



The Influence of Motivation and Work Goals on Employee Performance at the South Sulawesi Provincial Food and Security Office

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Abstract	
<p>Keywords: <i>Motivation, Work Goals, Employee Performance.</i></p> <p>Conflict of Interest Statement: The authors report no conflicts of interest and confirm that the study was carried out independently, with no external influence affecting its objectivity or conclusions.</p> <p>Copyright © 2023 POVREMA. All rights reserved.</p>	<p>Purpose: This study aims to examine the influence of Motivation and Work Goals on Employee Performance. The research is grounded in the premise that work motivation and clearly defined work goals are critical in enhancing employee performance, particularly in achieving organizational objectives.</p> <p>Research Design and Methodology: A quantitative approach was employed using a survey method through the distribution of questionnaires. The study population comprised 105 employees, and the sample was determined using the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, resulting in 84 respondents. The research instrument was a Likert-scale questionnaire (1-5) measuring indicators of motivation, work goals, and employee performance. Data were analyzed using multiple linear regression analysis with statistical software.</p> <p>Findings and Discussion: The results indicate that, individually, Motivation positively and significantly affects Employee Performance, suggesting that higher employee motivation leads to improved performance. Similarly, Work Goals also exhibit a positive and significant effect, implying that clarity of work orientation, task understanding, and commitment enhances performance. When considered simultaneously, Motivation and Work Goals collectively have a significant positive impact on Employee Performance. These findings highlight that both intrinsic motivation and well-defined work goals are essential for increasing employee productivity.</p> <p>Implications: The study concludes that organizations can enhance employee performance by implementing strategies to boost motivation, such as providing opportunities for self-development and recognizing achievements, as well as ensuring that work goals are clear, challenging, and aligned with organizational objectives.</p>

Introduction

Employee performance is a fundamental determinant of organizational success, both in the public and private sectors. In the context of government institutions, employee performance is not only associated with the achievement of administrative targets but also reflects the effectiveness of public services delivered to society. Therefore, understanding the factors that influence employee performance is of critical importance.

Previous studies have shown that work motivation is a key determinant of individual performance. According to Siagian (2022), strong motivation drives employees to work optimally and fosters a positive work environment. Similarly, Sutrisno (2023) emphasizes that effective work motivation enhances performance by promoting discipline, perseverance, and creativity in task completion. Highly motivated employees tend to be more disciplined, enthusiastic, and responsible. Motivation encourages employees not merely to complete tasks but to strive for optimal outcomes. Within bureaucratic environments, motivation serves as a primary driver enabling employees to go beyond routine administrative duties.

In addition to motivation, work goals play a vital role in shaping work behavior. Mangkunegara (2022) notes that high performance is influenced by clear work objectives, which guide individuals to work systematically and in an organized manner. Handoko (2023) also asserts that internalized work goals increase employees' sense of responsibility and readiness to adaptively address work challenges. Clear goals provide direction, help prioritize tasks, and facilitate performance measurement, whereas the absence of structured objectives often results in mechanistic work lacking outcome orientation. Work goals thus function as a compass guiding employees toward optimal performance.

The Food Security Agency of South Sulawesi Province is a local government institution tasked with ensuring the availability and distribution of food. As a region recognized as a national food barn, South Sulawesi faces complex challenges in managing food supply, stabilizing prices, and ensuring accessibility for all community segments. In this context, employee performance within the agency is critically important.

However, field observations indicate obstacles to achieving employee performance targets. Common issues include low work motivation, weak organizational commitment, and unclear individual work objectives. These conditions negatively affect public service effectiveness and may hinder the attainment of strategic programs in the food security sector.

Given the significant roles of motivation and work goals, this study seeks to examine their influence on employee performance. The research contributes theoretically by enriching human resource management literature and practically by providing a basis for formulating policies aimed at improving civil servant performance. Although previous research has explored the relationships between motivation, work goals, and employee performance in the public sector, each institution has unique characteristics, necessitating context-specific studies. The Food Security Agency of South Sulawesi, with its strategic functions in the food sector, provides a compelling case for investigation. Empirical findings from this study are expected to illuminate the factors influencing employee performance in this critical sector.

Literature Review

Work Motivation

Work motivation is a psychological process that stimulates, directs, and sustains an individual's behavior in the workplace to achieve both organizational and personal objectives. Hasibuan (2022) explains that motivation is an internal drive or force that generates enthusiasm and willingness to act in order to accomplish specific goals, describing it as a condition within an individual that encourages engagement in particular activities to reach desired outcomes. Similarly, Robbins and Judge (2019) define motivation as a process that explains the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual in achieving goals, emphasizing that effective motivation requires effort, focus, and perseverance. According to Sedarmayanti (2021), work motivation not only impacts individual performance but also fosters a dynamic and collaborative work environment, highlighting the importance of understanding motivation comprehensively for designing effective managerial strategies to enhance employee performance.

Mangkunegara (2022) further underscores the critical role of motivation, defining it as a condition that stimulates, directs, and maintains behavior in relation to the work environment. Abraham Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs theory complements this perspective, proposing that human needs must be satisfied in a sequential manner, from the most basic physiological requirements to self-actualization. Physiological needs include essentials such as food, water, shelter, and rest, while safety needs encompass physical and psychological security, including job stability, insurance, and a safe working environment. Social needs involve a sense of belonging, interpersonal relationships, and interactions with colleagues, whereas esteem needs relate to recognition, status, and self-confidence, often achieved through praise, promotion, or incentives. The highest level, self-actualization, reflects the desire to realize personal potential through development opportunities, training, participation in decision-making, and innovation.

Victor Vroom's Expectancy Theory further elaborates on motivation by asserting that an individual's willingness to perform a task is influenced by the expectation that their effort will lead to desired performance and corresponding rewards. Motivation is determined by three components: expectancy, instrumentality, and valence. Expectancy refers to the belief that increased effort will improve performance, instrumentality reflects the perceived link between performance and rewards, and valence represents the value or attractiveness of the reward to the individual. These three factors interact multiplicatively, meaning that if any component is absent or valued at zero, overall motivation will be low. In government organizations such as the Food Security Agency of South Sulawesi Province, employees' perceptions of recognition, task clarity, and organizational fairness significantly influence their motivation. Employees who feel that their efforts are valued tend to demonstrate higher motivation and better performance.

Work Goals

Work goals are specific targets that individuals aim to achieve while performing tasks within an organization. Locke and Latham (2002) define goals as the outcomes or results that an individual seeks to accomplish, emphasizing that specific and challenging goals are more effective in improving performance than vague or easily attainable objectives. Rivai and Sagala (2020) further highlight that clearly defined work goals help employees prioritize tasks, allocate resources efficiently, and measure both effectiveness and efficiency in completing their responsibilities. The alignment of individual goals with organizational objectives ensures that employees remain focused and oriented toward achieving optimal performance.

Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the outcomes achieved by individuals or groups in fulfilling organizational tasks and responsibilities. Performance is not solely measured by the quantity of work produced but also by quality, timeliness, efficiency, and effectiveness. Mangkunegara (2022) describes performance as the results obtained by an individual based on organizational standards, which serve as benchmarks for evaluating whether outcomes align with the organization's objectives. Rivai and Sagala (2020) note that performance reflects the extent to which an employee effectively and efficiently executes tasks, influenced by internal factors such as ability and motivation, as well as external factors including work environment, leadership, and organizational culture. According to Wibowo (2022), employee performance can be assessed through indicators such as work quality, work quantity, timeliness, effectiveness, and the initiative and responsibility demonstrated in completing tasks. High-quality work reflects the employee's skill and precision, while quantity measures productivity within a given timeframe. Timeliness evaluates the completion of tasks according to schedule, and effectiveness assesses the degree to which results are achieved using resources efficiently. Initiative and responsibility indicate the ability to act independently and creatively while assuming accountability for assigned tasks and outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

The literature suggests that both motivation and work goals are essential determinants of employee performance. Motivation drives employees to engage fully in their tasks, while well-defined goals provide direction and focus, ensuring that effort is aligned with organizational objectives. In the context of the Food Security Agency of South Sulawesi Province, understanding how these factors interact provides valuable insights for improving employee performance and enhancing public service effectiveness.

Research Design and Methodology

This study adopted a quantitative research approach with a survey design, which is suitable for examining the relationships between variables in a structured and measurable manner. The research targeted employees of the Food Security Agency of South Sulawesi Province, representing the population of the study, which consisted of 105 individuals. To determine a representative sample, Slovin's formula was applied with a margin of error set at 5%, resulting in a total of 84 respondents. This sampling method ensures that the selected sample adequately represents the population while maintaining statistical reliability.

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire, which served as the primary research instrument. The questionnaire employed a five-point Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree), designed to capture respondents' perceptions regarding the study variables: work motivation, work goals, and employee performance. Prior to the main data collection, the instrument underwent rigorous validity and reliability testing. Validity testing confirmed that each item accurately measured the intended construct, while reliability testing, using Cronbach's alpha, ensured that the instrument consistently produced stable and dependable responses.

For data analysis, multiple linear regression techniques were applied to examine both the partial and simultaneous effects of work motivation and work goals on employee performance. The analysis was conducted using statistical software, which facilitated precise estimation of regression coefficients, significance levels, and the overall goodness of fit of the model. This approach enables the study to quantify the influence of independent variables on employee performance, providing robust empirical evidence to support conclusions regarding their relationships.

Findings and Discussion

Findings

The research instrument was first tested for validity and reliability using IBM SPSS 27 to ensure the accuracy and consistency of the data collected. The validity test showed that all items for Work Motivation (X1), Work Goals (X2), and Employee Performance (Y) were valid, with Pearson correlation coefficients exceeding the critical value of 0.213 and significance levels below 0.05. Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha confirmed strong internal consistency for all variables: 0.793 for Work Motivation, 0.775 for Work Goals, and 0.820 for Employee Performance, all above the acceptable threshold of 0.60 (Nunnally, 1994). These results indicate that the instrument was both reliable and appropriate for data collection.

The study involved 84 respondents, predominantly female (67.9%), with most aged 25–35 years (48.8%). The majority held a bachelor's degree (84.5%), with work experience varying from under one year to over ten years. This profile indicates a workforce with diverse experience and predominantly high educational attainment, which is likely to influence work performance.

Descriptive analysis of the research variables showed generally positive responses. Work Motivation scored highly across all indicators, ranging from 3.98 to 4.12, with the highest score related to opportunities for self-development. Work Goals were similarly rated positively, with scores between 4.01 and 4.11, reflecting employees' clear understanding of work orientation, commitment to tasks, motivation from challenging assignments, clarity of feedback, and well-defined deadlines. Employee

Performance was also rated highly, with scores above 4.00 for all indicators, highlighting strong commitment to quality, task completion, timeliness, effectiveness, and initiative.

Hypothesis testing using multiple linear regression analysis revealed a positive and significant effect of Work Motivation and Work Goals on Employee Performance. The regression equation, $Y = 4.838 + 0.397(X_1 + X_2)$, indicates that each one-unit increase in the combined independent variables is associated with a 0.397-unit increase in Employee Performance, while the constant of 4.838 represents baseline performance. Partial tests (t-tests) confirmed that both Work Motivation ($\beta = 0.718, t = 9.067, p < 0.05$) and Work Goals ($\beta = 0.736, t = 9.773, p < 0.05$) individually and significantly influence performance. Simultaneous testing (F-test) showed $F = 107.409, p = 0.000$, indicating that the combination of these two variables significantly affects Employee Performance. The coefficient of determination (R^2) of 0.567 suggests that 56.7% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by motivation and work goals, while the remaining 43.3% is influenced by other factors such as leadership, work environment, or compensation.

In summary, the findings demonstrate that both Work Motivation and Work Goals, individually and collectively, play a significant role in enhancing Employee Performance. Employees with high motivation and clear, structured goals exhibit greater responsibility, initiative, and overall productivity. These results emphasize the importance of fostering motivation and providing clear objectives to improve employee performance in public sector organizations.

Discussion

The results of this study indicate that Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance. The t-test produced a value of 9.067 with a significance level of 0.000, confirming that employees with higher motivation demonstrate better performance in fulfilling their duties and responsibilities. This finding aligns with Robbins and Judge (2019), who emphasize that motivation is an internal force that drives individuals to engage in productive behavior in accordance with organizational objectives. Empirical evidence from previous research supports this conclusion. Arifin (2021) found that motivation significantly enhances public sector employee performance, while Sari (2022) reported that motivation contributes substantially to performance improvement at the Tamalate Sub-District Office, Makassar. Additionally, Asis Rahman et al. (2020) highlighted that motivation, together with job satisfaction and career development, significantly influences employee performance, reinforcing the notion that motivation is a critical determinant of productivity in organizational contexts.

Similarly, Work Goals were shown to exert a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance, with a t-value of 9.773 and a significance level of 0.000. This result suggests that the clarity, specificity, and direction of organizational work goals play an essential role in enabling employees to achieve higher performance. Goal-setting theory, as proposed by Locke and Latham (2019), asserts that specific, measurable, and challenging goals increase employee focus, motivation, and performance. Clear objectives provide employees with guidance for prioritizing tasks, allocating resources efficiently, and executing responsibilities effectively. Empirical studies corroborate this perspective. Fitriani (2022) demonstrated that clear work goals significantly enhance public sector employee performance, and Ramadhani (2022) found that directed and structured goals contribute substantially to improving employee outcomes. These findings collectively underline the importance of goal clarity as a managerial instrument for increasing organizational effectiveness.

Furthermore, the simultaneous effect of Work Motivation and Work Goals on Employee Performance was examined using the F-test, which revealed a significant combined influence with an F-value of 107.409 and a significance level of 0.000. The coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.567$) indicates that 56.7% of the variation in employee performance can be explained by these two factors, while the remaining 43.3% is affected by other variables beyond the scope of this study, such as leadership, work environment, or compensation. This finding highlights the complementary roles of motivation and goal clarity in enhancing employee performance. Motivation functions as an internal driver that encourages employees to exert effort, while clearly defined work goals provide direction to

ensure that these efforts are aligned with organizational objectives. This conclusion is consistent with the findings of Pratama and Lestari (2020), who reported that motivation and work goals jointly influence public sector employee performance, as well as with Ramadhani (2022), who demonstrated that the combination of these factors optimizes overall employee outcomes.

In conclusion, this study confirms that employee performance in public sector organizations is significantly shaped by the interaction of internal factors, such as motivation, and organizational factors, such as work goal clarity. High levels of motivation coupled with well-defined objectives enable employees to perform more effectively, demonstrating responsibility, initiative, and commitment. Academically, these findings strengthen the evidence that both intrinsic motivation and clearly established work goals are essential prerequisites for enhancing employee performance within government institutions

Conclusion

Based on the analysis and discussion of the effects of Work Motivation (X1) and Work Goals (X2) on Employee Performance (Y), several conclusions can be drawn. Work Motivation has a positive and significant effect on Employee Performance, indicating that employees with higher levels of motivation tend to perform better in carrying out their duties and responsibilities. Similarly, Work Goals also exert a positive and significant influence on Employee Performance, suggesting that clear and well-directed objectives enable employees to achieve organizational targets more effectively. Furthermore, Work Motivation and Work Goals simultaneously have a significant and complementary effect on Employee Performance, highlighting that these factors work together to enhance employee productivity. Overall, the findings suggest that improving employee performance in public sector organizations is not solely determined by intrinsic or extrinsic motivation, but also strongly influenced by the clarity and direction of work goals set by the organization.

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