

UNDERSTANDING EMPLOYEE PERFORMANCE THROUGH COMPENSATION AND WORK MOTIVATION: AN EMPIRICAL STUDY OF TECHNICAL STORE EMPLOYEES IN CENTRAL JAKARTA

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ABSTRACT

Employee performance in small technical stores is closely connected to how employees are rewarded and how strongly they are motivated to carry out their daily responsibilities. This study aims to examine the effects of compensation and work motivation on employee performance among technical store employees in Central Jakarta. A quantitative explanatory design was employed, involving 62 employees selected through purposive sampling. Data were obtained and analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4. The findings reveal that compensation and work motivation have a positive effect on employee performance. These findings indicate that employee performance in small technical stores is associated not only with the rewards employees receive but also with their drive, initiative, and responsibility in carrying out their work. Theoretically, this study contributes to human resource management literature by examining compensation and work motivation as determinants of employee performance in small-scale technical retail businesses. Its contextual contribution extends empirical understanding of how organizational rewards and employee motivation relate to performance in this specific operational setting. Practically, store owners can support employee performance by maintaining fair compensation, providing transparent incentives and adequate facilities, setting clear work targets, and encouraging employee initiative and responsibility.

Keywords: compensation, work motivation, employee performance, store employees

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1. INTRODUCTION

Human resource management has evolved as a conceptual framework that positions workforce management as a primary determinant of organizational goal achievement (Dessler, 2024), rather than simply a technical administrative function. This perspective emphasizes that organizational effectiveness, whether large corporations or micro and small businesses, is highly dependent on how owners or managers design reward systems, direct work behavior, and encourage employee performance to align with business targets (Allen & Helms, 2001; Nugroho, 2022).

Employee performance refers to how well employees carry out the tasks and responsibilities associated with their roles. It can be examined through work quality, work quantity, punctuality, and teamwork, indicators that are relevant to both individual task completion and coordination with colleagues (Mangkunegara, 2023). Performance is not shaped by a single condition, but can be attributed to individual characteristics and organizational practices. A systematic review by Triansyah et al. (2023) similarly presents employee performance as an outcome influenced by multiple factors, supporting the need to examine specific workplace conditions in context.

Compensation is one HRM instrument that can influence performance because it relates to the rewards employees receive for their contributions. Compensation can include salary, incentives, benefits, and facilities provided by the organization (Hasibuan, 2023). Several previous studies have shown that compensation has a positive effect on employee performance (Damayanti et al., 2024; Yasa et al., 2023;

Yudistia & Nurani, 2023). This contrasts with the results of Hutabarat et al. (2023) study, which found that compensation has a negative effect on employee performance.

In addition to compensation, work motivation serves as an intrinsic and extrinsic psychological driver that directs the intensity, direction, and persistence of employee efforts in achieving work targets (Diefendorff et al., 2022). Highly motivated employees tend to demonstrate initiative, focus on solving work problems, and excel at task performance. Recent empirical studies have reported a positive relationship between motivation and employee performance (Adinata et al., 2026; Azahra & Widigdo, 2025; Satoto, 2023), although some studies have found no significant effect (Bodroastuti et al., 2024), suggesting that the relationship may vary across organizational settings.

Therefore, improving performance has become a strategic imperative. Compensation and motivation are positioned as two complementary managerial instruments in efforts to improve employee performance (Vuong & Nguyen, 2022). Compensation, both financial and non-financial, is expected to function as a tangible reward system that drives productivity. Conversely, motivation is believed to internally encourage employees to align their efforts with organizational goals (Aryata & Marendra, 2025). Examining both variables in one model allows the study to consider their separate relationships with performance rather than treating either factor as a complete explanation. This distinction is relevant in small businesses, where formal HR policies may be limited and employee management is often closely connected to everyday operational decisions.

Technical stores provide a useful context for examining these relationships because employees may be expected to serve customers, identify suitable technical products, explain product information, handle products, and monitor stock as part of routine operations. These duties require reliable task completion as well as initiative in responding to customer needs. Compared with larger organizations, small stores may have simpler reporting structures and fewer formalized HR procedures, while owners or managers may be directly involved in daily supervision. Under these conditions, the perceived fairness of rewards and employees' willingness to take responsibility may both be relevant to consistent performance. Studies of building and retail businesses have also examined compensation and motivation as performance-related factors (Adinata et al., 2026; Yasa et al., 2023).

Although compensation and work motivation have been examined extensively in employee-performance research, evidence specific to employees in small technical stores remains less developed than evidence from more formal organizational settings. This context matters because technical-store employees combine customer-facing duties with product and inventory tasks, while work arrangements and HR practices may be managed directly by store owners.

Previous studies also report differing results for compensation and motivation, indicating that relationships observed in one setting should not automatically be assumed to apply to another. Accordingly, this study examines the relationships of compensation and work motivation with employee performance among technical store employees in Central Jakarta. Its contribution is contextual rather than a claim that the two relationships have never been studied: it tests established HRM relationships in a small-scale technical retail setting and considers their implications for day-to-day employee management.

2. LITERATURE AND HYPOTHESIS

Compensation

Compensation is a reward provided by an employer to an employee as a reward for their contributions through work. Compensation encompasses various forms of recognition related to the employment relationship and is an essential part of human resource management practices (Dessler, 2024). According to Hasibuan (2023), compensation indicators include wages or salaries, incentives, allowance, and facilities.

Equity Theory proposes that employees assess the fairness of the relationship between their contributions and the outcomes they receive (Adams, 1965). In a technical-store setting, this perspective suggests that compensation perceived as appropriate to employees' responsibilities may be associated with their willingness to maintain expected work standards. Previous studies have reported a positive relationship between compensation and performance (Damayanti et al., 2024; Yasa et al., 2023), although other findings have differed (Hutabarat et al., 2023).

Therefore, the study proposes the following hypothesis.

H1: Compensation has a positive effect on employee performance.

Work Motivation

Work motivation is the drive that directs an individual to exert effort in carrying out work and achieving specific goals. In organizational behavior, motivation relates to the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual's efforts at work (Robbins et al., 2024). Motivation is a crucial aspect because it can influence how employees direct and maintain their efforts in completing their tasks (Mangkunegara, 2023). According to Syahyuti (2010) in Meisari et al. (2025), indicators of work motivation include the drive to achieve goals, work spirit, initiative, and responsibility.

Expectancy Theory suggests that employees are more likely to invest effort when they perceive a meaningful link between effort, performance, and valued outcomes (Vroom, 1964). For technical-store employees, motivation may be relevant to responding to customers, solving routine problems, and completing tasks without continuous prompting. Empirical research has found positive relationships between motivation and performance, although results are not consistent across all studies (Satoto, 2023; Adinata et al., 2026; Bodroastuti et al., 2024).

This study therefore proposes the following hypothesis.

H2: Work motivation has a positive effect on employee performance.

Employee Performance

According to Kasmir (2022), employee performance is the result obtained from completing tasks and obligations assigned to employees within a specified timeframe. Performance also indicates the extent to which employee activities contribute to or hinder the achievement of company goals. According to Mangkunegara (2023), employee performance indicators include work quality, quantity, punctuality, and teamwork. These indicators are relevant to technical stores because employees must provide appropriate service, handle goods accurately, complete routine tasks on time, and coordinate with colleagues. Performance is therefore considered an outcome that may be associated with both organizational rewards and employees' work motivation. The study tests these relationships without assuming that the selected factors explain every aspect of employee performance.

The proposed model distinguishes compensation as an external organizational factor from work motivation as a psychological factor that directs employees' effort. Drawing on Equity Theory, compensation may be associated with performance when employees perceive the rewards they receive as appropriate to their contributions. Expectancy Theory provides a complementary explanation for motivation, as employees may be more willing to sustain effort when they see a connection between effort, performance, and valued outcomes. These theories inform the expected relationships but do not establish causality on their own.

Figure 1 presents the model tested in this study.



Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. RESEARCH METHODS

This study uses a quantitative approach and explanatory design to examine the influence of compensation and work motivation on employee performance. This approach was chosen to examine the causal relationships between the variables through empirical data analysis.

The study population consisted of employees working in technical stores in Central Jakarta, using purposive sampling. Respondents were selected based on the following criteria: (1) working in a technical store (including electrical, building, plumbing, etc.); (2) having worked there for at least one year; and (3) being located in Central Jakarta.

The sample size was determined based on the guideline proposed by Hair et al. (2022), which recommends a minimum of five observations per indicator. In this study, each of the variables was measured using 4 indicators, resulting in a total of 12 indicators. Accordingly, the minimum required sample size was calculated as 12 indicators multiplied by five observations per indicator, yielding a minimum of 60 respondents.

Table 1. Operationalization of Variables

Variable	Indicator	Questionnaire Statement	Source
Compensation	Wage or salary	The salary I receive is commensurate with my workload.	Hasibuan (2023)
	Incentive	I receive incentives for my achievements or work performance.	
	Allowance	I receive allowances in accordance with my workplace's policies.	
	Facilities	My workplace provides facilities that support me in performing my job.	
Work motivation	Drive to achieve goals	I strive to achieve the work targets set by my workplace.	Syahyuti (2010) as cited in Meisari et al. (2025)
	Work spirit	I remain enthusiastic when carrying out my daily tasks.	
	Initiative	I take the initiative to perform tasks without always waiting for instructions.	
	Responsibility	I am willing to take responsibility for the results of my work.	
Employee performance	Quality of work	I complete my work in accordance with the established standards.	Mangkunegara (2023)

Variable	Indicator	Questionnaire Statement	Source
	Quantity of work	I am able to complete the tasks assigned to me within my working hours.	
	Punctuality	I strive to complete tasks without postponing them.	
	Teamwork	I am willing to help my colleagues when needed to complete work tasks.	

Source: (Hasibuan, 2023; Meisari et al., 2025; Mangkunegara, 2023)

Questionnaires were distributed through a combination of online and direct approaches with a five-point Likert scale. A total of 62 respondents participated in this study. Data were analyzed using PLS-SEM with SmartPLS 4.0 software. This technique was chosen due to its ability to explain complex causal pathways and its suitability for small sample sizes.

In addition, respondents characteristics, including age, years in job, and type of store where they worked were collected and analyzed to provide a clearer profile of the characteristics of the sample and to account for potential disruptive variables.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Result

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Age	< 20	4	6,5
	>20-30	15	24,2
	>30-40	13	21,0
	>40-50	20	32,3
	> 50	10	16,1
Years in Job	>1-3	9	14,5
	>3-5	15	24,2
	> 5	38	61,3
Store Type	Electrical	18	29,0
	Building Materials	10	16,1
	Pipe/Plumber	29	46,8
	Others	5	8,1

Source: Processed data, 2026.

Table 2 illustrates the characteristics of the 62 respondents involved in this study. Based on age distribution, the majority of respondents were employees aged 40-50 (32.3%), followed by 24.2% aged 20-30, 21% aged 30-40, 16.1% aged 50 and over, and 6.5% aged under 20.

The distribution of years in job indicates that the majority of respondents had extensive work experience. 61.3% of respondents had worked for more than 5 years, 24.2% had worked for 3-5 years, and 14.5% for approximately 1-3 years.

Finally, based on store type distribution, the majority of respondents (46.8%) worked in plumbing stores, 29% in electrical stores, 16.1% in building materials stores, and 8.1% in other types of stores such as hardware, spare parts, and others.

Measurement Model Evaluation

Table 3. Convergent Validity and Reliability

Variable	Item	Indicator	Loading Factor	AVE	CA	CR
Employee Performance	EP1	Quality of Work	0.912	0.796	0.914	0.940
	EP2	Quantity of Work	0.871			
	EP3	Punctuality	0.871			
	EP4	Teamwork	0.912			
Compensation	C1	Wage or Salary	0.841	0.665	0.830	0.887
	C2	Incentive	0.808			
	C3	Allowance	0.716			
	C4	Facilities	0.885			
Work Motivation	WM1	Drive to achieve goals	0.812	0.708	0.863	0.906
	WM2	Work spirit	0.831			
	WM3	Initiative	0.853			
	WM4	Responsibility	0.868			

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output, 2026.

Measurement Model Evaluation demonstrated satisfactory reliability and validity. Convergent validity assessments indicated that all factor loadings exceeded 0.70, with a range of 0.871–0.912 for the employee performance indicators, a range of 0.716–0.885 for the compensation indicators, and a range of 0.812–0.868 for the work motivation indicators.

The Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values for each construct exceeded the suggested minimum of 0.50, indicating that the measurement model has adequate convergent validity.

As illustrated in Table 3, findings indicate that each latent variable exceeded the suggested minimum of 0.70 threshold for Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha. Therefore, all constructs are reliable, and the questionnaire used in this study demonstrated strong internal consistency.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion

Variable	C	WM	EP
Compensation	0.815		
Work Motivation	0.660	0.841	
Employee Performance	0.740	0.688	0.892

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output, 2026.

The Fornell–Larcker criterion was used to assess discriminant validity by comparing the square root of AVE for each construct with its correlations with the other constructs. The square roots of AVE were 0.815 for compensation, 0.841 for work motivation, and 0.892 for employee performance. Each diagonal value exceeded the corresponding inter-construct correlations, supporting discriminant validity under this criterion.

Table 5. Heterotrait-monotrait

Variable	C	WM	EP
Compensation			
Work Motivation	0.767		
Employee Performance	0.839	0.759	

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output, 2026.

To assess discriminant validity in more detail, the Heterotrait–Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) was used. Hair et al. (2022) suggest that HTMT readings of less than 0.90 reflect adequate discriminant validity. The

results show that every HTMT value in this research is below the 0.90 level, thus confirming strong discriminant validity for the model.

Structural Model Evaluation

R-Square (R^2)

Table 6. R-Square Testing

Variable	R^2	R^2 Adjusted
Employee Performance	0.618	0.605

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output, 2026.

Table 6 illustrates that the adjusted R^2 value for employee performance is 0.605. This indicates that compensation and work motivation explain 60.5% of the variance in employee performance, indicating that the proposed model has moderat explanatory power, indicating that compensation and work motivation are important determinants of employee performance. The remaining 39.5% is explained by variables not tested in this study.

Predictive Relevance (Q^2)

Table 7. Q-Square Testing

Variable	SSO	SSE	Q^2
Employee Performance	248.000	130.515	0.474

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output, 2026.

The Q^2 value was used to evaluate the model's relevance in explaining endogenous variables through blindfolding. The results illustrated that the Q^2 value for employee performance was 0.474 greater than 0.35, indicating a strong level of predictive relevance for the endogenous construct.

Path Coefficient

Table 8. Path Coefficient

Variable	Original sample	Sample mean	Standard deviation	T statistic	P values	Remarks
Compensation -> Employee Performance	0.508	0.512	0.123	4.139	0.000	Accepted
Work Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.352	0.354	0.126	2.798	0.005	Accepted

Source: SmartPLS 4 Output, 2026.

Table 8 illustrates the results of the hypothesis testing using the bootstrapping method.

- 1) The path coefficient from compensation to employee performance is $\beta = 0.508$, indicating a strong positive effect. The statistical significance of this relationship is confirmed by a t-statistic of 4.139 and a p-value of 0.000. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 is accepted.
- 2) The path coefficient from work motivation to employee performance is $\beta = 0.352$, indicating a strong positive effect. The statistical significance of this relationship is confirmed by a t-statistic of 2.798 and a p-value of 0.005. Therefore, Hypothesis 2 is accepted.

Discussion

Compensation had a positive and significant effect on employee performance, and its path coefficient was larger than that of work motivation. This finding is consistent with Damayanti et al. (2024), Yasa et al. (2023), and Yudistia and Nurani (2023), who reported positive relationships between compensation and performance. It differs from Hutabarat et al. (2023), whose findings indicated a negative relationship, underscoring that compensation-performance relationships may vary across contexts.

One contextual explanation is that technical-store employees undertake tasks that are directly visible in daily operations, including assisting customers, identifying products, handling goods, and supporting inventory activities. Compensation in this study covers wages or salary, incentives, allowances, and facilities. Employees may interpret these rewards as a tangible indication of how their contributions are recognized, particularly when their responsibilities extend beyond a single routine task.

From an Equity Theory perspective, the perceived relationship between contribution and reward may be relevant to how employees approach their work. However, this interpretation is theoretical rather than a mechanism directly tested by the present model. For store owners or managers, the result suggests reviewing whether compensation arrangements are clear, consistently applied, and reasonably aligned with responsibilities. The coefficient difference should be treated as specific to this sample, not as evidence that compensation always outweighs motivation.

Work motivation also had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This finding aligns with Adinata et al. (2026), Azahra and Widigdo (2025), and Satoto (2023), while differing from Bodroastuti et al. (2024). The variation across studies suggests that the relationship may depend on the work setting and the way motivation and performance are measured.

In technical stores, employees are often required to respond to customer requests, identify products, manage inventory, and complete tasks with minimal supervision. The motivation indicators used in this study, namely goal achievement, work enthusiasm, initiative, and responsibility, are relevant to these job demands.

Expectancy Theory provides a possible explanation for employee motivation, suggesting that employees may be more willing to exert effort when they believe their efforts will lead to satisfactory performance and valued outcomes. However, because expectancy beliefs were not directly measured in this study, this explanation should be regarded as a theoretical interpretation rather than evidence of a tested mediating mechanism. From a managerial perspective, store owners can foster employee motivation by establishing clear and achievable targets, clarifying job responsibilities, providing constructive feedback, and allowing employees reasonable autonomy to take initiative.

5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This study found that compensation and work motivation both have positive effects on employee performance among employees of technical stores in Central Jakarta. These findings suggest that employee performance is not solely related to the ability to complete assigned tasks, but also to how employees perceive the rewards they receive and the motivation they bring to their work. In the context of technical stores, both aspects form part of employees' daily work experience as they interact directly with customers, products, and various operational demands.

From a practical perspective, the findings provide several considerations for owners and managers of small technical stores. Compensation should be structured in a way that employees can clearly understand in relation to their responsibilities and contribution. In addition to maintaining fair wages, store owners can consider simple incentive schemes linked to clearly defined achievements, provide appropriate work-related facilities, and communicate compensation arrangements transparently. For motivation, managers can establish clear daily or monthly work targets, give employees greater opportunity to take initiative in serving customers and handling operational tasks, and assign responsibilities according to employees' roles. Regular feedback can also help employees understand whether their work meets the store's expectations. These practices are particularly relevant for small stores where formal HR systems may be limited and employee performance is closely connected to daily interactions with customers, products, and operational activities.

This study has several limitations. The respondents were limited to employees of technical stores in Central Jakarta and were selected based on specific criteria; therefore, the findings may not represent employees of technical stores in other areas or different types of businesses. The study also employed a quantitative approach with a limited set of variables, namely compensation, work motivation, and employee performance. Other factors that may be associated with employee performance were not examined in this study. Future research could expand the geographical scope and consider other factors that are relevant to the characteristics of technical-store businesses.

Declarations

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Data Availability: The data supporting the findings of this study are available from the corresponding author upon reasonable request, subject to appropriate privacy and confidentiality considerations.

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