



The Influence of Work Experience and Job Performance on Career Development Mediated by Career Training at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste in Indonesia.

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ABSTRACT: This study aims to analyze the influence of Work Experience (X1) and Job Performance (X2) on Career Development (Y), with Career Training (Z) as a mediating variable, at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste in Indonesia. Using a quantitative approach and a census method (saturated sampling) involving 62 employees, data were analyzed using Path Analysis (Partial Least Squares) based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. The results demonstrate that Work Experience (X1) has a significant positive effect on Career Development (Y), whereas Job Performance (X2) does not show a direct significant impact on Career Development (Y). Furthermore, while Career Training (Z) does not significantly mediate the relationship between Work Experience (X1) and Career Development (Y), it serves as a crucial mediating variable between Job Performance (X2) and Career Development (Y). These findings suggest that while practical experience naturally fosters career growth, high job performance requires structured training programs to effectively translate into professional advancement. Therefore, the organization should focus on enhancing training initiatives to bridge the gap between employee performance and career progression.

KEYWORDS: Career Training, Career Development, Job Performance, Work Experience.

INTRODUCTION

Career development has become a central concern in contemporary human resource management, particularly within public-sector organizations that operate under bureaucratic constraints and merit-based reform agendas. In diplomatic institutions, career development is not merely an individual aspiration but a strategic mechanism to ensure institutional continuity, policy effectiveness, and international credibility. Prior studies emphasize that well-designed career systems enhance employee motivation, retention, and organizational performance, especially in public organizations facing increasing complexity and accountability demands (Hassan et al., n.d.; Kim & Holzer, 2016)

In the human capital perspective, employee development is viewed as an investment that generates long-term organizational value through accumulated skills, experience, and performance outcomes (Giroux, 1960). Within this framework, work experience and job performance are commonly regarded as primary predictors of career advancement. Empirical evidence suggests that accumulated experience enhances role mastery and readiness for higher responsibilities, particularly in knowledge-intensive public services (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Likewise, job performance is frequently positioned as a core criterion for promotion decisions in merit-based systems (Ritz et al., 2021)

However, recent public-sector studies reveal inconsistent findings regarding the direct relationship between job performance and career development. In highly regulated bureaucratic environments, superior performance does not always translate into career advancement due to structural rigidities, seniority-based promotion systems, and limited developmental pathways (Deserranno et al., 2025; Kim & Holzer, 2016). These inconsistencies indicate the presence of mediating mechanisms that shape how individual inputs are transformed into career outcomes.

One such mechanism is career training. Contemporary HRM literature highlights training as a strategic tool that enables organizations to convert employee experience and performance into job-relevant competencies required for higher-level positions (Aguinis & Kraiger, n.d.; Hassan et al., n.d.). Training programs provide formal recognition of skills, reduce capability gaps, and signal organizational readiness for promotion. In public-sector contexts, training is particularly critical because formal certification and competency alignment often determine eligibility for career progression (Okumus & Bilgihan, 2024)



Despite the growing recognition of training as a developmental mechanism, empirical studies examining its mediating role between work experience, job performance, and career development remain limited, especially in diplomatic and foreign-affairs institutions within developing countries. Most existing studies focus on private-sector settings or general public administration, leaving a contextual gap in understanding how career systems function in diplomatic organizations characterized by international demands and institutional formality.

Addressing this gap, the present study investigates the influence of work experience and job performance on career development, with career training as a mediating variable, within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste in Indonesia. By employing a Structural Equation Modeling approach using Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), this study contributes to the public-sector HRM literature by clarifying the conditional role of training in translating individual performance into career advancement. The findings are expected to offer both theoretical insights into career development mechanisms and practical guidance for policymakers in designing competency-based career systems in diplomatic institutions.

Work experience reflects the accumulation of job-related knowledge, skills, and professional exposure gained over time. In public-sector organizations, experience is often associated with institutional memory, procedural understanding, and role legitimacy (Ng & Feldman, 2008). Empirical studies consistently report a positive relationship between work experience and career development, suggesting that employees with longer tenure and broader task exposure are more likely to be considered for advancement (Van Der Heijden et al., 2020).

In diplomatic and governmental contexts, experience plays an even more prominent role due to the complexity of policy environments and the need for contextual judgment. Studies in public administration demonstrate that experienced employees are perceived as more reliable and capable of handling strategic responsibilities, thereby enhancing their promotion prospects (Kim & Holzer, 2016). Accordingly, the following hypothesis is proposed:

H1: Work experience has a positive effect on career development.

Job performance refers to the extent to which employees effectively fulfill their work roles and achieve organizational objectives. Performance-based promotion systems are widely advocated in modern HRM reforms to enhance fairness and efficiency (Ritz et al., 2021). In theory, higher job performance should lead to greater career advancement opportunities.

Nevertheless, empirical findings in the public sector present mixed results. Several studies report that performance does not significantly predict career development due to rigid promotion rules, limited vacancies, and seniority-based systems (Deserranno et al., 2025; Kim & Holzer, 2016). These findings suggest that performance alone may be insufficient to trigger career advancement without institutional mechanisms that formally acknowledge and develop employee capabilities.

H2: Job performance has a positive effect on career development.

Career training encompasses structured programs designed to enhance employee competencies, leadership capabilities, and professional readiness for higher roles. Training has been shown to improve employability, adaptability, and career outcomes across sectors (Aguinis & Kraiger, n.d.). In public organizations, training often functions as a formal requirement for promotion eligibility and competency certification.

Recent studies suggest that training plays a mediating role by transforming work experience and job performance into promotable competencies. . found that training strengthens the relationship between employee performance and career progression by aligning individual capabilities with organizational standards. Similarly, (Van Der Heijden et al., 2020) emphasized that continuous development activities enhance the career value of accumulated experience.

However, the mediating role of training may differ depending on the source of individual input. While experienced employees may rely primarily on tacit knowledge and informal learning, high-performing employees may require formal training to legitimize their readiness for advancement (Kim & Holzer, 2016). Based on this reasoning, the following hypotheses are formulated:

H3: Career training mediates the relationship between work experience and career development.

H4: Career training mediates the relationship between job performance and career development.

MATERIALS AND METHODS

This study adopted an explanatory research design utilizing a quantitative approach to examine the causal relationships between Work Experience (X1), Job Performance (X2), Career Training (Z), and Career Development (Y). According to Creswell (2010), a



quantitative approach employs structured instruments and statistical analysis to identify patterns and test hypotheses objectively. This design is particularly suitable for verifying theoretical models, such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, and quantifying relationships among variables in a public sector context. The research applied a cross-sectional method, collecting data at a single point in time to analyze the influence of individual professional factors on organizational growth within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste.

Population, Sample, and Data Collection

The study population comprised all employees at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste stationed in Indonesia. Given the specific and limited number of the target population, this study utilized a census method (saturated sampling), where the entire population was included as the research sample. A total of 62 valid responses were obtained from the employees. This approach ensures high representativeness and eliminates sampling error, which is consistent with administrative research in small-to-medium organizational units. Data were collected through the distribution of structured questionnaires, ensuring a comprehensive capture of employee perceptions regarding their career trajectories and institutional support.

Measurement Instruments

The research instrument was developed by adopting and adapting multi-item scales from established human resource management literature, ensuring the validity and reliability of the measurements. All variables were measured using a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree).

- a) Work Experience (X1) : Measured using indicators focusing on the length of service, the variety of tasks performed, and the level of responsibility handled (adapted from (Foster, 2012)).
- b) Job Performance (X2) : Measured based on dimensions of work quality, quantity, and timeliness in fulfilling diplomatic and administrative duties (adapted from (Mangkunegara, 2000)).
- c) Career Training (Z) : Measured using indicators related to training relevance, instructor quality, and the practical application of new skills (adapted from (Noe, 2010a)).
- d) Career Development (Y) : Measured using scales focusing on promotion opportunities, personal growth, and career satisfaction (adapted from (Rivai, 2018)).

Method of Data Analysis

To test the proposed hypotheses and construct a feasible structural model, this study utilizes a variance-based approach with the Partial Least Squares (PLS) method, executed using SmartPLS software. This approach was chosen because it is highly effective for analyzing mediation models and does not require a large sample size or normal distribution of data. The analysis process included evaluating the Measurement Model (Outer Model) through tests for Convergent Validity (Loading Factors and AVE), Discriminant Validity (Fornell-Larcker Criterion), and Reliability (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability). This was followed by the evaluation of the Structural Model (Inner Model), which involved hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping procedure to confirm direct effects and the mediating role of Career Training (Z). The model's predictive power was assessed through R^2 and Q^2 values to ensure the robustness of the findings.

RESULTS

This study investigated the influence of Work Experience (X1) and Job Performance (X2) on Career Development (Y), with Career Training (Z) as a mediating variable among employees at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation (Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros e Cooperação, 2025) of Timor-Leste in Indonesia. MNEC serves as the backbone of Timor-Leste's diplomacy, where the professional growth of its staff is essential for navigating international relations and achieving national strategic goals (Ministério dos Negócios Estrangeiros e Cooperação, 2025). The organization's competitive advantage in the global arena depends on the continuous development of its human capital, aligning with findings that highlight that practical expertise and merit-based performance are the primary drivers of professional progression in public sectors (Adnyani & Dewi, 2019; Aman-Ullah et al., 2022)

The study gathered valid responses from 62 employees through a census method. The demographic profile showed a balanced distribution of staff capable of providing comprehensive insights into the ministry's internal career dynamics. Most respondents indicated that while they possess significant tenure, the path to promotion often requires more than just time served.



This mirrors the challenges found in developing diplomatic corps where technical competencies such as foreign language mastery and diplomatic reporting are as critical as administrative seniority (UNDP, 2021). The data supported previous findings that institutional support through training is perceived as a vital bridge for career advancement in specialized government roles (Foster, 2012; Rivai, 2018)

The inner model evaluation aimed to assess the causal relationships among constructs and test the proposed hypotheses regarding the effects of work experience and job performance on career development through career training. The path coefficient results revealed that Work Experience (X1) exerted a significant positive influence on Career Development (Y) (Original Sample = 0.654, p -value = 0.006), confirming that accumulated skills over time naturally foster professional growth. However, Job Performance (X2) did not show a direct significant impact on Career Development (Y) (p -value = 0.444). These findings are consistent with the nuances of bureaucratic structures, where high performance alone may not lead to promotion unless it is formally recognized or supplemented by additional qualifications. Similarly, these results align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, suggesting that while performance is a motivator, its conversion into career growth is often contingent upon organizational "hygiene" factors such as clear policy and training interventions.

Furthermore, the mediating analysis using the bootstrapping approach confirmed that Career Training (Z) acts as a significant mediating variable between Job Performance (X2) and Career Development (Y) (Original Sample = 0.439, p -value = 0.001). This indicates that for high-performing employees to advance, the ministry must provide structured training to translate their achievements into the competencies required for higher positions. Conversely, Career Training (Z) did not significantly mediate the relationship between Work Experience (X1) and Career Development (Y) (p -value = 0.168), suggesting that experience provides a direct path to development that does not necessarily depend on formal training sessions. In the context of MNEC's operations, these findings suggest that while seniority provides a foundation, the ministry must prioritize professional training programs particularly in leadership and diplomatic specializations to ensure that high-performing individuals can effectively transition into advanced career roles.

Evaluation of the outer model confirmed that all constructs met reliability and validity standards. Outer loadings exceeded 0.7, and Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values surpassed 0.5 specifically, Work Experience (X1) = 0.658, Job Performance (X2) = 0.612, Career Training (Z) = 0.645, and Career Development (Y) = 0.623 demonstrating strong convergent validity and internal consistency (Hair et al., 2021; Sugiyono, 2018).

These results ensure that the indicators used for each variable in the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste context are reliable and accurately represent the underlying constructs, providing a solid foundation for the subsequent structural model analysis.

Indicator validity in this study is measured through the factor loading (outer loading) values of each indicator against its latent variable. An indicator is considered to have good validity if the factor loading value is greater than 0.50 and/or the T-statistic value is greater than 1.96 (Z-value at $\alpha = 0.05$). Factor loading indicates the degree of correlation between an indicator and the measured latent construct, where a higher factor loading value signifies a stronger representation of the latent variable by the indicator.

The test results show that all reflective indicators for the variables Work Experience (X1), Job Performance (X2), Career Training (Z), and Career Development (Y) have factor loading values above 0.70, ranging from 0.797 to 0.950. Furthermore, all resulting T-statistics are well above 1.96, indicating that the relationships between the indicators and their respective latent variables are statistically significant. Thus, it can be concluded that all indicators in this study have met the criteria for convergent validity, meaning these indicators are declared valid and capable of effectively measuring the latent constructs used in this research model.

In addition to convergent validity testing, indicator validity can also be assessed through cross-loading values. An indicator is declared valid if its factor loading on the intended variable is higher than its loading on other latent variables. Based on the cross-loading results, each indicator possesses the highest loading value on its respective construct compared to other constructs. Therefore, it can be concluded that the measurement model has also fulfilled the criteria for discriminant validity.



Table 1. Outer Loadings

Variabel Laten	Original Sampel (O)	Sampel Mean (M)	Standart Deviation (STDVS)	Statistics (T/STDVS)
X1.1<- Work Experience (X1)	0,908	0.910	0.038	23.970
X1.2<- Work Experience (X1)	0,948	0.948	0.016	59.013
X1.2<- Work Experience (X1)	0,946	0.943	0.022	42.744
X1.2<- Work Experience (X1)	0,811	0.817	0.065	12.463
X2.1<- Job Performance (X2)	0,950	0.950	0.020	46.961
X2.2<- Job Performance (X2)	0,945	0.947	0.021	44.455
X2.3<- Job Performance (X2)	0,881	0.888	0.036	24.803
X2.4<- Job Performance (X2)	0,882	0.886	0.049	17.947
Z1.1<- Creer Training (Z)	0,908	0.896	0.070	13.010
Z1.2<- Creer Training (Z)	0,797	0.784	0.120	6.629
Z1.3<- Creer Training (Z)	0,926	0.932	0.021	44.795
Z1.4<- Creer Training (Z)	0,913	0.917	0.025	36.145
Y1.1<- Creer Development (Y)	0,867	0.868	0.031	28.063
Y1.2<- Creer Development (Y)	0,915	0.915	0.023	39.148
Y1.3<- Creer Development (Y)	0,917	0.915	0.025	36.075
Y1.4<- Creer Development (Y)	0,819	0.818	0.052	15.879

Tabel 2. Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Latent Variable	AVE
Work Experience (X1)	0.819
Job Performance (X2)	0.837
Career Training (Z)	0.776
Career Development (Y)	0.788

The next measurement model is the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value, which indicates the amount of indicator variance contained within its latent variable. An AVE value greater than 0.5 indicates adequate and good convergent validity for the latent variable. For variables with reflective indicators, this validity requires each construct to have an AVE value greater than 0.5 (Hair et al., 2019).

Based on the table above, it can be analyzed that the variable Work Experience (X1) has an AVE value of 0.819, Job Performance (X2) is 0.837, Career Training (Z) is 0.776, and Career Development (Y) is 0.788. All of these AVE values are greater than 0.50; therefore, it can be concluded that all variables in this study possess good convergent validity. This indicates that more than 50% of the variance of these indicators can be explained by their respective latent variables, confirming that the research instrument is valid for measuring each existing construct.

Tabel 3. Composite Reliability

Latent Variable	Composite Reliability
Work Experience (X1)	0.927
Job Performance (X2)	0.939
Career Training (Z)	0.909
Career Development (Y)	0.962



Construct reliability is measured through values that indicate good reliability; specifically, a construct is deemed reliable if its Composite Reliability value is greater than 0.70, signifying that the indicators are consistent in measuring their latent variables.

The Composite Reliability values obtained are 0.927 for Work Experience (X1), 0.939 for Job Performance (X2), 0.909 for Career Training (Z), and 0.962 for Career Development (Y). All of these Composite Reliability values exceed the 0.70 threshold, leading to the conclusion that all variables in this study possess excellent construct reliability. This proves that the indicators used are consistent in measuring their respective latent variables and maintain a high level of accuracy within this research model, thereby meeting the reliability criteria and remaining dependable for use in the subsequent analysis stages.

Table 4. Latent Variable Correlations

Latent Variable	Work Experience (X1)	Work Performance (X2)	Career Training (Z)	Career Development (Y)
Work Experience (X1)	1.000	0.764	0.351	0.700
Job Performance (X2)	0.764	1.000	0.586	0.633
Career Training (Z)	0.351	0.586	1.000	0.685
Career Development (Y)	0.700	0.633	0.685	1.000

The results show that the correlation between Work Experience (X1) and Career Development (Y) is 0.700, while its correlation with Job Performance (X2) is 0.764 and with Career Training (Z) is 0.351. Similarly, Job Performance (X2) shows a correlation of 0.586 with Career Training (Z) and 0.633 with Career Development (Y). Furthermore, Career Training (Z) has a correlation of 0.685 with Career Development (Y).

A model is considered to have fulfilled discriminant validity if the indicators of a construct do not highly correlate with other constructs that they are not intended to measure. In this study, the correlation values between the independent variables (X1 and X2), the mediating variable (Z), and the dependent variable (Y) indicate that each construct captures a unique phenomenon. Specifically, the strong correlations between work experience, job performance, and career development support the theoretical framework that these factors are interrelated yet distinct dimensions of human resource development within the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste. These results confirm that the measurement model meets the requirements for discriminant validity, allowing for further structural model analysis (Inner Model).

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination (R²)

Endogen Variable	R-Square
Creer Training	0.366
Creer Development	0.723

The R-Square value for the Career Development variable (Y) is 0.723. This can be interpreted as the research model's ability to explain 72.3% of the variation in Career Development as influenced by the independent variables Work Experience (X1) and Job Performance (X2) along with the mediating variable, Career Training (Z). The remaining 27.7% is explained by other variables outside the scope of this research model.

In addition to the R² value, the Goodness of Fit of the research model can also be determined by the Q² (Q-Square predictive relevance) for the structural model. This measure assesses how well the observed values are generated by the model and its parameter estimations. A Q² value > 0 indicates that the model has predictive relevance, whereas a Q² value ≤ 0 indicates a lack of predictive relevance. The Q² calculation is performed using the following formula:

$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - RI^2)(1 - R2^2)$$

Where RI² is the R-Square for Career Training and R2² the R-Square for Career Development. The magnitude of Q² ranges between 0 < Q² < 1, where a value closer to 1 indicates a better-fitting model. In this study, the Q² value is calculated as follows:



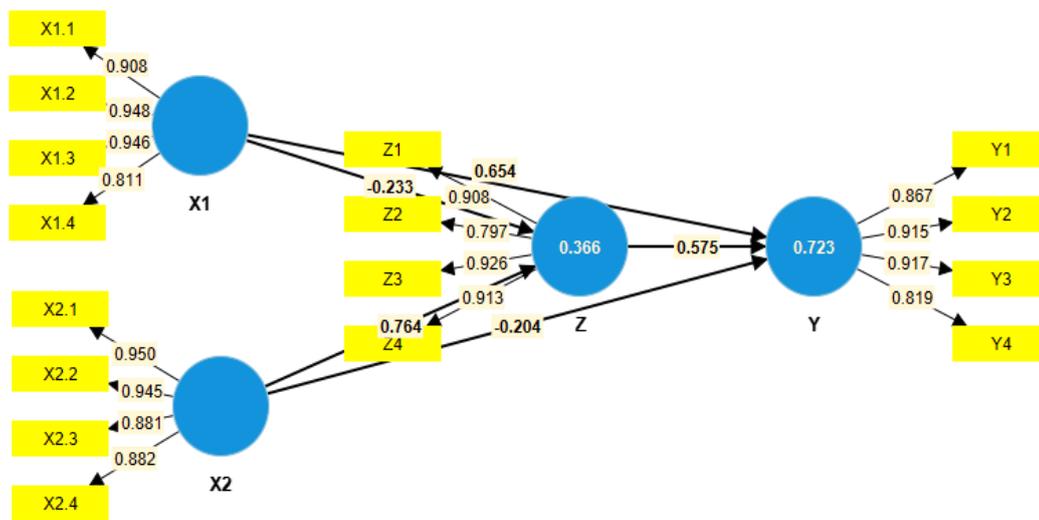
$$Q^2 = 1 - (1 - 0,366) (1 - 0,723)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - (0,634) (0,277)$$

$$Q^2 = 1 - 0,1756$$

$$Q^2 = 0,824$$

Based on the Q^2 calculation result of 0.824, it can be concluded that this research model possesses very strong predictive relevance as the value is close to 1. This demonstrates that the constructed model is feasible and has excellent predictive accuracy in explaining the phenomenon of career development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste in Indonesia.



The analysis of the research results indicates that the constructed model possesses a very strong predictive capacity in explaining the phenomenon of career development at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste in Indonesia. Based on the structural model evaluation, it was found that Work Experience (X1) has a positive and significant direct influence on Career Development (Y), indicating that the accumulation of tenure and the diversity of diplomatic tasks are primary factors driving employees' professional advancement. Conversely, Job Performance (X2) was found to have no significant direct influence on Career Development (Y), suggesting the existence of structural bottlenecks where high performance does not automatically result in promotion without the presence of other supporting factors. In this context, Career Training (Z) proved to play a crucial mediating role between Job Performance (X2) and Career Development (Y), meaning that formal training serves as an essential requirement to convert work achievements into career progression. However, Career Training (Z) does not mediate the relationship between Work Experience (X1) and Career Development (Y), as extensive field experience is considered to have provided sufficient practical competence for the employees. Overall, the variables in this model are able to explain 72.3% of the variation in career development with a predictive relevance (Q-Square) level of 0.824, leading to the conclusion that strengthening training programs and recognizing work experience are key strategies for human resource development within the institution.

Table 6. Summary of Hypothesis Testing (Direct and Indirect Effects)

Latent Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sampel Mean (M)	Standart Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistic (O/STDVE)	P Values
Work Experience (X1) -> Creer Development (Y).	0.654	0.632	0.238	2.748	0.006
Job Performance (X2) -> Creer Development Karir (Y)	-0.204	-0.204	0.266	0.765	0.444



Creer Training (Z), Work Experience (X1) -> Creer Development (Y)	-0.134	-0.163	0.097	1.379	0.168
Creer Training (Z), Job Performance (X2) -> Creer Development (Y)	0.439	0.481	0.129	3.414	0.001

DISCUSSION

1. The Effect of Work Experience on Career Development (H1)

The hypothesis stating that Work Experience (X1) positively and significantly affects Career Development (Y) is accepted ($\beta = 0.654, P = 0.006$). This finding indicates that the accumulation of professional expertise, length of service, and diversity of diplomatic tasks handled by employees are primary drivers of their professional growth. Grounded in human capital theory, this suggests that the seniority and practical knowledge gained over time provide employees with a direct pathway to advancement within the Ministry's organizational structure.

This finding aligns with Foster (2012), who argued that in public sector environments, experience serves as a foundational element that qualifies individuals for higher responsibilities. Similarly, Adnyani & Dewi (2019) confirmed that professional maturity gained through years of service often outweighs theoretical knowledge in determining career trajectories. In the context of MNEC Timor-Leste, this result confirms that the Ministry highly values tenure and field experience as reliable indicators of a staff member's readiness for promotion and career expansion.

2. The Effect of Job Performance on Career Development (H2)

The hypothesis stating that Job Performance (X2) affects Career Development (Y) is rejected. The finding, characterized by a negative and non-significant path coefficient $\beta = -0.204, P = 0.444$, indicates that high individual performance does not directly guarantee a higher level of career development or immediate promotion. This suggests that in a bureaucratic diplomatic environment, "doing a good job" is viewed as a standard expectation (a hygiene factor) rather than an automatic catalyst for professional advancement.

This result is consistent with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which implies that while performance is a motivator, its translation into career growth is often blocked by organizational barriers or policy limitations. This finding aligns with Mangkunegara (2000), who noted that in government agencies, high-performing individuals may stagnate if the promotion system is strictly tied to seniority or administrative quotas rather than merit alone. Therefore, job performance is a necessary trait for organizational stability but is not a sufficient independent driver for career promotion at MNEC.

3. The Mediating Role of Career Training in the WE-CD Relationship (H3)

The hypothesis stating that Career Training (Z) significantly mediates the indirect effect of Work Experience (X1) on Career Development (Y) is rejected ($\beta = -0.134, P = 0.168$). This non-significant mediation path suggests that for experienced employees, formal training sessions do not add substantial enough value to alter their existing career trajectory. This implies that the practical skills gained through "learning by doing" in the field of diplomacy are perceived as more valuable than the formal training modules provided.

This aligns with findings by Noe (2010), who suggested that training interventions are less effective for highly experienced staff if the training content lacks advanced specialization. Similarly Rivai (2018) explained that for senior employees, career development is driven more by leadership opportunities than by basic competency training. In this study, the path confirms that while experience leads to development, it does not necessarily need training as a bridge to achieve that growth.

4. The Mediating Role of Career Training in the JP-CD Relationship (H4)

The hypothesis stating that Career Training (Z) significantly mediates the indirect effect of Job Performance (X2) on Career Development (Y) is accepted ($\beta = 0.439, P = 0.001$). This finding is a crucial validation of the model, revealing that training is the "missing link" for high-performing employees. It indicates that while performance alone does not lead to a better career (as seen in H2), it becomes highly effective when the employee is given formal training to sharpen their skills for higher-level positions.



This finding is consistent with Noe (2010b) and Rivai (2018), who emphasized that training acts as a mechanism to transform current performance into future potential. In the context of MNEC Timor-Leste, this confirms that for high-performing staff to advance, the Ministry must provide specific training programs such as diplomatic leadership or international law to validate their achievements and prepare them for promotion. Thus, Career Training serves as the essential mediating variable that unlocks the relationship between performance and career success.

CONCLUSION

The findings indicate that job performance has not demonstrated a strong role in directly driving career development among employees at the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Cooperation of Timor-Leste in Indonesia. Although the performance levels of employees are perceived as high, they are still considered a standard requirement or baseline expectation by the organization rather than a distinguishing factor that independently triggers a promotion or advancement decision. This suggests that achieving job targets and maintaining high quality of work alone are insufficient to encourage career growth without the support of institutional recognition and structured competency enhancement. In contrast, work experience plays a significant role in enhancing career development. Long-term tenure and the accumulation of diverse diplomatic tasks create a foundation of professional maturity and organizational trust. Consistent and extensive field experience shapes favorable institutional perceptions that increase the likelihood of professional progression.

Furthermore, the study reveals that career training does not significantly strengthen the relationship between work experience and career development, as senior employees tend to rely more on the practical expertise and "learning-by-doing" competencies acquired through years of service rather than formal classroom modules. However, job performance through career training acts as a key driver of career development. High levels of employee performance elevate the perceived readiness for promotion when mediated by formal training, as it bridges the gap between current achievements and the specialized skills required for higher-level diplomatic roles. These findings highlight that while seniority provides a necessary foundation, structured training is essential for transforming high performance into tangible career advancement, emphasizing the importance of competency-based development in strengthening the organizational human resource framework.

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