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The Effect of Merit System Career Development on Employee Performance through Transparency of Career Development in the State Apparatus of Mojokerto Regency

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ABSTRACT

Developing professional and integrity-driven human resources (HR) is key to improving the quality of public services in Indonesia. In this context, career development for civil servants based on a merit system is important to consider, particularly regarding transparency. This study aims to analyze the influence of merit-based career development on transparency and employee performance within the Civil Service (ASN) of Mojokerto Regency. The method used is quantitative with an explanatory research approach, involving 87 employees who experienced transfers and promotions. Data was collected through questionnaires and analyzed using SPSS statistical software. The findings indicate that merit-based career development significantly influences the transparency of the career development system and employee performance, with transparency acting as a mediating variable. The t-test results show that merit-based career development significantly influences employee performance, and transparency in career development increases motivation and job satisfaction. The conclusion of this study emphasizes that transparent and fair career development policies can improve overall employee performance. Therefore, it is recommended that policymakers in Mojokerto Regency design and implement more transparent policies in the career development process and conduct regular evaluations to ensure that employee needs are met and organizational performance can continue to be improved.

Contribution to Sustainable Development Goals (SDGs):

SDG 8: Decent Work and Economic Growth

SDG 16: Peace, Justice, and Strong Institutions

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Research Background

Developing professional, competent, and integrity human resources (HR) is a fundamental element in improving the quality of public services in Indonesia. In this context, the career

development of employees based on the merit system is an important theme that needs to be considered. The merit system, as mandated in Law Number 5 of 2014 concerning the State Civil Apparatus (ASN), aims to prioritize the principle of fair and transparent human resource management. However, challenges in implementing the merit system, especially in the aspect of transparency, are still a major issue. Intransparency in the career



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development process often triggers a perception of injustice among employees, which has the potential to lower work motivation and affect overall performance. Therefore, exploring how merit-system-based career development can create a conducive work environment and increase employees' trust in the organization is important.

The core problem of this research lies in the influence of the career development system on the transparency and performance of employees in the Mojokerto Regency ASN. Previous research has shown that employee satisfaction is closely related to career development opportunities and the support they receive from management [1]. Transparency in career development is one of the main drivers in improving employee performance and commitment [2], [3]. In Mojokerto Regency, although the implementation of open selection for high positions in the government has begun, the level of interest and participation of civil servants is still low, indicating the need for a thorough evaluation of how career development can be aligned with the needs of employees and ensure the openness of the selection process [4].

Previous research shows that career management transparency has a positive correlation between job satisfaction and employee performance [5]–[8]. However, there is still a gap in this study related to how the career development of the merit system can directly and indirectly affect employee performance through transparency. This study aims to fill this gap by testing the hypothesis that the career development of the merit system has a significant effect on the transparency of the career development system (H1), employee performance (H2), and the transparency of the career development system has a significant effect on employee performance (H3). In addition, this study will also examine the indirect influence of the career development of the merit system on employee performance through the transparency of the career development system (H4).

The urgency of this research lies in the importance of understanding the mechanism of career development within the framework of a merit system that can increase the effectiveness of public services in Mojokerto Regency. With a transparent career development policy, it is hoped that it can create a better and more productive work environment. This research is expected to provide valuable recommendations for policymakers in creating more strategic and effective policies and improving employees' performance in the ASN environment.

1.2. Literature Review

1.2.1. Career Development

Employee career development is a process that involves various stages, ranging from career awareness and exploration to vocational and post-vocational education. Research shows that the existence of the right career guidance and guidance can help individuals understand the potential and direction of their career development [9], [10].

1.2.2. Transparency

Transparency in career development is a crucial element that affects employee trust in the promotion and development process in the organization. In the context of Government Institutions, transparency can increase accountability and integrity in human resource management. Research shows that workplaces that support transparency and open communication can motivate employees to be more involved in their career development, as they feel there is clarity and fairness in every step of the process

[11], [12]. Thus, transparency not only ensures equality in access to information related to career opportunities but also functions as a driving factor in improving employee morale and performance [13].

1.2.3. Employee Performance

Several factors, including motivation, discipline, and work culture, significantly impact employee performance. Optimal performance in employees can be realized when they are satisfied with their career path and development. There is evidence that organizational commitment is significantly related to employee motivation levels, which in turn impacts their performance [11], [12].

1.3. Research Objective

This study aims to test and analyze the direct and significant influence of the career development of the merit system on the transparency of the career development system and employee performance within the Mojokerto Regency ASN. In addition, this research also aims to contribute to a deeper understanding of how this mechanism can be optimized to improve the effectiveness of public services. Thus, this research is expected to provide benefits for the local government of Mojokerto Regency and other related agencies in developing strategic policies to improve employee performance through the implementation of a merit and transparency system.

2. MATERIALS AND METHODS

2.1. Types of Research

This study uses a quantitative method with a quantitative description analysis approach and *explanatory research* (Hardani et al., 2020; Sugiyono, 2022). *Explanatory research* aims to explain the relationship between the variables studied, namely employee career development (X), transparency (Z), and performance (Y).

2.2. Research Location and Time

The location of this research was carried out at the Mojokerto Regency Education and Training Personnel Agency, East Java. The selection of this location is based on its relevance to the topic of research and the existence of employees who undergo mutations and promotions.

2.3. Types and Data Sources

The data used in this study consists of two types, namely primary data and secondary data. Primary data was obtained through questionnaires distributed to respondents, which served as a direct source of information about the variables studied. Meanwhile, secondary data is obtained from literature research, which includes documents, reports, and literature relevant to the research topic. The research population is employees in Mojokerto Regency who underwent mutations and promotions in 2020, totaling 105 employees. The sample was determined using a simple random method with a sample of 87 respondents, based on the Isaac and Michael formula with an error rate of 5%.

2.4. Variable Operational Definitions and Hypothesis Testing

The operational definition of research variables includes three main variables:

1. Independent Variable (X): Career development, which is measured through indicators such as organizational policies, work performance, educational background, training, and loyalty to the organization.
2. Mediation Variable (Z): Transparency, which is measured through indicators such as the provision of clear information, ease of access to information, a complaint mechanism, and increased information flow.
3. Bound Variable (Y): Performance, which is measured through indicators such as work quantity, work quality, output timeframe, cooperation, and responsibility.

Variable measurements were carried out using the Likert scale, which consists of five levels of answers. The test of the research instrument includes a validity and reliability test, which is carried out using the Pearson and *Cronbach's alpha correlation formula*. Hypothesis tests were carried out with a t-statistical test to measure the individual influence of independent variables on dependent variables, as well as a path test to test the contribution of path coefficients.

2.5. Data Analysis

Data analysis is carried out using statistical software, such as SPSS. The analysis process includes several steps, namely [16]–[19]:

1. Validity Test: Using Pearson correlation to ensure that each item in the questionnaire can measure the variable in question.

2. Reliability Test: Using *Cronbach's alpha* to measure the internal consistency of the research instrument. A variable is considered reliable if it has a reliability coefficient of 0.6 or more.
3. Normality Test: Performed to determine whether the distribution of data follows the normal distribution, using graph analysis and the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test.
4. Multicollinearity Test: To identify the presence of strong linear relationships between independent variables in regression models.
5. Autocorrelation Test: To evaluate the relationship between the residuals of sequential observations in a regression model, using the Durbin-Watson value.
6. Path Analysis: Used to test the influence of intervening variables on the relationship between independent and dependent variables. The Sobel test is carried out to measure the strength of the indirect influence of independent variables on dependent variables through intervening variables.
7. Hypothesis Test: To test the significance of the influence of independent variables on dependent variables using the t-test.

3. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

2.1. Validity Test

Table 1. Validity Test Results

Variable	Item	Pearson Correlation	Sig. (2-tailed)	Information
Merit System Career Development (X)	X.1	0.858	0.000	Valid
	X.2	0.880	0.000	Valid
	X.3	0.772	0.000	Valid
	X.4	0.772	0.000	Valid
	X.5	0.460	0.000	Valid
Career Development System Transparency (Z)	Z.1	0.873	0.000	Valid
	Z.2	0.847	0.000	Valid
	Z.3	0.870	0.000	Valid
	Z.4	0.747	0.000	Valid
Performance (Y)	Y.1	0.793	0.000	Valid
	Y.2	0.802	0.000	Valid
	Y.3	0.788	0.000	Valid
	Y.4	0.802	0.000	Valid
	Y.5	0.766	0.000	Valid

Based on Table 1, the results of the validity test for the variables studied in this study are shown, namely Career Development Merit System (X), Career Development System Transparency (Z), and Performance (Y). Each item in the questionnaire was tested using Pearson's correlation analysis, with results showing a significant correlation coefficient value at a significance level of 0.000. For the Merit System Career Development variable, all items (X.1 to X.5) have correlation values ranging from 0.460 to 0.880, indicating that all items are

valid. Similarly, for the Career Development System Transparency variable, all items (Z.1 to Z.4) also showed significant correlation values, with the highest value reaching 0.873. Finally, the Performance variable indicates that all items (Y.1 to Y.5) have a valid correlation value, with the highest value being 0.802.

2.2. Reliability Test

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variabel	<i>Cronbach's alpha</i>	N of item	Information > A (0.60)
Merit System Career Development (X)	0.815	5	Reliable
Career Development System Transparency (Z)	0.856	4	Reliable
Performance (Y)	0.849	5	Reliable

Based on Table 2, the results of the reliability test for the variables studied in this study are shown, namely Career Development Merit System (X), Career Development System Transparency (Z), and Performance (Y). The reliability test was

carried out using *Cronbach's alpha coefficient*, where the values obtained for each variable showed good internal consistency. The Merit System Career Development variable has a *Cronbach's alpha value* of 0.815 with 5 items, indicating that this variable can

be considered reliable because its value exceeds the set minimum limit of 0.60. Similarly, the Career Development System Transparency variable obtained a value of 0.856 with 4 items, and the Performance variable achieved a value of 0.849 with 5 items, both of which also met the expected reliability criteria.

2.3. Normality Test

2.3.1 Normality Test Through Chart Analysis

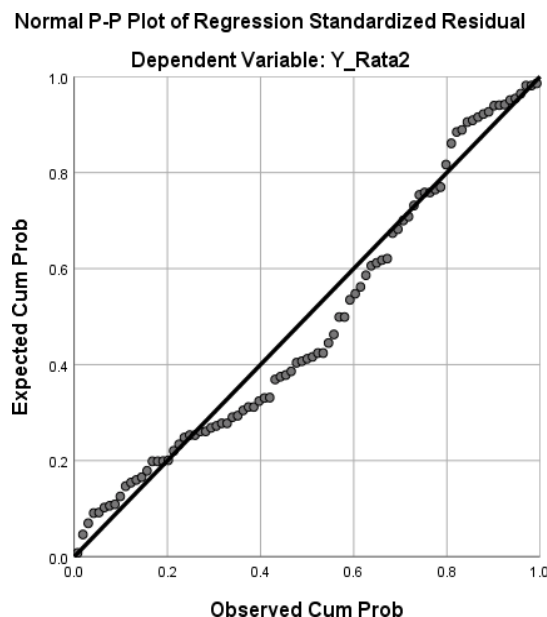


Figure 1. Normality Test Results Through Graph Analysis

Figure 1 shows that normality tests can be performed using graph analysis, as seen in the Normal P-P Plot graph, which shows the standard residual distribution of the regression against the dependent variables. In this graph, the data points close to the straight line show that the residue follows a normal distribution. This indicates that the regression model used is following the residual normality assumption. Suppose the points are spread far

from a straight line or form a specific pattern. In that case, this can indicate that the residual is not normally distributed, which can affect the validity of the regression model results.

2.3.2. Normality Test Through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Table 3. Normality Test Results Through the Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

N		87
Normal Parameters ^{a,b}	Mean	3.0574713
	Std. Deviation	.42535559
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute	.054
	Positive	.052
	Negative	-.054
Test Statistic		.054
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200 ^{c,d}

Table 3 shows the results of the data normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov test, which aims to determine whether the data distribution follows the normal distribution. In this study, the number of samples (N) used was 87. The calculated normal parameters show a mean value of 3.057 and a standard deviation of 0.425. This test results in a test statistical value of 0.054, which is the value of the absolute extreme difference between the

sample distribution and the normal distribution. The value of asymptotic significance (Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)) obtained was 0.200. Since this significance value is greater than the commonly used significance level ($\alpha = 0.05$), it can be concluded that the data in this study are normally distributed.

2.4. Multicollinearity Test

Table 4. Multicollinearity Test Results

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig	Collinearity Statistics	
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta	1.673	.098	Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	.605	.361		2.873	.005		
	X Mean	.277	.096	.276	4.535	.000	.818	1.223
	Z Mean	.409	.090	.435			.818	1.223

Based on Table 4, the results of the multicollinearity test are shown, and the aim is to identify the presence of strong linear

relationships between independent variables in the regression model. In this table, two independent variables are tested, namely

the Merit System Career Development (X_Mean) and the Career Development System Transparency (Z_Mean). The value of the non-standardized regression coefficient (B) for the X_Mean variable was 0.277 with a standard error of 0.096, while for Z_Mean, the value of B was 0.409 with a standard error of 0.090. The standardized beta value for X_Mean is 0.276 and for Z_Mean is 0.435, indicating the relative contribution of each variable in the model. The "Collinearity Statistics" column shows values for

both variables, Tolerance and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF). The Tolerance value for X_Mean and Z_Mean is 0.818, indicating no significant multicollinearity problem, as the Tolerance value is above 0.1. In addition, the VIF values for both variables were also below 10 (VIF = 1.223), indicating no serious multicollinearity in the model.

2.5. Heteroscedasticity Test

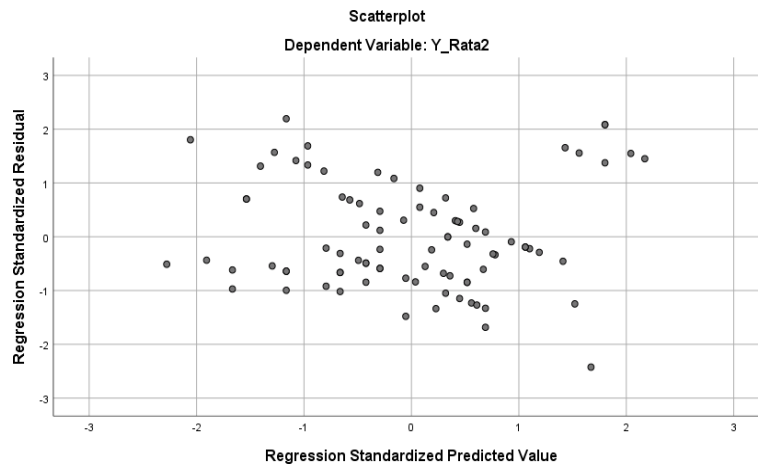


Figure 2. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Figure 2 shows that the heteroscedasticity test can be carried out through scatterplot analysis between the regression standard residual and the regression standard prediction value. In this scatterplot, if the data points are randomly scattered without a clear pattern along the vertical axis, then it can be concluded that there is no heteroscedasticity problem, which means that the residual variance tends to be constant over the entire prediction

range. Conversely, if the data points show a specific pattern, such as a wider spread over a particular predicted value or a cone-shaped pattern, this indicates the presence of heteroscedasticity, i.e. a non-constant residual variance, which could affect the validity of the regression model results

2.6. Autocorrelation Test

Table 5. Autocorrelation Test Results

Model Summary					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.606 ^a	.368	.353	.56435	1.758

Based on Table 5, the results of the autocorrelation test were conducted to evaluate the relationship between the residuals of sequential observations in the regression model. The Durbin-Watson score obtained was 1.758. These values are in a range that indicates the absence of significant autocorrelations, as ideal Durbin-Watson values range from 1.5 to 2.5. Thus, these results

show that the regression model used in this study does not experience autocorrelation problems, which is an important condition for the validity of the regression analysis.

2.7. Path Analysis

2.7.1. Model 1 Substructural Equation Test

Table 6. Model 1 R-Square Value Coefficient

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.427 ^a	.182	.173	.67834

Table 6 shows the R-squared value coefficient for Model 1, where the R value is 0.427, and the R Square is 0.182. This indicates that the independent variable in this model can explain 18.2% of the variation in the dependent variable. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.173 indicates that this model has good predictive capabilities, although other factors may affect the dependent variable.

Table 7 shows the results of the t-test for the Model 1 substructural equation. The non-standardized regression coefficient (B) for the X_Mean variable was 0.456 with a standard error of 0.105, and the standardized beta value was 0.427. The t-value obtained was 4.352 with a significance (Sig.) of 0.000, indicating that the Merit System Career Development variable significantly influences the dependent variable.

Table 7. Model 1 Substructural Equation T Test Results

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	1.998	.377		5.306	.000
	X_Mean	.456	.105	.427	4.352	.000

2.7.2. Model 2 Substructural Equation Test

Table 8. Model 2 R-Square Value Coefficient

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	.606 ^a	.368	.353	.56435	1.758

Table 8 shows the R-Square value coefficient for Model 2, where the R value is 0.606, and the R Square is 0.368. This indicates that 36.8% of the variation in the dependent variables can be explained by the independent variables in this model,

which shows an improvement in predictability compared to Model 1. The Adjusted R Square value of 0.353 indicates that this model also has good predictive capabilities.

Table 9. Model 2 Substructural Equation T Test Results

		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Model		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	.605	.361		1.673	.098
	X_Mean	.277	.096	.276	2.873	.005
	Z_Mean	.409	.090	.435	4.535	.000

Based on Table 9, showing the results of the t-test for the Model 2 substructural equations. The non-standardized regression coefficient (B) for the X_Mean variable was 0.277 with a standard error of 0.096, and the standardized beta value was 0.276. The t-value obtained was 2.873 with a significance (Sig.) of 0.005, indicating that the Merit System Career Development variable also significantly influenced the dependent variables in this model. In addition, the Z_Mean variable has a B coefficient of 0.409 with a standard error of 0.090 and a t-value

of 4.535 with a significance of 0.000, which shows that the Transparency of the Career Development System also has a significant effect on employee performance. These results confirm the importance of the two variables in influencing employees' performance in the state apparatus of Mojokerto Regency.

2.8. Hypothesis Test

Table 10. Hypothesis Test Results

Model	t	Sig.
(Constant)	5.306	0.000
X_Mean	4.352	0.000
(Constant)	1.673	0.098
X_Mean	2.873	0.005
Z_Mean	4.535	0.000

Based on Table 10, the t-test for the first hypothesis shows that the t-value for the Merit System Career Development variable (X) is 4.352 with a significance (Sig.) of 0.000. By comparing the value of α (0.05) with the value of Sig., it was found that $\alpha > \text{Sig.}$ (0.000), so that it can be concluded that the career development of the merit system partially has a significant effect on the transparency of the career development system, and the first hypothesis is accepted. Furthermore, for the second hypothesis, the Sig. value for variable X is 0.005, which indicates that the career development of the merit system partially has a significant effect on employee performance, so the second hypothesis is accepted. For the third hypothesis, the Sig. value for the Z variable is 0.000, which shows that the transparency of the career development system also has a significant effect on employee performance, so the third hypothesis is accepted. Finally, for the fourth hypothesis, the results of the Sobel test showed a significance p-value of 0.01625, which was below 0.05,

indicating that there was a significant positive influence of the career development of the merit system on employee performance through the transparency of the career development system as a mediating variable. Thus, the fourth hypothesis is also accepted.

2.9. Discussion

2.9.1. Career Development Merit System Has a Significant Effect on Career Development System Transparency

The career development of the merit system has shown a significant impact on transparency in career development within the state apparatus, as evidenced in this study. The t-test analysis showed a fairly high t-value on this variable, confirming that the career development of the merit system plays an important role in creating transparency in the career development mechanism [20]. Previous research underscores the importance of organizational culture and communication as a determining factor in creating job

satisfaction related to employee performance [21]. Other research shows that organizational commitment also significantly affects employee performance, confirming that transparency and employee commitment to transparent career development policies create a more productive work environment [22].

Research shows that successful career development is closely related to employees' understanding of clear organizational goals and procedures, where transparency creates a positive perception among employees, essential for the achievement of optimal performance [23]. Findings that show that transparency in career development plays a mediator between the career development of the merit system and employee performance are very relevant, in line with research that emphasizes the importance of motivation as a mediator in the relationship between organizational commitment and employee performance [11]. Good governance in career development is also indicated by the existence of supportive facilities and work environments, which contribute to employee performance [24].

2.9.2. Merit System Career Development Has a Significant Effect on Employee Performance

Career development through the merit system within the State Apparatus of Mojokerto Regency significantly influenced employee performance, with test results showing a t-value of 4.352 and a significance of 0.000 for the career development of the merit system (X). Research confirms that career development positively and significantly influences employee performance (Nur et al., 2021). These findings are in line with the results of research in Mojokerto Regency, where career development through the merit system not only increases transparency but also has a positive impact on employee performance, creating clarity and fairness in career development that increases employee motivation and morale [22]. The study results show that work facilities and non-physical environments affect employee performance, where better access to career development makes employees feel more supported [24]. Transparency in the career development process allows employees to understand the steps needed to achieve progress, thereby improving work efficiency [26].

Other findings found that discipline and work motivation play an important role in employee performance, supporting the argument that planned and transparent career development can create disciplined and motivated employees [27]. Research shows the importance of skill development in building employees' employability [28]. Interventions involving transparent and structured career development can improve employee performance, as seen in a study in Mojokerto Regency. Career development in the form of a merit system allows employees to explore their intrinsic motivations, supporting positive outcomes in performance. Research emphasizes that a transparent system and rewards significantly affect employee motivation [29].

2.9.3. Career Development System Transparency Has a Significant Effect on Employee Performance

The transparency of the career development system within the state apparatus has a significant impact on employee performance. Research shows that career development with a merit system positively affects career development transparency, which in turn improves employee performance. In the literature, much evidence supports the importance of transparency in the career development process and its relationship to employee

performance outcomes. Research shows that transparency positively affects the performance of regional apparatus organizations [30]. The positive influence of transparency can be accepted as part of a merit system that pays attention to meritocracy in employee career promotion and development. This is reinforced by research showing that a transparent and fair career development system improves employee performance through objective evaluation [31]. When employees realize their career development is based on clear and measurable factors, they are more likely to feel motivated to perform better. Previous findings also show that an organizational culture that supports transparency and efficient communication can create a work environment conducive to employee creativity and productivity [20].

In addition, studies show that factors related to work features, including a commitment to transparency in career development policies, contribute to employee performance [22]. These outcomes imply that organizations need to design and implement career development policies that focus on individual achievement goals and create a transparent feedback system. Research explains that transparency in career development can strengthen employees' workability and discipline, creating a situation where employees feel valued and recognized [27]. Research shows that a good work environment and facilities have an impact on employee performance, which is in line with the idea that transparency also applies to creating a supportive work environment [24].

2.9.4. Career Development Merit System Has a Significant Effect on Employee Performance Through Career Development System Transparency

The career development of the merit system significantly influences employee performance through the transparency of the career development system within the state apparatus, especially in Mojokerto Regency. Research shows that career development, education, and training contribute positively to employee performance [32]. The effectiveness of the merit system in career development is based on the validity of assessments that focus on competencies and achievements, which builds trust among employees in the system. The study provides additional evidence that positive career development significantly affects employee performance [25]. When employees feel that their career development is managed transparently and fairly, their work motivation increases, which leads to improved performance. Research also states that employee competencies can drive higher performance, emphasizing the importance of managing internal factors such as competence and training [33].

Transparency in the career development system plays a key role in ensuring employees feel valued and recognized. Research reveals that a positive work environment greatly influences employee performance, where the elements of transparency and good communication generate motivation [34]. The findings of Sobel's analysis show that there is a significant positive influence of the merit system's career development on employee performance through transparency as a mediating variable. Research emphasizes that an effective management information system contributes to improving employee performance through transparent and structured information management [35]. Research found that work ability, discipline, and motivation contribute significantly to employee performance, showing the interdependence between variables [27].

3.9.5. Research Implications

The results of this study provide important implications for the development of human resource policies within the state apparatus, especially in Mojokerto Regency. By showing that the career development of the merit system has a significant effect on employee transparency and performance, this study encourages policymakers to design and implement policies that are more transparent and fair in the career development process. This is expected to increase employee motivation and job satisfaction and create a more productive work environment.

3.9.6. Research Limitations

The limitation of this study lies in focusing only on employees in Mojokerto Regency, so the results may not be fully generalized to other regions with different contexts. In addition, this study uses quantitative methods that may not fully capture the nuances and complexity of employee experiences related to career development and transparency. Therefore, further research with a qualitative or mixed approach can provide deeper insights into the factors that affect employee performance in the context of career development of the merit system.

3. CONCLUSION

The conclusion of this study shows that the merit system's career development significantly influences the transparency of the career development system and the performance of employees within the state apparatus of Mojokerto Regency. Transparency is an important mediating variable in this relationship, suggesting that transparent career development policies can improve employee performance. Suggestions for future research are for policymakers to consider implementing a more transparent and fair merit system and conducting periodic evaluations of career development policies to ensure that employee needs are met and organizational performance can continue to be improved.

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