

THE INFLUENCE OF COMPENSATION AND BENEFITS, WORK ENVIRONMENT, AND EMPLOYEE DEMOGRAPHICS ON EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE MEDIATED BY MOTIVATION IN PAPER MANUFACTURING COMPANIES

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the influence of compensation and benefits, work environment, and employee demographics on employee performance mediated by motivation in quantitative manufacturing companies using a survey method. The research population was all employees, with a sample of 104 employees selected using purposive sampling techniques. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The study's results indicate that compensation and benefits have a positive and significant impact on employee performance and motivation. The work environment has a positive and significant effect on motivation, but it does not have a direct effect on employee performance. Employee demographics have no significant effect on employee motivation or performance. Motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and has been shown to mediate the relationship between compensation and benefits, as well as the work environment, on employee performance. This research provides practical implications for company management in improving employee performance through improved compensation systems, conducive work environments, and increased work motivation.

Keywords: *Compensation and Benefits, Work Environment, Employee Demographics, Motivation, Employee Performance*

1. INTRODUCTION

The paper industry in Indonesia has become a major contributor to the national economy, with a significant role in labor absorption and economic growth. Vetráková et al. (2016) stated that the pulp and paper industry faces complex challenges in retaining and developing qualified employees in the midst of global competition. The sector faces the demands of high production efficiency, the need to maintain product quality, as well as

adaptation to technological developments and digitalization (Sharma & Rattan, 2016). In this context, employee performance is a crucial factor that determines the competitiveness of paper manufacturing companies. The company where the research took place is one of the paper manufacturing companies that faces various challenges in managing its human resources. McWhannel & Cronshaw (2008) identified that the pulp and paper industry faces labor shortages and difficulties in retaining qualified employees. Initial observations show that there is a significant variation in employee performance between departments and job levels. Several performance indicators, such as productivity, work quality, and target achievement, show fluctuations that need serious attention from management.

Various studies show that employee performance is influenced by multiple factors. Ng et al. (2024) identified key factors that affect employee performance, including compensation, work environment, and individual characteristics. Competitive compensation and benefits are recognized as one of the important factors in improving employee satisfaction and performance (Williams et al., 2008; Negash et al., 2014). A conducive work environment, both physical and non-physical, has also been shown to contribute to employee productivity (Zhenjing et al., 2022; Maniah et al., 2024). Meanwhile, demographic factors such as age, gender, education level, and length of service can affect how employees work and contribute to the organization (Sherbaz et al., 2022; Marcus & Gopinath, 2017). Although many studies have examined the factors that affect employee performance, there are still research gaps that need to be filled. First, research that comprehensively integrates compensation and benefits, work environment, and employee demographics in one research model is still limited, especially in the context of the paper manufacturing industry in Indonesia. Second, the role of motivation as a mediating variable in the relationship between these factors and employee performance has not been widely explored, especially in the paper manufacturing industry setting that has unique characteristics.

The novelty of this study lies in the development of a comprehensive model that integrates three independent groups of variables (compensation and benefits, work environment, and employee demographics) by considering the mediating role of motivation on employee performance, particularly in the context of the paper manufacturing industry. This study also uses the Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) approach, which allows the analysis of complex relationships between variables simultaneously. This study aims to: (1) analyze the influence of compensation and benefits on employee performance; (2) analyze the influence of the work environment on employee performance; (3) analyze the influence of employee demographics on employee performance; (4) analyze the effect of compensation and benefits on motivation; (5) analyze the influence of the work environment on motivation; (6) analyze the influence of employee demographics on motivation; (7) analyze the influence of motivation on employee performance; and (8) analyze the role of motivational mediation in the relationship between

compensation and benefits, work environment, and employee demographics on employee performance in the company.

The implementation of corporate goals and objectives, especially in the paper manufacturing industry, is very important to be understood by various lines within the company and factory operations, so that targets and achievements are in accordance with the management direction set on performance. In this company, factory performance targets are set in KPIs, which have been determined by central management and communicated to operational management. The Goal Setting Theory, put forward by Karmila et al. (2023), states that the simplest way to improve motivation and the explanation of why some people perform better than others is that they have different performance goals. The core of the theory is four. First, challenging specific targets leads to much higher performance than easy targets. Second, maintaining the ability to remain constant. Third, the employee's personal background and compensation incentives influence individual behavior. Fourth, goal setting, in addition to influencing three motivational mechanisms, namely choice, effort, and perseverance, can also have cognitive benefits (Latham & Locke, 2017; Ruma, Z., 2023).

The influence of employee motivation on employee performance based on Expectancy Theory, Victor Harold Vroom created a theory about Motivation in 1964. This theory states that behavior is motivated by anticipated outcomes or consequences. Vroom proposes that a person decides to behave in a certain way based on the expected outcome of the chosen behavior. For example, people will be willing to work harder if they think the extra effort will be rewarded. In essence, individuals make choices based on estimates of how well the expected outcomes of a particular behavior will correspond to or ultimately lead to the desired outcome. (Williams, 2008; Sri Mudefi et al., 2023).

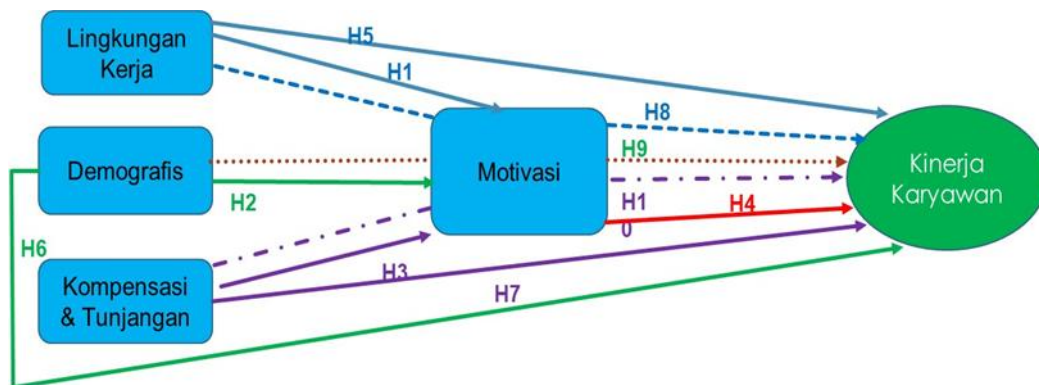
The influence of employee demographics on employee performance is based on the diversity of employees who describe their characteristics in their roles in the industry. In Role Theory, it is explained that in concepts in sociology and social psychology, most of a person's role in daily activities is the embodiment of socially defined categories (e.g., mother, manager, teacher). Each role is a set of rights, duties, expectations, norms, and behaviors that a person must face and fulfill. This model is based on the observation that people behave in a predictable way, and that individual behavior is context-specific, based on social position and other factors (Sri Mudefi et al., 2023).

Compensation and benefits are described as a balanced reciprocity for an employee towards his or her performance and contribution to his or her work, which can be measured through performance evaluation (Musa et al., 2023; Wahyudi et al., 2023). In Social Exchange Theory, based on sociological and psychological theories, a person's social behavior in two-party interactions will apply cost-to-benefit analysis to determine risks and benefits. This theory also involves the economic relationship to the cost-benefit analysis that occurs when each party owns an item that is considered important by the other party

(Roeckelein, 2006). Social exchange theory states that if the cost of a relationship is higher than the reward, such as if a lot of effort or money is devoted to a relationship and is not reciprocated, then the relationship can be terminated or abandoned (Emerson, 1976).

2. RESEARCH METHOD

This research is an explanatory type of research that uses a quantitative approach. Explanatory research explains why certain things happen and how various variables interact with each other. This research focuses on cause-and-effect relationships and is known as confirmatory or correlational research (Sari et al., 2022). The purpose of this study is to find out how the independent variables of demographics, work environment, and compensation and benefits (independent) affect employee performance as a dependent variable and employee motivation as a mediating variable (*intervening*). In Figure 3.1, the following is formulated for the relationship between the variables tested in the study.



This study uses a quantitative approach with an explanatory survey method. The research population is all employees of *the Technical* department, which totals 140 people. The research sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 5%, so that a sample of 104 respondents was obtained. The sampling technique used is *purposive sampling* with the following criteria: (1) permanent employees with a minimum working period of 1 year; (2) willing to be a respondent; and (3) still actively working at the time the research was conducted.

All items in the questionnaire use a 5-point Likert scale (1 = Strongly Disagree to 5 = Strongly Agree). Testing of the instrument is carried out through validity and reliability tests. The validity test used Pearson's product-moment correlation with the r -value criterion calculated $> r$ table (0.361). The reliability test used *Cronbach's Alpha* with a value criterion of > 0.70 . The test results show that all items are valid and reliable.

The data analysis technique used was *Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling* (PLS-SEM) with the help of SmartPLS 3.0 software. The analysis was carried out in two stages: (1) evaluation of *the measurement model* through a convergent validity test

(loading factor > 0.70 and AVE > 0.50), discriminant validity. (2) evaluation of the structural model through path coefficient tests, R-square, and hypothesis testing using *bootstrapping*.

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

The results of the analysis of respondent characteristics showed that the majority of respondents were male (87.50%) with a dominant age of 40-49 years (34.62%). The education level of respondents was dominated by high school graduates/equivalent (48.08%), followed by Bachelor or higher (19.23%) and Diploma (18.27%). Based on the current working period in the field, the majority of respondents have worked for 14-20 years (35.58%), while based on the overall working period, the majority of respondents have worked for 14-20 years (36.54%). The marital status of the majority of respondents is married (79.81%). Based on the position level, the majority of respondents were operators (59.62%), followed by supervisors (19.23%), and officers (12.50%). The majority of respondents worked with a field shift system (84.61%).

Descriptive Statistical Analysis

In this study, there is the first exogenous variable of the work environment, which is measured with 3 (three) indicators, namely: work environment temperature, work environment lighting, and work environment noise. Then the second exogenous variable of employee demographics is measured by 3 (three) indicators, namely: Education, work experience, and work skills. Then, the third exogenous variable of compensation and allowances is measured by 3 (three) indicators, namely: salary position, allowance position, and position of non-financial facilities. Furthermore, endogenous variables of employee performance are measured by 3 (three) indicators, namely: work quality, quantity of work, and teamwork. Then the intervening variables of employee motivation are measured by 3 (three) indicators, namely: initiative at work, innovative and creative, and enthusiasm at work.

Table 1. Descriptive Statistical Analysis

Variable	N	Red	Stdev
Employee Performance (Y)	104	4,21	0,59
Employee Motivation (Z)	104	4,15	0,61
Work Environment (X1)	104	3,71	0,65
Employee Demographics (X2)	104	3,91	0,72
Compensation and Benefits (X3)	104	3,70	0,78
Overall variables	104	3,94	

Based on the overall items, a grand mean value of 3.94 was obtained, which means that employees of the Technical department have high motivation to achieve the company's targets and have high performance.

Partial Least Squares (PLS) Analysis

Partial *Least Squares* (PLS) analysis will be used to test and analyze the direct and indirect influences between variables. Employee performance variables with 4 (four) indicators, which are reflection indicators (formed from variables). Work environment variables with 3 (three) indicators, which are reflection indicators (formed from variables). Employee demographic variables with 3 (three) indicators, which are reflection indicators (formed from variables). Compensation and allowance variables with 3 (three) indicators, which are reflection indicators (formed from variables). Employee motivation variables with 3 (three) indicators, which are indicators of reflection (formed from variables). The results of the PLS analysis will show whether the influence between the variables is positive or significant.

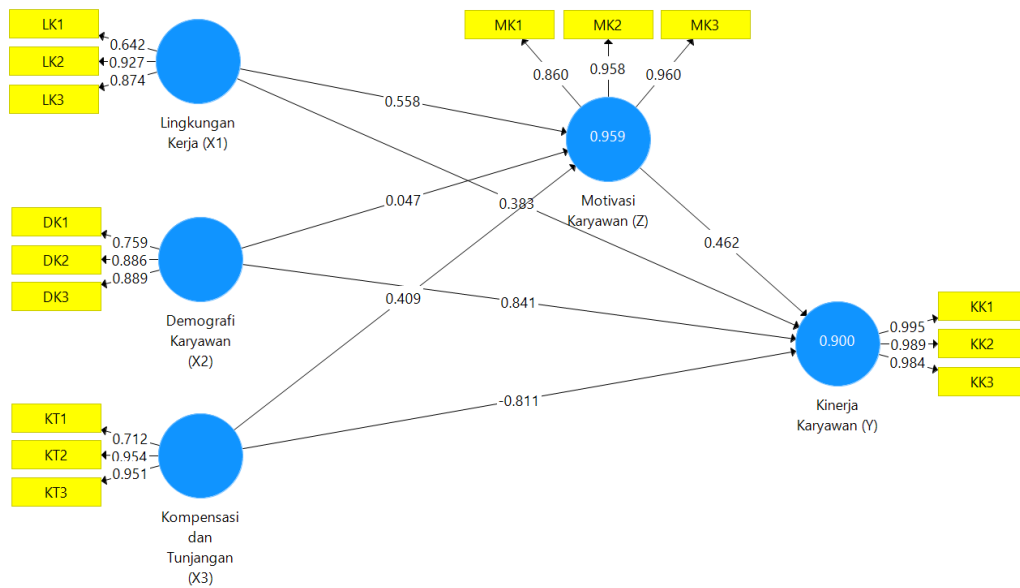


Figure 1. Output PLS

Evaluation Results of the Measurement Model

The results of the convergent validity test through *the loading factor* value showed that all indicators on each variable had a value above 0.70, which means that each item has a strong contribution in explaining its own latent construct.

Table 2. Convergent Validity by Loading Factor

Variable	Indicator	Outer Loading	Remarks
Employee Performance (Y)	CD 1	0.995	<i>Valid</i>
	CD 2	0.989	<i>Valid</i>

	CD 3	0.984	<i>Valid</i>
Employee Motivation (Z)	MK 1	0.860	<i>Valid</i>
	MK 2	0.958	<i>Valid</i>
	MK 3	0.960	<i>Valid</i>
Work Environment (X1)	LK 1	0.808	<i>Valid</i>
	LK 2	0.927	<i>Valid</i>
	LK 3	0.874	<i>Valid</i>
Employee Demographics (X2)	DK 1	0.759	<i>Valid</i>
	DK 2	0.886	<i>Valid</i>
	DK 3	0.889	<i>Valid</i>
Compensation and Benefits (X3)	KTK 1	0.712	<i>Valid</i>
	KTK 2	0.954	<i>Valid</i>
	KTK 3	0.951	<i>Valid</i>

The *Average Variance Extracted* (AVE) value of all variables also showed excellent results, which were above 0.50, which means that each construct was able to explain more than 50% of the variance of the indicator. The Employee Performance (Y) variable had the highest AVE (0.979), which indicates the best measurement quality among all variables. Other variables, such as Employee Motivation (0.860) and Compensation and Benefits (0.774), also had high AVEs, indicating a strong convergent validity. The variable with the lowest AVE was Work Environment (0.679), but it remained in the very good category.

Table 3. Convergent Validity based on AVE

Variable	AVE	Standard AVE	Remarks
Employee Performance (Y)	0,979	0,5	<i>Valid</i>
Employee Motivation (Z)	0,860	0,5	<i>Valid</i>
Work Environment (X1)	0,679	0,5	<i>Valid</i>
Employee Demographics (X2)	0,717	0,5	<i>Valid</i>
Compensation and Benefits (X3)	0,774	0,5	<i>Valid</i>

Structural Model Evaluation Results

The evaluation of the structural model shows that the value of R-squared indicates the level of ability of independent variables to explain variations in dependent variables. In the Employee Performance variable (Y), the R Square value of 0.900 and the R Square Adjusted of 0.896 indicate that 90 percent of the variation in Employee Performance can be explained by predictor variables in the model, while the remaining 10 percent is influenced by other factors outside the model. For the Employee Motivation (Z) variable, the R Square value of 0.959 and the R Square Adjusted value of 0.957 indicate that 95.9 percent of the variation in Employee Motivation can be explained by independent variables in the model.

Table 4. R Square

	R Square	R Square Adjusted
Employee Performance (Y)	0.900	0.896
Employee Motivation (Z)	0.959	0.957

Hypothesis Testing Results

The results of the hypothesis test show the following results:

Table 5. Hypothesis Test Results

Variable	Mediation Variables	Dependent Variable	Path coefficient <i>t</i>	P Value	T Statistic	Hypothetical Results
Work Environment (X1)		Employee Performance (Y)	0.383	0.000	3.834	Accepted
Employee Demographics (X2)		Employee Performance (Y)	0.841	0.001	3.253	Accepted
Compensation and Benefits (X3)		Employee Performance (Y)	-0.811	0.000	4.806	Accepted (opposite direction)
Employee Motivation (Z)		Employee Performance (Y)	0.462	0.030	2.176	Accepted
Work Environment (X1)		Employee Motivation (Z)	0.558	0.000	7.950	Accepted
Employee Demographics (X2)		Employee Motivation (Z)	0.047	0.000	2.587	Accepted
Compensation and Benefits (X3)		Employee Motivation (Z)	0.409	0.000	6.119	Accepted
Work Environment (X1)	Employee Motivation (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)	0.258	0.035	2.117	Accepted
Employee Demographics (X2)	Employee Motivation (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)	0.022	0.041	3.542	Accepted

Compensation and Benefits (X3)	Employee Motivation (Z)	Employee Performance (Y)	0.189	0.000	1.991	Accepted
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DISCUSSION

The results showed that the work environment had a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.383$; $p < 0.001$). These findings are in line with research by Zhenjing et al. (2022), who found that a conducive work environment directly improves employee performance. Putri et al. (2019) also confirmed that the work environment contributes positively to performance through work discipline. In the context of the paper manufacturing industry, aspects of the physical work environment, such as temperature, lighting, and noise, are crucial given the characteristics of work that require work comfort and safety (Sharma & Rattan, 2016; Kahaki et al., 2022). A good work environment creates optimal conditions for employees to work productively and focus on achieving targets. With optimal performance, employees will have confidence and a strong employee self-assessment to improve their performance. (Fadilah et al., 2018).

Employee demographics were shown to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.841$; $p = 0.001$), which was the strongest influence in the study. These findings are in line with research by Sherbaz et al. (2022), which found that demographic characteristics have a significant impact on employee performance in Pakistan. Wahyu et al. (2025) also confirmed that individual characteristics of employees contribute to performance. In the context of PT Ekamas Fortuna, the majority of employees have a long working period (60.58% have worked for more than 13 years in their field) and rich work experience (79.81% have worked for more than 8 years overall), which contributes to skill mastery, understanding of work culture, and good adaptability (Ratnawati et al., 2020). Having abilities and skills will have a positive effect on employee performance. (Winarno & Zulaikah, 2021)

An interesting finding in this study is that compensation and benefits have a significant influence on employee performance, but they are negatively correlated, so that their improvement is not always followed by performance improvement. ($\beta = -0.811$; $p < 0.001$). These results are in contrast to most of the literature, such as Williams et al. (2008) and Negash et al. (2014), which found a positive influence. However, these findings can be understood in the context of Herzberg's *Two-Factor* theory, which distinguishes between hygiene factors and motivators. High compensation but not accompanied by other motivating factors can actually reduce performance because it causes complacency or unrealistic expectations (Shobirin & Siharis, 2022). These findings also indicate an imbalance between the compensation system and the job challenges or performance appraisal systems that need to be evaluated.

Employee motivation has been shown to have a positive and significant effect on employee performance ($\beta = 0.462$; $p = 0.030$). These findings are consistent with the research of Maniah et al. (2024), which found the important role of motivation in connecting the work environment and employee performance in Indonesia. Sanjaya & Indrawati (2023) also confirmed that work motivation contributes significantly to employee performance. These results support the Expectancy theory, which states that motivation is a driving force that directs employee behavior towards the achievement of organizational goals (Virgiawan et al., 2021), because attitudes are highly influential on employee performance. (Setiawan et al., 2024) (Kelerey et al., 2020)

The work environment had a positive and significant effect on motivation ($\beta = 0.558$; $p < 0.001$), which was the strongest influence on motivation. These findings are in line with research by Nst & Marsono (2023), who found that the work environment influences performance through motivation as an intervening variable. Maniah et al. (2024) also confirmed the important role of the work environment in building employee motivation. A safe, comfortable, and supportive work environment creates positive psychological conditions, creates a work-life balance, and increases work engagement that affects employee performance. (Dwitanti et al., 2023; Prilatama et al., 2025) .

Employee demographics had a positive and significant effect on motivation ($\beta = 0.047$; $p < 0.001$), albeit with a relatively small coefficient. Mulyadi & Enas (2023) found that educational background affects employee work motivation. In the context of this study, employees with higher education (19.23% Bachelor's or higher and 18.27% Diploma) tended to have better motivation due to a deeper understanding of the job and higher career development aspirations.

Compensation and benefits had a positive and significant effect on motivation ($\beta = 0.409$; $p < 0.001$). These findings are in line with the research of Negash et al. (2014), which found that compensation has a positive effect on employee motivation. Although compensation has a negative effect on performance directly, its effect on motivation remains positive, indicating that good compensation is still important to maintain employee morale, but it needs to be combined with other factors in order to improve actual performance.

Motivation has been shown to play a mediator role in the relationship between the work environment ($\beta = 0.258$; $p = 0.035$), employee demographics ($\beta = 0.022$; $p = 0.041$), and compensation and benefits ($\beta = 0.189$; $p < 0.001$) on employee performance. These findings support the research of Maniah et al. (2024), who found the role of motivational mediation in the relationship between the work environment and performance. Nst & Marsono (2023) also confirmed that motivation mediates the influence of the work environment on performance. This role of motivational mediation indicates that the three independent variables not only work directly, but also through the construction of employees' intrinsic and extrinsic motivations to achieve optimal performance improvement.

4. CONCLUSION

This research shows that employee performance is directly influenced by several key factors. The work environment and the demographic characteristics of employees have a positive influence on performance, while compensation and benefits show the opposite influence. Among these factors, employee demographics are the most dominant determinant in shaping performance. On the other hand, compensation and benefits have a fairly strong negative influence, while the work environment still contributes positively, although not as much as demographic factors. In addition, work motivation has an important role as a liaison that explains how these three factors affect employee performance. In this case, the work environment is the factor that contributes the most to forming motivation, which ultimately has an impact on improving employee performance.

The practical implications of this research lead to the need for management to continue to maintain and improve the quality of the work environment, both from the physical and non-physical sides. Aspects such as temperature, lighting, and noise levels are major concerns because they are closely related to the characteristics of the paper manufacturing industry. On the other hand, the compensation and benefits system needs to be thoroughly reviewed to understand the factors that cause the emergence of negative influences on performance, so that appropriate improvements can be made. This research still has a number of limitations that need to be considered. The use of samples from only one department within a single company means the results of this study cannot be generalized widely without caution. Findings related to the negative influence of compensation on performance also still need further deepening so that they can be comprehensively understood.

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