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Competency-Based Internal Mobility as a Pathway Linking Organizational Restructuring to Employee Performance: Evidence from a Public Sector Agency

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Abstract: Organizational restructuring and internal mobility policies in the public sector create significant human resource management challenges, particularly regarding employee competency alignment and performance outcomes. This study examines the effect of organizational restructuring and internal mobility on employee performance with competency as a mediating variable among civil servants at the Geospatial Information Agency of Indonesia following its 2023 restructuring. Using a quantitative approach with Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) methodology, data were collected from 195 civil servants directly affected by restructuring and internal mobility. The results reveal that: (1) restructuring significantly and positively influences internal mobility ($\beta = 0.348$, $p < 0.001$); (2) neither restructuring nor internal mobility directly and significantly affects employee performance; (3) employee competency is the strongest direct determinant of performance ($\beta = 0.650$, $p < 0.001$); and (4) competency significantly mediates the relationships between restructuring and employee performance ($\beta = 0.296$, $p < 0.001$) and between internal mobility and employee performance ($\beta = 0.223$, $p < 0.001$). These findings suggest that structural changes alone are not directly associated with higher individual performance; instead, competency appears to play an important intermediary role in the relationships between restructuring, internal mobility, and performance. The study contributes novel empirical evidence on competency-mediated performance dynamics in public sector restructuring contexts, with practical implications for merit-based civil service management.

Keywords: Competency, Employee Performance, Internal Mobility, Organizational Restructuring, Public Sector

INTRODUCTION

Public sector organizations worldwide are navigating a permanent state of transition (Selvakumar et al., 2025). Driven by the "siren call" of New Public Management (NPM) and the modern imperative for "agile governance", government agencies frequently resort to structural reorganization as a panacea for inefficiency (Peters, 2019; Di Mascio & Natalini, 2016). However, a persistent paradox remains: while the lines on organizational charts are easily redrawn, the human performance they are meant to optimize often falters in the wake of such changes. In the Indonesian context, this tension is particularly acute as the nation pursues its "Indonesia Emas 2045" vision, which demands a bureaucracy that is not only lean but also exceptionally professional and competent (Abadi & Dewi, 2024; Abadi et al., 2022).

The legal architecture for this transformation was solidified through Government Regulation No. 17/2020 and, more recently, Law No. 20 of 2023, which emphasizes a strict merit-based system for the State Civil Apparatus (Dewi, Virdaus, & Pratama, 2026). These mandates aim to eliminate patronage and ensure that every appointment, promotion, and transfer is based on demonstrable competence and performance (Rahman, Wantu, & Abdussamad, 2026). Yet, as agencies scramble to align with these new standards, they often focus on the mechanics of restructuring—expanding or merging directorates—while neglecting the intervening mechanisms that translate structure into results.

The Geospatial Information Agency serves as a critical case study for this phenomenon. As the primary provider of the geospatial data foundation required for national development, Geospatial Information Agency operational efficiency is a strategic necessity for the 2025–2029 National Medium-Term Development Plan (Utama & Sutanta, 2025). To meet these high-stakes demands, Geospatial Information Agency underwent a comprehensive reorganization under Agency Regulation No. 7 of 2023, expanding its internal structure from 12 to 15 work units.

This structural expansion was followed by an unprecedented wave of internal mobility. In July 2024, under Head of Agency Decree No. 133/2024, the agency implemented a mass redistribution policy for 681 employees affecting a substantial proportion of civil servants. This large-scale movement represents a substantial effort to reallocate human resources following organizational restructuring. However, the immediate aftermath revealed a transitional performance dynamic following organizational restructuring. Rather than a surge in productivity, Geospatial Information Agency witnessed “a temporary decline in employee evaluation outcomes during the transition period: The proportion of employees rated 'below satisfactory' shows a gradual increase over the 2022–2024 period—a trajectory signaling that organizational restructuring, in isolation, may be insufficient to drive performance improvement. Concurrently, employee satisfaction surveys on internal mobility services indicated relatively moderate satisfaction scores indicating areas for improvement, and in addition, a modest increase in inter-unit and inter-agency mobility was observed following the restructuring period, which may reflect evolving career considerations during organizational transition.

To understand why massive structural change did not immediately translate into observable performance gains at Geospatial Information Agency, we must look at the "Internal Labour Market Churn" concept. MacKenzie and McLachlan (2023) argue that while internal redeployment is a traditional tool for flexibility, frequent restructuring can lead to a sense of "churning" that mirrors the insecurity of external markets. At the Geospatial Information Agency, the scale of employee mobility may have created adjustment challenges associated with large-scale workforce redeployment. Furthermore, the logic of resource redeployability suggests that while flexibility is a "switching option" that creates value under uncertainty, it can also lower a firm's perceived commitment to specific strategic positions. When applied to the public sector, if employees are moved across units without regard for their specialized skills,

the organization gains structural flexibility but loses "competency alignment" (Zulhakim & Yogopriyatno, 2025).

This study posits that competency acts as the "mediating bridge" in this causal chain. As Naim and Lenka (2020) demonstrated, competency development is a critical mediator that strengthens the link between talent management practices and organizational outcomes like employee retention and performance. Without this bridge, restructuring is merely "moving boxes", and mobility is merely "moving people". Despite the theoretical consensus that competency is vital, empirical evidence simultaneously examining the indirect pathways from restructuring and internal mobility to performance remains scarce, particularly within the Indonesian public sector (Wardiyanto et al., 2025). The current reform agenda, while legally robust, often operates on the assumption that structural change automatically leads to performance improvement.

The observed performance dynamics at the Geospatial Information Agency—along with indications of evolving employee perceptions—are also reflected in a gradual increase in internal and inter-agency mobility, which has been on the rise between 2024 and early 2025. Based on data from the Geospatial Information Agency (2025), this pattern can be interpreted as part of a broader adjustment process following large-scale organizational change. Such dynamics are commonly observed in public sector restructuring contexts and do not necessarily indicate organizational dysfunction. These conditions highlight the importance of understanding whether performance outcomes during restructuring are driven by structural changes themselves or by the extent to which those changes are aligned with employee competencies.

The study's primary objectives are: (1) to analyze the effect of organizational restructuring and internal mobility on employee performance, both directly and indirectly through competency mediation; and (2) to test whether competency functions as a full or partial mediator in the restructuring-performance and internal mobility-performance relationships. Findings are expected to contribute to theory by clarifying the mechanism through which structural changes translate—or fail to translate—into performance outcomes, and to practice by guiding competency-based talent management policies during organizational transition.

In this study, organizational restructuring is operationalized as the deliberate reconfiguration of an organization's structure, processes, and human resources to enhance efficiency, adaptability, and strategic alignment (McGrath & O'Neill, 2025; Nour & Arbussà, 2024). Men et al. (2025) conceptualize administrative restructuring along three dimensions: ownership (employee sense of belonging to the new structure), responsibility (clarity of roles and accountability), and coordination (inter-unit collaboration mechanisms). In the public sector, restructuring frequently manifests as reorganization, functional redefinition, and reallocation of positions—processes that directly trigger internal mobility (MacKenzie & McLachlan, 2022).

Then, internal mobility encompasses the movement of employees across roles, functions, or work units within an organization (Ray, 2024; Bidwell & Mollick, 2015; Ray et al., 2023). Bossi et al. (2022) link internal mobility outcomes to three experiential dimensions: job satisfaction, communication satisfaction, and workplace inclusion. Research consistently identifies skill-job fit as the most critical predictor of post-mobility performance (Sabel & Sasson, 2023; Tammubua et al., 2025), while inadequate competency-based placement processes can result in mismatch, role confusion, and reduced productivity (Ariyanto et al., 2025; Sudiantini et al., 2023).

Meanwhile, competency represents the integrated combination of knowledge, skills, behaviors, and personal attributes enabling effective job performance (Spencer & Spencer, 1993). Naim and Lenka (2018) decompose competency into three dimensions particularly relevant to dynamic organizational contexts: personal competence (adaptability, self-development, stress management), professional competence (technical mastery, problem-

solving, role understanding), and social competence (collaboration, communication, cross-unit coordination). These dimensions collectively determine employees' capacity to absorb and respond to organizational changes, making competency a theoretically plausible mediator between structural changes and performance outcomes.

Furthermore, employee performance is operationalized as the extent to which individuals achieve organizationally-set targets across dimensions of quantity, quality, timeliness, and resource efficiency (Qureshi & Tasneem, 2021). In public sector contexts, performance is shaped not only by individual capability but also by organizational support structures, role clarity, and the quality of HR systems (Notanubun et al., 2019; Tammubua et al., 2025).

METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using Structural Equation Modeling–Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) with SmartPLS 4.0. The research was conducted at Geospatial Information Agency headquarters in Cibinong, West Java, Indonesia, from November to December 2025. The population comprised 681 civil servants directly affected by both the 2023 restructuring and the 2024 internal mobility policy. Using the inverse square root method at a 5% significance level, the minimum required sample size was estimated at 155 respondents. A total of 195 valid responses were obtained through purposive sampling using an online questionnaire. Eligible respondents had at least two years of tenure and had experienced both organizational restructuring and internal mobility.

The measurement instrument comprised four constructs: Restructuring (12 indicators across ownership, responsibility, coordination, communication, training, and HR system alignment dimensions; Men et al., 2025; Cascio, 2002); Internal Mobility (11 indicators across skill-job fit, career progression, job satisfaction, communication satisfaction, and inclusion dimensions; Bossi et al., 2022); Competency (14 indicators across personal, professional, and social competence dimensions; Naim & Lenka, 2018); and Employee Performance (8 indicators across quantity, quality, timeliness, and resource efficiency dimensions) (see Table 1). All items used a 5-point Likert scale. Following initial validity screening (r-hitung > r-table = 0.361), seven indicators with outer loadings below 0.70 were removed, yielding final constructs of 11 (restructuring), 10 (internal mobility), 9 (competency), and 8 (performance) indicators. To address potential concerns regarding measurement artifacts, this study conducted Harman's single-factor test, thereby confirming that common method bias does not significantly threaten the validity of the reported relationships.

Table 1. Concept operationalization

Variable	Dimensions	Indicators
Restructuring	Ownership	Employee involvement in change planning
		Sense of ownership of new structures and functions
	Responsibility	Clarity of new roles and responsibilities
		Accountability for post-restructuring work results
	Coordination	Coordination between units or between positions in the new structure
		Cross-sector workflow alignment
	Communication	Information about the restructuring is conveyed openly
		Transparency of change information to employees
	Training	Availability of training to understand new roles and systems
		Relevance of training to improving work skills
	HR System Alignment	Adaptation of the assessment and reward system to the new structure
		Changes to recruitment, transfer and career systems according to organizational needs
Competence	Personal Competence	Ability to learn new things
		Ability to develop oneself
		Ability to adapt to change
		Readiness to be creative

Variable	Dimensions	Indicators
		Ability to manage stress
		Confidence in action
	Professional Competence	Mastery of technical skills
		Ability to solve problems
		Understanding of job responsibilities
	Social Competence	Ability to understand organizational culture and values
		Ability to work in a team
		Conflict resolution skills
		Ability to collaborate across departments
		Effective communication skills
Performance	Quantity of Work	The number of tasks completed is in accordance with the given target
		Monthly/quarterly work targets are consistently achieved
		Capacity to complete more than one major task
	Quality of Work	Accuracy and precision of work results
		Work according to the quality standards set by the organization
		The output achieved has added value for the work unit
	Punctuality	Compliance of completion time with target
	Resource Efficiency	Optimizing the use of resources in carrying out tasks
Internal Mobility	Skill–Job Fit	Job suitability with skills and experience
		Utilization of employee competencies in new positions
		Placement according to the employee's abilities and work experience
	Career Progression	Career development opportunities
		Opportunities for career advancement
	Organizational Commitment	Strengthening loyalty to the organization after the transfer
	Job Satisfaction	Job satisfaction in new position
		Perceptions of the meaning and added value of post-transfer work
	Communication Satisfaction	Communication with superiors and colleagues in the new unit is going well
	Inclusion	A sense of acceptance and inclusion in the new work environment
		Level of integration within a new team or work unit

This study formulates a research model (see Figure 1) with six hypotheses are formulated:

H1: Organizational restructuring positively affects internal mobility.
H2: Organizational restructuring positively affects employee performance.
H3: Internal mobility positively affects employee performance.
H4: Competency positively affects employee performance.
H5: Competency mediates the effect of restructuring on employee performance.
H6: Competency mediates the effect of internal mobility on employee performance.

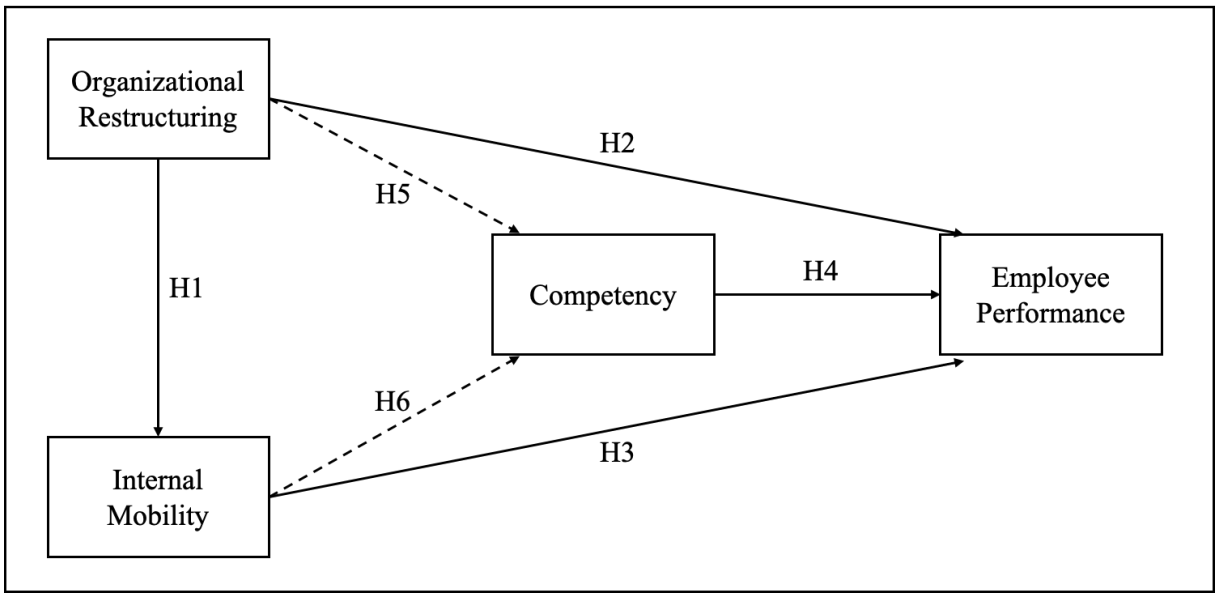

Figure 1. Research Model

For data analysis, SEM-PLS evaluation followed the two-stage approach: outer model assessment (convergent validity via outer loading ≥ 0.70 and AVE ≥ 0.50; discriminant validity via HTMT and Fornell-Larcker criterion; reliability via Cronbach's α ≥ 0.70 and CR ≥ 0.70) and inner model assessment (R^2, path coefficients, f^2, Q^2). Mediation was assessed through bootstrapping-derived indirect effects (5,000 sub-samples).

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Measurement Model (Outer Model) Evaluation

Table 2 presents convergent validity and reliability indicators. All AVE values exceed the 0.50 threshold (Hair et al., 2022), confirming convergent validity. Cronbach's α and composite reliability (CR) values uniformly exceed 0.90, indicating excellent internal consistency.

Table 2. Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's α	CR (ρc)	AVE
Internal Mobility	0.933	0.942	0.621
Employee Performance	0.929	0.942	0.669
Competency	0.922	0.936	0.618
Restructuring	0.934	0.943	0.601

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Discriminant validity was assessed using HTMT (Table 3). All HTMT values are below 0.90, with the highest value of 0.823 between Competency and Employee Performance—reflecting a theoretically expected strong association while remaining empirically distinguishable. Fornell-Larcker criterion also confirmed that the square root of each construct's AVE exceeds its inter-construct correlations.

Table 3. HTMT Discriminant Validity Results

Variable Pair	HTMT Value
Competency ↔ Employee Performance	0.823
Restructuring ↔ Competency	0.580
Restructuring ↔ Employee Performance	0.540
Competency ↔ Internal Mobility	0.518

Restructuring ↔ Internal Mobility	0.350
Employee Performance ↔ Internal Mobility	0.464

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)
Note: Although the HTMT is close to the limit (0.90), it is still acceptable because theoretically the two constructs are strongly correlated.

Structural Model (Inner Model) Evaluation

R^2 values (Table 4) indicate that the model explains 60.2% of the variance in employee performance, 43.2% in competency, and 12.1% in internal mobility. The relatively low R^2 for internal mobility indicates that substantial variance remains unexplained by the predictors included in the model. As a note, the R^2 for internal mobility (0.121) is categorized as "weak"—this is true, but it does not diminish the validity of the model because internal mobility in the public sector is indeed more determined by policy than individual factors.

Table 4. R^2 Values

Endogenous Variable	R^2	Category
Employee Performance	0.602	Strong
Competency	0.432	Moderate
Internal Mobility	0.121	Weak

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Hypothesis Testing – Direct Effects

Table 5 presents bootstrapping results for direct path coefficients (5,000 sub-samples). H1 is supported: restructuring exerts a significant positive effect on internal mobility ($\beta = 0.348$, $t = 4.970$, $p < 0.001$), confirming that Geospatial Information Agency structural reorganization directly triggered large-scale employee redeployment. H2 and H3 are not supported: neither restructuring ($\beta = 0.131$, $p = 0.052$) nor internal mobility ($\beta = 0.079$, $p = 0.240$) directly and significantly affects employee performance. H4 is strongly supported: competency is the dominant direct predictor of performance ($\beta = 0.650$, $t = 9.724$, $p < 0.001$), with a large f^2 of 0.602.

Table 5. Direct Path Coefficients

Path	β	T-stat	p-value	Decision
Restructuring → Internal Mobility	0.348	4.970	0.000	H1: Accepted
Restructuring → Performance	0.131	1.944	0.052	H2: Rejected
Internal Mobility → Performance	0.079	1.174	0.240	H3: Rejected
Competency → Performance	0.650	9.724	0.000	H4: Accepted

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Hypothesis Testing – Indirect Effects (Mediation)

Table 6 confirms full mediation by competency in both pathways. Restructuring exerts a significant indirect effect on performance through competency ($\beta = 0.296$, $t = 5.437$, $p < 0.001$; H5 accepted), and internal mobility similarly exerts a significant indirect effect through competency ($\beta = 0.223$, $t = 5.328$, $p < 0.001$; H6 accepted). Given that the direct effects of restructuring and internal mobility on performance are non-significant while the indirect effects are significant, competency functions as a full mediator in both relationships.

Table 6. Indirect Path Coefficients (Mediation)

Indirect Path	β	T-stat	p-value	Decision
Restructuring → Competency → Performance	0.296	5.437	0.000	H5: Accepted
Internal Mobility → Competency → Performance	0.223	5.328	0.000	H6: Accepted

Source: Primary data, processed (2025)

Discussion

The results of this study provide a nuanced understanding of how structural changes within a public sector organization—specifically the Geospatial Information Agency—translate into actual performance outcomes. By examining the interplay between restructuring, internal mobility, competency, and employee performance, the findings challenge the simplistic assumption that organizational "shuffling" leads to immediate efficiency. Instead, the data underscores that competency is the indispensable bridge that turns structural potential into operational reality.

The Structural Reality: Restructuring and Internal Mobility

The statistical confirmation of H1 ($\beta=0.348$, $p<0.001$) validates that restructuring is the primary engine behind internal mobility. Within the context of the Geospatial Information Agency, the reorganization was not merely a cosmetic change but a fundamental catalyst for large-scale employee redeployment. This aligns with the characterization of public sector labor markets where redeployment is often a structural necessity rather than an individual career choice.

However, the rejection of H2—the direct link between restructuring and performance ($p=0.052$)—offers a critical insight. While the p-value was near the threshold, it confirms that moving boxes on an organizational chart does not automatically move the needle on performance. As noted by Kotter's change model, structural transformation is a precursor to improvement, but it often creates initial friction. New roles and coordination requirements demand a period of adaptation. This "lag" is further supported by the findings of Safita & Budiantoro (2024), suggesting that performance gains only materialize after the workforce has psychologically and technically adjusted to the new environment.

The Internal Mobility Paradox

One of the more surprising findings is the non-significant direct effect of internal mobility on performance (H3 rejected, $p=0.240$). Theoretically, moving employees to roles that better suit their skills or organizational needs should boost output. Yet, at the Geospatial Information Agency, mobility in isolation was not sufficient to generate significant performance improvement.

This can be explained through the lens of Person-Job Fit Theory. While the agency has incorporated structured considerations in internal mobility decisions—such as performance indicators and educational background—these administrative measures may not fully capture the broader, multidimensional nature of competency required in dynamic organizational contexts. As a result, although formal alignment may be achieved, challenges may still arise in terms of task distribution, adaptation to new systems, and overall performance outcomes. Employees reported that while their new placements were "appropriate," the actual distribution of tasks and the mastery of new systems were the real hurdles. This mirrors the work of Majd et al. (2024), which posits that job rotation and mobility are administrative exercises unless

supported by specific human resource mechanisms that address workload and task-specific training.

Furthermore, employees perceive mobility as an administrative directive rather than a path for growth. When mobility is viewed as an administratively driven process rather than a career opportunity, the motivation required to drive performance may be absent, a condition that Bossi et al. (2022) identify as a major barrier to organizational well-being.

Competency: The Dominant Driver

The most robust finding of this study is the overwhelming impact of competency on performance (H4 accepted, $\beta=0.650$, $p<0.001$). With a large f^2 effect size and an R^2 of 0.602 for employee performance, competency emerges as the strongest direct predictor of performance among the variables included in the model.

This aligns perfectly with Spencer and Spencer's (1993) Iceberg Model. At the Geospatial Information Agency, technical skills and cross-unit collaboration (the visible part of the iceberg) were identified as strengths. However, the study also revealed weaknesses in organizational value internalization and self-development (the hidden portion). This suggests that while employees have the "hard" tools to do their jobs, the "soft" drivers of long-term performance—such as alignment with organizational mission—require more attention. According to Human Capital Theory, these capabilities are the ultimate determinants of an organization's productive capacity.

The Power of Full Mediation

The acceptance of H5 and H6 establishes competency as a full mediator. This is perhaps the most significant theoretical contribution of the study.

1. Restructuring → Competency → Performance (H5): Restructuring only improves performance if it forces or encourages the development of new competencies ($\beta=0.296$).
2. Internal Mobility → Competency → Performance (H6): Moving employees around only works if that movement leads to better competency utilization or growth ($\beta=0.223$).

Because the direct effects (H2 and H3) were non-significant, we can conclude that restructuring and mobility are essentially less effective when not accompanied by competency development if they do not result in competency enhancement. This extends the work of Jönsson & Schölin (2016) by quantifying exactly how much of the performance variance in a public sector restructuring is actually carried by the "competency" variable.

In summary, the model successfully explains 60.2% of the variance in employee performance at the Geospatial Information Agency. While restructuring and internal mobility are necessary tools for organizational evolution, they are not sufficient on their own. Competency is the "secret sauce" that makes these structural changes work. Without a focus on building and leveraging the actual capabilities of the workforce, restructuring is merely a change in form without a change in substance. The path to high performance in the public sector, therefore, lies not in the movement of people, but in the mastery of their roles.

CONCLUSION

This study provides compelling evidence that structural reorganization within the public sector is not a standalone solution for enhancing productivity. The analysis of the Geospatial Information Agency reveals that while restructuring is a potent driver of internal mobility (H1 accepted), it fails to exert a direct, significant influence on employee performance (H2 and H3 rejected). These findings suggest that moving personnel and shifting organizational charts are merely administrative precursors that do not, in isolation, guarantee better outcomes.

The central contribution of this research lies in identifying competency as the critical bridge in the performance chain. Competency emerged as the most significant direct predictor of performance (H4 accepted) and, more importantly, as a full mediator for both restructuring and internal mobility (H5 and H6 accepted). This implies that structural changes and staff redeployment only yield performance gains when they successfully leverage or enhance the actual capabilities of the workforce. With the model explaining 60.2% of the variance in employee performance, the dominance of the competency variable is statistically undeniable.

These findings provide an opportunity to further strengthen policy implementation through pre- and post-restructuring competency mapping, develop role-specific training aligned to post-mobility requirements, and institutionalize career development pathways within internal mobility frameworks as integral components of merit-based civil service management. While performance indicators and educational background serve as important foundations, the integration of systematic competency mapping, role-specific training, and post-mobility evaluation mechanisms can enhance the effectiveness of workforce placements.

Crucially, organizational restructuring must be accompanied by adequate institutional readiness, where structural changes are implemented in parallel with supportive human resource systems and tools. The restructuring phase is a critical "window of opportunity" to ensure that not only the organizational structure but also supporting mechanisms—such as competency frameworks, strong teams, training systems, and performance alignment tools—are strengthened simultaneously or can be rapidly developed within a short timeframe to support effective workforce alignment.

Theoretically, this study contributes to the importance of considering restructuring and internal mobility, as well as competency, in improving employee performance. However, future research should examine moderating factors—such as organizational culture, motivation, leadership effectiveness, and merit system maturity—and extend longitudinal designs to capture performance trajectory over time post-restructuring. Replication in other restructured government agencies would enhance generalizability of the competency mediation model identified here.

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