Accountant Competency as A Moderation of The Determination of The Quality of Financial Reports with Regional Independence

Santy Rahayu Ningsih[1*], Suratno [2] Ardiansyah Syam[3]
[1,2,3.] Magister Accounting Department, Pancasila University, Indonesia
*corresponding author e-mail : santy.rahayu2902@gmail.com

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Abstract

This study investigates the influence of Regional Original Income (PAD), Balancing Funds, and Other Legitimate Regional Revenues on Regional Financial Independence, with Accountant Competence serving as a moderating variable. The analysis covers 84 observations from 14 districts and cities in West Java Province during the 2014–2019 period, selected through purposive sampling. Secondary data were obtained from the Directorate General of Fiscal Balance and analyzed using Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) with SPSS version 25. The findings reveal that PAD significantly enhances regional financial independence, while Balancing Funds and Other Legitimate Regional Revenues exert a significant negative influence. Accountant Competence moderates these relationships in varying directions, underscoring the strategic role of fiscal autonomy and human capital in strengthening regional financial governance.

1. Introduction

To strengthen the quality of financial reporting and accountability in managing public funds—both at the central and regional levels—accountants are increasingly expected to incorporate not only current but also forward-looking information into their reporting practices. In line with the evolving conditions of economic recovery following the impact of the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic at both national and regional levels.

Indonesia and all countries in the world face significant challenges to restoring the economy affected by the Coronavirus Disease 2019 (COVID-19) pandemic. Speed is something significant, but at the same time, it is emphasized that speed should not compromise accountability, transparency, and good management.

Enhancing the reliability and presentation standards of financial disclosures produced by regional governments must address the principles of accountability and transparency. These reports should be publicly accessible through current technological advancements, overcoming limitations of time and space in the dissemination of public information. Since 2012, Indonesia has experienced development and regional expansion, so it has 34 provinces in Indonesia from Sabang to Merauke.

A key objective underlying the enactment of regional autonomy is to enable each regional government to achieve fiscal independence. However, until now, there are still many regions that are very dependent on central transfers. This result means that every regional head must be able to make changes in innovation and creativity to manage and explore resources in their region, especially to increase their original regional income. This is important to realize fiscal independence (Kompas, 2021).

A persistent issue facing autonomous regional governments is the limited capacity of regional expansion areas to optimize local revenue (PAD), resulting in continued high dependency on central government transfers. The delegation of fiscal authority through village fund programs has not yet yielded significant economic improvements, and regional fiscal independence remains below expectations, particularly in rural areas where quality of life and welfare indicators have not shown substantial progress. According to Government Regulation No. 12 of 2019 on Regional Financial Management (Article 1), the scope of regional financial management includes planning, budgeting, implementation, administration, reporting, accountability, and supervision. An illustrative case is West Java Province, which consists of 18 regencies, 9 cities, 627 districts, 645 subdistricts, and 5,312 villages. Based on data from the 2020 Population Census (SP2020) conducted by the Central Statistics Agency (BPS), West Java's population reached 48.27 million in September 2020. Compared to the previous census, the population has grown steadily, increasing by approximately 5.2 million over the past decade, or an average of 0.44 million per year. The province recorded an annual population growth rate of 1.11 percent between 2010 and 2020.

To improve transparency and accountability of central/regional government performance, since 2015, accrual-based accounting has been implemented in all work units. The government has made extensive preparations to address risks affecting financial reporting and accountability. Law Number 17 of 2003 mandates that the President along with regional heads—including governors, regents, and mayors—must present fiscal responsibility reports on the execution of the national and regional budgets (APBN/APBD) in the form of financial statements. This obligation is further reinforced through Law Number 1 of 2004 on the State Treasury and Law Number 15 of 2004 concerning the audit framework for the management and accountability of public finances. The change from a centralized system to a decentralized system brings changes in the government system of transferring responsibility, authority, and resources (funds, human resources, etc.) from the central government to regional governments. This change provides an opportunity for changes in national development from growth to equitable development in a more just and balanced manner. Changes in regional autonomy policy through Law No. 22 of 1999 there were several weaknesses in both the policy and its implementation.

As the policy and legal framework of decentralization evolved, the implementation of regional autonomy has necessitated amendments to its regulatory framework. Law No. 22 of 1999 on Regional Government was replaced by Law No. 32 of 2004, accompanied by a revision of Law No. 25 of 1999 on Fiscal Balance between the Central and Regional Governments into Law No. 33 of 2004. These reforms were designed to strengthen democratic governance, promote equitable and just public service delivery, and enhance community welfare through the optimal utilization of local potential. As a form of accountability for the exercise of rights and responsibilities by regional governments in achieving development objectives, the regional autonomy framework aims to reinforce local capacity in managing regional welfare independently and sustainably. In the long term, successful decentralization is expected to reduce the rate of urban migration to Jakarta by narrowing regional welfare disparities. The effectiveness of regional governance is highly dependent on the synergy between government performance and active public participation. Thus, the legal foundation for regional autonomy serves as a strategic instrument to improve the efficiency, effectiveness, and accountability of public sector management in Indonesia. At the same time, regional governments are encouraged to seek alternative sources of development financing without diminishing the role of central government support, ensuring that public spending aligns with local priorities and community aspirations.

An essential aspect of regional autonomy implementation in enhancing public service quality is the imperative to strengthen the performance of local governments in managing the Regional

Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD). The financial capacity of regional governments is primarily sourced from locally generated revenue (PAD), intergovernmental transfer funds, and other legally recognized income.

Regional Revenue in West Java Regency or City from 2014 to 2019 increased by 45%, with Regional Revenue in 2014 of IDR 65.5 billion to IDR 95.2 billion in 2019. Regional Original Revenue in 2014 was IDR 14 billion to IDR 22 billion in 2019, which means an increase of 62.59%. The Balancing Fund fluctuated from 2014 to 2019 by 3%; in 2017, it received IDR 47.7 billion, decreased in 2018, and increased again in 2019 to IDR 47.6 billion. Meanwhile, other legitimate regional revenues in 2014 were IDR 16.3 billion in 2019 to IDR 20.6 billion, with fluctuations every year. The enactment of regional autonomy laws has had significant implications for subnational governance in Indonesia. One of the key pillars of this reform is fiscal decentralization, which grants greater authority to local governments in managing their financial resources. Within this framework, regions are expected to strengthen their fiscal capacity to independently finance public expenditures, while gradually reducing their reliance on central government funding. As noted by Ardi (2007), in the era of decentralization, enhancing fiscal self-sufficiency is essential to support regional development and improve each region's fiscal independence ranking. Therefore, the success of regional autonomy depends not only on regulatory structures but also on the institutional readiness and financial capability of each local government to effectively fulfill its public service responsibilities.

Local governments possess extensive authority in allocating Regional Original Revenue (PAD), which includes income derived from local taxes, service charges, the management of regionally owned assets, and other legitimate sources. PAD serves as a critical indicator of a region's financial autonomy. The larger the proportion of PAD within the Regional Budget (APBD), the more limited the region's dependency on central government transfers, indicating a higher level of fiscal self-sufficiency.

The fiscal independence of regional governments is classified into four categories. In the lowest category, the central government maintains a dominant role in regional financial affairs, indicating very limited local autonomy. A low level of independence suggests that central intervention has begun to decline, with regions showing early signs of managing autonomy. The moderate category reflects a transitional phase where regions are progressively capable of exercising autonomous governance, while the highest category indicates that regional governments have achieved substantial fiscal autonomy and are capable of independently managing their administrative and financial responsibilities (BPS, 2017).

Each community must establish a harmonious relationship so that it can be used as basic capital in regional development. The balancing funds provided by the central government are used as basic capital and stimulus so that they can attract funds that are greater than the potential of the regional economy (Almira et al., 2020). In order to ensure that such financial stimuli are utilized optimally, performance evaluation becomes a crucial mechanism in strengthening accountability and guiding decision-making processes at the regional level. Performance evaluation is recognized by the International Public Sector Accounting Standards Board (IPSAS) as a managerial tool designed to improve the quality of decision-making and strengthen public accountability. Accountability itself is a core element in the realization of good governance. As emphasized by IFAC (2016), it is necessary for governments to report the outcomes of their executed programs so that the public can properly assess their performance. In the context of regional autonomy, two critical dimensions of financial performance that deserve close attention are fiscal independence and the financial effectiveness of autonomous regions—both of which serve as indicators of a region's success in realizing its targeted locally generated revenue (PAD).

Regional fiscal independence reflects a local government's capacity to fund its administrative functions, development initiatives, and public services using resources derived from local taxes and levies contributed by the community (Halim, 2007). However, empirical findings suggest that, on average, city governments have not yet achieved full fiscal autonomy and continue to rely significantly on intergovernmental transfers from the central government to finance their operations (Nuzullestary & Mulyaningsih, 2021). Regional financial independence can be seen from the amount of PAD compared to transfer receipts from the center. PAD is the main element in measuring regional financial independence. According to Halim (2007), "PAD is all regional revenues originating from original regional economic sources". PAD is sourced from regional taxes, service charges, proceeds from the management of regionally owned assets, and other lawful regional income. Accordingly, each local government is expected to enhance its PAD as a means to strengthen fiscal independence and realize regional self-sufficiency.

Regional financial independence refers to the capacity of local governments to enhance their Regional Original Revenue (PAD) through sources such as regional taxes, levies, and other legitimate income. Despite this, many local governments remain reliant on central government transfers to support development financing. The level of a region's fiscal autonomy can be assessed by the ratio of PAD to Balancing Funds and regional loans. The availability and structure of local financial resources are reflected in the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD), which serves as an indicator of a local government's ability to fund governance functions, development initiatives, and public services. Accordingly, the effectiveness of regional financial management plays a vital role in determining the extent to which a region can implement autonomy in a sustainable and accountable manner.

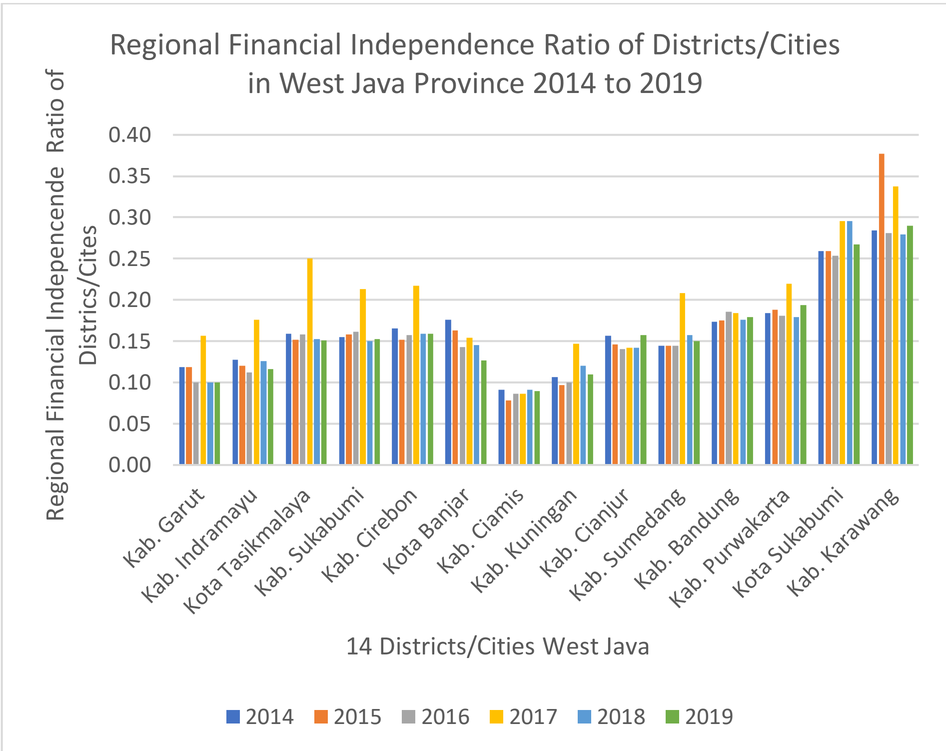

Figure 1. Graph of regional financial independence level of regency/city in West Java

The graphical data indicate that 14 regencies/cities exhibit a pattern of regional financial independence classified as instructive, where the central government retains a dominant role—signifying that these regions lack the fiscal capacity to implement autonomy effectively. In contrast, two regencies/cities demonstrate a consultative pattern, suggesting a reduction in central government intervention and a shift toward advisory support, reflecting the regions' emerging capability to manage autonomous financial governance.

This financial independence is also greatly influenced by Regional Original Income (PAD), which can meet all government spending needs, including operational and capital expenditures. The higher the region's ability to generate PAD, the greater the regional discretion to use the PAD according to aspirations, needs, and regional development priorities (Mahmudi, 2009).

According to Law No. 23 of 2014, article 1, paragraph 35 concerning Regional Government, Regional original income is regional income from various types of regional government efforts to collect funds that will be used to finance regional needs. If regional original income increases, the level of regional financial independence also increases; conversely, if regional original income is low, regional financial independence is also low (Ersyad, 2011). Balancing funds refer to financial allocations derived from APBN and distributed to regional governments to support the implementation of decentralization (PP No. 55 of 2005). Alongside Locally Generated Revenue (PAD), balancing funds serve as an additional income source for both district and municipal governments.

The fiscal capacity of regional governments is typically assessed through three key indicators: the fiscal decentralization ratio, the dependency ratio, and the financial independence ratio. The fiscal decentralization ratio reflects a region’s ability to generate its own-source revenue to support local development initiatives. The dependency ratio gauges the extent to which a region relies on transfers from central or provincial governments to fund operational and development expenditures. In contrast, the financial independence ratio captures the degree to which local governments are capable of financing their administrative functions, infrastructure, and public services independently. This study addresses the issue of fiscal independence among regencies and cities in West Java Province, particularly in relation to the quality of financial reporting and the effectiveness of resource utilization. One of the persistent challenges facing local governments is the year-to-year fluctuation in regional budget revenues, including balancing funds and other legitimate income sources. Despite ongoing fiscal decentralization efforts, the overall level of financial autonomy among local governments in the region remains relatively low.

According to Halim (2008), the primary attributes of regions capable of implementing fiscal decentralization include: (1) Adequate regional financial capacity, whereby local governments must possess both the authority and the competence to mobilize financial resources, manage, and utilize them effectively to support governmental functions; and (2) minimal reliance on central government transfers, meaning that Regional Original Income (PAD) should constitute the dominant source of revenue. This condition should be supported by equitable fiscal balance policies between central and regional governments to enhance regional autonomy. Furthermore, components of Other Legitimate Regional Income—beyond regional taxes, service charges, and returns from separated regional asset management—are considered integral to increasing PAD. As Novalistia (2016) emphasizes, enhancing these alternative sources of revenue contributes directly to PAD growth, which in turn reduces fiscal dependence on the central government and strengthens financial independence.

In the context of regional autonomy, Heru (2020) notes that financial independence is influenced by various factors, particularly the quality of financial reporting, which plays a role in stimulating community income. Higher public income levels are likely to increase civic participation in paying local taxes and levies, thereby boosting PAD. Sustained increases in PAD are expected to gradually improve a region's fiscal self-sufficiency year by year, thereby enhancing regional accountability.

Empirical studies support these theoretical relationships. Fontanella and Rossieta (2014), Erryana and Setyawan (2016), and Mudhofar and Tahar (2016) all found that regional financial independence positively affects financial reporting accountability—indicating that higher levels of independence lead to improved financial accountability. However, contrasting findings by Irmawati and Pratolo (2016) suggest that regional independence does not significantly influence financial reporting accountability.

This study aligns with the concept of managing Regional Original Income (PAD), which is not intended as a means of exploitation but rather as a strategic effort by regional governments to optimize PAD collection in accordance with their fiscal potential. Beyond merely maximizing current revenue, regions are also encouraged to expand their PAD capacity in the future while simultaneously reducing their reliance on central government transfers through balancing funds. The t-statistic value for the balancing fund variable demonstrates a significant positive effect on the level of regional financial independence. This indicates that balancing funds function as an external support mechanism that enables regions to sustain governmental operations, especially in times of budget deficits. Nonetheless, regional financial independence is expected to strengthen when the contribution of PAD surpasses that of balancing funds (Arpani & Halmawati, 2020).

Other Legitimate Regional Income is the original regional income consisting of grant funds, emergency funds, and levy fines (Kendy et al., 2017). The test results prove that other Legitimate Regional Income has a positive effect on regional original income. This result is in line with previous studies conducted by Wahyu et al. (2017), Laksmi (2017), and Prabawa (2009), which prove that the variable of other legitimate regional income has a positive and significant effect on regional original income. This result is undoubtedly a big task for the government to optimize the receipt of levy fines according to its function and affects the increase in other Legitimate Regional Income revenue, which will also be accompanied by an increase in regional original income (Hafandi & Romandhon, 2020). Several studies and data above show the variable factors that can affect financial independence in district/city governments in West Java province. Several variables have different levels of influence each year. This study aims to determine the highest regional independence in West Java, thus increasing the author's curiosity about independence in supporting areas around the capital city for the period 2014-2019, so the author determines the title of the study, namely "Accountant Competence as a Moderator of the Determination of the Quality of Financial Reports with Regional Independence" (Financial Reports of Regional Governments of Districts/Cities in West Java 2014-2019).

Theoretical Framework

Stakeholder Theory

The grand theory underpinning this study is the Stakeholder Theory. The concept of stakeholders was initially introduced by the Stanford Research Institute (SRI) in 1963 (Putro, 2013). According to Putro (2013), stakeholders are defined as “any group or individual who can affect or be affected by the achievement of an organization's objective.” In this context, stakeholders encompass individuals or collectives that either influence or are influenced by the attainment of organizational goals. Stakeholder Theory posits that stakeholders—whether entire communities or specific groups—maintain a relationship with and vested interest in an organization’s operations (Putro, 2013). Within the public sector, the stakeholder spectrum is considerably broader than in the private sector. As the entity entrusted with governmental authority, the state must prioritize public interests as a fundamental stakeholder group. Accordingly, the government is obligated to manage regional resources, revenues, and assets for the collective benefit of society, in alignment with Article 33 of the 1945 Constitution. This constitutional provision asserts that all natural resources under state control must be harnessed to promote public welfare, signifying a reciprocal relationship between the state and its citizens in fostering governance equilibrium.

According to Article 3, regional revenue sources are structured to support the implementation of decentralization and regional autonomy. Paragraph (1) stipulates that Regional Original Income (PAD) serves to empower regional governments in financing autonomous functions in accordance with their fiscal capacity. Paragraph (2) states that Balancing Funds are intended to address fiscal disparities between the central government and regional governments. Paragraph (3) emphasizes that Regional Loans provide an alternative financing mechanism for managing regional administrative responsibilities. Lastly, paragraph (4) explains that Other Income allows regions to generate additional revenue beyond the categories outlined in the previous sections. This study is grounded in a scientific and theoretical framework that supports the analysis of regional fiscal management under the principles of decentralization.

Entity Theory

Accounting refers to a structured set of activities centered on an economic entity and concerned with generating information about the financial consequences of events affecting that entity. According to Staubus (1985), the accounting entity is typically conceptualized as an economic unit operating under a unified management structure, whereby the extent of managerial authority broadly defines the boundaries of the entity. PP No. 71 of 2010 further elaborates that an accounting entity is a governmental unit responsible for managing budgets, assets, and liabilities, maintaining accounting records, and preparing financial reports in accordance with established accounting standards. Meanwhile, a reporting entity consists of one or more accounting entities and, in accordance with statutory requirements, is mandated to submit accountability reports in the form of general-purpose financial statements. These reporting entities include both central and regional government institutions.

Budgeting Theory

As part of the legal framework for regional fiscal management in Indonesia, Law Number 33 of 2004 concerning the Fiscal Balance between the Central and Regional Governments defines the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) as the regional government's annual financial plan, which is deliberated and approved jointly by the regional executive and legislative bodies and formalized through a Regional Regulation. In alignment with this, Minister of Home Affairs Regulation Number 77 of 2020 regarding Technical Guidelines for Regional Financial Management also affirms that the APBD constitutes the regional financial plan established annually through a Regional Regulation. Furthermore, Law Number 17 of 2003, Article 1 point 8, concerning State Finance, reiterates that the APBD represents the financial planning instrument of regional governments for a fiscal year, subject to approval by the Regional People's Representative Council. The functions of the APBD are outlined in Article 3 paragraph (4) of the same law, which emphasizes its role in ensuring accountability, transparency, and discipline in managing public finances at the regional level.

Locally Generate Revenue

Locally generated revenue (Pendapatan Asli Daerah/PAD) refers to income sourced and collected directly by regional governments. A higher level of PAD signifies a greater degree of fiscal autonomy, enabling regional authorities to more effectively respond to the needs and interests of their communities without overreliance on central transfers. PAD comprises four primary components: (1) regional taxes, including hotel, restaurant, entertainment, advertisement, street lighting, and class C mineral taxes; (2) regional levies, derived from services such as parking, public markets, and local water utilities; (3) proceeds from regional wealth management, which include dividends or profit shares from capital participation in regionally owned enterprises (BUMD), state-owned enterprises (BUMN), and private companies; and (4) other legitimate revenues, such as interest income, giro services, sales of unseparated regional assets, and compensation claims. The degree of regional fiscal independence, particularly in the formulation of the APBD (regional budget), is closely linked to the performance of PAD. As PAD increases, so does a region's capacity to craft development programs tailored to local needs—minimizing the influence of central priorities that may not align with regional conditions.

Balancing Fund

In accordance with the statutory framework governing fiscal decentralization, Law Number 33 of 2004 defines Balancing Funds as transfers sourced from the State Budget (APBN) that are allocated to regional governments to support regional financing needs in implementing decentralization mandates. Complementing this, Government Regulation Number 55 of 2005 on Balancing Funds emphasizes that these transfers are intended not only to support the exercise of regional authority but also to reduce fiscal disparities between central and regional governments, as well as to address funding imbalances across different regions.

Other Legitimate Regional Income

Additional categories of legitimate regional income—classified by type—include a diverse range of non-binding revenue sources. These comprise grants from the central government, other regional governments, domestic private entities, civil society organizations, individual donors, and international institutions. Also included are emergency funds allocated by the central government in response to national disasters or extraordinary events that exceed the region's fiscal capacity under the APBD. Furthermore, regional governments may receive adjustment funds and special autonomy funds as stipulated by national fiscal policy. Other intergovernmental transfers include revenue-sharing allocations from provinces to districts or municipalities, and financial assistance originating either from the provincial government or other regional administrations.

Research Framework and Hypothesis Development

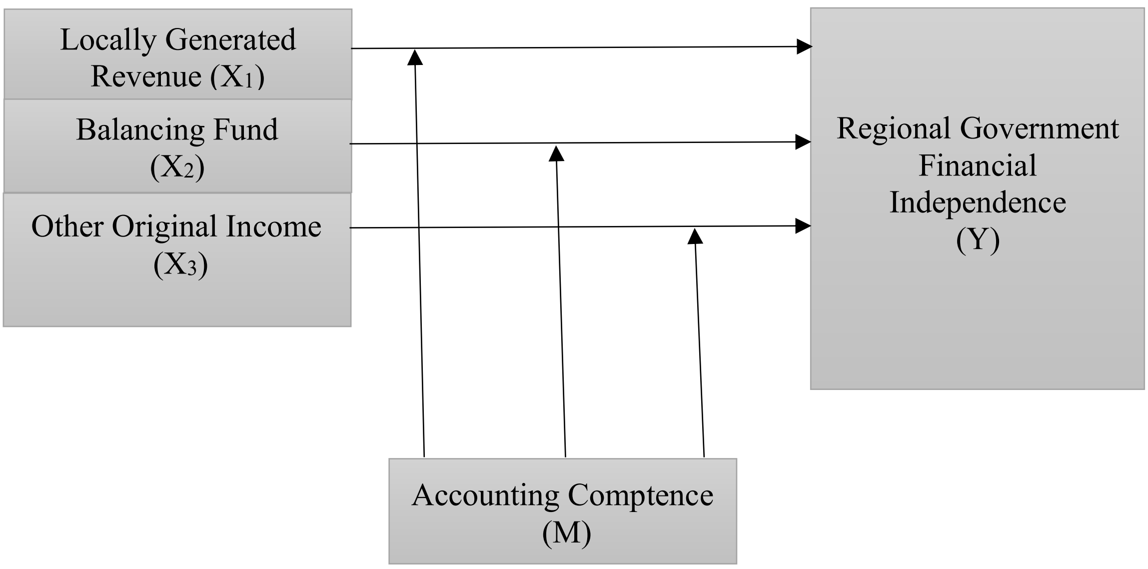

Figure 2. Conceptual Framework

H1. Local original income has a significant influence on the financial independence of the district/city government.
H2. Balancing Funds have a significant influence on the financial independence of the district/city government.

H3. Other legitimate regional income has a significant influence on the financial independence of district/city governments.
H4. Accountant competence plays a moderating role that has a significant influence on local revenue with the financial independence of the district/city government.
H5. Accountant competence plays a moderating role that has a significant influence on balancing funds with the financial independence of district/city governments.
H6. Accountant competence plays a moderating role in other legitimate incomes with regional financial independence.

2. Research Method

This study employs a quantitative method utilizing panel secondary data to examine the effect of regional revenue sources on fiscal independence, incorporating accountant competence as a moderating variable. The analysis targets local governments (regencies and municipalities) within West Java Province over the 2014–2019 period. Data were sourced from the Regional Revenue and Expenditure Budget (APBD) realization reports published by the Directorate General of Fiscal Balance (DJPK), Ministry of Finance of the Republic of Indonesia. The dependent variable—regional financial independence—is defined as a region's capacity to fund its expenditures using internally generated revenue rather than relying on central government transfers. The independent variables consist of Regional Original Revenue (PAD), Balancing Funds, and Other Legitimate Regional Revenues, which collectively represent the region's core income streams. Accountant competence is included as a moderating variable to test the interaction effects within the regression framework.

The study population includes all 27 regencies and cities in West Java Province. To ensure consistency and data completeness, purposive sampling was used. According to Ghozali (2018), purposive sampling allows the selection of samples based on specific criteria aligned with research objectives. The criteria applied were the availability of complete APBD realization reports for the years 2014–2019 and the inclusion of all relevant variables (PAD, Balancing Funds, Other Revenues, and financial independence indicators). Based on these criteria, 14 local governments met the inclusion requirements, consisting of 12 regencies and two municipalities. Given the six years and 14 selected regions, the final sample consists of 84 observations in a balanced panel dataset. The steps taken to select the final sample are outlined in the following table.

Table 1. Representative Sample Selection Process

Step	Criteria	Number of Regions	Explanation
1	Total regencies and municipalities in West Java Province	27	Entire population of local governments
2	Availability of complete APBD data for 2014–2019	14	Only these had consistent and complete panel data
3	Inclusion of required variables (PAD, DAPER, LLPD, Independence)	14	All financial indicators were available for these regions
4	Final dataset: 14 regions × 6 years	84 Observations	Balanced panel data for regression and interaction analysis

Data collection was conducted through documentation and literature review, focusing on publicly available government financial reports. The resulting dataset includes the annual time-series financial data across multiple units of analysis, which qualifies as a balanced panel structure. However, the analysis applies pooled ordinary least squares (OLS) multiple regression, treating the panel dataset without fixed or random effects. The data analysis method integrates both descriptive and inferential approaches. Descriptive statistics are used to summarize the distribution and trends of each variable across regions and years. To test research hypotheses, multiple linear regression is used to examine the direct effects of PAD, Balancing Funds, and Other Legitimate Revenues on regional financial independence.

Furthermore, a Moderated Regression Analysis (MRA) is employed to test whether accountant competence moderates these relationships. Although panel data are used (14 regions over 6 years), the regression model follows a pooled OLS approach. The interaction effects are captured through multiplicative terms between each independent variable and the moderating variable. The regression model for hypothesis testing is presented as follows:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + \beta_4M + \beta_5(X_1M) + \beta_6(X_2M) + \beta_7(X_3{*}M) + \varepsilon$$

Where:
Y = Regional Financial Independence
X_1 = PAD (Regional Original Revenue)
X_2 = Balancing Funds
X_3 = Other Legitimate Regional Revenues
M = Accountant Competence (Dummy: 1 = competent; 0 = not competent)
X_1M, X_2M, $X_3{*}M$ = interaction terms for moderation analysis
α = constant
β = regression coefficients
ε = error term

To clarify how each variable was defined and measured, the following table provides operational definitions and data specifications.

Table 2. Variable Definitions and Measurements

Variable	Definition	Measurement	Scale
Regional Financial Independence (Y)	The ability of a region to fund its expenditures with local income without external support	Ratio of PAD to Total Revenue	Ratio
Regional Original Revenue (PAD)	Income generated locally from taxes, retributions, and other charges	Total annual PAD (in IDR)	Ratio
Balancing Funds (DAPER)	Transfers from central government (general, specific, and revenue-sharing funds)	Total annual Balancing Funds (in IDR)	Ratio
Other Legitimate Revenues (LLPD)	Other regionally authorized revenues as classified in APBD	Total annual LLPD (in IDR)	Ratio
Accountant Competence (KA)	The level of qualification or training of government financial managers	Dummy: 1 = competent, 0 = not competent	Nominal (Dummy)

This methodological structure ensures clarity and consistency in how the empirical model is built and interpreted. It also enables the testing of both direct and moderating effects using rigorous statistical procedures, thus aligning with the conceptual framework derived from Figure 2.

3. Results and Discussions

Descriptive Statistics Result

The variables used in this study include Regional Original Income, Balancing Funds, Other Legitimate Regional Income, Accountant Competence, and Regional Independence. The following are the results of descriptive statistical tests for these variables.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics Result

Variable	N	Min	Max	Mean	Std. Deviation
Locally generated revenue	84	101	1398	467,47	277,342
Balancing Fund	84	424	3375	1638,71	674,837
Other Legitimate Regional Income	84	123	1465	697,54	351,131
Regional Independence	84	0,08	0,38	0,1677	0,06048
Accountant Competence	84	0	1	0,64	0,482
Valid N (listwise)	84				

Source: SPSS data processed

The table above provides descriptive statistics regarding the general picture of the various financial variables and related indicators analyzed in this study. With a minimum range of 101 and a maximum range of 1,398, the Regional Original Income (PAD) is very diverse. With a standard deviation of 277.342 and an average PAD of 467.47, there is a significant difference in PAD acquisition between regions. This result may indicate that there are differences in the economic potential and ability of regions to generate their income, which may be influenced by fiscal policy, economic base, and regional tax administration capabilities.

The source of transfer income from the central government, the Balancing Fund, has an average of 1,638.71 with a minimum value of 424 and a maximum value of 3,375. The imbalance in the distribution of balancing funds between regions is indicated by a significant standard deviation of 674.837. This result may be caused by differences in the fiscal needs of each region, the policies used by the central government for fund allocation, and the ability of regions to take and utilize these funds for development and public services.

Other Legitimate Regional Income averaged 697.54, with a minimum value of 123 and a maximum value of 1,465. There is a significant difference in how each region obtains income from sources other than PAD and Balancing Funds, as indicated by the relatively large standard deviation of 351.131. This source of income can come from regional levies, BUMD profits, grants, or other sources permitted by law. This significant variation may indicate how well local government management utilizes alternative sources of income.

Regional independence is a measure of how much a region can finance its own needs without relying on transfers from the center. In this result, the average value is 0.1677, with a minimum value of 0.08 and a maximum value of 0.38. These values indicate that the level of regional independence is still low because only the highest value reaches 0.5. The slight standard deviation of 0.06048 indicates that dependence on central funds is relatively even in each region. This result shows that most regions are still unable to finance themselves fully and are still very dependent on balancing funds from the central government.

In this study, there are two binary variables used to measure accountant competence, with a minimum value of 0 indicating that there are no competent accountants and a maximum value of 1 indicating that there are competent accountants. The level of accountant competence varies with a deviation level of 0.482. Accounting is essential for managing regional finances, especially in making transparent and accountable financial reports. This variation may indicate that some regions do not have enough accounting personnel, which can have an impact on how effective regional financial governance is.

Overall, these descriptive statistics show that, in terms of PAD, balancing funds, and other sources of income, there is still a gap in regional financial capacity. The low level of regional independence indicates that most regions are still very dependent on the central government to meet their needs. In addition, the uneven experience of accountants can be an obstacle in efforts to improve financial transparency and accountability in the regions. Therefore, to make regions more financially independent, a better plan is needed to increase PAD, improve regional financial governance, and improve human resource capacity.

Results of Residual Data Normality Test

Table 4. One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test

Parameter	Value
N	84
Mean	0
Std. Deviation	0,01819759
Absolute	0,075
Positive	0,075
Negative	-0,045
Test Statistic	0,075
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	0,200

Source: SPSS data processed

The normality assumption was tested using the Kolmogorov–Smirnov method. The results indicate that the data follow a normal distribution, as evidenced by the Kolmogorov–Smirnov significance value of 0.200, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold. This implies that the null hypothesis of non-normality is rejected, thereby confirming that the regression model satisfies the classical assumption of normality.

Results of Heteroscedasticity Test

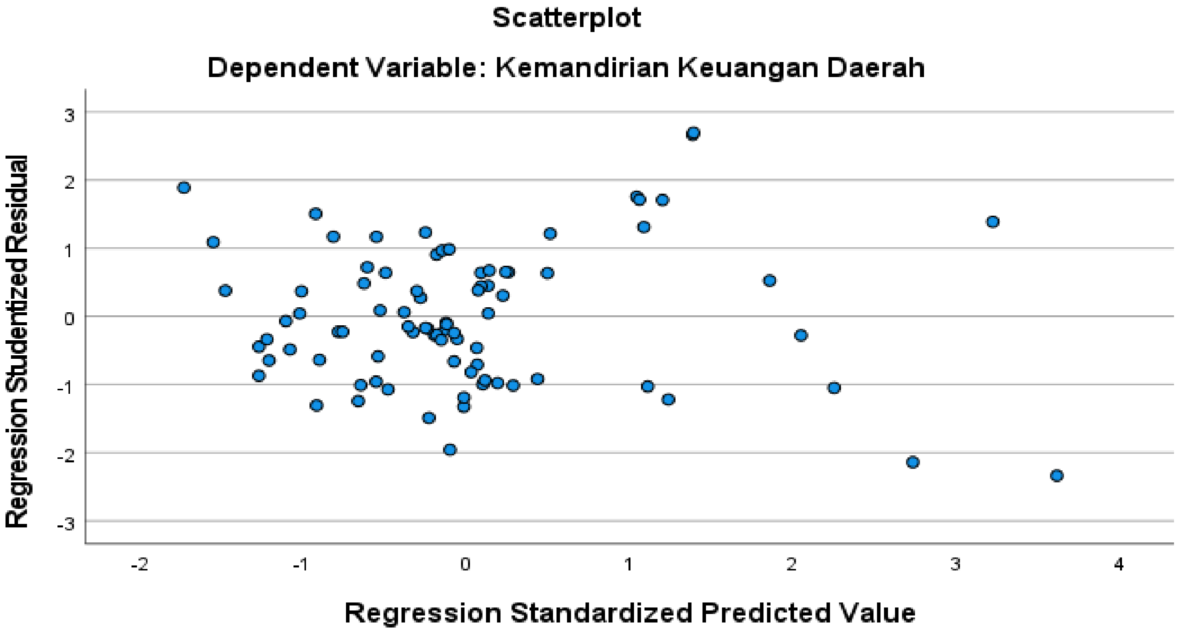

Figure 3. Conceptual Framework

Figure 3 displays the scatterplot of standardized residuals against standardized predicted values for the dependent variable, regional financial independence (*Kemandirian Keuangan Daerah*). The plot shows that the data points are randomly dispersed both above and below the zero line on the Y-axis, without forming any discernible pattern. This distribution indicates the absence of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. Accordingly, the model satisfies the classical assumption of homoscedasticity, making it suitable for predicting regional financial independence based on the independent variables—Regional Original Income (PAD), Balancing Funds, Other Legitimate Regional Income, and Accountant Competence.

Results of Multicollinearity Test

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test

Variable	B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.	Tolerance	VIF
Constant	0,204	0,006	-	31,53	<.001	-	-
Locally generated revenue	0	0	1,188	26,489	<.001	0,57	1,754
Balancing Fund	-5,4E-05	0	-0,608	-8,855	<.001	0,243	4,108
Other Legitimate Regional Income	-7,3E-05	0	-0,426	-6,951	<.001	0,305	3,278
Regional Independence	-0,027	0,004	-0,214	-6,134	<.001	0,939	1,065

Source: SPSS data processed

Results of Test of Determination Coefficient Analysis (R2) before Moderate Regression Analysis (MRA)

Table 6 Results of the Determination Coefficient (R2) Test before Moderate Regression Analysis (MRA)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,931	0,866	0,861	0,02252

Source: SPSS data processed

The table shows the Adjusted R Square value of 0.861 or 86.1%, this shows that the independent variables of local revenue, balancing funds, other legitimate local revenues explain the relationship between these variables and regional financial independence by 86.1%, while the remaining 23.9% is explained by other factors not included in this research model, as well as other factors that can influence or have a relationship with regional financial independence. The table shows the Adjusted R Square value of 0.861 or 86.1%; this shows that the independent variables of local revenue, balancing funds, and other legitimate local revenues explain the relationship between these variables and regional financial independence by 86.1%. In comparison, the remaining 23.9% is explained by other factors not included in this research model, as well as other factors that can influence or have a relationship with regional financial independence.

Results of Test of Moderate Regression Analysis (MRA)

Table 7 Results of the Moderate Regression Analysis (MRA)

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		Sig
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	
1	(Constant)	0,171527778	0.011	-	22.096	0.000
	Locally generated revenue	0.000	0.000	1.015	8.353	**0.000**
	Balancing Fund	-0,073	0.000	-0.816	-8.447	**0.000**
	Other Legitimate Regional Income	-0,062	0.000	-0.362	-4.373	**0.000**
	Regional Independence	-0.084	0.013	-0.673	-6.743	**0.000**
	PAD*KA	0,025	0.000	0,101	0,898	0,372
	DAPER*KA	0,030	0.000	0,317	2.696	**0.009**
	LLPD*KA	-0,005	0.000	-0.036	-0.286	0,776

Source: SPSS data processed

The regression results show that PAD has a coefficient of 0.000, a t value of 8.353, and a significance level of 0.000. With a significance level below 0.05, it can be concluded that PAD has a positive and significant effect on the dependent variable, which means that the value of the larger dependent variable (such as fiscal independence or effectiveness of regional financial management) is greater than the PAD of the region itself. These results indicate that regions with strong sources of income have a greater ability to finance their needs without having to rely on transfers from the central government. High PAD indicates that the regional government can optimize its economic potential through regional taxes, levies, results of regional wealth management, and other legitimate income. In the context of the regional economy, this is in line with fiscal decentralization, which states that the greater the fiscal autonomy of a region, the better its economic performance.

Furthermore, these findings also provide policy implications that regional governments need to continue to encourage increased PAD through the optimization of local resources. Some strategies that can be implemented include improving the regional taxation system, improving the quality of public services to attract investment, and increasing transparency in regional financial management to increase public and private sector trust in contributing to regional development. Then this research is supported and in line with research conducted by Primahadi & Kurniawan (2021) and Novalista (2016), which states that PAD can increase regional financial independence because it describes regional fiscal capacity and as a basis for regional finance to reduce dependence on the central government. However, this research is also not in line with research conducted by Ersyad (2011), which found that PAD has not been significant enough to increase independence if the tax revenue base is still narrow and weak.

With a regression coefficient of -0.073, a t value of -8.447, and a significance of 0.000, which is below 0.05, the results of the Balancing Fund indicate that, with a significant negative coefficient, the level of fiscal independence or regional financial management is getting weaker. This result can be associated with fiscal dependence. When a region receives a large amount of funds from the central government in the form of Balancing Funds, the region may not be motivated to increase its local income. This means can lead to a reduced desire to increase PAD, which in turn can hinder regional independence. The phenomenon known as fiscal dependency syndrome in fiscal economic Theory causes regions that are too dependent on transfer funds to be less creative in managing their finances. This result shows that reforming the Balancing Fund distribution mechanism is very important in the context of policy. To encourage an increase in regional PAD, the central government can implement incentive programs so that regions do not only rely on central transfers but also develop their local economic resources. In addition, the Balancing Fund management policy must also focus on increasing regional productivity through programs that focus more on increasing local economic capacity. Then this study is in line with research conducted by Saleh (2020) and Mufida et al. (2020), which found that balancing funds supports the implementation of regional autonomy and reduces fiscal disparities, and central transfers are effective in encouraging independence if appropriately managed. However, this study is not in line with research conducted by Prasetyo (2020), which found that balancing funds can cause fiscal dependency due to minimal regional control and capacity.

The regression coefficient of Other Legitimate Regional Income (LLPD) is -0.062, the t value is -4.373, and the significance of 0.000 is below <0.05. With this finding, it can be concluded that LLPD has a significant negative impact on the dependent variable. These results indicate that regional income from sources other than PAD and Balancing Funds is often unstable and cannot be relied upon as a source of long-term funding. LLPD usually comes from various sources, such as grants, emergency funds, and third-party contributions. However, the uncertainty in receiving this income can cause uncertainty in regional financial management, which in turn will reduce the efficiency of financial management. From a policy perspective, regional governments must find ways to stabilize the LLPD so that they can contribute more to fiscal independence. One way that can be done is by diversifying regional income sources, for example, by increasing cooperation with the private sector, optimizing the use of regional assets, and managing regional investment better. Then this study is in line with research conducted by Wardana et al. (2020). Wahyu et al. (2017) state that the results emphasize that LLPD is a strategic component that can increase PAD and independence, and other income has a strong correlation with regional income. However, on the other hand, this study is not in line with research conducted by Hafandi & Romandhon (2020), which states that LLPD results often fluctuate and cannot be used as a reliable long-term financial basis.

Accountant competence shows a regression coefficient of -0.084, a t value of -6.743, and a significance of 0.000. A significant negative coefficient value indicates that the more skilled the accountant, the stricter the regulations and supervision applied to regional financial management, which can result in less flexible budget use. Although high accountant expertise is expected to improve the quality of financial reports and transparency of regional financial management, overly strict financial policies can hinder creativity in budget allocation and can cause regional financial decision-making to be less efficient. Local governments must ensure that the accounting standards applied continue to allow innovation in financial management without sacrificing accountability; these results show how important it is to balance strict regulations with flexibility in regional financial management. Send feedback.

The results of the moderation test show that accountant competence does not have a significant effect on the relationship between PAD and the dependent variable. With a coefficient value of 0.025 and a significance value of 0.372, it can be concluded that accountant competence does not have a moderating effect on the relationship between PAD and the dependent variable of regional independence. In other words, the existence of accountant competence in regional financial management does not have a significant effect on regional original income (PAD). These results indicate that accountant competence is not enough to increase the effectiveness of PAD management on the dependent variable; instead, other factors, such as regional taxation policies, the level of taxpayer compliance, and the ability of local governments to generate their sources of income are the main factors that determine PAD on the dependent variable. In addition, this result is not significant due to the different levels of intervention of accountants in the planning and use of PAD.

In many cases, regional executive officials such as regional heads or financial planning agencies are more responsible for strategic decisions on the use of PAD, while accountants are more responsible for administration and financial recording. Therefore, although accountants are responsible for ensuring transparency and accountability, the effect of PAD in increasing the dependent variable may not be large enough. Therefore, although the ability of accountants is essential for regional financial management, this finding shows that its impact on the dependent variable in the context of PAD is not significant enough. Therefore, increasing PAD will be more effective if supported by proactive fiscal policy rather than relying solely on the ability of accountants to manage it. Then, with accounting competence as moderation in this research, it gives Pure Moderation results. Then this study is in line with research conducted by Irmawati and Patolo (2016), which states that accountant competence does not directly affect PAD accountability and is not in line with Novalistia's research (2016) that accountant competence strengthens PAD receipts and fiscal effectiveness.

With a coefficient value of 0.030 and a significance value of 0.009 below <0.05, the relationship between the Balancing Fund (DAPER) and Accountant Competence (KA) significantly moderates the relationship between the Balancing Fund and regional independence. This finding indicates that accountant skills are critical in ensuring that the Balancing Fund is appropriately used to improve regional financial performance. This moderation effect indicates that the level of accountant expertise is related to the level of management of the Balancing Fund received by the region. The Balancing Fund is the primary source of funding for many regions, and if not appropriately managed, these funds can be misused or not appropriately allocated. By using high-quality accountants, transparency and accountability in the use of the Balancing Fund can be improved so that the budget provided is targeted and provides greater benefits to the dependent variable. This result also supports the argument that accountant expertise has a greater role in managing fund transfers from the central government than PAD. This result is due to the administrative difficulties associated with the use of the Balancing Fund, which requires stricter supervision to ensure that funds are used according to applicable regulations. As a result, regions with better accounting skills can manage fund transfers from the central government to PAD. The findings of this research indicate that improving the ability of accountants should be a top priority in managing the Balancing Fund. Local governments must ensure that accountants understand regional financial governance well so that the Balancing Fund can be used properly and does not cause excessive fiscal dependence. The results of the moderation interaction of accountant competence provide results that there is quasi-moderation in this hypothesis interaction. Then this study is supported by Mufida et al. (2020), who stated the importance of competent transfer fund management to encourage independence. However, it is not in line with research conducted by Prasetyo (2020), who stated in his research that the competence of regional accountants is not yet adequate to manage central funds efficiently, so the effect is weak.

The results of the moderation regression test show that the interaction between Other Legitimate Regional Income (LLPD) and Accountant Competence (KA) has a coefficient of -0.005 and a significance value of 0.776. A significant value much greater than 0.05 indicates that accountant competence does not have a significant moderating role in the relationship between legitimate LLPD and the dependent variable of regional independence. In other words, the existence of accountant competence in the management of legitimate LLPD does not have a significant impact. This phenomenon shows that it is not the quality of accounting management in the region that has more influence on the effectiveness of legitimate LLPD on the dependent variable. The characteristics of legitimate LLPD itself can explain the unimportance of this moderate role. Unlike PAD or Balancing Funds, which have a more transparent and more predictable pattern, LLPD is a source of regional income that is not fixed. Sometimes, this source of income comes from grants, fines, or other income that is not included in the primary income category.

Therefore, because of the varying amounts and sustainability of LLPD, they depend more on regional policy decisions than on the accountant's ability to manage them. Even high accountant competence will not increase the impact of LLPD on the dependent variable if this source of income is not sustainable and fluctuates. In addition, due to its irregular nature, LLPD often does not have a complex management mechanism such as PAD or Balancing Funds. Funds received from LLPD are usually used directly as needed without going through a complicated financial management process. This process causes the role of accountants to be more limited in managing legitimate LLPD. As a result, even though accountants have high expertise, the influence of the use of legitimate LLPD to increase the dependent variable remains small. In other words, the main factor that determines the effectiveness of legitimate LLPD is not how the funds are managed in accounting but rather the policies made by the local government to allocate the funds. This result also shows that improving accountant skills is not enough to increase the influence of legitimate LLPD on the dependent variable.

On the other hand, a broader approach is needed to optimize legitimate LLPD, such as finding more stable alternative sources of income and improving the regional fiscal policy management system. To develop more sustainable revenue potential, local governments must think creatively. They can do this by increasing regional investment or collaborating with the private sector. Therefore, although accountant skills are still important in overall regional financial management, the results of this analysis indicate that their role in moderating the relationship between legitimate LLPD, and the dependent variable is not significant. The results of the interaction in the relationship of these variables are Pure Moderation. Then this research is also supported by research conducted by Irmawati and Patolo (2016), which states that accountant competency is not relevant to LLPD because this type of receipt is more administrative than technical accounting. Then also, some research is not in line with these findings, namely research conducted by Wahyu et al. (2017) and Laksmi (2017), which provides results. Reporting that competency significantly affects the effectiveness of LLPD collection.

Results of Test of Determination Coefficient Analysis (R2) after Moderate Regression Analysis (MRA)

Table 8 Results of the Determination Coefficient (R2) Test before Moderate Regression Analysis (MRA)

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	0,966	0,933	0,927	0,01637

After entering the moderation variable of the industry specialization auditor in the Table, the Adjusted R Square value increased to 0.927 or 92.7%; this shows that the variables of regional income, balancing funds, and other regional income are valid in explaining the dependent variable, namely the regional independence audit with the accountant competency variable as a moderation is 92.7%. In comparison, the remaining 0.073 or 7.3% (100% - 92.7%) is explained by other factors that are not included in this research model.

4. Conclusions

This study investigated the influence of Regional Original Revenue (PAD), Balancing Funds, and Other Legitimate Regional Revenues on regional financial independence, with accountant competence serving as a moderating variable. The findings reveal that PAD has a significant and positive impact on the fiscal independence of local governments in West Java Province during the 2014–2019 period. Conversely, Balancing Funds exhibit a significant negative effect, indicating that greater dependence on intergovernmental transfers may undermine regional fiscal autonomy. Similarly, Other Legitimate Regional Revenues also show a significant negative relationship, potentially due to their volatile and non-recurring nature as income sources.

Regarding the moderating role of accountant competence, the findings indicate that accountant competence does not significantly moderate the relationship between PAD and regional financial independence. However, it weakens the influence of balancing funds on financial independence, implying that qualified accountants may mitigate the dependency effect of intergovernmental transfers. No significant moderating effect was found between accountant competence and other legitimate local revenues.

Despite offering empirical insights, this study has several limitations. The analysis was based solely on secondary data, and the application of pooled OLS regression may not fully capture regional heterogeneity. Furthermore, the operationalization of accountant competence using a binary dummy variable may not reflect its nuanced dimensions. Future research is encouraged to apply fixed-effects panel models, incorporate qualitative assessments (e.g., audit quality or staff certification levels), and explore additional moderating variables such as governance quality, digital infrastructure, or political leadership to gain a deeper understanding of the determinants of fiscal independence.

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