criteria deemed important to the problem at hand. Understanding research design is facilitated by a conceptual model, which assists in everything from structuring specific research stages to applying theory and assigning variables resulting from the model design.

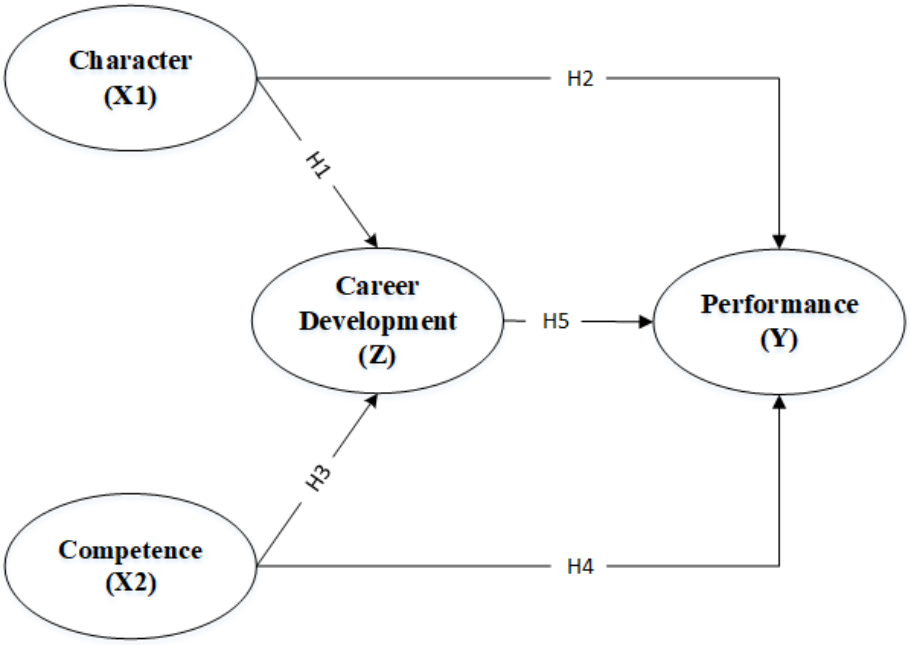

Figure 1. Conceptual Model

Hypothesis formulation:

H1 : Character has a significant influence on career development of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
H2 : Character has a significant influence on the performance of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
H3 : Competence has a significant influence on career development of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
H4 : Competence has a significant influence on the performance of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
H5 : Career development has a significant influence on the performance of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.

Research methods

This research is a fundamental study aimed at developing theoretical understanding in the field of human resource management in higher education. This research is explanatory with a causal approach, aiming to explain the cause-and-effect relationships between variables through hypothesis testing. The population in this study were lecturers working at private universities in West Sulawesi Province. The sampling technique used was a stratified random sampling approach, which takes into account the diverse characteristics of each stratum in the population. The sample size used in this study was 300 lecturers.

Data collection was conducted through a survey method using a questionnaire instrument with a five-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," designed to measure lecturers' perceptions of the variables of character, competence, career development, and performance. The questionnaire was distributed online through a Google Form link, where researchers first contacted respondents directly (via message or phone) to increase participation rates and ensure understanding of the survey's objectives. This process was carried out systematically to maintain the validity and reliability of the collected data.

The obtained data were then analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) to examine the relationships between latent variables in the research model, both direct and indirect influences through intervening variables. Data processing was performed using AMOS version 29 statistical software, which allows for comprehensive and accurate structural model analysis in accordance with the complexity of the proposed model.

Research Results and Discussion

Initial Analysis

In the initial analysis, the researcher will conduct two tests, first testing the validity and reliability of the questionnaire, and second is conducting a bias evaluation to ensure there is no bias in the data.

Testing for validity and reliability

Validity testing is conducted to determine the extent to which statement items accurately measure each variable. Validity testing is carried out using the validity criteria, which are measured using the intercorrelation method, namely by calculating the correlation value between the score of each item and the total score (corrected item-total correlation). The criteria for an item to be valid are those with a positive correlation

coefficient greater than 0.30.(Malhotra & Birks, 2007). Next testReliability indicates the extent to which a measuring instrument can be relied upon. The reliability technique used is internal consistency, namely by examining the Cronbach's Alpha coefficient. According toHair et al. (2019), the reliability measure has a range from 0 to 1, the generally agreed lower limit for the Cronbach's Alpha value is above 0.70 (good reliability), with a value of 0.60 to 0.70 considered as the lower limit that is still acceptable (acceptable reliability).

Table 1. Validity and reliability test

Variables	Indicators	Item	*Corrected Item-Total Correlation*	Cronbach's Alpha
Performance (Y)	Teaching effectiveness (Y.1)	01	0.568	0.831 (good reliability)
		02	0.600	
	Research productivity (Y.2)	03	0.619	
	Community service (Y.3)	04	0.578	
	Personal competency development (Y.4)	05	0.612	
		06	0.597	
	Discipline and work ethics (Y.5)	07	0.523	
Career Development (Z)	Career competencies (Z.1)	08	0.602	0.810 (good reliability)
		09	0.550	
	Career adaptability (Z.2)	10	0.594	
	Career support (Z.3)	11	0.589	
	Career maturity (Z.4)	12	0.560	
	Career exploration and planning (Z.5)	13	0.544	
Character (X1)	Sincerity (X1.1)	14	0.594	0.829 (good reliability)
	Compassion (X1.2)	15	0.671	
	Courage (X1.3)	16	0.540	
	Compassion (X1.4)	17	0.510	
	Self-control (X1.5)	18	0.668	
	Cooperation (X1.6)	19	0.508	
	Hard work (X1.7)	20	0.559	
Competence (X2)	Pedagogical competence (X2.1)	21	0.671	0.814 (good reliability)
		22	0.577	
	Personality competence (X2.2)	23	0.554	
	Social competence (X2.3)	24	0.528	
		25	0.567	
	Professional competence (X2.4)	26	0.565	
	Rule of thumb		≥0.30	≥0.70

The results of the validity test on all items produced a corrected item-total correlation value in the range between 0.508-0.671 (greater than 0.30), so it can be concluded that all statement items have met the validity criteria and are declared valid to be used to measure each variable. Furthermore, the results of the reliability test show that the Cronbach's Alpha value for each variable is 0.831, 0.810, 0.829, and 0.814, respectively, all of these values are greater than 0.70, so it is concluded that the arrangement of statement items used to measure the variables of character, competence, career development, and performance can be stated to have good reliability.

Testing for Common Method Bias (CMB) & non-response bias

After the questionnaire was declared valid and reliable, the researcher continued data collection until 300 responses were obtained, meeting the minimum sample size requirement. During this process, common method bias and non-response bias were evaluated to ensure there was no bias in the data collection. Common method bias can occur due to the use of the same method and measuring instrument to measure several variables, resulting in similar statement structures eliciting uniform responses from respondents, or due to respondents' tendency to provide answers that do not reflect the actual situation due to the influence of their mood or personal judgment style.(Jordan & Troth, 2019; Podsakoff et al., 2003).

This study adopted procedural and statistical strategies to control for common method bias. Procedurally, the questionnaire was adapted from a reputable journal and adapted to the context of private universities in West Sulawesi for ease of understanding. It was structured separately for each variable. It was administered to lecturers with at least one year of service, with guaranteed anonymity to encourage honest responses.(Podsakoff et al., 2003). Statistically, Harman's single factor test was conducted through EFA and CFA. The EFA results showed that the first factor only explained 11.4% of the total variance, with a TLI value of 0.188, far below the threshold of 0.90. In CFA, the CFI index of 0.235 and TLI of 0.168 also indicated a model misfit, with a chi-square probability value <0.001 and a SRMR of 0.160 exceeding the maximum limit of 0.08. Based on these results, respondents gave different responses for each variable, indicating that common method bias was not a serious threat in this study.

Non-response bias is a potential bias that occurs when the response to a questionnaire is low, so that the sample obtained may not accurately represent the population.(Cheung et al., 2017; Sedgwick, 2014)In this study, the number of responses obtained was more than sufficient, so the possibility of bias can be minimized. Statistically, non-response bias was evaluated by comparing the response patterns between early and late respondents.(Armstrong & Overton, 1977;Jordan & Troth, 2020), because respondents who completed the survey at the beginning and end of the survey potentially had different motivations and response patterns. The multivariate test results showed a Hotelling's Trace F-value of 1.334 with a p-value of 0.088 (>0.05), and the univariate test produced a p-value of 0.847 (>0.05), both of which were insignificant. Therefore, it can be concluded that non-response bias is not a serious threat in this study.

Descriptive Analysis

The sample in this study consisted of lecturers at private universities in West Sulawesi Province, described based on various demographic characteristics. The majority of respondents were male (54.0%) and were in the 31–40 years age range (50.3%), indicating that most were of productive age with relatively mature teaching experience. Most were permanent lecturers (83.7%), with a master's degree (93.7%), while only 6.3% had completed doctoral studies. Based on functional positions, the majority of respondents were at the Assistant Expert (48.3%) and Lecturer (43.7%) levels, while only 1.3% had reached the Associate Lecturer level. In terms of length of service, most respondents had less than 5 years of work experience (59.0%), and only 34.0% had lecturer certification. The majority of respondents were married (84.0%), which may influence their commitment to career development and the implementation of academic duties.

Based on the distribution of institutions of origin, the largest participation came from the Muhammadiyah Institute of Technology and Business, Polewali Mandar (12.7%), followed by Muhammadiyah University of Mamuju (8.7%) and Al Asyariah University, Mandar (8.0%). This diversity of institutions indicates that the research involved lecturers from various private universities, both large and small, thus providing a comprehensive picture of the performance and career development of lecturers in private universities in West Sulawesi Province. This even representation strengthens the external validity of the research in describing the actual conditions at various private higher education institutions in the region.

Table 2. Descriptive statistics

Indicators	No item	Item description	Item Mean	Indicator mean
Performance (Y)				
Teaching effectiveness (Y.1)	1	I deliver lecture materials clearly.	4.25	4.19
	2	I deliver lecture materials in a structured manner.	4.13	
Research productivity (Y.2)	3	I am actively involved in scientific research.	3.24	3.24
Community service (Y.3)	4	I participate in community service activities.	3.41	3.41
Personal competency development (Y.4)	5	I actively improve my competencies through training.	3.44	3.28
	6	I actively improve my competencies through further education.	3.11	
Discipline and work ethics (Y.5)	7	I am always disciplined in carrying out my duties and responsibilities.	3.83	3.83
		Mean variable	3.59	
Career Development (Z)				
Career competencies (Z.1)	8	I actively enhance my career competencies through education.	3.27	3.34
	9	I actively enhance my career competencies through training.	3.41	

Indicators	No item	Item description	Item Mean	Indicator mean
Career adaptability (Z.2)	10	I can adapt to changes in the workplace.	4.05	4.05
Career support (Z.3)	11	I received career support from the institution.	3.13	3.13
Career maturity (Z.4)	12	I am ready to make career decisions that align with my potential.	3.96	3.96
Career exploration and planning (Z.5)	13	I actively explore and plan my career steps.	3.52	3.52
		Mean variable	3.60	
Character (X1)				
Sincerity (X1.1)	14	I am always honest in evaluating students.	4.38	4.38
Compassion (X1.2)	15	I always empathize with the difficulties faced by students.	4.20	4.20
Courage (X1.3)	16	I am not afraid to speak the truth, even when it involves risks.	3.57	3.57
Compassion (X1.4)	17	I try to understand students' needs.	4.11	4.11
Self-control (X1.5)	18	I am able to control my emotions in difficult situations.	3.90	3.90
Cooperation (X1.6)	19	I collaborate with colleagues to achieve common goals.	4.09	4.09
Hard work (X1.7)	20	I put forth my best effort in fulfilling the three pillars of higher education.	3.92	3.92
		Mean variable	4.02	
Competence (X2)				
Pedagogical competence (X2.1)	21	I can plan learning activities that meet students' needs.	4.20	4.19
	22	I can implement learning activities that meet students' needs.	4.17	
Personality competence (X2.2)	23	I demonstrate attitudes and behaviors that reflect good morals.	4.45	4.45
Social competence (X2.3)	24	I communicate effectively with students.	4.29	4.25
	25	I communicate effectively with colleagues.	4.20	
Professional competence (X2.4)	26	I have a deep mastery of the subject matter.	4.32	4.32
		Mean variable	4.30	

Performance Description

The overall average value of lecturer performance variables was 3.59, which is included in the high category, indicating that private university lecturers in West Sulawesi Province generally have good performance in carrying out academic and professional duties. The effective teaching indicator obtained the highest score of 4.19, indicating the lecturers' ability to convey material clearly and structured. Discipline and work ethics were also classified as high with a mean of 3.83, and community service recorded a score of 3.41, indicating lecturers' involvement in social and academic activities in the community.

However, research productivity had the lowest mean score of 3.24 and fell into the moderate category, indicating that lecturers' involvement in scientific research still needs improvement. The personal competency development indicator also recorded a score of 3.28, reflecting that self-improvement efforts through training or further education have not been optimal. These findings indicate that lecturers' primary focus remains on teaching and work discipline, while institutions need to encourage improvements in research and personal development to strengthen overall academic quality.

Career Development Description

The average value of the career development variable for lecturers in private universities in West Sulawesi Province was 3.60, which is considered high. This indicates that lecturers have generally actively managed their careers through competency development, adaptability, and sound planning. The career adaptability indicator recorded the highest score of 4.05, demonstrating lecturers' ability to adapt to changes in the work environment. Career maturity was also quite high, with a score of 3.95, and career exploration and

planning at 3.52, indicating that the majority of lecturers have awareness and direction in their career development.

However, several aspects still need improvement. Career competency scored 3.34, which is considered moderate, indicating that efforts to improve skills through training and education are not yet optimal. Institutional support for lecturers' careers is a major concern, with the lowest score being 3.13, also in the moderate category. This indicates that although lecturers are motivated and ready to develop, concrete support from the institution is still lacking, and therefore needs to be strengthened to optimize overall career development.

Character Description

The average value of the lecturer's character variable in private universities in West Sulawesi Province was 4.02, which is considered high, reflecting that the majority of lecturers possess integrity, empathy, self-control, and a strong commitment to carrying out academic duties. Although the overall score is considered high, differences in the levels of each indicator indicate that certain character aspects still need to be improved in human resource development within the university environment.

Sincerity or honesty recorded the highest score of 4.38, followed by compassion (4.20), affection (4.11), and cooperation (4.09), indicating strong values of empathy and collaboration among lecturers. Self-control (3.90) and hard work (3.92) were also high, reflecting lecturers' dedication to the tridharma duties. However, courage recorded the lowest score of 3.57, although still in the high category, indicating that some lecturers still face obstacles in speaking the truth in risky situations.

Competence Description

The average score for the self-competence variable for lecturers in private universities in West Sulawesi Province was 4.30, categorized as very high. This indicates that lecturers generally possess excellent competence in carrying out academic duties, including teaching, personality, communication, and material mastery. This high score indicates that lecturers have met the academic standards expected in higher education.

From the analysis of each indicator, personality competency recorded the highest mean of 4.45, indicating that lecturers have attitudes and behaviors that reflect very good morals. Professional competency (4.32) and social competency (4.25) also showed very high results, reflecting mastery of the material and excellent communication skills. Although pedagogical competency had the lowest mean (4.19), its value is still in the high category, but still indicates that there is room for improvement in the planning and implementation of learning that is more in line with student needs.

Structural Equation Modeling (SEM)

SEM Assumption Testing

According toHair et al. (2019), a model with seven or fewer constructs and more than three indicators per construct requires a minimum of 150 samples. Furthermore, the sample size can also be determined based on 5–10 times the number of indicators. In this study, there are 21 indicators, so using the 10-indicator approach, the ideal sample size is at least 210 respondents. With a sample size of 300, this study has met both criteria, so it can be said that the sample size is sufficient to produce good and efficient SEM model estimates.

The multivariate normality test is performed by examining the critical ratio (cr) value of multivariate kurtosis, also known as the Z-value. If the Z-value is within the range of ±2.58 at a 5% significance level, the data is considered normally distributed.(Hair et al., 2019). The test results show a cr value of -1.171, which is within the limits of -2.58 to +2.58, so it can be concluded that the data in this study is multivariately normally distributed.

Outlier testing was performed univariately and multivariately. Univariately, all indicator Z-score values were within the range of ±3 (the lowest was -2,530 and the highest was 2,483), so there were no univariate outliers. Multivariate testing using Mahalanobis d-Squared was evaluated based on the chi-square value with 21 degrees of freedom at a significance level of 0.001, which was 46.80. The detection results showed that all observations had Mahalanobis d-Squared values below 46.80, including the highest value in respondent number 168 of 44.08. Thus, no multivariate outliers were found and all data were suitable for use in the analysis.

Multicollinearity and singularity can be detected using the determinant covariance matrix and correlation matrix. However, due to the narrow Likert scale of 1–5 used in this study, the determinant value is small, making it less reliable for detecting multicollinearity (Hair et al., 2019). Based on the correlation between indicators, the highest value was only 0.670 and the lowest was -0.035, all below the threshold of 0.80.(Grewal et al., 2004; Hair et al., 2019), indicating the absence of multicollinearity. Furthermore, the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for both independent variables were 1.024, well below the critical limit of 10. Therefore, this model is free from both multicollinearity and singularity problems.

Measurement Model Analysis

Measurement model analysis is also called the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) test, which is carried out in three stages, namely testing measurement model fit, construct validity, and construct reliability.

Hair et al. (2019)states that the measurement model fit test needs to include at least one absolute fit index and one incremental fit index, while parsimony fit indices are only used to compare between models. The

results of the measurement model fit test indicate good model fit. In absolute fit indices, the Cmin/df value is 1.160, RMSEA 0.023, SRMR 0.039, GFI 0.937, CFI 0.987, TLI 0.985, NFI 0.914, RFI 0.902, and AGFI 0.921 are all included in the good fit category. With these results, the measurement model is considered appropriate because it has met most of the good fit model indicators, so it can be concluded that the measurement model is appropriate and can be used in the next analysis stage.

After ensuring that the measurement model has good model fit, the next step is to test the construct's validity and reliability.

Table 3. Construct validity and reliability

Constructs	Indicators	Factor Loadings	Construct Reliability	AVE
Character (X1)	Sincerity (X1.1)	0.656	0.835	0.505
	Compassion (X1.2)	0.648		
	Courage (X1.3)	0.604		
	Compassion (X1.4)	0.704		
	Self-control (X1.5)	0.623		
	Cooperation (X1.6)	0.660		
	Hard work (X1.7)	0.637		
Competence (X2)	Pedagogical competence (X2.1)	0.795	0.826	0.546
	Personality competence (X2.2)	0.622		
	Social competence (X2.3)	0.838		
	Professional competence (X2.4)	0.680		
Career Development (Z)	Career competencies (Z.1)	0.813	0.838	0.512
	Career adaptability (Z.2)	0.602		
	Career support (Z.3)	0.760		
	Career maturity (Z.4)	0.637		
	Career exploration and planning (Z.5)	0.744		
Performance (Y)	Teaching effectiveness (Y.1)	0.652	0.804	0.538
	Research productivity (Y.2)	0.625		
	Community service (Y.3)	0.720		
	Personal competency development (Y.4)	0.746		
	Discipline and work ethics (Y.5)	0.610		

Construct validity indicates the extent to which an indicator is able to measure the intended construct. In SEM, construct validity is tested through convergent validity, with the general rule that a construct meets convergent validity if the standardized factor loading value for each indicator is at least 0.50 and preferably ≥ 0.70.(Hair et al., 2019). Based on the results of this study, all indicators in the Character, Competence, Career Development, and Performance constructs have factor loadings above 0.50, with values ranging from 0.602 to 0.838. This indicates that all indicators are convergently valid and are able to reflect their respective constructs well.

The construct reliability test uses the construct reliability value and average variance extracted (AVE).Hair et al. (2019)states that construct reliability should ideally be > 0.70, but is still acceptable if > 0.60 if convergent validity has been met. The test results show that the construct reliability value of each construct is in the range of 0.804 to 0.838, which means it meets the reliability criteria. In addition, all constructs also have an AVE value ≥ 0.50: Character (0.505), Competence (0.546), Career Development (0.512), and Performance (0.538), which indicates that the proportion of indicator variance explained by the construct is quite good. Thus, all constructs are declared valid and reliable for use in the next stage of structural model analysis.

Structural Model Analysis

The results of the structural model estimation according to the conceptual model developed in this study are presented in the following figure:

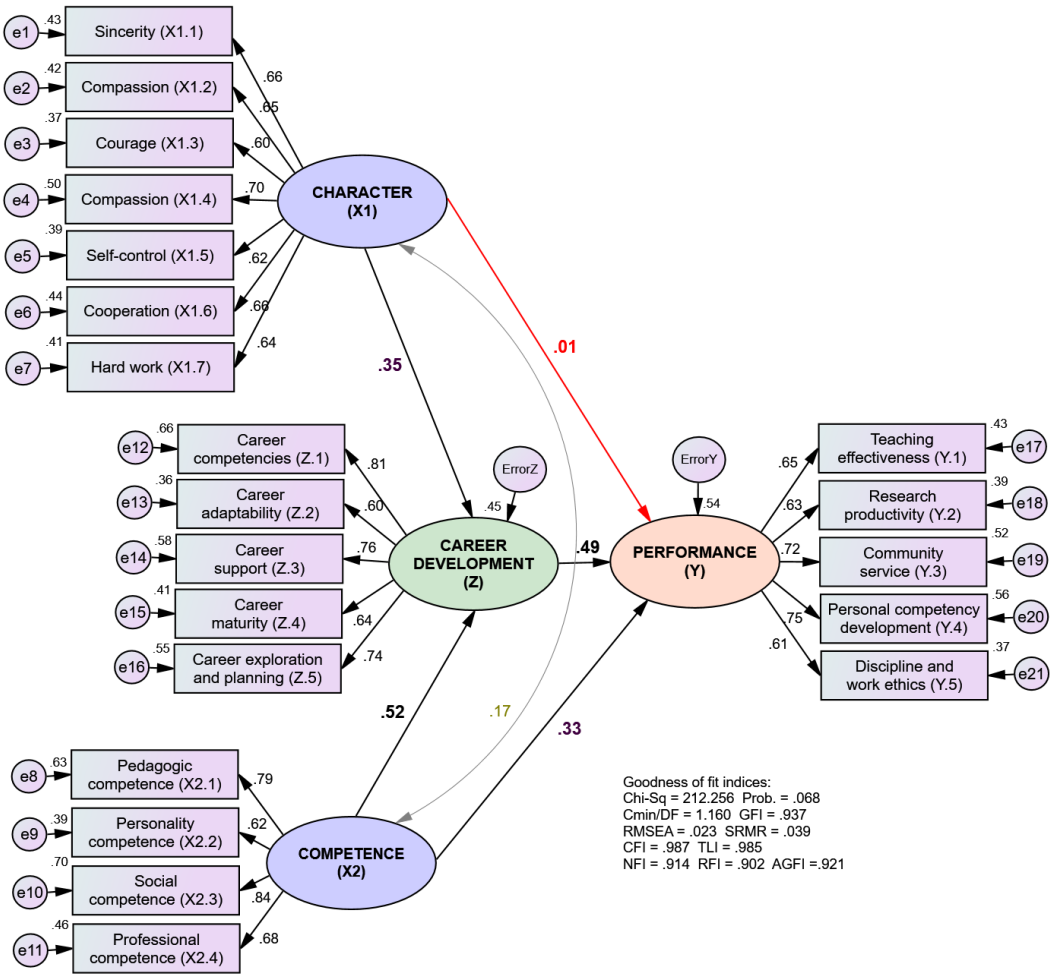

Figure 2. Estimation of structural model parameters

The structural model development stage begins with a structural model fit evaluation (goodness of fit) to ensure the developed model is in accordance with the data (fit). The results of the structural model fit evaluation indicate that the developed structural model has a very good level of fit to the data, as indicated by all goodness of fit indices that meet the criteria. Absolute fit indices such as Prob. χ^2 0.068 (> 0.05), Cmin/DF 1.160 (≤ 3.00), GFI 0.937 (≥ 0.90), RMSEA 0.023 (≤ 0.08), and SRMR 0.039 (≤ 0.08) all indicate a good fit. Similarly, in the incremental fit indices, the CFI value is 0.987, TLI 0.985, NFI 0.914, and RFI 0.902, all of which are above the minimum required limit. The AGFI parsimony fit index of 0.921 also indicates a good fit. Thus, it can be concluded that the structural model has an excellent fit to the data, making it suitable for use in hypothesis testing and interpreting the relationships between variables in the model.

As with regression analysis, SEM also produces an output coefficient of determination (R2).Hair et al. (2019)states that the coefficient of determination measures the proportion of the variability of the dependent variable that can be explained by the independent variable. The results of the coefficient of determination analysis indicate that the variables of self-character and self-competence are able to explain 44.9% of the variation in self-development, while the combination of the variables of self-character, self-competence, and career development together is able to explain 54.1% of the variation in the lecturer performance variable. In total, 50.3% of the variability in lecturer performance can be explained by self-character, self-competence, and self-development. This shows that the model has quite good predictive ability in explaining the influence of constructs on lecturer performance.

Hypothesis Testing

The hypothesis testing stage is an examination of the significance of the coefficients of influence between variables representing each theoretical hypothesis. A hypothesis is accepted if the path parameters are statistically significant with the direction of influence as predicted, meaning the path parameters must be greater than zero for the positive direction and less than zero for the negative direction.(Hair et al., 2019). Testing the significance of the influence between variables uses the critical ratio (CR) and probability value (p-value). If the CR value is ≥ 1.96 or the p-value is ≤ the 5% significance level, then it is decided that there is a significant influence.

Table 4. Testing for direct effects

No	Direct Effects	Std. Estimate	SE	CR	P value	Hypothesis
1	X1 → Z	0.346	0.089	5,374	0.000	H1 accepted
2	X1 → Y	0.005	0.054	0.082	0.935	H2 rejected
3	X2 → Z	0.517	0.084	8,081	0.000	H3 accepted
4	X2 → Y	0.333	0.063	4,238	0.000	H4 accepted
5	Z → Y	0.489	0.056	5,340	0.000	H5 accepted

Information:
X1: Character — Z: Career Development
X2: Competence — Y:Performance

1. The results of the estimated coefficient of the influence of self-character on career development show a significant influence with a CR value of 5..374 and -value 0.000. The influence coefficient is 0.346 (positive), meaning that the stronger the lecturer's self-character, the better their career development will be. The results of the study indicate that the first hypothesis is accepted. This indicates that lecturers with strong self-character have a tendency to demonstrate better integrity, work ethic, and interpersonal skills. Positive self-character is an important asset in improving superior performance, both in teaching, research, and community service. High integrity enables lecturers to carry out their duties consistently in accordance with academic ethical values, while work ethic encourages them to achieve more optimal performance targets. In addition, good interpersonal skills support the creation of harmonious relationships with students, colleagues, and institutional leaders, so that a collaborative work climate can be built well.
   Furthermore, positive personal character has been shown to significantly contribute to a lecturer's professional image. Strong professionalism increases trust from various parties, including students who are the primary recipients of educational services, colleagues in academic collaborations, and university leaders who assess lecturers' performance for academic promotion. This trust ultimately opens up greater opportunities for lecturers to obtain career development opportunities, whether through promotions, additional leadership duties, or involvement in broader academic networks.
   Thus, these findings confirm that strengthening character not only impacts individual performance but also has strategic implications for lecturers' career development, particularly in private higher education (PTS) settings. Universities need to prioritize character development as an integral part of their human resource development programs. This is crucial because strong character can be a differentiating factor that supports institutional competitiveness, particularly amidst global competition that demands superior human resources in higher education.

2. The estimated coefficient of the influence of personal character on lecturer performance showed an insignificant effect with a CR value of 0.082 and a p-value of 0.935. The coefficient of influence was only 0.005, meaning that lecturer personal character does not have a significant direct influence on lecturer performance at PTS West Sulawesi. Therefore, the second hypothesis was rejected. The research findings also indicate that although personal character plays an important role in the academic environment, other factors can be more dominant in determining lecturer performance. The data shows that the majority of lecturers are still at the Assistant Expert and Lecturer levels, with most not yet certified and having less than five years of work experience. This condition indicates that although lecturers have good personal character—such as integrity, work ethic, and interpersonal skills—these have not been fully translated into optimal academic performance. One cause is limited access to professional development opportunities, whether through training programs, certification, or further study opportunities. Without formal capacity building, lecturers find it difficult to expand their academic competencies, thus limiting productivity in the fields of research and community service. Furthermore, a lack of incentives, whether in the form of awards or financial support, can also reduce lecturers' motivation to improve academic performance. In other words, good character requires adequate systemic support to be realized in the form of tangible achievements.
   Furthermore, the lack of institutional support is another inhibiting factor in the effective utilization of character. Support from universities, such as clear career development policies, performance-based incentives, and the provision of research facilities, plays a crucial role in creating a conducive work environment. Without this support, lecturers' character will not function optimally in supporting performance, but will instead remain unrealized potential. Therefore, human resource development in universities needs to emphasize not only character aspects but also be supported by comprehensive, structured, and sustainable institutional policies.

3. The estimated coefficient of the influence of self-competence on career development shows a significant influence with a CR value of 8.081 and a p-value of 0.000. The influence coefficient is 0.517 (positive), meaning that the higher the lecturer's self-competence, the better their career development. Thus, the third hypothesis is accepted. Pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competencies are the four main pillars that shape the quality of lecturers. When these four competencies are well developed, lecturers have a more adaptive ability to deal with increasingly complex academic demands. Pedagogical competency, for example, enables lecturers to design, implement, and evaluate the learning process effectively so that students can achieve optimal learning outcomes. Lecturers who have strong pedagogical mastery are also able to adapt learning strategies to student characteristics, technological developments, and the dynamics of the needs of the workplace.
   Good personality competencies serve as the foundation for lecturers in demonstrating integrity, emotional maturity, and exemplary behavior in the academic environment. Lecturers with mature personalities will be more consistent in carrying out their duties, able to maintain their authority, and foster respect from students and colleagues. This impacts the formation of a conducive and professional academic climate. Meanwhile, social competencies enable lecturers to build effective communication, forge collaborations, and develop academic networks both nationally and internationally. This ability to build good relationships is crucial in an era of collaborative research and scientific publications that increasingly demands cross-institutional and cross-national involvement.
   Professional competence is a pillar that confirms a lecturer's mastery of their field of study. Lecturers with high professional competence are not only able to teach theory and practice in depth, but also contribute to the development of science through research and publications. This directly improves academic achievement, which can be measured through scientific papers, patents, and professional awards. The combination of pedagogical, personal, social, and professional competence ultimately increases lecturers' opportunities for promotion and academic recognition. Lecturers who excel in these four competencies tend to be more productive, more valued by the academic community, and have a strong track record to support promotion to higher career levels. Therefore, holistically improving lecturer competence is a crucial strategy for higher education institutions to strengthen their competitiveness and institutional reputation at the national and international levels.

4. The estimation results show that self-competence has a significant effect on lecturer performance with a CR value of 4.238 and a p-value of 0.000. The influence coefficient is 0.333 (positive), indicating that the higher the lecturer's competence, the better the resulting performance. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is accepted. The competence possessed by lecturers plays an important role in determining the quality of academic performance. Good competence enables lecturers to deliver material more effectively. This is demonstrated through the lecturer's ability to design learning plans, choose appropriate methods and media, and master the scientific substance being taught. With effective material delivery, students not only more easily understand concepts but are also encouraged to develop critical and creative thinking skills. In addition, good competence is also reflected in lecturers' communication skills, both with students and with colleagues. Effective communication with students encourages the creation of healthy two-way interactions, increases learning motivation, and builds positive emotional closeness. Meanwhile, harmonious communication with colleagues supports the creation of a collaborative climate in the fields of research, scientific publications, and curriculum development. This is in line with the view that the interpersonal competence of lecturers is very important in determining success in building a productive academic network.
   Furthermore, lecturers' competence is also evident in their ability to manage academic tasks professionally. Professionalism is demonstrated through discipline, punctuality in completing administrative responsibilities, consistency in academic ethics, and commitment to implementing the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Thus, good competence supports lecturers in optimally fulfilling their multifunctional roles as teachers, researchers, and community service providers. All of these aspects ultimately lead to improved lecturer performance. Competent lecturers not only contribute to student achievement but also play a role in strengthening the reputation of educational institutions. In other words, lecturer competence is a crucial foundation for the successful and sustainable achievement of higher education goals.

5. The estimation results show that career development has a significant effect on lecturer performance with a CR value of 5.340 and a p-value of 0.000. The coefficient of influence is 0.489 (positive), which means that the better the lecturer's career development, the higher their performance. Thus, the fifth hypothesis is accepted. Career development is an important factor in supporting the improvement of the quality of lecturer performance. Through career development programs, lecturers have the opportunity to acquire new skills relevant to the development of science and technology. These skills are not only limited to

mastery of teaching materials, but also include research skills, scientific publications, the use of learning technology, and managerial skills needed in managing academic activities.

Furthermore, career development also has implications for increased work motivation. Lecturers who are given space to develop themselves tend to have greater enthusiasm in carrying out academic tasks. This motivation arises from the drive to achieve, new challenges that can be achieved, and opportunities to gain broader experience. Thus, career development serves as a psychological stimulus that strengthens lecturers' commitment to their profession. Furthermore, career development provides opportunities for lecturers to gain academic recognition, whether in the form of functional positions, academic awards, or reputations in national and international scientific forums. This recognition is not only a symbol of personal achievement but also reflects the lecturer's tangible contribution to the advancement of the institution.

Overall, planned and sustainable career development will positively impact the performance of lecturers in West Sulawesi private universities. Lecturers with new skills, high work motivation, and academic recognition will be more productive in carrying out the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, ultimately contributing to the overall improvement in the quality of higher education.

The next stage of hypothesis testing is testing for indirect effects. In SEM, the indirect effect test is conducted using the bias-corrected percentile method, which is a development of the Sobel Test and is more appropriate in the context of structural modeling. Once the significance of the mediation effect is known, the next step is to determine the type of mediation that occurs. The characteristics of mediation can be seen from the combination of direct and indirect influences. If the exogenous variable has a significant direct effect on the endogenous variable, and the indirect effect through the mediator is also significant, then the model indicates partial or complementary mediation. However, if the direct effect is insignificant, while the indirect path through the mediator is significant, then the type of mediation that occurs is full or perfect mediation.(Baron & Kenny, 1986; Zhao et al., 2010).

Table 5. Testing for indirect effects

No	Indirect effects	Specific Indirect Effect				
		Std. Estimate	SE bootstrap	CR	P-value	Type of mediation
1	X1→Z→Y	0.169	0.045	3,180	0.006	Fully mediation
2	X2→Z→Y	0.253	0.049	4.163	0.005	Partial mediation

Results of the indirect influence path analysisparasocial relationship and brand image on purchase intention through brand attitude as a mediator can be explained as follows:

1. The results of the significance test of the indirect path X->Z->Y showed a significant influence with a coefficient value of 0.169 and a p-value of 0.006. Thus, career development significantly mediates the influence of self-character on the performance of PTS lecturers. The nature of the mediator is full mediation because its influence cannot be direct, but must go through mediation, this implies that a strong lecturer's self-character will be able to encourage increased performance only if supported by good career development.
2. The results of the indirect path significance test X2->Z->Y also showed a significant influence with a coefficient value of 0.253 and a p-value of 0.005. Thus, career development significantly mediates the influence of self-competence on lecturer performance. The nature of the mediator is partial mediation because its influence can be direct and indirect, this implies that strong lecturer self-competence will be able to directly encourage increased performance, but if it is also supported by good career development, the increase in lecturer performance will be even higher.

Next, the results of the total effect analysis will be explained.self-character construct, self-competence, and career development on lecturer performance.

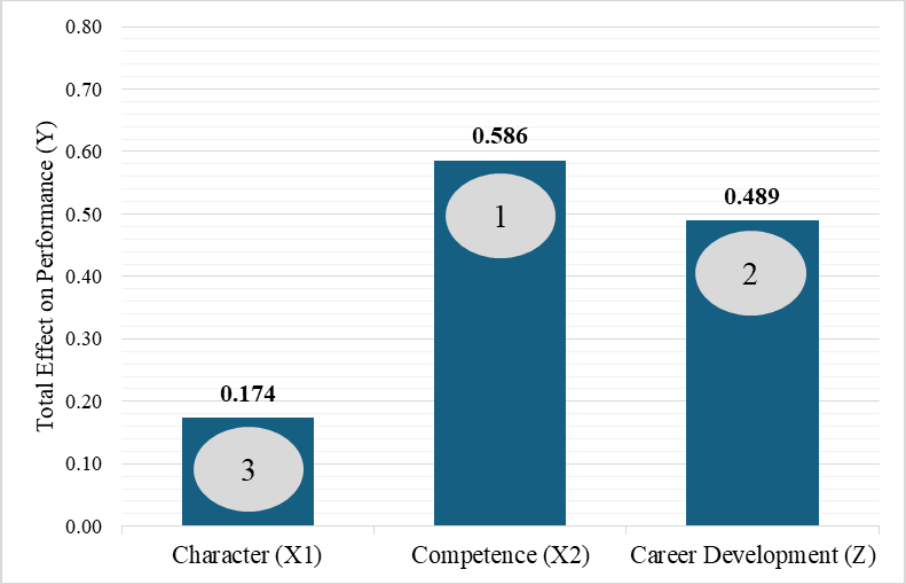

Figure 3. Total effect on lecturer performance

The results of the total effect analysis indicate that all three constructs have a significant influence on improving the performance of private university lecturers. This finding emphasizes the importance of strengthening individual internal factors in supporting optimal performance achievement. Specifically, self-competence has the most dominant influence on performance, indicating that improving lecturers' professional abilities and functional expertise is a top priority in human resource development strategies. Furthermore, career development also makes an important contribution as a path to actualization and sustainable work motivation, while self-character continues to play a role as a foundation for ethics, responsibility, and integrity in carrying out the duties of the tridharma of higher education.

Conclusion and suggestions

Based on the results of data analysis, it can be concluded that:

1. Character has a significant influence on career development of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
2. Character has no significant effect on the performance of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
3. Competence has a significant influence on career development of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
4. Competence has a significant influence on the performance of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.
5. Career development has a significant influence on the performance of PTS lecturers in West Sulawesi Province.

Based on the research results showing that personal character significantly influences career development but does not directly influence performance, further research is recommended to examine mediating variables such as career development or work motivation in this relationship. Furthermore, because competence has been shown to significantly influence both career development and performance, future research can deepen the analysis of specific types of competence (pedagogical, social, personality, or professional) that are most dominant in driving lecturer performance. Future research should also consider external factors, such as institutional policy support, incentives, and professional development opportunities, so that the results obtained are more comprehensive and relevant for formulating strategies to improve lecturer quality in higher education.

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