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The Impact of Digital Competence, Compensation, and Transformational Leadership on Career Development of Lecturers

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Abstract
Purpose: This study aimed to analyze the effect of digital competence, compensation, and transformational leadership on lecturer career development, with achievement motivation as an intervening variable and organizational support as a moderating variable at Private Universities in West Sumatra.
Research methodology: This study uses a quantitative approach with SEM-PLS analysis on 293 lecturers selected through random sampling, complemented by qualitative data from 20 purposively selected informants, including lecturers and university stakeholders.
Results: Digital competence, compensation, and transformational leadership positively influenced achievement motivation and lecturer career development. Achievement motivation acts as a significant intervening variable, whereas organizational support strengthens its effect on career development.
Conclusions: The study concluded that improving digital competence, providing adequate compensation, and implementing transformational leadership are essential factors in enhancing lecturers' achievement motivation and career development. Organizational support further strengthens this relationship.
Limitations: This study is limited to private universities in West Sumatra, which may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other regions or types of higher-education institutions. Additionally, the use of cross-sectional data limits our ability to capture long-term effects.
Contributions: This study contributes to the theoretical development of competency- and motivation-based academic-career models. Practically, it provides insights for higher-education institutions to formulate strategic policies that support sustainable lecturer development and improve the overall quality of higher education, particularly in private universities.

Keywords: *Achievement Motivation, Career Development, Compensation, Digital Competence, Organizational Support*

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1. Introduction

Education is the cornerstone of national development. In an increasingly competitive global context, the education sector is expected to produce adaptable, co-resourcedeco-resresourcesn reandources (Shehzad & Charles, 2023). Lecturers are one of the important pillars of the higher education system aintellectual changellectualchange. Thedemic change.The performance of lecturers greatly affects the quality of the implementation of the Tri Dharma Perguruan Tinggi

(Three Pillars of Higher Education), which includes teaching, research, and community service (Widana, Susanto, Sadipung, & Pujiati, 2025).

The development of higher education affects not only economic growth but also human and social development. Higher education is one type of educational institutions can improve the quality of a nation's human resources, Higher education is undergoing significant changes as universities (Wijaya, 2025). The performance of higher education institutions is largely determined by their lecturers. As professional educators and scholars, lecturers carry out the Tridharma of Higher Education, education, research, and community service to enhance the quality of national education (Yusuf, Fadli, Liana, & Santosa, 2024). Lecturers are responsible for designing and delivering educational programs to students. They are also involved in ensuring quality (Micallef, 2025). This situation results in an imbalance between the quantity of publications needed to achieve career advancement and the quality of scholarly research produced (Eisenberger, Huntington, Hutchison, & Sowa, 1986).

The increasingly advanced development of modernization can indirectly stimulate the development of management systems within organizations and institutions. Generally, management in an institution can be defined as the process of organizing, regulating, and managing human resources and controlling them to achieve the objectives of an activity (Ismail, Tini, & Rahmat, 2022). This management is essential, especially in higher education institutions. Universities and higher education institutions are required to produce and develop competent human resources with highly competitive capabilities, with the goal of being able to work more effectively and efficiently in various fields (Dinantara, 2018).

To achieve the stated goals, educational institutions must be able to implement policies for their lecturers to implement the Tri Dharma of Higher Education, which requires a lecturer to carry out Education and Teaching, Research, and Community Service activities (Nanda et al., 2022). In West Sumatra, several State and Private Universities have implemented the Tri Dharma of Higher Education. In this study, the focus is on lecturers of Private Universities in West Sumatra, both those with the status of *Aparatur Sipil Negara (ASN)* and Non-ASN who are in (LLDIKTI) region X. AA general description of the lecturers at various private universities can be seen below (Asmawati, Wasliman, Sulatini, & Rosmaladewi, 2025).

Table 1. Number and distribution of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra

No. Jabfung		**Expert Assistant**		**Lecturer**		**Associate Professor**		**Professionr**		**Total number**	
USN	Non-ASN	USN	Non-ASN	Professor	Non-ASN	USN	Non-ASN	USN	Non-ASN	USN	Non-ASN
1	646	10	963	111	1985	125	97	16	19	263	3710

In general, work motivation is a crucial element in organizations. Lecturers who lack work motivation can impact the continuity of their career development, leading to the failure to achieve existing organizational goals (Riyanto, Endri, & Herlisha, 2021). Every lecturer must possess motivation; with good work motivation, the Tri Dharma of Higher Education can also be effectively implemented. Ismail et al. (2022) highlighted the importance of innovative lecturers who adopt essential practices in online education to adapt to the disruption in the education sector.

Based on initial observations, lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra still lack the implementation of Tri Dharma of Higher Education. Many lecturers consider research and community service burdens, primarily due to the lack of incentives from their institutions (Luneto, Aneta, & Tohopi, 2025). The questionnaire results indicated that only a small proportion of lecturers actively write, and of the 22 respondents, only six effectively implemented the Tri Dharma. Low compensation also reduces lecturers' motivation and performance, leading to a greater focus on

teaching activities. This, in turn, impacts the performance of lecturers. Another issue identified concerns lecturer discipline, particularly among those without structural positions (Nurhadi, Mufarrikoh, Indahsari, Riskiyah, & Ifadhah, 2024). Many lecturers are simply present during class and are not actively involved in developing teaching materials.This can be seen in the following table

Table 2. Number of lecturers based on formal educational background at private universities in West Sumatra

Formal Education Levels	
Master's Degree	**Doctoral Degree**
3461	512

Lecturers' skills in facing new challenges are also limited, as reflected in the low number of recipients of research and community service grants from the DRPTM. Data show a decline in the number of lecturers receiving research funding from 2021 to 2023, as well as fluctuations in community service, as shown in the following table (Haryanto et al., 2023).

Table 3. Number of Lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra who received DRPTM research funds

Year	Number of Research Lecturers Receiving Funds from DRPTM Research
2023	170
2022	194
2021	227

Based on the table above, it can be seen that there has been a very significant decrease in the number of lecturers receiving research funds sourced from the Ministry's DRPTM.

Table 4. Number of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra who received DRPTM community service funds

Year	Number of Research Lecturers Receiving Funds from DRPTM Community Service
2023	33
2022	47
2021	30

Based on the data above, the total number of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra is not yet in line with those receiving DRPTM community service funds. Furthermore, another crucial factor in lecturers' career development is their competency.

To achieve this objective, this research was formulated based on the following questions:

(1) How does digital competence influence the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra?;
(2) How does compensation influence the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra?;
(3) How does transformational leadership influence the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra?;
(4) How does achievement motivation influence the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra?;
(5) How does digital competence influence the achievement motivation of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra?;
(6) How does transformational leadership influence the achievement motivation of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra?;
(7) How does digital competence influence the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra through achievement motivation?;

(8) How does compensation influence the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra through achievement motivation?;
(9) How does transformational leadership influence the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra through achievement motivation?;
(10) How can organizational support strengthen the influence of achievement motivation on the career development of lecturers at Private Universities in West Sumatra?

2. Literature Review and Hypothesis Development

2.1 Literature Review

2.1.1 Digital Competence and Career Development

Digital competence is crucial for lecturers' professional success, enhancing their ability to manage academic data, engage in online learning and conduct research. According to Becker (2002), human capital theory suggests that digital skills are essential for adapting to digital education, improving career satisfaction and job performance (Nadapdap, Laili, Natsir, & Setyadi, 2025). Lecturers with higher digital competence tend to perform better in their roles.

2.1.2 Compensation and Career Development

Although compensation is vital for motivation, it does not directly influence career growth. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory indicates that compensation is a hygiene factor, but its presence does not necessarily motivate employees. Research by Hung (2020) and Sjarifudin, Widyastuti, Renwarin, and Suroso (2026), shows that inadequate compensation, coupled with a mismatch between workload and rewards, negatively affects career development in private universities.

2.1.3 Transformational Leadership and Career Development

Transformational leadership motivates employees to exceed their expectations and fosters professional growth. Bass and Avolio (1994) that this leadership style enhances career development by creating an innovative and supportive work environment. Nguni et al.Nguni, Sleegers, and Denessen (2006) demonstrated a positive correlation between transformational leadership, job satisfaction, and career advancement in academic settings (Hadi, 2025).

2.1.4 Achievement Motivation as an Intervening Variable

According to Davis (1962), achievement motivation is key to career development. It highlights that intrinsic motivation, such as the desire for personal growth, drives career advancement. This motivation mediates the impact of factors such as digital competence and leadership on career development.

2.1.5 Organizational Support as a Moderating Variable

Organizational support strengthens career development by enhancing employees' commitment and performance. Eisenberger et al. (1986) found that lecturers who perceive strong organizational support are more satisfied with their career. Husainah, Suhartini, Fachrial, Sopyan, and Sundari (2025), further emphasize that supportive environments mitigate dissatisfaction with compensation and promote career growth.

2.2 Hypothesis Development

The research hypotheses are as follows:

H_1: There is an influence of digital competence on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra
H_2: There is an influence of compensation on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra
H_3: There is an influence of transformational leadership on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra
H_4: There is an influence of achievement motivation on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra, Indonesia
H_5: There is an influence of digital competence on the achievement motivation of lecturers at

private universities in West Sumatra, Indonesia

H_6: There is an influence of transformational leadership on the achievement motivation of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra

H_7: There is an influence of digital competence on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra through Achievement Motivation (AM)

H_8: There is an influence of compensation on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra through Achievement Motivation (AM)

H_9: There is an influence of transformational leadership on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra through achievement motivation

H_{10}: Organizational support is able to strengthen the influence of achievement motivation on the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra

3. Methodology

This study uses a mixed methods research method, namely research based on a combination of positivism and positivism (Wahyudi, 2018). The combination method variant used in this research is concurrent triangulation, namely two-sided research conducted simultaneously, so that both sides have the same emphasis. An associative quantitative method was used for the quantitative analysis. This research was conducted in the LDDIKTI work area in region X, which was carried out starting from preparation from July 2024 until the completion of data collection, processing, and analysis in July 2025.

This study used 363 samples in total. PLS is suggested for data analysis that involves relationships between variables in structural models (Sarstedt, Ringle, & Hair, 2021). Data were analyzed using SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares) via SmartPLSi4.1.1.2. The analysis included measurement and structural models, with validity and reliability tests based on established criteria (Hair Junior, Hult, Ringle, & Sarstedt, 2014).

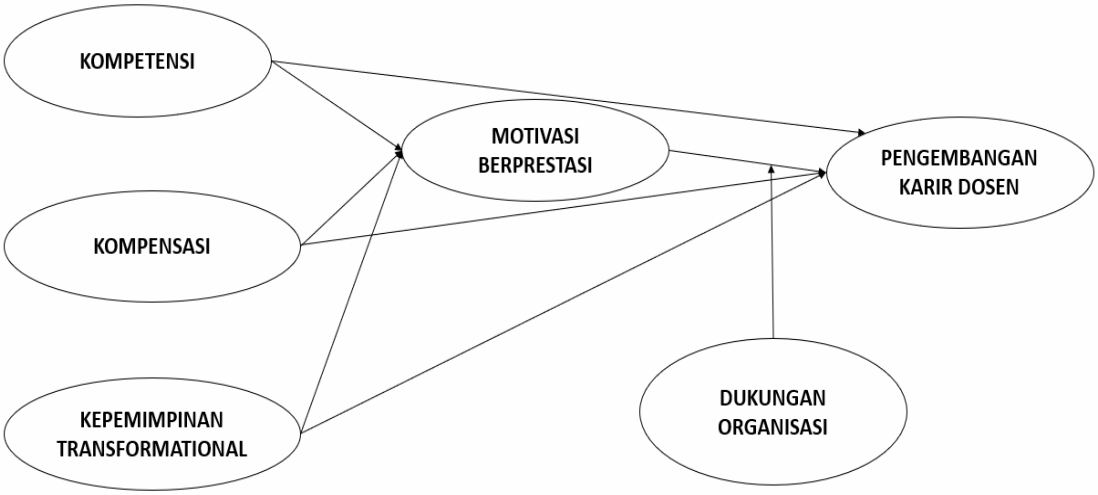

Figure 1. Research model

4. Result and Discussion

4.1 Measurement Model Analysis

A measurement model analysis was conducted to test the validity and reliability of the research instrument for each latent variable (Ghozali, 2021). In SmartPLS, several stages are carried out to determine validity, namely convergent validity and discriminant validity. For reliability testing, the composite reliability approach and Cronbach's alpha were used. Convergent validity was evaluated by examining the outer loading of each item and the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value. According to Hair Junior et al. (2014), an indicator is considered valid if its outer loading value is greater than 0.70 and the AVE value for each construct is greater than 0.50. The results of the convergent validity analysis

in this study indicate that all items have loading values above 0.70 and all AVE values are >0.50. This condition indicates that each variable meets the convergent validity criteria (Amatan, Han, & Pang, 2025).

Table 1. Loading factor and AVE Test

Variables	Indicator	Loading Factor						Note	AVE
Organizational Support (M)	DO41	0.914						Valid	0.793
	DO42	0.866						Valid	
Digital Competence	KD11		0.941					Valid	0.863
	KD12		0.917					Valid	
Competence	KOM15			0.818				Valid	0.726
	KOM19			0.767				Valid	
	KOM20			0.816				Valid	
	KOM21			0.822				Valid	
Transformational Leadership	KT26				0.817			Valid	0.769
	KT27				0.865			Valid	
	KT28				0.87			Valid	
	KT29				0.841			Valid	
	KT31				0.786			Valid	
Achievement Motivation	MB33					0.735		Valid	
Career Development	PK46						0.832	Valid	0.737
	PK47						0.731	Valid	
	PK49						0.726	Valid	

The above test indicates that all indicators met the required convergent validity values. The outer loading and AVE values for each variable were >0.7, indicating that all variable data in this study were valid. Discriminant validity was tested to obtain more accurate validity results. The discriminant validity value is determined by the cross-loading, which is >0.70 (Hair Junior et al. (2014) as follows:

Table 2. Cross loading test

	Organizational Support (M)	Digital Competence (X_1)	Compensation (X_2)	Leadership Transformational (X_3)	Achievement Motivation (Z)	Career Development (Y)
DO41	**0.914**	0.256	0.606	-0.405	0.616	0.692
DO42	**0.866**	0.205	0.562	-0.349	0.504	0.559
KD11	0.251	**0.941**	0.211	-0.067	0.31	0.232
KD12	0.233	**0.917**	0.166	0.011	0.261	0.199
KOM15	0.54	0.161	**0.867**	-0.374	0.497	0.46
KOM19	0.58	0.242	**0.816**	-0.394	0.529	0.546
KOM20	0.56	0.134	**0.862**	-0.379	0.457	0.476
KOM21	0.554	0.153	**0.862**	-0.306	0.521	0.521
KT26	-0.353	-0.047	-0.337	**0.858**	-0.275	-0.267
KT27	-0.37	-0.007	-0.381	**0.926**	-0.293	-0.25
KT28	-0.385	-0.022	-0.401	**0.932**	-0.291	-0.277
KT29	-0.358	-0.041	-0.399	**0.884**	-0.336	-0.301
KT31	-0.388	-0.028	-0.342	**0.775**	-0.268	-0.374
MB33	0.634	0.309	0.591	-0.336	**1**	0.595
PK46	0.679	0.206	0.581	-0.379	0.595	**0.894**
PK47	0.569	0.171	0.51	-0.27	0.448	**0.857**
PK49	0.566	0.223	0.418	-0.208	0.475	**0.822**

The cross-loading value for discriminant validity was >0.7 for one variable. Therefore, it can be concluded that all instruments for each construct were valid. Therefore, the next testing stage was carried out by examining composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha. Reliability test results were considered satisfactory if the Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability values were ≥0.70.

Table 3. Reliability test

	Cronbach's alpha	Composite reliability (rho_c)	Note
Organizational Support (*M*)	0.741	0.884	Reliable
Transformational Leadership (X_3)	0.924	0.943	Reliable
Compensation (X_2)	0.874	0.914	Reliable
Digital Competence (X_1)	0.843	0.927	Reliable
Career Development (*Y*)	0.822	0.894	Reliable

Based on the results in the table above, the values of all constructs have a Cronbach Alpha value.iAndiCompositeiReliability >0.7 (greater) indicates reliability. This is stated in the measurement model test, indicating that all constructs in the model were valid and reliable (Haji-Othman & Yusuff, 2022). The following is a visualization of the results of the measurement-model test:

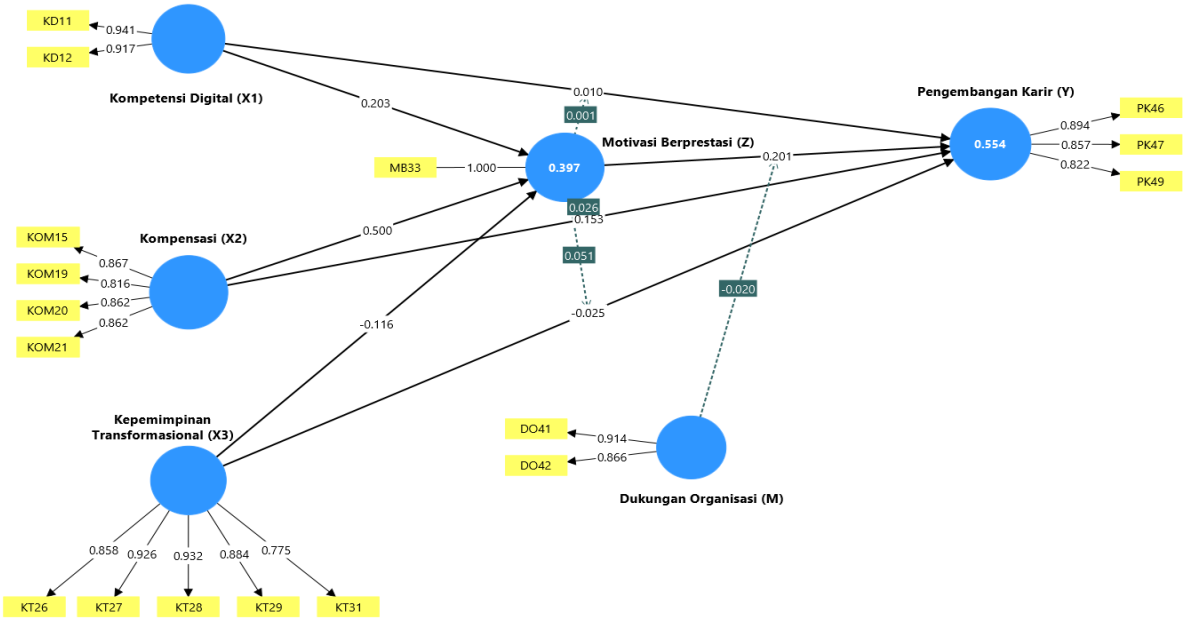

Figure 2. Measurement model

4.2 Structural Model Analysis

After testing the measurement model, a structural model was constructed to empirically test the hypotheses. The structural model was evaluated using bootstrapping techniques with 5,000 subsamples in SmartPLS 4.1.1.2, which allows for the estimation of the significance level of path relationships between constructs (Hair Junior et al., 2014). Sarstedt et al. (2021) discussed data analysis methods using PLS-SEM, which are beneficial for understanding the relationships between variables in marketing research.

This study examines the β-coefficient, p-value, and t-value to interpret the regression results and determine the significance of the hypothesized relationships. In SmartPLS 4.1.1.2, several steps are used to determine the influence between variables: the Direct Effect examines the direct influence between variables and the Indirect Effect determines the indirect influence through the intervening variable. Ghozali (2021) emphasized the importance of the Partial Least Squares (PLS) approach

in empirical research for analyzing complex and valid data. This study also conducts a Coefficient of Determination (R^2) test to assess the explanatory power and overall model suitability.

Table 4. R-Square

	R-square
Achievement Motivation (*Z*)	0.397
Career Development (*Y*)	0.554

The R-Square test results show that 39.7% (0.397) of the Achievement Motivation variable (Y_1) is influenced by Digital Competence (X_1), Comp (X_2), and Transformational Leadership (X_3). Meanwhile, 55.4% (0.554) of the Career Development variable (Y_2) is influenced by Achievement Motivation (Y_1), and Organizational Support (*Z*). These results indicate that the model has moderate to strong explanatory power, making it suitable for explaining the relationship between the variables in this study.

Table 5. Path coefficient results

	T-table	**T-statistics**	**P-values**	**Note**
H_1 : KD (X_1) -> PK (*Y*)	1.96	0.241	0.81	Rejected
H_2 : KOM (X_2) -> PK (*Y*)	1.96	2,498	**0.013**	Accepted
H_3 : KT (X_3) -> PK (*Y*)	1.96	0.556	0.578	Rejected
H_4 : MB (*Z*) -> PK(*Y*)	1.96	3,243	**0.001**	Accepted
H_5 : KD (X_1) -> MB(*Z*)	1.96	4,057	**0**	Accepted
H_6 : KT (X3) -> MB (*Z*)	1.96	1,951	0.051	Rejected
H_7 : MB (*Z*) x KD (X_1) -> PK (*Y*)	1.96	0.055	0.956	Rejected
H_8 : MB (*Z*) x KOM (X_2) -> PK (*Y*)	1.96	0.28	0.78	Rejected
H_9 : MB (*Z*) x KT (X_3) -> PK (*Y*)	1.96	1,331	0.183	Rejected
DO (*M*) -> PK(*Y*)	1.96	6,945	**0**	Accepted
KOM (X_2) -> MB (*Z*)	1.96	9,883	**0**	Accepted
H_{10} : DO x MB -> PK	1.96	0.312	0.755	Rejected

If the T-statistic value > T-table with a significance level of P-value < 0.05, the results are declared significant or accepted. The P-value is the magnitude of the observed probability in a statistical test. The results show that the T-statistic value of five hypotheses is accepted and seven hypotheses are rejected. This is because the value of 1.96 with a p-value is less than 0.05 and one hypothesis has a t-statistic value below 1.96 with a p-value greater than 0.05, which causes the hypothesis to be rejected. Thus, based on the results of the path from Achievement Motivation (*Z*) to Career Development (*Y*), it has a fairly strong direct influence (0.365), which indicates that the higher an individual's achievement motivation, the higher their level of career development. This shows that the direct relationship between compensation (X_2) and Career Development (*Y*) is negative (-0.475), indicating the possibility of moderating or mediating factors that indirectly influence the relationship.

4.3 Qualitative Research Results

Empirically, the significant F-test results indicate that the combination of digital competence, appropriate compensation, and transformational leadership plays a significant role in encouraging career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra. This finding is supported by the qualitative data obtained in the present study (Madrid et al., 2024). Qualitative data can be seen from the following coding and interpretation:

Table 6. Results of coding and interpretation of qualitative data

Element	**Indicator**	**Informant**	**Interview**	**Interpretation**
Lecturer career development	Work performance	Informant 2 Informant 5	Most of the informants demonstrated active	Work performance is the main

		Informant 9 Informant 13 Informant 17	performance in tridharma activities, such as teaching, research, and community service. Some had received grants, accredited journal publications and lecturer certification.	motivation for career development and is closely related to internal motivation and institutional support.
	Exposure	Informant 3 Informant 6 Informant 8 Informant 14	Not all lecturers had high exposure. Some are regularly invited as speakers or reviewers, while others have minimal public appearances in academic forums.	Exposure is important for building a lecturer's reputation and academic network, as well as increasing self-confidence and collaboration opportunities.
	Network	Informant 4 Informant 7 Informant 11 Informant 16 Informant 20	Lecturers build networks through interuniversity collaborative activities, scientific forums, and academic social media. Informal relationships with other campus partners were also mentioned.	The network expands opportunities for research collaboration, teaching, and the exchange of ideas, supporting lecturers' professional growth.
	Opportunity to Grow	Informant 1 Informant 10 Informant 12 Informant 15	Most informants felt that the institution trusted them to grow, such as becoming heads of study programs, journal reviewers, and training resource persons.	A work environment that provides opportunities for growth helps lecturers build their career paths and enhance their leadership skills.
	Mentors and Sponsors	Informant 6 Informant 8 Informant 13 Informant 18 Informant 21	Institutions and foundations provide career assistance, both formal, such as training, and informal, such as mentoring from senior lecturers.	The role of internal mentors and sponsors encourages lecturers to develop more quickly and in a more focused manner in their academic career paths.

Digital competence	Access	Informant 1 Informant 2 Informant 5 Informant 9	Most informants stated that they could access the internet, learning platforms (LMS), and various digital communication media provided by the institution.	The institution provided adequate access to support digital-based academic activities.
	Using the Device	Informant 3 Informant 6 Informant 7 Informant 10	All informants could operate digital devices such as laptops and projectors and basic software such as Microsoft Office and Zoom.	The ability to use basic digital devices is common and has become part of the lecturers' routine.
	Application Development	Informant 4 Informant 11 Informant 14 Informant 17	Only a few informants had created simple applications or interactive learning media, such as digital quizzes, teaching videos, and interactive modules.	Digital creativity has begun to grow, but training is still needed to improve the advanced technical capacity.
	Digital Document Creation	Informant 8 Informant 13 Informant 15 Informant 18	The informants are accustomed to creating digital documents, such as RPS, teaching materials, and student assignments, using Google Docs, Word, and LMS.	Digital document creation has become an efficient and productive work culture for organizations.
	Digital Communication	Informant 12 Informant 16 Informant 19 Informant 21	All informants used WhatsApp, email, and LMS groups for academic communication with their students and colleagues.	Digital communication accelerates the flow of information and supports collaboration in Tridharma activities.
Compensation	Wages	Informant 2 Informant 5 Informant 9 Informant 13	The salaries of most lecturers are equivalent to or close to those of civil servants, but some still feel that they are not getting the best results without additional allowances.	Decent compensation can maintain work enthusiasm, but it needs to be increased according to workload.

	Incentive	Informant 3 Informant 6 Informant 10 Informant 14	Institutional incentives are a driving force for performance, such as publication, teaching, and involvement in academic activities.	Incentives motivate lecturers to achieve performance targets.
	Allowance	Informant 4 Informant 7 Informant 11 Informant 15	Benefits such as THR, transportation, and 13th salary are generally accepted and felt to help welfare.	The allowance provides a sense of security and balance in lecturers' lives.
	Facility	Informant 8 Informant 12 Informant 17 Informant 20	Supporting facilities for the tridharma, such as classrooms, LCDs, Wi-Fi, and laboratories, are available with varying levels of completeness.	Facilities are an important element in supporting the smooth implementation of Tri Dharma.
Transformational leadership	Charisma	Informant 1 Informant 6 Informant 13 Informant 16	Charismatic leadership is considered important for building work enthusiasm and loyalty among lecturers.	Leadership style directly influences the academic atmosphere.
	Inspirational Motivation	Informant 3 Informant 5 Informant 11 Informant 17	Leaders who set ethical examples and are passionate about technological work are considered to build trust and motivation among lecturers.	Inspirational leadership encourages lecturers to become student role models.
	Intellectual Stimulation	Informant 4 Informant 9 Informant 14 Informant 18	Lecturers are encouraged to think critically, creatively, and productively through training and innovative spaces.	Progressive leadership creates a healthy and intellectual ecosystem.
	Individualized Attention	Informant 2 Informant 7 Informant 12 Informant 19	Leadership provides personal attention, such as listening to lecturers' problems and helping them achieve academic targets.	Good interpersonal relationships create a comfortable work environment for employees.
Achievement motivation	Physical needs	Informant 3 Informant 5 Informant 8 Informant 14	The majority of informants stated that basic needs such as salary, food allowance, transportation, and	Proper fulfillment of physical needs is very important to maintain the stability and work

			health were available, although they were not always ideal.	performance of university lecturers.
	The Need for Safety	Informant 6 Informant 10 Informant 13 Informant 18	Informants felt quite secure professionally, especially due to the guarantee of work contracts and regular benefits, although some were uncertain about the future.	A sense of security drives work commitment; however, long-term career transparency and an objective appraisal system are necessary.
	Social Needs	Informant 2 Informant 7 Informant 12 Informant 15	Lecturers feel they have positive social relationships with colleagues, supported by open communication and solidarity among the academic staff.	Social support from the work environment greatly contributes to psychological comfort and academic collaboration.
Organizational support	Award	Informant 1 Informant 4 Informant 9 Informant 11	Most informants stated that they received awards in the form of certificates, job promotions, or direct appreciation from their leaders.	Consistent forms of appreciation increase motivation and strengthen loyalty to institutions.
	Support from Superiors	Informant 3 Informant 6 Informant 10 Informant 16	Informants felt that there was support in the form of academic direction, guidance in performance reporting, and leadership involvement in institutional activities.	Leadership support is highly influential in facilitating the achievement of performance and development of lecturer competencies.
	Working Conditions	Informant 5 Informant 8 Informant 13 Informant 17	Informants described working conditions as quite conducive, with active scientific forums, comfortable workspaces and good social interactions.	A healthy and supportive work environment is a major factor in creating sustainable academic productivity.
	Lecturer Welfare	Informant 2 Informant 7 Informant 12 Informant 20	Informants felt that institutions were starting to pay attention to overall well-being, both financially and	A holistic welfare approach strengthens lecturers'

			psychologically, and in terms of personal development.	commitment to Tridharma tasks.

4.4 Discussion

Based on the quantitative and qualitative results, the discussion is as follows:

4.4.1 Digital Competence for Lecturer Career Development

This is in accordance with the study by Nadapdap et al. (2025) digital competence has been shown to have a positive and significant impact on lecturers' career development. Posits that mastery of information technology increases lecturers' productivity and adaptability to the challenges of digital education. Digital competence is crucial for online learning, academic data management and scientific publications. This indicates that lecturers with higher digital competence are more satisfied with their jobs. Lecturers in Career Development who effectively utilize technology in teaching tend to feel more confident and efficient in their roles, contributing to higher job satisfaction.

4.4.2 Compensation for Lecturer Career Development

Contrary to expectations, compensation negatively impacts career development. Although Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory considers compensation a hygiene factor, in this context, compensation has not yet become a motivator. A mismatch between workload and reward likely creates a perception of unfairness. This is in accordance with Hung (2020), who examined the effect of income on lecturer performance in private universities and showed a direct relationship between incentives and productivity. This is in accordance with the research by Sjarifudin et al. (2026), who found that compensation does not have a positive and significant effect on careers.

4.4.3 Transformational Leadership towards Lecturer Career Development

Transformational leadership positively and significantly influences lecturers' careers. According to Bass and Avolio (1994) theory, visionary and inspiring leaders encourage lecturers to actively participate in the Tri Dharma of Higher Education and professional development. This leadership style creates a work climate that encourages innovation and career advancement. This finding is consistent with Nguni et al. (2006), which showed that transformational leadership is highly positively correlated with career advancement and job satisfaction among lecturers in educational institutions.

This study analyzed the relationship between transformational leadership and organizational performance in public universities in Indonesia through a comprehensive literature review. The analysis shows that transformational leadership plays a crucial and significant role in improving university organizational performance across multiple dimensions (Hadi, 2025).

4.4.4 The Role of Achievement Motivation as an Intervening Variable

Achievement motivation mediates the relationship between key variables and career development. Based on Davis (1962), individuals with high achievement motivation are more motivated to develop. In this study, intrinsic motivation strengthened the influence of digital competence and leadership on careers and reduced the negative impact of compensation on career development. This aligns with study Robbins, Judge, and Vohra (2018), which emphasized the importance of intrinsic needs in driving sustainable individual performance.

4.4.5 Organizational Support (Moderating Variable)

Organizational support strengthens the relationship between individual factors and career development. According to the theory of perceived organizational support (Eisenberger et al. (1986), support in the form of facilities, recognition, and a conducive work environment increases lecturers' loyalty and participation in academic activities. Husainah et al. (2025) proposed a theoretical mechanism linking digital HR practices and employee retention via perceived organizational support.

As demonstrated in this study, organizational support strengthens the influence of digital competence and leadership on career development, as lecturers feel valued and supported. It also mitigates

dissatisfaction with suboptimal compensation through fair and proactive institutional responses. This support creates an ecosystem that sustains lecturers' motivation and loyalty. Overall, the relationship model indicates that lecturer career development is influenced not only by individual factors such as competence and motivation but also by institutional factors such as leadership and organizational support. The relationships between these variables are complex and interconnected, with empirical contributions to strengthening the lecturer career model in private universities through a combination of personal characteristics, compensation, and organizational climate.

5. Conclusions

5.1 Conclusion

Based on the PLS-SEM analysis results, this study concludes that the career development of lecturers at private universities in West Sumatra is influenced by individual and institutional factors. Compensation and achievement motivation were shown to have a significant influence on career development, confirming the importance of rewards and intrinsic motivation in academic progress. Conversely, digital competence and transformational leadership did not show a significant direct influence, indicating that these two factors have not received adequate recognition in the promotion system. Furthermore, digital competence and compensation positively influenced achievement motivation, whereas transformational leadership did not.

Organizational support is the most dominant factor in driving lecturers' career development. Although achievement motivation did not act as a moderating factor, organizational support had a direct and significant influence. The negative relationship between compensation and career development suggests a possible imbalance between rewards and career actualization. Overall, lecturers' career development results from a complex interaction between personal, structural, and contextual factors. Therefore, a structured, transparent, and adaptive career system is necessary to address the challenges of the digital era and the dynamics of academia.

5.2 Research Implications

This study broadens the understanding of career development theory by integrating the digital dimension, where digital competence acts as an indirect driver of achievement motivation. The findings also strengthen the relevance of motivational theories such as Expectancy Theory and Incentive Theory by showing that significant compensation drives motivation and career development. In contrast, transformational leadership did not show a significant effect, indicating the need to contextualize leadership styles in private academic settings. Furthermore, achievement motivation proved to be an important mediator but not a moderator, and organizational support emerged as the most dominant factor in driving career development, reinforcing the Perceived Organizational Support Theory.

5.3 Suggestions and Directions for Future Research

Higher education institutions must optimize the role of digital competencies through career-based training and digital incentives. A performance-based compensation system must be implemented fairly and transparently to encourage its achievement. Transformational leadership styles must be directed toward concrete actions through empathy-based mentoring and training. Achievement motivation can be strengthened through a supportive and competitive work environment and faculty involvement in formulating career goals. Finally, organizational support must be realized through a structured career system, adequate facilities, and the establishment of an academic human resource development unit that focuses on ongoing coaching and training.

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Author Contributions

AA conducted the conceptualization, methodology and data analysis. CW contributed to the research design and provided valuable insights during data interpretation. BS provided supervision and guidance throughout the study.

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