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Leadership and Career Development Effects on Personnel Performance: Psychological Capital Mediation in Central Sulawesi Police Directorate

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ABSTRACT

Leadership and career development are important determinants of personnel performance, particularly in police organizations where effective service delivery depends on competent and psychologically resilient personnel. However, the role of psychological capital in linking leadership and career development to personnel performance requires further empirical examination. This study aimed to analyze the effects of leadership and career development on personnel performance and psychological capital, as well as the mediating role of psychological capital at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police. A quantitative study was conducted using primary data collected through questionnaires from 90 personnel. The respondents were selected using saturated sampling (census), and the data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling with the Partial Least Squares approach. The results showed that leadership and career development had positive and significant effects on personnel performance and psychological capital. Psychological capital also had a positive and significant effect on personnel performance. Furthermore, psychological capital significantly mediated the effects of leadership and career development on personnel performance. These findings indicate that personnel performance can be strengthened through effective leadership and structured career development, while psychological capital serves as an important mechanism connecting these organizational factors to performance. The study contributes practical insight for police organizations by emphasizing the importance of strengthening personnel's self-confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism to support effective task performance.

1. Introduction

Human resources are a fundamental element of every organization because they serve as the primary drivers of organizational activities and goal achievement. Organizational success is determined not only by the availability of physical and financial resources but also by the quality of the individuals involved. Human resources with strong competence, integrity, and adaptability are better able to perform their duties effectively and provide optimal contributions to organizational outcomes (Armstrong, 2021). Accordingly, systematic and sustainable human resource management is essential for developing productive organizations capable of responding to dynamic environmental changes. Human resources are therefore regarded as strategic assets that need to be continuously managed and developed to support organizational effectiveness and competitive advantage (Noe, 2020).

Effective human resource management requires organizations to understand the factors that shape personnel performance. Performance is influenced not only by organizational systems and policies but also by individual conditions and readiness to perform assigned responsibilities. Organizational factors include work direction, supervision, coaching, and opportunities for professional development, whereas individual factors involve psychological readiness, self-confidence, and the ability to cope with work pressures and demands (Robbins & Judge, 2021; Yukl, 2020). Leadership plays an important role in providing direction, coordination, and guidance, while career development provides opportunities for individuals

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to enhance their competence and preparedness for increasingly demanding responsibilities (Northouse, 2021; Dessler, 2020; Noe, 2020). At the individual level, psychological readiness is also relevant to personnel performance through psychological capital, which represents a positive psychological resource that can be developed to support effective functioning at work (Luthans et al., 2020; Avey et al., 2021). The interaction of these organizational and individual factors provides an important basis for understanding how optimal and sustainable personnel performance is achieved.

This issue is particularly relevant in public-sector organizations responsible for essential public services. The Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police has a strategic role in providing traffic-related public services and therefore requires high levels of professionalism, accuracy, responsiveness, and operational effectiveness. Field observations identified several human resource management challenges in the implementation of public services. Interviews with personnel in the Registration and Identification Subdirectorate revealed that task performance was not always optimal when workloads increased, as reflected in administrative delays, irregular service processes, and limited initiative in situations outside routine procedures. Under high work pressure, personnel tended to prioritize core duties, while accuracy, innovation, and responsiveness were not always maintained. These conditions were associated with uneven work direction, coaching, organizational support, and development opportunities. Consequently, personnel psychological readiness was not consistently stable, as indicated by reduced self-confidence and optimism and a tendency to rely heavily on established procedures. These conditions suggest that the performance problem is not attributable to a single factor but is related to leadership, career development, and personnel psychological conditions.

Leadership is a critical organizational mechanism for directing, influencing, and coordinating individual behavior toward organizational goals. Effective leadership extends beyond issuing instructions and includes establishing a clear vision, motivating personnel, and creating a work environment that supports optimal performance (Northouse, 2021). Leadership effectiveness also depends on the ability of leaders to adapt their approach to work situations and subordinate needs (Yukl, 2020). Empirical evidence further indicates that effective leadership can strengthen individual commitment and engagement and consequently improve the quality of task implementation (Adda et al., 2022). Nevertheless, observations at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police indicate that leadership implementation continues to face managerial and operational challenges. Interviews with personnel in the Law Enforcement Subdirectorate indicated that work instructions were not always communicated clearly and consistently, particularly in dynamic operational situations, resulting in differences in task understanding. Interviews with personnel in the Registration and Identification Subdirectorate also indicated that coaching and supervision had not been implemented optimally and continuously, limiting personnel access to clear feedback concerning task execution and performance improvement. Consequently, some personnel tended to wait for further instructions rather than demonstrate initiative in decision-making. This phenomenon is consistent with Jia (2025), who found that leadership influenced performance through psychological capital as a mediating mechanism.

Career development is another organizational factor that can influence personnel performance. It refers to a planned and continuous organizational process for improving individual capabilities, competencies, and readiness to assume higher-level responsibilities (Dessler, 2020). Effective career development encompasses not only promotion but also improvements in knowledge, skills, work experience, and psychological preparedness for increasingly complex job demands. Clear career paths, training opportunities, and objective evaluation systems provide individuals with a clear direction for professional development (Noe, 2020). Effective career development can also strengthen employees' sense of belonging, loyalty, and work commitment because individuals perceive that their professional growth is supported by the organization. However, observations at the Traffic Directorate indicated that career development remained constrained in its implementation. Interviews with personnel in the Safety and Security Subdirectorate showed that information concerning promotion pathways and position development had not been disseminated comprehensively. Interviews

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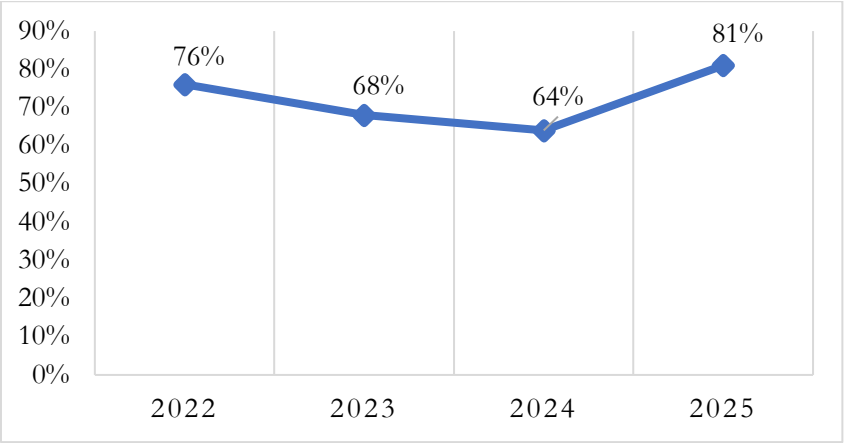
with personnel in the Planning and Administration Subsection further indicated that performance evaluation as a basis for career development had not been implemented consistently or adequately documented. As a result, feedback for competency improvement was not systematically received, and career development tended to be administrative rather than performance-based. This condition is consistent with Karmina et al. (2025), who found that career development significantly affected performance while emphasizing the importance of effective evaluation and management systems.

Psychological capital provides an important individual-level mechanism for explaining how organizational factors may translate into personnel performance. It represents a developable psychological resource that contributes to individual effectiveness in organizations (Luthans et al., 2020). In this study, psychological capital is positioned as a mediating variable linking leadership and career development with personnel performance. Individuals with high psychological capital tend to demonstrate confidence in their capabilities, establish realistic goals, maintain positive expectations about the future, and persist when facing pressure and failure. Because psychological capital is considered a state-like psychological capacity, it can be developed through work experiences, training, and organizational support (Avey et al., 2021). It can also enhance motivation, work resilience, and decision-making quality under demanding conditions (Newman et al., 2022). Field observations, however, indicated that psychological capital among personnel was not fully stable. Interviews with Highway Patrol Unit personnel showed that high workloads and unpredictable field situations could reduce confidence in making rapid decisions, potentially affecting task accuracy and responsiveness. Interviews with Law Enforcement Subdirectorate personnel also indicated that optimism in achieving operational targets was inconsistent, particularly under time pressure and complex cases. Psychological resilience was similarly uneven, with some personnel more susceptible to work pressure, which could reduce initiative and the ability to respond effectively to demanding situations. These findings are consistent with Novitasari and Young (2025), who demonstrated the important mediating role of psychological capital in improving personnel performance.

Personnel performance represents the outcomes achieved by individuals in fulfilling responsibilities according to organizational standards. It encompasses work quality, quantity, timeliness, and effectiveness and is influenced by individual capability, motivation, psychological conditions, and organizational support (Robbins & Judge, 2021). Optimal performance also requires the ability to adapt to dynamic work demands, operate under pressure, make appropriate decisions, and demonstrate initiative, while maintaining consistent work quality (Armstrong, 2021). At the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police, observations identified challenges in both operational duties and public services. Interviews indicated that the processing of driving licenses, vehicle registration certificates, and vehicle ownership documents was not always optimal during periods of increased service volume, resulting in inconsistent administrative completion times. Personnel in the Law Enforcement Subdirectorate also reported challenges in maintaining consistent responses to changing field conditions, particularly in decision-making, coordination in handling traffic violations and accidents, and managing situations outside routine procedures.

Personnel performance is assessed through key performance indicators supporting the achievement of security, safety, order, and smooth traffic conditions within the jurisdiction of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police. These indicators cover vehicle registration and identification, traffic law enforcement, public education, highway patrol, and operational development, as well as integrity and discipline, task accuracy, public service quality, the ability to work under pressure, teamwork, communication, initiative, and personnel development. The accumulated performance data of all units provide an important indication of the consistency of task implementation.

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Source: Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police (2026)

Fig. 1. Achievement of Performance Indicators for the Realization of Security, Safety, Order, and Smooth Traffic Conditions within the Jurisdiction of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police

The performance data for 2022–2025 show fluctuations across the measurement period, with a decline through 2024 followed by an increase in 2025. This pattern indicates that performance achievement had not been fully consistent and sustainable. Because the data represent the accumulated performance of units responsible for registration and identification, law enforcement, highway patrol, public education, and operational development, the fluctuations reflect the dynamics of task implementation across these functions. The pattern further indicates continuing challenges in maintaining service quality during periods of high demand, making timely operational decisions, and sustaining task quality under work pressure. Thus, strengthening both organizational and individual factors is necessary to support more consistent and sustainable personnel performance.

Previous studies have provided evidence that leadership, career development, and psychological capital are relevant to performance outcomes. Kusnadi et al. (2025) found that psychological capital and authentic leadership influenced work engagement and performance, while Karmina et al. (2025) demonstrated a significant effect of career development on civil servant performance. Jia (2025) and AlZoubi et al. (2025) showed that leadership influenced performance through psychological capital as a mediator, whereas Novitasari and Young (2025) found that managerial coaching affected performance through psychological capital. Although these studies establish the relevance of psychological capital as an important mechanism, the existing evidence remains limited in explaining the simultaneous relationships among leadership, career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance within a police traffic-service context. In particular, empirical evidence concerning how leadership and career development influence personnel performance through psychological capital at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police remains limited.

Based on this research gap and the observed performance challenges, this study aimed to examine the effects of leadership and career development on personnel performance, the effects of leadership and career development on psychological capital, the effect of psychological capital on personnel performance, and the mediating role of psychological capital in the relationships between leadership, career development, and personnel performance at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police. The study addresses the specific problem of whether organizational factors, namely leadership and career development, contribute to improved personnel performance directly and indirectly through psychological capital.

The study contributes theoretically by integrating organizational factors and individual psychological resources into a mediation framework for explaining personnel performance in a public-sector law-enforcement context. It extends the existing discussion by examining psychological capital not merely as an individual characteristic but as a mechanism through which leadership and career development may translate into improved performance. Practically, the findings provide a basis for the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police to strengthen leadership practices, establish more structured and transparent career

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development systems, and develop personnel psychological capital through initiatives that enhance confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism. The novelty of this study lies in examining these relationships simultaneously within the specific institutional and operational context of traffic policing in Central Sulawesi, thereby providing context-specific evidence on how organizational support and psychological resources can be combined to strengthen sustainable personnel performance.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Conceptual and Theoretical Foundations

2.1.1 Leadership

Leadership is a social influence process through which individuals guide, motivate, and coordinate organizational members toward achieving organizational objectives. Effective leadership extends beyond formal authority and involves communication, trust, motivation, and the development of productive relationships (Yukl, 2020; Northouse, 2021; Antonakis & Day, 2021; Cameron, 2021). In dynamic environments, leaders must also demonstrate adaptability and collaboration to manage uncertainty and organizational change (Wang et al., 2021; McKinsey and Company, 2023; Adda, 2025). In public organizations, leadership must balance performance, discipline, ethics, and service responsibilities, with ethical and transformational leadership contributing to service quality, public trust, employee commitment, and performance (Pratama & Hidayat, 2023; Eva et al., 2021; Adda et al., 2022).

This study focuses on transformational leadership, which emphasizes idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 2021). These dimensions represent leaders' abilities to serve as role models, inspire personnel, encourage critical thinking, and provide individualized support. Transformational leadership may therefore strengthen both personnel performance and the psychological resources needed to manage demanding work conditions (Adda et al., 2022).

2.1.2 Career Development

Career development is a continuous process through which individuals develop competencies, experience, and career opportunities in accordance with organizational needs. It extends beyond promotion to include professional growth, career planning, and adaptation to changing work demands (De Vos et al., 2021; Akkermans et al., 2020). Effective career development can clarify career direction, increase motivation, and improve professional readiness (Hutauruk et al., 2023; Jubaedi et al., 2024). From an organizational perspective, systematic career planning, direction, and control help align individual potential with organizational requirements and development opportunities (Spurk et al., 2021; Sukmawati et al., 2024).

Career development in this study is measured through career need assessment, career opportunities, and need–opportunity alignment (Sinambela et al., 2022). These dimensions assess employees' interests and competency gaps, access to transparent opportunities such as promotion and rotation, and the alignment between individual career aspirations and organizational opportunities. An effective career development system is therefore expected to strengthen professional competence, motivation, and personnel performance.

2.1.3 Psychological Capital

Psychological capital refers to developable positive psychological resources that support individual effectiveness, adaptability, and performance. It complements human and social capital through resources such as confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism, enabling individuals to respond constructively to demanding work conditions (Avey et al., 2021; Luthans et al., 2021). These resources are particularly relevant in dynamic work environments characterized by technological change, complex responsibilities, and work pressure (Newman et al., 2022). Psychological capital is not a fixed personality characteristic; it can be strengthened through organizational interventions, learning, coaching, and work experiences (Luthans et al., 2021). Its development may consequently support employee performance, job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and adaptability (Avey et al., 2021; Spurk et al., 2021).

Psychological capital comprises self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2021). Self-efficacy concerns confidence in one's capabilities, hope involves goal-directed determination and pathways, resilience reflects the ability to recover from difficulties, and optimism

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represents positive expectations about future outcomes. In this study, psychological capital is positioned as a mediating mechanism through which leadership and career development may influence personnel performance.

2.1.4 Personnel Performance

Personnel performance refers to the extent to which individuals fulfill their duties and contribute to organizational effectiveness through both work outcomes and supportive behaviors (Mangkunegara, 2022; Bakker & Demerouti, 2021). It includes task-related accomplishments as well as cooperation, compliance, and voluntary contributions that support organizational functioning (Triansyah et al., 2023). Organizational citizenship behavior is also relevant because employees' contributions to the broader work environment may improve organizational effectiveness beyond formally rewarded tasks (Robbins & Judge, 2021).

Performance is influenced by individual capabilities, motivation, psychological conditions, organizational support, and the work environment (Bakker & Demerouti, 2021; Harefa et al., 2024). Psychological well-being, job satisfaction, and trust in supervisors may also shape performance outcomes (Judge & Kammeyer-Mueller, 2021). Following Koopmans et al. (2021), this study measures personnel performance through task performance and contextual performance. Task performance concerns the effective, accurate, efficient, and timely completion of core responsibilities, whereas contextual performance includes cooperation, initiative, assistance to colleagues, and constructive interpersonal relationships.

2.2 Review of Empirical Studies

Recent empirical studies demonstrate the relevance of leadership and psychological resources in explaining employee performance across different organizational settings. Kusnadi et al. (2025), examining 387 manufacturing employees in Banten, Indonesia, identified relationships among psychological capital, authentic leadership, job satisfaction, work engagement, and job performance. Jia (2025) confirmed the mediating role of psychological capital between spiritual leadership and employee performance. Similarly, AlZoubi et al. (2025), studying 222 academic staff from 10 public higher education institutions in Jordan, found that psychological capital partially mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and adaptive performance. Mutonyi et al. (2025) also demonstrated that psychological capital mediated the relationship between leadership curiosity and creative performance among 181 hospitality employees, although psychological safety did not function as a mediator.

Career development and developmental leadership have also been associated with employee performance. Karmina et al. (2025), in a study of 72 civil servants at the Ministry of Religious Affairs in Rokan Hilir Regency, found that career development significantly influenced performance, whereas competence did not significantly mediate the relationship. Novitasari and Young (2025), examining 224 employees in an Indonesian manufacturing company, found that managerial coaching had positive direct and indirect effects on employee performance through psychological capital. Bai (2025), using 412 valid questionnaires and 15 in-depth interviews, found that transformational leadership positively influenced employee career growth, with knowledge sharing partially mediating the relationship. Self-efficacy moderated the relationship between transformational leadership and knowledge sharing, while psychological capital strengthened the relevant relationships and mediation mechanism.

Collectively, these studies support the importance of leadership, career development, and psychological capital in explaining employee outcomes. However, the studies differ in leadership styles, mediating mechanisms, dependent variables, and organizational settings. In particular, the simultaneous roles of leadership and career development in influencing personnel performance through psychological capital remain insufficiently examined in hierarchical and operationally demanding traffic-policing organizations.

2.3 Identification of the Research Gap

The existing literature reveals three research gaps. First, previous studies have examined various leadership approaches, including authentic leadership, spiritual leadership, inclusive leadership, managerial coaching, transformational leadership, and leadership curiosity (Kusnadi et al., 2025; Jia, 2025; AlZoubi et al., 2025; Novitasari & Young,

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2025; Bai, 2025; Mutonyi et al., 2025). However, limited evidence explains the integrated effects of leadership and career development on personnel performance through psychological capital.

Second, prior research has predominantly examined manufacturing, hospitality, higher education, and other organizational settings. Evidence concerning these relationships in hierarchical public-sector law-enforcement organizations remains limited. Traffic-policing personnel operate under pressure, maintain discipline, respond to unpredictable situations, and provide public services, making this context distinct from conventional organizational environments.

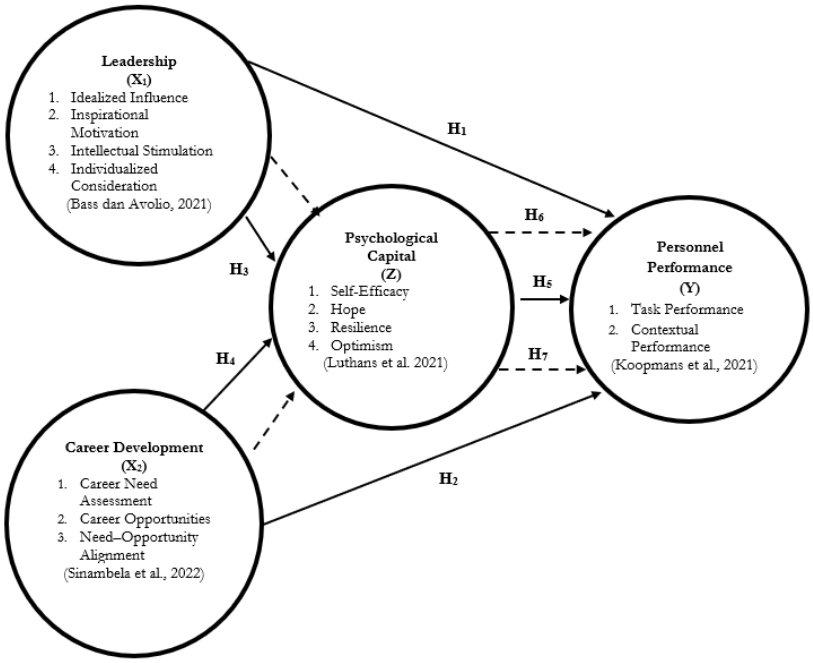
Third, previous studies have considered mediating mechanisms such as job satisfaction, work engagement, competence, knowledge sharing, and psychological safety. Although psychological capital has increasingly been recognized as a relevant mediator, its simultaneous role in linking leadership and career development with personnel performance has not been sufficiently examined in traffic policing.

Accordingly, this study integrates leadership and career development as organizational antecedents, psychological capital as an internal psychological mechanism, and personnel performance as the outcome within a single empirical model. It addresses these gaps by examining the direct and indirect relationships among the constructs in the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

2.4 Development of the Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework proposes that personnel performance is influenced by organizational resources and individual psychological resources. Leadership provides direction, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support, whereas career development provides opportunities for competency development, career progression, and alignment between individual aspirations and organizational needs. These conditions are expected to strengthen psychological capital, which subsequently supports task and contextual performance.

The framework specifies direct relationships from leadership and career development to personnel performance, as well as relationships from both organizational antecedents to psychological capital. Psychological capital is then expected to influence personnel performance and mediate the relationships between leadership and performance and between career development and performance. The model adopts the transformational leadership dimensions of idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 2021); career development dimensions of career need assessment, career opportunities, and need–opportunity alignment (Sinambela et al., 2022); psychological capital dimensions of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2021); and personnel performance dimensions of task and contextual performance (Koopmans et al., 2021).



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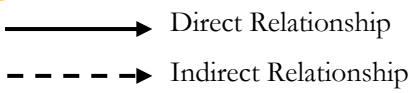


Fig. 1. Conceptual Framework

The conceptual framework above reflects the proposition that organizational factors alone may not fully explain personnel performance. Instead, their effects may operate partly through the psychological resources developed within personnel.

2.1 Hypotheses or Research Propositions

2.5.1 Leadership and Personnel Performance

Effective leadership provides direction, motivation, communication, and support that enable personnel to perform their responsibilities effectively. Transformational leadership encourages personnel to exceed routine expectations through inspiration, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Northouse, 2021; Yukl, 2020). Adaptive and collaborative leadership is also important in changing work environments (Adda, 2025), while transformational leadership has been associated with employee commitment and performance (Adda et al., 2022). Empirical findings further indicate that authentic leadership can contribute to performance through work engagement, inclusive leadership can improve adaptive performance, and transformational leadership is associated with employee career growth (Kusnadi et al., 2025; AlZoubi et al., 2025; Bai, 2025). These findings support the following hypothesis.

H1: Leadership has a positive effect on personnel performance at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

2.5.2 Career Development and Personnel Performance

Career development can improve performance by strengthening competence, professional readiness, motivation, and preparedness for greater responsibilities. It involves continuous learning and professional growth rather than promotion alone (De Vos et al., 2021; Spurk et al., 2021). Effective career development also supports adaptability and readiness to meet changing work demands (Akkermans et al., 2020). Empirically, Karmina et al. (2025) found that career development significantly influenced civil servant performance, while Bai (2025) identified a positive relationship involving transformational leadership and employee career growth. These findings suggest that structured career development can support improved work outcomes.

H2: Career development has a positive effect on personnel performance at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

2.5.3 Leadership and Psychological Capital

Leadership can strengthen psychological capital by creating supportive working conditions, communicating meaningful goals, and increasing personnel confidence and motivation. Psychological capital consists of self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism and can be developed through positive organizational experiences and leadership support (Luthans et al., 2021; Avey et al., 2021). Empirical findings indicate that authentic leadership is associated with psychological capital (Kusnadi et al., 2025), while inclusive leadership positively influences psychological capital (AlZoubi et al., 2025). Leadership practices that encourage support and positive interpersonal relationships may therefore strengthen personnel psychological resources.

H3: Leadership has a positive effect on personnel psychological capital at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

2.5.4 Career Development and Psychological Capital

Career development may strengthen psychological capital by providing opportunities to develop competencies, pursue attainable goals, and obtain meaningful work experiences. These opportunities can support self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2021). Sustainable career development can also improve individual confidence and readiness (Akkermans et al., 2020), while effective career development is associated with motivation, optimism, and resilience (Spurk et al., 2021). Supporting this relationship, Bai (2025) examined the connections among career growth, self-efficacy, and psychological capital, while Novitasari and Young (2025) demonstrated that developmental managerial practices enhanced

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psychological capital. Thus, career development aligned with individual needs and organizational opportunities is expected to strengthen personnel psychological resources.

H4: Career development has a positive effect on personnel psychological capital at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

2.5.5 Psychological Capital and Personnel Performance

Psychological capital provides resources that support motivation, persistence, adaptability, and effective responses to work demands. Self-efficacy strengthens confidence in performing tasks, hope supports goal attainment, resilience facilitates recovery from difficulties, and optimism encourages positive expectations about future outcomes (Luthans et al., 2021). These resources may improve work engagement and performance (Newman et al., 2022; Avey et al., 2021). Empirical evidence indicates that psychological capital is associated with performance through job satisfaction and work engagement (Kusnadi et al., 2025) and mediates the relationship between leadership curiosity and creative performance (Mutonyi et al., 2025). Psychological capital is therefore expected to contribute positively to personnel performance.

H5: Psychological capital has a positive effect on personnel performance at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

2.5.6 Leadership, Psychological Capital, and Personnel Performance

Leadership may influence personnel performance indirectly by strengthening psychological capital. Supportive and inspirational leadership can increase confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism, enabling personnel to respond more effectively to demanding work conditions (Yukl, 2020; Luthans et al., 2021). Empirical studies support this mediating mechanism: psychological capital partially mediated the relationship between inclusive leadership and adaptive performance (AlZoubi et al., 2025), mediated the relationship between leadership curiosity and creative performance (Mutonyi et al., 2025), and played a mediating role between spiritual leadership and employee performance (Jia, 2025). These findings suggest that leadership may improve performance partly through the development of positive psychological resources.

H6: Leadership has a positive effect on personnel performance through psychological capital at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

2.5.7 Career Development, Psychological Capital, and Personnel Performance

Career development may improve personnel performance indirectly by strengthening psychological capital. Opportunities for competency development, career progression, and meaningful work experiences can increase self-efficacy and hope while supporting resilience and optimism. These psychological resources subsequently facilitate motivation, persistence, adaptability, and effective task performance (Akkermans et al., 2020; Spurk et al., 2021). Bai (2025) demonstrated relationships among career growth, self-efficacy, knowledge sharing, and psychological capital, while Novitasari and Young (2025) found that psychological capital mediated the relationship between developmental managerial practices and employee performance. Career development may therefore improve performance through both professional growth and stronger psychological resources.

H7: Career development has a positive effect on personnel performance through psychological capital at the Traffic Directorate of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

3. Research Methods

3.1 Research Design

This study employed a quantitative descriptive-causal research design to examine the effects of leadership and career development on personnel performance, with psychological capital as a mediating variable. The descriptive approach characterized the conditions of the research variables, while the causal approach examined the hypothesized relationships among them using numerical data and statistical analysis. A quantitative approach was selected to measure these relationships objectively and systematically (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.2 Research Context and Setting

The study was conducted at the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police (Direktorat Lalu Lintas Polda Sulawesi Tengah). This setting was selected because personnel performance in traffic

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policing involves leadership, career development opportunities, and psychological resources under demanding operational conditions. The research covered six organizational units: Subbagrenmin, Bagbinopsnal, Subditkamsel, Subditgakkum, Subditregident, and Satuan Patroli Jalan Raya (Sat PJR). The organizational population comprised 90 personnel, consisting of 81 Polri personnel and 9 civil servants (ASN), based on organizational data from the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police (Direktorat Lalu Lintas Polda Sulawesi Tengah, 2026).

3.3 Population and Sample / Research Participants

The study population consisted of all 90 personnel assigned to the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police. Population refers to individuals or objects with specified characteristics from which research conclusions or generalizations are drawn (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). Given the relatively small and accessible population, saturated sampling (census sampling) was employed by including all population members as respondents. This approach provided comprehensive population coverage and reduced the possibility of excluding relevant participants (Priadana & Sunarsi, 2021). Accordingly, the study involved all 90 personnel.

3.4 Data Sources and Data Collection

The study used primary and secondary data. Primary data were collected through structured questionnaires measuring leadership, career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance. Secondary data were obtained from books, scientific journals, previous studies, organizational documents, official regulations, and performance records. Primary data originate directly from respondents, whereas secondary data are derived from existing documents and written sources (Muin, 2023).

Data were collected through questionnaires, observation, and documentation. Questionnaires served as the principal instrument, while observation provided contextual information about personnel activities and working conditions. Documentation supplied organizational records, performance reports, internal archives, and relevant regulations to support the interpretation and triangulation of research evidence (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.3 Measurement of Variables and Research Instruments

The study examined four constructs: leadership (X1) and career development (X2) as independent variables, psychological capital (Z) as the mediating variable, and personnel performance (Y) as the dependent variable. Leadership was measured through idealized influence, inspirational motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized consideration (Bass & Avolio, 2021). Career development comprised career need assessment, career opportunities, and need–opportunity alignment (Sinambela et al., 2022). Psychological capital included self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism (Luthans et al., 2021), while personnel performance comprised task performance and contextual performance (Koopmans et al., 2021).

The questionnaire consisted of 39 items: 12 for leadership, 9 for career development, 12 for psychological capital, and 6 for personnel performance. The indicators covered leadership integrity, direction, motivation, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support; career needs, potential, promotion, training, and alignment between capabilities and opportunities; psychological confidence, goal setting, persistence, resilience, adaptability, and optimism; and task-related performance and contextual behaviors, including coordination, compliance, and initiative.

All items were measured using a seven-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 7 (strongly agree), with intermediate categories representing varying degrees of disagreement and agreement and a neutral midpoint. This scale enabled systematic measurement of respondents' perceptions for quantitative analysis (Creswell & Creswell, 2023).

3.6 Data Analysis Techniques

Data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS. Descriptive analysis summarized response distributions and mean scores, interpreted using the following criteria: 1.00–2.20 (very low), 2.21–3.40 (low), 3.41–4.60 (moderate), 4.61–5.80 (high), and 5.81–7.00 (very high) (Hair et al., 2020).

SEM-PLS was used to assess measurement quality and structural relationships simultaneously.

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Its predictive orientation and relatively flexible distributional assumptions make it suitable for complex latent-variable models and relatively small samples, including samples below 100 respondents (Ghozali & Latan, 2021; Hair et al., 2020). The analysis comprised outer-model evaluation, inner-model assessment, and hypothesis testing through bootstrapping.

The outer model was assessed for convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability. Indicator loadings of at least 0.70 were considered adequate for convergent validity, while discriminant validity was evaluated using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. Reliability was assessed using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, with values above 0.70 indicating high Composite Reliability and values above 0.60 considered acceptable according to the criteria adopted in this study (Ghozali & Latan, 2021).

The inner model was evaluated using R-square (R^2) to determine the variance explained in endogenous constructs. R^2 values of 0.67, 0.33, and 0.19 represented high, moderate, and low explanatory strength, respectively (Ghozali & Latan, 2021). Hypotheses were tested using bootstrapping, with statistical significance assessed at the 5% level using a t-statistic greater than 1.96 and/or a p-value below 0.05 (Hair et al., 2020). The analysis examined seven hypotheses concerning the direct effects of leadership and career development on personnel performance (H1–H2), their effects on psychological capital (H3–H4), the effect of psychological capital on performance (H5), and the indirect effects of leadership and career development on performance through psychological capital (H6–H7). Direct effects were assessed through path coefficients, while mediation was examined through indirect effects.

3.7 Validity, Reliability, and Trustworthiness

The questionnaire was pilot-tested on 35 personnel from the Directorate of Community Development, Central Sulawesi Regional Police (Ditbinmas Polda Sulawesi Tengah). Item validity was assessed using Pearson correlation in SPSS Version 27, with a positive correlation coefficient of at least 0.30 considered acceptable. All questionnaire items exceeded this threshold. Reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha through a one-shot measurement procedure, with coefficients above 0.60 considered acceptable. The resulting coefficients were 0.773 for leadership, 0.693 for career development, 0.761 for psychological capital, and 0.622 for personnel performance. All constructs therefore met the study's specified reliability criteria. In the main SEM-PLS analysis, measurement quality was further assessed through convergent validity, discriminant validity, Composite Reliability, and Cronbach's Alpha to evaluate the adequacy and consistency of the reflective indicators (Ghozali & Latan, 2021).

3.8 Ethical Considerations

Ethical considerations were maintained throughout data collection and management. Participation was limited to personnel within the defined research population, and questionnaire responses were used exclusively for research purposes. Respondent information and organizational documents, including performance records, were handled confidentially and responsibly to minimize potential risks to participants and protect the integrity of the research process.

3.9 Research Procedure

The research was conducted in sequential stages. First, the research problem, objectives, variables, and hypotheses were established. Second, the research setting and population were identified, and the questionnaire was developed based on the operational definitions and indicators. Third, the instrument was pilot-tested on 35 personnel from Ditbinmas Polda Sulawesi Tengah, with validity and reliability assessed using SPSS Version 27. Fourth, the questionnaire was administered to all 90 personnel at the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police using saturated sampling. Fifth, questionnaire responses were supplemented with observational and documentary information. Finally, the data were analyzed using descriptive statistics and SEM-PLS with SmartPLS, including outer-model evaluation, inner-model assessment, and bootstrapping to test direct and indirect effects (Creswell & Creswell, 2023; Ghozali & Latan, 2021; Hair et al., 2020).

3.10 Methodological Limitations

This study has four methodological limitations. First, it was conducted within a single organization, the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police, which may limit

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generalizability to other institutions and geographical settings. Second, although saturated sampling covered the entire accessible population, the sample consisted of only 90 personnel. Third, the reliance on self-reported questionnaires may introduce individual perceptions and response tendencies. Fourth, the cross-sectional design captures relationships at a particular point in time and cannot fully establish changes over time. Future research could address these limitations through larger and more diverse samples, longitudinal designs, and complementary objective performance measures.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Research Results

4.1.1 Sample Description and Descriptive Statistics

a. Respondent Characteristics

The The study involved 90 respondents from the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police. Respondent characteristics were examined based on gender, age, highest educational attainment, and length of service to describe the composition of the research sample.

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	59	65.56
	Female	31	34.44
Age	18–25 years	12	13.33
	26–35 years	20	22.22
	36–45 years	32	35.56
	46–58 years	26	28.89
Education	Senior high school/vocational high school (SMA/SMK)	57	63.33
	Diploma IV/Bachelor's degree (DIV/S1)	25	27.78
	Master's degree (S2)	7	7.78
	Doctoral degree (S3)	1	1.11
Length of service	Less than 3 years	1	1.11
	4–6 years	10	11.11
	7–10 years	40	44.44
	More than 10 years	39	43.33

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026.

As shown in Table 1, the respondents were predominantly male (65.56%), aged 36–45 years (35.56%), and educated to senior high school/vocational high school level (63.33%). Regarding length of service, most respondents had worked for 7–10 years (44.44%) or more than 10 years (43.33%). These characteristics indicate that the sample was predominantly composed of experienced personnel, while also representing diversity in age, gender, and educational background.

b. Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive statistics were used to summarize respondents' assessments of leadership, career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance. The analysis focused on the mean scores of the four variables and their respective dimensions.

Table 2. Summary of Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Dimension	Mean	Category
Leadership (X1)	Idealized Influence	4.75	High
	Inspirational Motivation	4.76	High
	Intellectual Stimulation	4.75	High
	Individualized Consideration	4.73	High
	Overall mean	**4.75**	**High**
Career Development (X2)	Career Need Assessment	4.19	Moderate

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	Career Opportunities	4.19	Moderate
	Need–Opportunity Alignment	4.19	Moderate
	Overall mean	**4.19**	**Moderate**
Psychological Capital (Z)	Self-Efficacy	4.58	Moderate
	Hope	4.58	Moderate
	Resilience	4.57	Moderate
	Optimism	4.54	Moderate
	Overall mean	**4.57**	**Moderate**
Personnel Performance (Y)	Task Performance	4.36	Moderate
	Contextual Performance	4.39	Moderate
	Overall mean	**4.37**	**Moderate**

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026.

1) Leadership (X1)

Leadership obtained an overall mean score of 4.75, indicating a high level of positive perception among respondents. Inspirational Motivation recorded the highest dimension mean (4.76), while Individualized Consideration recorded the lowest (4.73), although both remained in the high category. The findings indicate that leadership was generally perceived positively, particularly in providing work direction and motivation. Nevertheless, individualized guidance and support for personnel development could be strengthened.

2) Career Development (X2)

Career development obtained an overall mean score of 4.19, categorized as moderate. All three dimensions—Career Need Assessment, Career Opportunities, and Need–Opportunity Alignment—recorded the same mean score of 4.19. These results indicate that career development practices were present but had not yet reached an optimal level. More systematic identification of personnel potential, expanded competency development opportunities, and continuous career planning could improve alignment between individual capabilities and organizational needs.

3) Psychological Capital (Z)

Psychological capital obtained an overall mean score of 4.57, categorized as moderate. Self-Efficacy and Hope recorded the highest dimension means (4.58), followed by Resilience (4.57) and Optimism (4.54). These findings indicate that personnel possessed psychological resources to support their work, although further improvement was needed in maintaining positive attitudes, sustaining effort when facing obstacles, and making decisions under pressure.

4) Personnel Performance (Y)

Personnel performance obtained an overall mean score of 4.37, categorized as moderate. Contextual Performance recorded a mean of 4.39, slightly higher than Task Performance at 4.36. The findings indicate that personnel generally fulfilled their responsibilities and complied with organizational rules, but improvements in task accuracy, consistency in law enforcement, and initiative remained necessary.

4.1.2 Data Quality and Preliminary Analysis

The measurement model was evaluated using PLS-SEM in SmartPLS 4. The assessment covered convergent validity, discriminant validity, and construct reliability to establish the adequacy of the measurement model before evaluating the structural relationships.

a. Convergent Validity

Convergent validity was assessed using outer loadings and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). The 39 indicators recorded outer loadings ranging from 0.784 to 0.912, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.70. The detailed outer loading results can be provided in an appendix or supplementary table.

Table 3. Convergent Validity and Construct Reliability

Variable	AVE	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability

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Leadership (X1)	0.734	0.967	0.968
Career Development (X2)	0.712	0.949	0.950
Psychological Capital (Z)	0.747	0.969	0.970
Personnel Performance (Y)	0.728	0.925	0.927

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026.

As presented in Table 3, AVE values ranged from 0.712 to 0.747, exceeding the minimum criterion of 0.50. These results indicate that all constructs met the convergent validity requirement.

b. Discriminant Validity

Discriminant validity was assessed using the Fornell–Larcker criterion. A construct satisfies this criterion when the square root of its AVE exceeds its correlations with other constructs.

Table 4. Fornell–Larcker Criterion

Variable	Leadership (X1)	Career Development (X2)	Psychological Capital (Z)	Personnel Performance (Y)
Leadership (X1)	**0.857**			
Career Development (X2)	0.422	**0.844**		
Psychological Capital (Z)	0.739	0.729	**0.865**	
Personnel Performance (Y)	0.717	0.817	0.856	**0.853**

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026. Bold diagonal values represent the square roots of AVE.

As shown in Table 4, the square roots of AVE were 0.857 for leadership, 0.844 for career development, 0.865 for psychological capital, and 0.853 for personnel performance. Each diagonal value exceeded the corresponding correlations with the other constructs. Therefore, all constructs satisfied the Fornell–Larcker criterion.

c. Construct Reliability

Construct reliability was evaluated using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability, as reported in Table 3. All Cronbach's Alpha values exceeded 0.60, while all Composite Reliability values exceeded 0.70. These results demonstrate satisfactory internal consistency, indicating that the indicators were sufficiently reliable for subsequent structural model assessment.

4.1.3 Main Analytical Results

Following the measurement model assessment, the structural model was evaluated to determine its explanatory capacity and predictive relevance.

a. R-Square

The coefficient of determination (R^2) was used to assess the proportion of variance in endogenous constructs explained by their predictors.

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination and Predictive Relevance

Measure	Construct	Value
R^2	Psychological Capital (Z)	0.758
R^2	Personnel Performance (Y)	0.859
Q^2	Overall model calculation	0.966

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026.

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The R^2 value for psychological capital was 0.758, indicating that leadership and career development jointly explained 75.8% of its variance, while the remaining 24.2% was attributable to factors outside the model. For personnel performance, the R^2 value of 0.859 indicated that leadership, career development, and psychological capital jointly explained 85.9% of its variance, with 14.1% attributable to other factors.

b. Q-Square

Predictive relevance was calculated using the following formula:

[
Q^2=1-[(1-R_1^2)(1-R_2^2)]
]

[
Q^2=1-[(1-0.758)(1-0.859)]
]

[
Q^2=1-(0.242\times0.141)=0.966
]

The resulting Q^2 value was 0.966, indicating high predictive relevance according to the calculation adopted in this study. This result suggests that the proposed model demonstrated strong predictive capacity for psychological capital and personnel performance.

4.1.4 Hypothesis Testing Results / Key Findings

Hypotheses were tested using the bootstrapping procedure in SmartPLS 4. Statistical significance was assessed at the 5% level, using a t-statistic greater than 1.96 and a p-value below 0.05.

a. Direct Effects

Table 6. Direct Effect Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Coefficient (O)	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
H1	Leadership → Personnel Performance	0.290	5.289	0.000	Supported
H2	Career Development → Personnel Performance	0.468	8.318	0.000	Supported
H3	Leadership → Psychological Capital	0.525	8.778	0.000	Supported
H4	Career Development → Psychological Capital	0.507	8.707	0.000	Supported
H5	Psychological Capital → Personnel Performance	0.311	4.457	0.000	Supported

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026.

Table 6 shows that all five direct relationships were positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). Leadership positively influenced personnel performance ($\beta = 0.290$, $t = 5.289$), supporting H1. Career development also had a positive effect on personnel performance ($\beta = 0.468$, $t = 8.318$), supporting H2.

Leadership positively influenced psychological capital ($\beta = 0.525$, $t = 8.778$), supporting H3, while career development also had a positive effect on psychological capital ($\beta = 0.507$, $t = 8.707$), supporting H4. Finally, psychological capital positively influenced personnel performance ($\beta = 0.311$, $t = 4.457$), supporting H5. Thus, all five direct-effect hypotheses were supported.

b. Indirect Effects

The indirect-effect analysis examined whether psychological capital mediated the relationships between leadership and career development and personnel performance.

Table 7. Indirect Effect Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Structural Path	Coefficient (O)	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
H6	Leadership → Psychological Capital → Personnel Performance	0.163	3.903	0.000	Supported

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H7	Career Development → Psychological Capital → Personnel Performance	0.158	3.965	0.000	Supported

Source: Primary Data Processed, 2026.

As presented in Table 7, both indirect effects were positive and statistically significant ($p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of leadership on personnel performance through psychological capital was 0.163 ($t = 3.903$), supporting H6. Similarly, career development had a positive indirect effect on personnel performance through psychological capital of 0.158 ($t = 3.965$), supporting H7.

These findings indicate that psychological capital serves as a significant mediating mechanism linking both leadership and career development with personnel performance. Consequently, all seven research hypotheses were supported.

4.2 Research Discussion

4.2.1 Interpretation of Key Findings

a. Leadership and Personnel Performance

The first hypothesis (H1) was supported, with a positive path coefficient of 0.290, a t-statistic of 5.289, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that leadership positively influences personnel performance at the Directorate of Traffic of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police. Effective leadership contributes to performance by providing clear direction, exemplary behavior, motivation, decision-making support, and attention to personnel development. These functions are particularly relevant in traffic policing, where personnel must demonstrate discipline, accuracy, responsibility, and responsiveness to changing operational conditions.

The descriptive results reinforce this finding, with leadership obtaining a mean score of 4.75, categorized as high. Inspirational Motivation recorded the highest dimension mean (4.76), while Individualized Consideration recorded the lowest (4.73). Although leadership was generally perceived positively, decisiveness, encouragement of new ideas, achievement of work targets, and individualized guidance remain areas for improvement. The respondent profile, characterized by relatively mature age groups and substantial work experience, further highlights the importance of leadership that accommodates differences in personnel capabilities, experience, and development needs.

These findings are consistent with Kusnadi et al. (2025), who identified relationships between authentic leadership, psychological and work-related factors, and performance. AlZoubi et al. (2025) demonstrated that inclusive leadership positively influences adaptive performance, while Jia (2025) identified psychological capital as a mechanism linking leadership with employee performance. Collectively, these findings reinforce the importance of leadership in strengthening personnel performance, both directly and through the development of positive psychological resources.

b. Career Development and Personnel Performance

The second hypothesis (H2) was supported, with a positive path coefficient of 0.468, a t-statistic of 8.318, and a p-value of 0.000. The results demonstrate that career development positively influences personnel performance. In traffic policing, career development can strengthen professional capabilities, discipline, and readiness to respond to operational demands through career-needs assessment, competency development, work experience, and alignment between personnel potential and career opportunities.

Career development obtained a mean score of 4.19, categorized as moderate. The three dimensions—Career Need Assessment, Career Opportunities, and Need–Opportunity Alignment—each recorded a mean of 4.19. These findings indicate that career development practices have been implemented but require further improvement, particularly in systematic identification of personnel potential, access to competency-enhancing training, and continuity of professional development. Given the respondents' relatively extensive work experience and diverse educational backgrounds, career development should accommodate individual capabilities while remaining aligned with organizational requirements.

This finding is consistent with Karmina et al. (2025), who found that career development positively and significantly affects civil servant performance. Bai (2025) also identified a positive relationship involving employee career growth and psychological factors. The present results extend this evidence by demonstrating that career development is directly associated with personnel performance in

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a public-sector law-enforcement setting, emphasizing the importance of structured development opportunities and appropriate alignment between personnel capabilities and job responsibilities.

c. Leadership and Psychological Capital

The third hypothesis (H3) was supported, with a positive path coefficient of 0.525, a t-statistic of 8.778, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that leadership positively influences psychological capital. Leaders who provide exemplary behavior, clear direction, motivation, opportunities to express ideas, and individualized support can strengthen personnel's self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism. These resources are particularly important in traffic policing, where personnel face operational pressure and unpredictable field conditions.

Psychological capital obtained a mean score of 4.57, categorized as moderate. Self-Efficacy and Hope recorded the highest dimension means (4.58), while Optimism recorded the lowest (4.54). Although personnel demonstrated confidence and goal orientation, their ability to maintain positive attitudes and make decisions under pressure could be strengthened. Leadership support, constructive feedback, coaching, and opportunities to learn from work experiences may help personnel sustain confidence and resilience.

The findings are consistent with AlZoubi et al. (2025), who demonstrated the importance of inclusive leadership and psychological capital in explaining adaptive performance. Jia (2025) also identified psychological capital as an important mechanism linking leadership with employee performance, while Mutonyi et al. (2025) found that psychological capital mediates the relationship between leadership behavior and creative performance. These findings support the argument that leadership contributes not only to task direction but also to the development of psychological resources that help personnel manage work demands.

d. Career Development and Psychological Capital

The fourth hypothesis (H4) was supported, with a positive path coefficient of 0.507, a t-statistic of 8.707, and a p-value of 0.000. The findings demonstrate that career development positively influences psychological capital. Clear career directions, opportunities for competency improvement, and alignment between personnel potential and career opportunities can strengthen confidence, hope for professional growth, resilience when facing obstacles, and optimism regarding future development.

The moderate mean score for career development (4.19) indicates that existing practices have not yet reached an optimal level. Similarly, psychological capital remained moderate at 4.57, with optimism representing the lowest dimension. These results suggest that more systematic potential mapping, equitable access to training and work experience, and continuous career development may help strengthen personnel's psychological resources. Such opportunities are especially relevant for personnel with substantial work experience who require continued competency development and clear professional directions.

Bai (2025) demonstrated relationships among transformational leadership, employee career growth, and psychological capital, while Kusnadi et al. (2025) identified psychological capital as an important factor associated with positive work-related outcomes. The present findings complement this evidence by demonstrating that career development directly contributes to psychological capital in a traffic-policing context. Career development therefore serves not only as a means of preparing personnel for positions but also as an organizational resource that supports psychological readiness and professional motivation.

e. Psychological Capital and Personnel Performance

The fifth hypothesis (H5) was supported, with a positive path coefficient of 0.311, a t-statistic of 4.457, and a p-value of 0.000. This result indicates that psychological capital positively influences personnel performance. Personnel with confidence in their abilities, clear goals, resilience, and positive expectations are better equipped to manage operational demands, maintain responsibility under pressure, and adapt to changing traffic conditions.

The descriptive results show that psychological capital was moderate (4.57), while personnel performance was also moderate (4.37). Contextual Performance recorded a mean of 4.39,

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slightly exceeding Task Performance at 4.36. These findings indicate that personnel generally complied with organizational rules and coordinated their activities, although improvements in task accuracy, consistency in law enforcement, and initiative remain necessary. The relatively lower optimism score further suggests the need to strengthen personnel's ability to maintain positive attitudes and motivation when encountering difficulties.

The findings are consistent with Kusnadi et al. (2025), who identified relationships between psychological capital and performance-related outcomes. Jia (2025) demonstrated the importance of psychological capital in explaining employee performance, while Novitasari and Young (2025) found that psychological capital mediates the relationship between managerial coaching and employee performance. Mutonyi et al. (2025) likewise identified its mediating role in the relationship between leadership and creative performance. Together, these findings reinforce psychological capital as an important individual resource supporting effective task implementation and performance consistency.

f. Leadership, Psychological Capital, and Personnel Performance

The sixth hypothesis (H6) was supported, with an indirect path coefficient of 0.163, a t-statistic of 3.903, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding demonstrates that leadership influences personnel performance indirectly through psychological capital, in addition to its direct effect. Leadership practices that provide direction, motivation, exemplary behavior, intellectual stimulation, and individualized support can strengthen personnel's confidence, hope, resilience, and optimism, which subsequently support effective task implementation.

The descriptive findings provide further context: leadership was categorized as high, whereas psychological capital and personnel performance were categorized as moderate. This difference suggests that positive leadership perceptions coexist with opportunities to strengthen personnel psychological resources and performance. In particular, individualized guidance, confidence in operational decision-making, resilience under pressure, and optimism require continued attention. Leadership practices that combine clear performance expectations with coaching, constructive feedback, and opportunities to develop ideas may help translate leadership quality into more consistent performance.

The result is consistent with AlZoubi et al. (2025), who found that psychological capital mediates the relationship between inclusive leadership and adaptive performance. Jia (2025) also identified a mediating role for psychological capital between spiritual leadership and employee performance, while Novitasari and Young (2025) demonstrated mediation in the relationship between managerial coaching and employee performance. Mutonyi et al. (2025) similarly identified psychological capital as a mechanism connecting leadership behavior with creative performance. The present study extends this evidence by confirming the indirect leadership–performance relationship within a public-sector traffic-policing organization.

g. Career Development, Psychological Capital, and Personnel Performance

The The seventh hypothesis (H7) was supported, with an indirect path coefficient of 0.158, a t-statistic of 3.965, and a p-value of 0.000. This finding indicates that career development influences personnel performance indirectly through psychological capital. Career-needs assessment, competency-development opportunities, and alignment between personnel potential and career opportunities can strengthen self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism, which subsequently support personnel performance.

Career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance were all categorized as moderate, with mean scores of 4.19, 4.57, and 4.37, respectively. These results indicate that opportunities for improvement remain across organizational development practices and personnel outcomes. More systematic identification of competency needs, equitable access to training, and continuous career development may strengthen psychological resources and enable personnel to translate professional development into improved task implementation.

The findings are related to Bai (2025), who identified relationships among employee career growth, transformational leadership, and psychological capital, and Karmina et al. (2025), who demonstrated a positive and significant effect of career development on civil servant performance. The present study extends these findings by

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establishing psychological capital as a mediating mechanism through which career development contributes to personnel performance. Thus, career development can support performance not only through improved capabilities and career readiness but also through the psychological resources needed to manage work demands.

4.2.2 Comparison with Previous Studies

The findings are broadly consistent with previous studies emphasizing leadership, career development, and psychological capital as important factors associated with employee performance. Kusnadi et al. (2025) identified relationships among authentic leadership, psychological capital, work-related attitudes, and performance. AlZoubi et al. (2025) found that inclusive leadership contributes to adaptive performance and that psychological capital partially mediates this relationship. These findings support the present results concerning the direct effect of leadership on performance and the mediating role of psychological capital.

The significant relationship between leadership and psychological capital also aligns with AlZoubi et al. (2025). Furthermore, Jia (2025), who examined 2,357 government employees in China, demonstrated the importance of psychological capital in explaining job performance in the public sector. The present study extends this evidence to police personnel, whose duties involve discipline, rapid decision-making, traffic management, and law enforcement.

The findings concerning career development complement Karmina et al. (2025), Bai (2025), Mutonyi et al. (2025), and Novitasari and Young (2025), whose studies emphasize the relevance of organizational support, employee development, and psychological resources to positive work outcomes. By examining leadership and career development simultaneously, the present study provides an integrated explanation of their direct effects on personnel performance and their indirect effects through psychological capital.

Overall, the study contributes to previous research by integrating leadership, career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance in a single model. Whereas previous studies examined selected relationships among these constructs or focused on other occupational contexts, the present study demonstrates that psychological capital mediates both the leadership–performance and career-development–performance relationships within the Directorate of Traffic of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police.

4.2.3 Theoretical Contributions

The findings provide several theoretical contributions. First, the positive and significant effects of leadership on personnel performance and psychological capital reinforce the theoretical proposition that organizational leadership can influence both behavioral outcomes and employees' psychological resources. The finding extends the leadership–performance perspective by demonstrating that leadership operates not only through direct behavioral or task-related mechanisms but also through psychological conditions represented by psychological capital.

Second, the significant relationship between career development and personnel performance confirms that career development constitutes an important organizational mechanism for strengthening individual capability and work outcomes. The significant effect of career development on psychological capital further extends this perspective by demonstrating that career development can shape positive psychological resources. Career development therefore has relevance beyond promotion or position advancement because it can contribute to self-efficacy, hope, resilience, and optimism.

Third, the significant effect of psychological capital on personnel performance confirms the importance of positive psychological resources in explaining performance. The findings demonstrate that personnel performance is associated not only with organizational factors but also with the psychological capacity of individuals to manage work demands, maintain goals, adapt to difficulties, and remain positive.

Fourth, the significant indirect effects establish psychological capital as a mediating mechanism linking leadership and career development with personnel performance. This finding integrates organizational and individual-level explanations of performance by demonstrating that leadership and career development can shape psychological resources, which subsequently contribute to performance. The study therefore provides an integrated perspective in which

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organizational conditions and individual psychological resources jointly explain personnel performance in a police traffic context.

4.2.4 Practical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest four practical priorities for the Directorate of Traffic of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police. First, leadership development should strengthen decisiveness, individualized guidance, intellectual stimulation, and motivation oriented toward measurable work outcomes. Although leadership was rated highly, these areas could improve the consistency of personnel performance.

Second, career-development policies should emphasize systematic mapping of personnel potential and competency needs, equitable access to training and work experience, transparent promotion opportunities, and continuous professional development. Aligning personnel capabilities with job assignments can improve the use of available competencies and support organizational requirements.

Third, psychological-capital development should be integrated into personnel management, with particular attention to optimism, resilience under pressure, sustained effort when facing obstacles, and confidence in operational decision-making. Coaching, constructive communication, recognition, and opportunities to learn from work experiences may help strengthen these resources.

Fourth, performance improvement should combine organizational and psychological approaches. Because psychological capital mediates the effects of leadership and career development on personnel performance, improvements in leadership and career-development practices should be accompanied by initiatives that strengthen personnel psychological readiness.

4.2.5 Integration with the Research Gap

This study addresses the research gap concerning the integrated relationships among leadership, career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance in a specific police traffic context. Although previous studies have examined these constructs in various organizational settings, evidence concerning their simultaneous relationships within a hierarchical and operationally demanding law-enforcement organization remains limited.

The findings demonstrate that leadership and career development influence both psychological capital and personnel performance, while psychological capital mediates the effects of both organizational factors on performance. By examining these relationships within the Directorate of Traffic of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police, the study provides a more integrated explanation of how organizational support can be translated into performance through positive psychological resources.

4.2.6 Acknowledgement of Study Limitations

Several limitations should be considered when interpreting the findings. First, the study focused on the Directorate of Traffic of the Central Sulawesi Regional Police, limiting the extent to which the findings can be generalized to other police units or organizations with different structures, tasks, and personnel conditions. Second, the moderate levels of psychological capital and personnel performance represent the conditions observed in the study context and should not be interpreted as permanent characteristics. These conditions may change with leadership practices, career-development policies, and operational demands.

Third, although the proposed model demonstrates significant relationships and identifies psychological capital as a mediator, other organizational and individual factors may also influence personnel performance. The findings therefore explain the relationships specified in the research model rather than providing an exhaustive account of all performance determinants.

Overall, the study demonstrates that personnel performance is associated with the interaction between organizational support and individual psychological resources. Leadership and career development have significant direct effects on personnel performance and psychological capital, while psychological capital contributes to performance and mediates both relationships. These findings highlight the importance of strengthening leadership quality, career-development practices, and personnel psychological resources as complementary approaches to improving performance.

5. Conclusion

5.1 Summary of Key Findings

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This study demonstrates that leadership and career development have positive and significant effects on personnel performance and psychological capital at the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police. Psychological capital also positively and significantly affects personnel performance, while mediating the relationships between leadership and performance and between career development and performance. These findings indicate that leadership and career development contribute to performance both directly and indirectly by strengthening personnel psychological resources.

5.2 Theoretical Contributions

This study contributes to organizational behavior literature by integrating leadership, career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance into a single analytical framework. The findings highlight psychological capital as an important mechanism linking organizational practices with individual performance. By demonstrating its mediating role, this study extends the understanding of how leadership and career development can improve performance, particularly in the context of police personnel.

5.3 Practical and Policy Implications

The findings suggest four practical priorities for the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police. First, leadership practices should be strengthened through clear work guidance, decisive decision-making, open communication, measurable performance targets, and individualized coaching. Second, career development should be more structured, transparent, and competency-based through regular personnel assessments, relevant training, mentoring, and objective promotion criteria.

Third, psychological capital should be developed by strengthening *self-efficacy*, *hope*, *resilience*, and *optimism*. Delegation, constructive feedback, leadership support, and recognition of achievements can help personnel build confidence and cope with operational challenges. Particular attention should be given to optimism. Fourth, performance management should use clear and measurable indicators, periodic evaluations, constructive feedback, consistent supervision, and appropriate recognition. These measures can improve task accuracy, compliance, coordination, initiative, and overall performance.

5.4 Limitations of the Study

This study focuses on personnel at the Directorate of Traffic, Central Sulawesi Regional Police; therefore, its findings may not be generalizable to other police units or organizational settings with different operational conditions and management practices. In addition, the analytical framework examines only leadership, career development, psychological capital, and personnel performance. Other potentially relevant factors, including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, workload, organizational culture, and organizational support, were not included.

5.5 Directions for Future Research

Future research should incorporate additional organizational and individual factors, such as job satisfaction, organizational commitment, workload, organizational culture, and organizational support, to provide a more comprehensive explanation of personnel performance. Studies involving other police units and institutional settings could also test the consistency of the relationships identified in this study. Furthermore, mixed-methods research is recommended to complement quantitative findings with qualitative insights into personnel experiences, leadership practices, career development processes, and the role of psychological capital in daily police duties.

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