

Remuneration, Work Motivation, and Employee Performance in Gorontalo Hospitals

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Keywords: Remuneration; Work motivation; Employee performance; Hospital; PLS-SEM	ABSTRACT This study examines the effects of remuneration on work motivation and employee performance and tests whether work motivation mediates the remuneration-performance relationship in two hospitals in Gorontalo City, Indonesia. A quantitative cross-sectional survey was conducted with 150 employees, comprising 75 respondents from Sitti Khadijah Hospital and 75 from Prof. Dr. H. Aloei Saboe Regional General Hospital. Data were collected using a five-point Likert questionnaire and analyzed with Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Remuneration positively affected work motivation ($\beta = 0.1083$; $t = 1.620$; $p = 0.0729$) and employee performance ($\beta = 0.0889$; $t = 1.435$; $p = 0.1049$), but the effects were not significant. Work motivation had a positive and significant effect on performance ($\beta = 0.2778$; $t = 5.157$; $p < 0.001$). The indirect effect of remuneration on performance through motivation was not significant ($\beta = 0.062$; $t = 1.444$; $p = 0.149$), indicating no mediation. The model explained 13.33% of the variance in employee performance and 2.40% of the variance in work motivation. The novelty lies in showing that, across two hospitals with different organizational characteristics, remuneration alone did not explain employee performance, whereas motivation emerged as the stronger behavioral mechanism. The findings support integrated reward policies that combine fair and transparent remuneration with recognition, competency development, supportive leadership, and employee involvement.
Kata Kunci: Remunerasi; Motivasi kerja; Kinerja karyawan; Rumah sakit; PLS-SEM	ABSTRAK <i>Penelitian ini menganalisis pengaruh remunerasi terhadap motivasi kerja dan kinerja karyawan serta menguji apakah motivasi kerja memediasi hubungan antara remunerasi dan kinerja pada dua rumah sakit di Kota Gorontalo. Survei kuantitatif dengan desain potong lintang dilakukan terhadap 150 karyawan, terdiri atas 75 responden dari Rumah Sakit Sitti Khadijah dan 75 responden dari RSUD Prof. Dr. H. Aloei Saboe. Data dikumpulkan menggunakan kuesioner skala Likert lima poin dan dianalisis menggunakan Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). Remunerasi berpengaruh positif tetapi tidak signifikan terhadap motivasi kerja ($\beta = 0,1083$; $t = 1,620$; $p = 0,0729$) dan kinerja karyawan ($\beta = 0,0889$; $t = 1,435$; $p = 0,1049$). Motivasi kerja berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap kinerja ($\beta = 0,2778$; $t = 5,157$; $p < 0,001$). Pengaruh tidak langsung remunerasi terhadap kinerja melalui motivasi juga tidak signifikan ($\beta = 0,062$; $t = 1,444$; $p = 0,149$), sehingga tidak terdapat mediasi. Model menjelaskan 13,33% variasi kinerja dan 2,40% variasi motivasi. Kebaruan penelitian terletak pada bukti bahwa pada dua rumah sakit dengan karakteristik organisasi yang berbeda, remunerasi saja belum menjelaskan kinerja, sedangkan motivasi menjadi mekanisme perilaku yang lebih kuat. Temuan ini mendukung kebijakan penghargaan terpadu yang menggabungkan remunerasi yang adil dan transparan dengan pengakuan, pengembangan kompetensi, kepemimpinan yang suportif, serta keterlibatan karyawan.</i>
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INTRODUCTION

Hospital performance depends strongly on human resources because the quality, continuity, and safety of health services are produced through the daily behavior of medical, paramedical, and administrative employees. In this setting, remuneration and work motivation are central human resource management issues. Remuneration provides economic recognition for employee contribution, while motivation influences the willingness to sustain effort, discipline, responsibility, and service quality.

Evidence on financial incentives in health care is not uniform. Systematic reviews show that pay-for-performance can improve selected processes or outputs, but the direction and magnitude of effects depend on incentive design, organizational context, payment size, target specification, and implementation quality (Kovacs et al., 2020; Diaconu et al., 2021; Gadsden et al., 2021a; Asadi-Aliabadi et al., 2022; Lin et al., 2022). Financial incentives may therefore support performance without necessarily becoming its dominant determinant.

Indonesian evidence is similarly mixed. Sudarsono et al. (2021) found that remuneration affected nurses' motivation but did not directly affect performance. Suriadi et al. (2022) reported that compensation, work environment, and motivation were related to nurse performance, whereas Tyas and Meliala (2023) highlighted the importance of compensation satisfaction and work motivation. More recent hospital studies also show inconsistent direct and mediated relationships among compensation, motivation, satisfaction, and performance (Dwianto & Damanik, 2024; Estrada & Mellita, 2024; Hidayati & Saimi, 2024; Rahmadani et al., 2024).

This study addresses this inconsistency in Gorontalo City by examining employees at two hospitals with different organizational characteristics: Sitti Khadijah Hospital and Prof. Dr. H. Aloe Saboe Regional General Hospital. The thesis identified practical concerns including perceived mismatch between workload and remuneration, delayed service incentives in certain periods, and limited transparency of remuneration mechanisms. These conditions provide a useful empirical setting to test whether remuneration affects performance directly or indirectly through work motivation.

The study makes three contributions. First, it provides contextual evidence from a provincial Indonesian health-care setting that remains underrepresented in remuneration research. Second, it simultaneously tests direct and indirect paths using PLS-SEM rather than examining compensation or motivation separately. Third, the study treats a non-significant remuneration effect as theoretically informative: performance may depend less on pay levels alone than on the broader motivational and organizational system in which remuneration is embedded. This interpretation is consistent with health-workforce evidence that financial and non-financial incentives often work in combination (Glenn et al., 2021; Gadsden et al., 2021b; Flodgren et al., 2022).

This study tests four propositions: remuneration affects work motivation; remuneration affects employee performance; work motivation affects employee performance; and work motivation mediates the effect of remuneration on employee performance. The paper proceeds with the literature review and hypotheses, research method, results and discussion, and conclusion and recommendations.

LITERATURE REVIEW

Theoretical Background

Remuneration is the set of financial and non-financial returns employees receive in exchange for their contributions to the organization. In the present study, remuneration is represented by salary and wages, fixed and non-fixed allowances, performance-based incentives, fairness and transparency, and compliance with internal standards. The incentive-design literature suggests that timing, magnitude, target clarity, and who receives the reward can alter behavioral responses to pay (Kovacs et al., 2020; Lin et al., 2022).

Work motivation is the internal and external force that directs the intensity, persistence, and orientation of work behavior. In health care, motivation matters because performance includes both technical responsibilities and service behaviors that cannot always be fully specified or financially rewarded. Research among nurses shows that motivation, engagement, perceived organizational support, and leadership can shape performance beyond financial rewards (Zhang et al., 2022; Holtan et al., 2024).

Employee performance refers to the quality, quantity, timeliness, discipline, cooperation, and responsibility demonstrated in fulfilling work roles. Hospital performance is therefore multidimensional and may depend on competence, workload, leadership, organizational support, work environment, and motivational processes in addition to remuneration.

Previous Studies and Research Gap

Recent international studies provide a nuanced picture of incentives. Kovacs et al. (2020) documented substantial heterogeneity in pay-for-performance design across low- and middle-income countries. Diaconu et al. (2021) concluded that pay-for-performance produces mixed effects depending on design and context. Gadsden et al. (2021a) found that performance-based incentives can improve community health worker outputs but may shift effort away from non-incentivized tasks. Glenn et al. (2021) showed that removing financial incentives can weaken motivation, while Gadsden et al. (2021b) demonstrated that both financial and behavioral incentives can be feasible in rural Indonesia. Flodgren et al. (2022), Asadi-Aliabadi et al. (2022), and Lin et al. (2022) likewise show that financial incentives can influence health-worker behavior, but effects are neither automatic nor uniform.

At the individual and organizational level, Zhang et al. (2022) found that work engagement and perceived organizational support are important mechanisms of nurses' performance, while Holtan et al. (2024) showed that autonomy-supportive leadership affects nurses' motivation, well-being, engagement, and performance. These studies strengthen the argument that financial rewards are only one part of a broader motivational architecture.

Indonesian hospital studies also reveal inconsistent findings. Sudarsono et al. (2021) found a significant remuneration-motivation relationship but no significant direct remuneration-performance relationship. Suriadi et al. (2022) found compensation, work environment, and motivation related to nurse performance. Tyas and Meliala (2023) reported meaningful links among compensation satisfaction, motivation, and nurse performance. Sultan and Peristiowati (2023) summarized evidence that rewards and

motivation are relevant to inpatient nurse performance. Rahmadani et al. (2024) concluded from a literature review that adequate remuneration generally strengthens motivation. Hidayati and Saimi (2024) reported significant associations between motivation, remuneration, and nurse performance. Dwianto and Damanik (2024), however, found that work motivation did not mediate the compensation-performance relationship at Medistra Hospital. Estrada and Mellita (2024) similarly showed that motivation was more influential than remuneration in explaining hospital employee outcomes.

Taken together, the unresolved issue is not whether remuneration matters at all, but under what organizational conditions it translates into motivation and performance. The present study therefore tests remuneration, motivation, and performance simultaneously in two hospitals in Gorontalo City. The main novelty is the examination of a mediation model in a setting where remuneration systems operate across two institutionally different hospitals and where direct remuneration effects may be weak.

Relevance to Islamic Business Economics

The formal scope of Islamic business economics gives additional relevance to the fairness dimension of remuneration. Islamic work-ethics research links ethical work values with motivation, commitment, engagement, and employee performance (Aflah et al., 2021; Ridlo et al., 2022; Nindyati & Ulfia, 2024). These studies emphasize justice, responsibility, and meaningful work as organizational principles. In the present study, Islamic work ethics were not measured as a latent construct; therefore, this perspective is used only to interpret the managerial importance of fair and transparent remuneration, not as an empirically tested causal mechanism.

Hypothesis Development

H₁: Remuneration has a positive and significant effect on work motivation.

H₂: Remuneration has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H₃: Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

H₄: Work motivation mediates the effect of remuneration on employee performance.

Research Framework

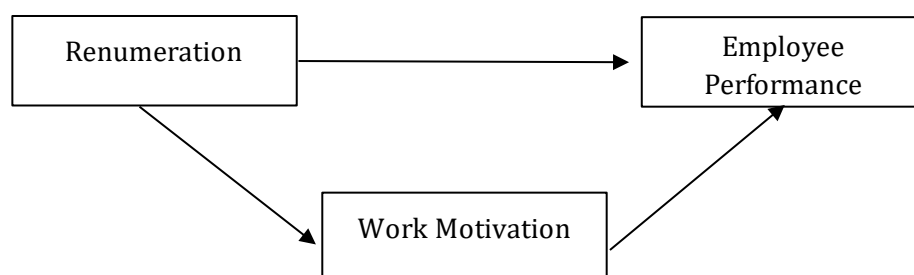


Figure 1. Research Framework (Source: Author, 2026)

METHOD

Data. The study used primary cross-sectional survey data collected in 2026 from employees of Sitti Khadijah Hospital and Prof. Dr. H. Aloei Saboe Regional General Hospital in Gorontalo City. The final sample consisted of 150 employees, with 75 respondents from each hospital. The thesis specifies probability sampling with proportionate random sampling. Respondents represented medical, paramedical, and non-medical work units.

Measurement. A structured five-point Likert questionnaire was used. Remuneration was measured through salary and wages, allowances, performance-based incentives, fairness and transparency, and compliance with internal policies. Work motivation covered intrinsic motivation, extrinsic motivation, achievement and self-development needs, and work involvement. Employee performance included work quality, work quantity, timeliness, discipline and compliance, cooperation, and responsibility.

Model Development. Remuneration (X) was specified as the exogenous construct, work motivation (M) as the proposed mediator, and employee performance (Y) as the endogenous construct. The model estimated three direct paths ($X \rightarrow M$, $X \rightarrow Y$, $M \rightarrow Y$) and one indirect path ($X \rightarrow M \rightarrow Y$).

Method. Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM) was used because the study focused on prediction and simultaneous estimation of the measurement and structural models. The thesis evaluated convergent validity, discriminant validity, construct reliability, coefficient of determination (R^2), path coefficients, bootstrapping, indirect effects, and effect size (f^2). Statistical significance was assessed at $p < 0.05$ with $t > 1.96$. Methodological interpretation follows commonly used PLS-SEM guidance (Hair et al., 2022).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Respondent Characteristics

Women represented 79.3% of the sample. Respondents aged 20–30 years formed the largest age group (44.67%), followed by those aged 31–40 years (39.33%). The most common educational levels were bachelor's degree (31.3%) and diploma-3 (27.3%). Employees with 1–5 years of service represented 39.3% of respondents, followed by 6–10 years of service (33.3%).

Table 1. Selected Respondent Characteristics

Characteristic	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Male	31	20.7
Female	119	79.3
Age 20–30 years	67	44.67
Age 31–40 years	59	39.33
Age 41–50 years	20	13.33
Age >50 years	4	2.67
Service 1–5 years	59	39.3
Service 6–10 years	50	33.3

Source: Author estimation from survey data (2026)

Descriptive Results

All indicator means were above the midpoint of the five-point scale. Remuneration indicators ranged from 3.713 to 4.393, work motivation from 4.233 to 4.427, and employee performance from 4.207 to 4.393. Respondents therefore tended to report favorable perceptions of the three constructs, although dispersion was greater for some remuneration indicators than for motivation and performance indicators.

Structural Model and Hypothesis Testing

The structural model explained 13.33% of the variance in employee performance ($R^2 = 0.1333$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.1257$) and 2.40% of the variance in work motivation ($R^2 = 0.0240$; adjusted $R^2 = 0.0180$). These values indicate modest explanatory power and suggest that most variation in motivation and performance is associated with factors outside the model.

Table 2. Hypothesis Testing Results

Relationship	β	t-statistic	p-value	Decision	Effect
Remuneration → Motivation	0.1083	1.620	0.0729	H1 not supported	$f^2 = 0.025$
Remuneration → Performance	0.0889	1.435	0.1049	H2 not supported	$f^2 = 0.020$
Motivation → Performance	0.2778	5.157	<0.001	H3 supported	$f^2 = 0.9378$
Remuneration → Motivation → Performance	0.062	1.444	0.149	H4 not supported	No mediation

Source: Author estimation from PLS-SEM output (2026)

Discussion

Remuneration had a positive but non-significant effect on work motivation. The positive sign indicates that better remuneration tends to move in the expected direction, but the relationship was not sufficiently strong at the 5% significance level. This finding differs from Rahmadani et al. (2024) and Sudarsono et al. (2021), which reported clearer remuneration-motivation links, but it is consistent with broader evidence that incentive effects depend on payment design, perceived fairness, predictability, and context (Kovacs et al., 2020; Glenn et al., 2021; Lin et al., 2022).

Remuneration also had no significant direct effect on employee performance and showed only a small effect size. This result suggests that performance in hospital organizations is not produced by compensation alone. It is compatible with systematic evidence showing mixed performance effects of financial incentives (Diaconu et al., 2021; Flodgren et al., 2022; Asadi-Aliabadi et al., 2022) and with Sudarsono et al. (2021), who likewise reported no significant direct remuneration-performance effect. The finding differs from Hidayati and Saimi (2024) and some Indonesian studies that observed significant associations, reinforcing the context-dependent nature of remuneration.

Work motivation had a positive and significant effect on employee performance and was the strongest path in the model. This result supports evidence that psychological and

organizational resources are important determinants of health-worker performance. Zhang et al. (2022) showed that engagement and perceived organizational support shape nurses' performance, while Holtan et al. (2024) demonstrated that leadership influences performance through motivational pathways. The finding is also consistent with Estrada and Mellita (2024), who reported a stronger role for motivation than for remuneration in hospital employee outcomes.

The indirect effect of remuneration on performance through work motivation was not significant, so work motivation did not mediate the relationship. A mediation pathway requires the first-stage relationship from remuneration to motivation to be sufficiently strong; in this study it was not. Dwianto and Damanik (2024) also found that work motivation did not mediate compensation and employee performance at Medistra Hospital. The current result therefore adds evidence that motivation can be a powerful direct predictor of performance without necessarily functioning as a mechanism through which remuneration operates.

The managerial implication is to treat remuneration as part of an integrated people-management system. Hospitals should maintain fairness, transparency, timeliness, and performance linkage in financial rewards while investing in recognition, competency development, supportive leadership, employee participation, and a conducive work environment. This implication also resonates with Islamic business-ethics literature emphasizing justice and meaningful work as foundations for engagement and performance (Aflah et al., 2021; Nindyati & Ulfia, 2024), although Islamic work ethics were not directly measured in this study.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATION

This study concludes that remuneration has a positive but non-significant effect on work motivation and employee performance in the two hospitals studied in Gorontalo City. Work motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance and represents the strongest relationship in the model. Work motivation does not mediate the effect of remuneration on performance. The findings indicate that employee performance cannot be improved through remuneration alone.

Hospital management should strengthen the fairness, transparency, timeliness, and performance linkage of remuneration while simultaneously developing non-financial sources of motivation. Practical priorities include employee recognition, regular and constructive performance feedback, competency development, clearer career opportunities, supportive leadership, and employee involvement in service improvement.

The study is limited by its cross-sectional design, reliance on self-reported perceptions, modest explanatory power, and measurement concerns that warrant further instrument refinement. Future studies should use broader or longitudinal samples, compare public and private hospitals explicitly, and test additional predictors such as leadership, workload, job satisfaction, organizational culture, competence, perceived organizational justice, and employee engagement.

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