



The Effect of Work Environment, Work Motivation, and Compensation on Employee Performance

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Abstract

This study aims to examine the influence of work environment, work motivation, and compensation on employee performance through a literature review approach. The study uses a literature review method by analyzing journals published in the last ten years. The population consists of previous relevant studies, with samples from national and international journals discussing the related variables. The research design is descriptive with content analysis techniques to identify patterns of relationships among variables. The results show that work environment, work motivation, and compensation generally have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, both partially and simultaneously. The novelty lies in the systematic mapping of findings from various studies to provide a comprehensive picture of the relationships among these variables. Companies are advised to improve the quality of the physical and non-physical work environment, enhance fair compensation systems, and manage motivation factors effectively.

Introduction

Creating a positive working environment both physical and non-physical (e.g. inter-personal relationships and general workplace atmosphere) has been empirically proven to facilitate comfort among the employees and enhance productivity. According to the research findings presented by Hermawan & Rahadi (2021) it is necessary to emphasize that a favorable work environment does not only raise morale, but also promotes internal motivation, in turn prompting staff to perform best. Development of a positive and effective working environment is thus a strategic necessity as far as long-term performance enhancement is concerned.

Motivation at the workplace is also central towards achieving organizational goals. Highly motivated employees are more committed, self-disciplined and more creative. According to Robbins & Judge (2013), motivation is internalized propensity on the part of an individual towards organizational goals, depending on the level to which such endeavor gratifies individual needs.

Compensation acts as the reward that the employees get in place of their input in the organization. Rivai & Sagala (2009) observe that the role of compensation goes beyond the economic aspect but must also serve as a reward to the employee as a form of appreciation of his/her loyalty and performance. The general expectation of the employees is the reasonable and equitable remuneration which gives reciprocity to the work value. It has been seen that good remuneration will improve motivation, morale and organizational commitment. As a result, according to (Fahmi, 2016) the measure of performance is undertaken over a specific

duration and upon agreed standards. In this context, the compensation factor will appear as a strategic element to be heavily considered, as rational and decent pay may become a source of employee performance, as well as a way to develop a more competitive and productive workplace.

Literature Review

Employee Performance and Theoretical Perspectives

Employee performance is widely recognized as a critical determinant of organizational success, and it is significantly influenced by factors such as the work environment, work motivation, and compensation. These relationships can be explained through Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which together provide a comprehensive understanding of employee behavior. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory differentiates between hygiene factors such as working conditions, salary, and job security and motivator factors, including recognition, achievement, and opportunities for personal growth (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 1959). According to this theory, hygiene factors such as a supportive work environment and fair compensation do not necessarily increase motivation when present but prevent dissatisfaction and turnover. On the other hand, motivators are directly responsible for fostering intrinsic motivation and driving employees to exceed performance expectations.

Complementing Herzberg's perspective, (Vroom, 1964) highlights the cognitive process underlying employee motivation, proposing that individuals are motivated to exert effort when they believe that their performance will lead to desirable outcomes (instrumentality), and these outcomes are personally valuable (valence). In this context, compensation serves not only as a financial reward but also as a tangible acknowledgment of employee contributions, while a positive work environment enhances employees' confidence that their efforts will translate into high performance (expectancy). Together, these two theories suggest that providing equitable compensation, designing supportive and safe work environments, and offering motivators such as recognition and growth opportunities form an integrated approach to improving work motivation and ultimately enhancing employee performance. Empirical studies have reinforced these theoretical arguments, showing that organizations implementing comprehensive compensation systems and supportive work environments experience significant improvements in employee productivity and job satisfaction (Chien et al., 2020; Raziq & Maulabakhsh, 2015).

Work Environment

The work environment plays a critical role in shaping employees' comfort, motivation, and overall performance. A supportive work environment encompasses physical factors such as lighting, cleanliness, and safety, as well as psychological aspects such as interpersonal relationships, organizational culture, and leadership style (Citra Arta, Supartha, & Dewi, 2022). Research by (Pramesti & Suarmana, 2024) highlights that a positive work environment improves job satisfaction and reduces stress levels, resulting in higher productivity. Internationally, organizations with inclusive and collaborative cultures tend to experience better employee engagement and lower turnover (Al-Anzi, 2009). In Indonesia, social norms emphasizing collectivism and kinship at the workplace add value by fostering stronger employee attachment and loyalty to the organization.

Work Motivation

Work motivation is a primary driver in achieving organizational goals and enhancing individual performance. The Self-Determination Theory (SDT) proposed by (Deci & Ryan,

2000) differentiates between intrinsic motivation derived from personal satisfaction and self-fulfillment and extrinsic motivation, which is linked to external rewards such as pay and recognition. (Gagné & Deci 2005) argue that intrinsic motivation tends to have a more sustainable impact on employee performance compared to purely extrinsic incentives. Globally, motivated employees demonstrate higher levels of engagement, creativity, and resilience, which are key for long-term organizational success (Deci & Ryan, 2000). In collectivist cultures like Indonesia, motivation is often influenced by social harmony and loyalty, highlighting the importance of relational and communal factors in driving performance.

Compensation

Compensation plays a pivotal role in attracting, retaining, and motivating employees and can be classified into several forms. First, financial compensation (e.g., salary, bonuses, allowances) addresses employees' economic needs, while non-financial compensation (e.g., career development opportunities, recognition programs) fulfills psychological and social needs (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Second, fixed compensation provides income stability, whereas performance-based pay links rewards directly to individual or team achievements, promoting higher accountability (Gagné & Deci, 2005). Third, intrinsic rewards (personal satisfaction, sense of achievement) and extrinsic rewards (monetary incentives, formal awards) differ in their impact on motivation and job satisfaction, with intrinsic rewards generally leading to longer-term engagement (Deci & Ryan, 2000). Contextual factors also influence how compensation is perceived: in the public sector, compensation is often associated with job security and stability, whereas in the private sector it focuses more on performance and flexibility. In cultural contexts such as Indonesia, which is characterized by collectivism, hierarchical structures, and strong religious values, non-financial compensation such as harmonious workplace relations, learning opportunities, and spiritual recognition can significantly enhance employee commitment and motivation (Hofstede, 2011; Wibowo, 2023).

Employee Performance

Employee performance reflects the extent to which employees achieve their assigned responsibilities and is a crucial indicator of organizational success. Performance is often measured in terms of quality, quantity, timeliness, and efficiency of work (Fahmi, 2016). Previous studies (Citra Arta et al., 2022; Pramesti & Suarmana, 2024) indicate that a positive work environment, strong motivation, and an effective compensation system are key determinants of improved performance. Globally, high-performing employees are associated with organizations that adopt comprehensive human resource strategies, emphasize employee development, and align reward systems with organizational objectives (Delaney & Huselid, 1996) Indonesia, workplace culture emphasizing harmony, compliance with hierarchy, and respect for seniority shapes employees' performance behaviors and attitudes toward achieving organizational goals.

Methods

The study will use the methodology of systematic literature review as it intends to explore how work environment, work motivation, and remuneration can affect employee performance. The literature review is used due to its ability to integrate the results of a number of organizational settings, which then provide a global picture that is not limited to the boundaries of a single case study. As the review analyzes the studies in different environments, it elaborates both consistent trends between these variables and changes that are due to cultural, institutional, and sectoral factors. In such a way, the methodology does not only assist in a descriptive summation

of the previous studies but also in the creation of a unified point of view that enriches the theory and practice.

It started with the identification of the sources that were relevant through systematic database searches through databases like Scopus, ScienceDirect, Google Scholar, and national repositories. The keywords were work environment, work motivation, compensation, and employee performance which were applied separately and together, making sure that both studies that focused on the variables independently and interdependently were included. To maintain quality and rigor, priority was done only to peer-reviewed journal articles and works that were of academic credibility. After the identification step, a screening step was used to remove duplicate entries and screen out irrelevant titles and abstracts to narrow the literature pool to literature that was specifically focused on the variables of interest.

The next step was eligibility, where the full-text articles were reviewed based on criteria of inclusion and exclusion. Only the studies, which were published in the last decade, were included in order to present the realities of the modern organization. Articles that lacked evidence in terms of empirical evidence, theoretical basis or those that did not clearly address the issue of employee performance were avoided. The last inclusion was a thorough review of the chosen studies. The summarization of the major characteristics was used with the help of the descriptive synthesis, and the closer observation of the recurrent theme, theoretical point of view, and relations between variables was with the help of the content analysis. A combination of these methodological processes guaranteed the breadth and depth of the interpretation of the selected literature.

A conceptual framework was generated out of the systematic process. In these terms, the work environment and compensation of employees will be used as independent variables, whereas the work motivation will be considered as a mediating construct and the performance of employees is the dependent variable.

It is based on the already existing theoretical premise, such as the Two-Factor Theory of Herzberg, Expectancy Theory of Vroom, and Equity Theory, which elucidate the various aspects of the influence that organizational conditions have on motivation and performance. The methodological design may be also demonstrated in a flow diagram (Figure 1), which shows the way of identification to the inclusion of studies and the following creation of the framework. Systematic selection, in combination with a comprehensive analysis, provides a valid base of receiving substantive conclusions and gives practical insights to the organizations which are interested in improving employee performance.

Result and Discussion

The synthesis of the reviewed literature demonstrates that the work environment, motivation, and compensation are consistently associated with employee performance. However, the mechanisms of influence are far from uniform across sectors, time periods, and demographic groups. In general, most studies confirm positive relationships, with work motivation frequently serving as a mediator. Yet, a closer comparison of the evidence reveals important nuances: in some contexts, compensation is the dominant driver, in others, social dimensions of the environment are decisive, while in yet others, intrinsic motivation emerges as the key pathway to sustained performance. To capture these patterns more systematically, the findings are organized into five tables, each followed by a deeper interpretation.

Table 1. Summary of Prior Studies

Main Variable	Author & Year	Context / Sector	Key Findings	Theory / Key Notes
Work Environment	Hermawan & Rahadi (2021)	Literature Review, Indonesia	Physical & non-physical environment positively influence performance; motivation as a moderator.	Herzberg (hygiene factors).
	Pramesti (2025)	Hospitality, Bali	Work environment explains 52.8% of performance variation; supervisor–employee relations dominant.	Social factors salient in tourism.
	Gunawan, Sabudi & Sihombing (2024)	Hotel Bali	Improved physical & social environment increases performance up to 70%.	Comfort & interpersonal ties are crucial.
Work Motivation	Suhardi (2019)	Insurance, Batam	Motivation, competence, and compensation significant; environment influences OCB more than performance.	Motivation as core factor.
	Nicuță et al. (2025)	Longitudinal, Europe	Trait gratitude enhances intrinsic motivation & performance.	Self-Determination Theory (SDT).
	Tindowen (2022)	Higher Education, Philippines	Healthy work environment fosters commitment & motivation → higher performance.	Motivation as strong mediator.
Compensation	Dwianto & Purnamasari (2019)	Manufacturing, Indonesia	Compensation explains 48.6% of performance variation.	High R ² , crucial factor.
	Jufrizen (2016)	Plantation, Medan	Compensation directly & indirectly significant via job satisfaction.	Equity Theory.
	Sathishkumar et al. (2025)	Construction, India	Compensation improves motivation & performance but limited effect on productivity.	Incentive design matters.
Integration	Trisna & Guridno (2021)	Service Firm, Jakarta	Environment, motivation, compensation interact; environment most dominant.	Vroom & Herzberg.

	Nasution & Rahayu (2024)	Healthcare, Indonesia	Motivation partially mediates; environment & compensation directly affect performance.	Contextual variation in healthcare.
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The findings in Table 1 highlight the strong role of the work environment, with performance variance explained up to 70% in hospitality settings. Motivation consistently appears as a mediating factor, while compensation demonstrates varying strength very strong in manufacturing but weaker in service industries.

Table 2. Temporal and Post-Pandemic Shifts

Author & Year	Context / Period	Main Variable	Key Findings	Special Notes
Lee & Chen (2023)	Asia, Pre & Post COVID-19	Work Environment	Remote work reduced social interaction → lowered motivation.	Digital environment matters.
Wibowo & Sari (2024)	Indonesia, Hybrid Work	Environment & Motivation	Green & flexible environments enhanced engagement.	Balance between WFO–WFH.
OECD (2023)	Global, Post COVID-19	Compensation	Pay-for-performance reduced absenteeism in remote work.	Outcome-based incentives.
Deci, Olafsen & Ryan (2024)	Global, Multisector	Motivation (Intrinsic)	Autonomy more sustainable than extrinsic rewards post-pandemic.	SDT highly relevant.

Table 2 illustrates the redefinition of the work environment after the pandemic. No longer limited to physical attributes, the environment now includes digital access and hybrid flexibility. Evidence also confirms that autonomy and intrinsic drivers (SDT) have become more enduring motivators in this new landscape, while compensation tied to measurable outcomes gains traction in remote work arrangements.

Table 3. Sectoral and Cultural Variation

Author & Year	Sector / Location	Dominant Variable	Key Findings	Key Notes
Pramesti (2025)	Hospitality, Bali	Work Environment	Social relations (supervisor–employee) most critical.	Collectivist culture matters.
Dwianto & Purnamasari (2019)	Manufacturing, Indonesia	Compensation	$R^2 = 48.6\%$ → compensation critical driver.	Labor-intensive sector.

Tindowen (2022)	Higher Education, Philippines	Motivation	Intrinsic motivation & commitment stronger.	Academic sector.
Sathishkumar et al. (2025)	Construction, India	Compensation	Stronger effect on motivation, limited on direct productivity.	High-risk project context.
Nasution & Rahayu (2024)	Healthcare, Indonesia	Environment & Compensation	Direct effects dominant, motivation partial mediator.	Medical workforce.

As shown in Table 3, different sectors prioritize different variables: social environments dominate in hospitality, compensation drives manufacturing outcomes, while intrinsic motivation is central in education. The healthcare context underscores how environment and compensation exert direct influence while motivation remains only a partial mediator.

Table 4. Generational and Demographic Variation

Author & Year	Demographics / Generation	Main Variable	Key Findings	Practical Implications
Nugroho & Santoso (2024)	Young vs Senior Workers	Compensation & Motivation	Younger workers → more responsive to financial incentives; seniors → value recognition & stability.	Rewards must be adaptive.
Nicuță et al. (2025)	Europe, Cross-age	Motivation (Gratitude)	Intrinsic motivation stronger among younger cohorts.	Values shape motivation.
OECD (2023)	Global Workforce	Compensation	Pay-for-performance more effective for younger employees, weaker for seniors.	HRM must be generation-sensitive.

Table 4 highlights that demographic and generational differences significantly condition how employees respond. Younger employees value monetary incentives, while older employees place greater emphasis on recognition, social esteem, and job security. Organizations must therefore craft generationally adaptive reward systems.

Table 5. Theoretical Mapping of Prior Studies

Theory	Studies Applied	Variables Explained	Explanatory Strength
Herzberg's Two-Factor	Hermawan & Rahadi (2021), Pramesti (2025)	Work Environment (Hygiene)	Explains physical and social conditions as performance drivers.
Expectancy (Vroom)	Chien, Mao & Chang (2020), Trisna & Guridno (2021)	Motivation & Compensation	Links effort → reward → performance pathways.
Equity Theory	Jufrizen (2016), Sathishkumar et al. (2025)	Compensation	Illuminates fairness perceptions as central to outcomes.

Self-Determination (SDT)	Deci, Olafsen & Ryan (2024), Nicuță et al. (2025)	Intrinsic Motivation	Highlights autonomy & psychological needs as sustainable drivers.
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Table 5 reveals that no single theory can fully explain the patterns. Herzberg clarifies the importance of hygiene factors, Vroom maps out the expectancy-reward-performance pathway, Equity underscores fairness perceptions in compensation, while SDT accounts for the enduring power of intrinsic motivation. Integrating these theories provides a multidimensional framework to interpret the findings.

Interplay of Work Environment, Motivation, and Compensation

The results of this paper suggest that the employee performance can be viewed as the result of the interaction between the work environment, motivation and compensation. Work environment forms the context under which employees work and hence dictates the physical comfort as well as psychosocial well being. The environment of support lowers stress, facilitates cooperation and fosters a sense of psychological safety allowing employees to be at their best level. Motivation acts as the channel through which desirable situations are transformed into action, form tenacity, and indulgence. The effect of compensation is that it intensifies effort and is associated with organisational recognition, which, in turn, affect the not only readiness to work more but creates an impression of unfairness and injustice in the workplace.

These three factors hardly work independently. They intertwine in such a way as a positive environment strengthens intrinsic motivation, fair compensation strengthens the expectation of rewards and motivation combines both influences to improve performance. The balance between these factors is different in circumstances. In other labour intensive sectors like manufacturing, pay is usually a determining factor in explaining performance. In hospitality, which is a service-oriented industry, the social aspect of the environment, like supervisory and collegial support, will play a more leading role. In educational and knowledge-based contexts, intrinsic motivation and a sense of commitment are maintained even in those cases when financial incentives are not central. The appreciation of this difference means that no one-fit-all policies can be applied in all organisations; performance can only be maximised when managers come up with ways of integrating the environment, motivation and compensation in a way that resonates with the requirements of the workforce.

Implications of Changing Work Contexts for Human Resource Practices

The workplace revolution that comes after the pandemic has expanded the conceptualization of the work setting. Physical office buildings are not the only confinements that were previously present; digital infrastructure, remote or hybrid working and organizational policies that govern flexibility and work-life delimits have become inclusive. Such developments are both opportunities and liability creating at the same time. Increased flexibility that accompanies the implementation of the digital tools can complement the autonomy and reduce commuting stress, thus leading to employee engagement. On the other hand, the long-term working at the distance can further worsen social isolation, blur personal-professional boundaries, and undermine teamwork. Therefore, companies have to provide not only physically comfortable working conditions that are ergonomically correct but also reliable internet connectivity, psychological comfort, and socializing opportunities.

Practices of compensation also should be re-evaluated in such a new situation. Performance-related bonuses like outcome based are proven to decrease absenteeism in remote employment. However, monetary compensations will not be enough to provide lasting motivation. Employees are demanding recognition, personal growth, and challenging tasks that would maintain the intrinsic motivation. Younger generation can be very much interested in monetary rewards, but also they will be expecting to have the growth and career advancement. The elderly workers tend to be more stable-oriented and focus on respect and recognition of their input. The generational desires presented herein highlight the need to have adaptive human-resource practices, which integrate both the non-financial and financial rewards. It also implies that this means that pandemic-related strategies cannot be used in their pure form, as they need to be recalculated to fit the aspects of hybrid work, remote cooperation, and a multi-generational outlook.

Theoretical and Methodological Contributions and Future Directions

The theoretical contribution made in this review is also based on the fact that there is no single framework that can explain the complexity of employee performance. The two-factor theory developed by Herzberg emphasizes the importance of hygiene conditions in alleviating dissatisfaction; nevertheless, it does not explain how motivation contributes to a dynamic force needed to perform work. The expectancy theory explains the rational causal relationship between effort and reward, but it is not inclusive of the autonomy and meaning. The equity theory predicts the perception of fairness as a central factor that can influence the impacts of compensation. The self-determination theory describes how autonomy, competence and relatedness create intrinsic motivation and long-lasting interest. Upon summation, these theories point towards the fact that performance can be best explained in an integrative perspective that at once takes into consideration the hygiene factors, expectancy pathways, fairness perceptions, and psychological needs.

However, the argument is still limited by methodological constraints. Many studies use cross-sectional designs and authors use self-reported measures thus limiting causal inference and exposing the possibility of bias. There is a general discrepancy in the tools used to gauge variables and the research allocation in industries and geographical areas are not consistent. This kind of situation compromises generalizability of findings. Further studies are required to contribute to the academic contribution by using longitudinal designs which can help to follow up motivation and performance through time, multilevel modeling which can take into consideration individual, team, and organizational behavior and using experimental designs that can offer stronger test of causality. Cross-cultural and cross-industrial comparative research is also needed to explain the effects of normative and sectoral conditions in forming perceptions of fairness and reward effectiveness. In addition, other variables that need to be included in research by scholars include digital readiness, environmental sustainability and boundary management because these are emerging variables that are increasingly becoming relevant in modern workplaces. The creation of valid tools that will measure these new dimensions will enhance further analysis and provide organizations with realistic advice.

Conclusion

This paper shows that the interaction between three mutually dependent variables: the work environment, motivation, and compensation was the most effective way of thinking in terms

of employee performance. All constructs have their own influence, but it is the combination of all of them that makes the performance persisting in any organizational environment. The enabling climate provides material comfort and psychosocial security, drives these factors into action and involvement, and remunerates rewards and justice. The combination of these results in a system where performance is the output of a set of interacting pathways.

The analysis also highlights the augmented value of the working environment in the post-pandemic period. Work places are not restricted to physical offices anymore but include digital infrastructure, hybrid set ups and work-life boundary policies. The change forces organizations to think differently. Strength of flexibility and autonomy will support the engagement, however, unless there is sufficient support, it may support isolation and blurred boundaries. Compensation should, therefore, be both transparent and flexible with a mix of financial and non-financial rewards and developmental prospects that would maintain long-term motivation.

Theoretically, the review confirms the significance of including models like Herzberg two-factor theory, expectancy theory, equity theory and self-determination theory. They all help in comprehending a certain dimension but when combined it creates a complete image of how environment, motivation and compensation intersect to influence performance. The review also recognizes weaknesses of current evidence base, specifically the use of cross-sectional surveys and self-reports. Stricter techniques - such as longitudinal studies, multilevel analyses and experimental designs - are needed to explain causal pathways.

The maintenance of the performance of the employees requires the organizations to be systematic and adaptive. Managers should be able to balance the environmental support, motivational practices, and equitable compensation systems to reflect on the realities of the sector and the generational requirements. Theorists ought to keep on improving theories and developing ways of capturing the intricacy of the present day workplaces. A combination of these views will enable organizations to provide conditions that not only improve performance but also bring about fairness, meaning and sustainability in the long run.

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