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Influence of Compensation, Career Development, and Workload on Employee Performance at PTPN IV Medan

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Abstract

This research investigates compensation, career development, and workload effects on employee performance at PTPN IV Regional II Medan through quantitative methodology involving 75 respondents. Statistical analysis reveals significant individual effects: Compensation ($t = 4.432$, $p < 0.05$), Career Development ($t = 14.100$, $p < 0.05$), and Workload ($t = 3.144$, $p < 0.05$). Simultaneous testing demonstrates collective significance ($F = 144.777$, $p < 0.05$), with determination coefficient ($R^2 = 0.854$) indicating these variables explain 85.4% of performance variation. Results emphasize strategic importance of equitable remuneration systems, structured advancement opportunities, and balanced task allocation for enhancing workforce productivity and achieving organizational objectives in agro-industry contexts.

Keywords: *Compensation, Career Development, Workload, Employee Performance, PTPN IV*

Introduction

Human capital represents the cornerstone of organizational performance, serving critical functions as strategic decision-makers, operational executors, and institutional planners whose contributions fundamentally determine competitive outcomes (Alqershi et al., 2021). Distinguished from conventional production factors by cognitive capabilities, emotional intelligence, heterogeneous experiential backgrounds, and dynamic developmental needs, human resources require sophisticated management frameworks optimizing individual potential toward collective objectives (Becker & Gerhart, 2020). Contemporary organizations recognizing this complexity implement comprehensive human resource strategies integrating talent acquisition, competency development, and performance optimization mechanisms essential for sustained competitive advantage.Employee performance constitutes a fundamental organizational effectiveness indicator, representing individual contributions manifested through commitment, loyalty, discipline, innovation and self-learning that directly impact goal achievement (Wafy & Deka, 2024). Performance variability among workforce members necessitates supportive mechanisms including motivational frameworks, recognition systems, and performance management protocols ensuring sustained commitment and optimal productivity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Leadership assumes pivotal responsibility through motivational initiatives and achievement recognition that cultivate organizational commitment and work enthusiasm. Inadequate compensation structures, limited advancement opportunities, and suboptimal workload distribution precipitate performance deterioration, adversely affecting organizational outcomes and competitive positioning (Shields et al., 2020).

PT Perkebunan Nusantara IV (PTPN IV) Regional II Medan, operating within Indonesia's agro-industry sector, confronts performance challenges stemming from remuneration inconsistencies, constrained career progression pathways, and workload distribution imbalances. This investigation examines compensation mechanisms, career development frameworks, and workload allocation as determinants of employee performance, addressing critical organizational imperatives for sustainable productivity enhancement. Implementation of equitable remuneration systems, structured professional advancement programs, and balanced task distribution represents essential interventions for elevating workforce motivation, job satisfaction, and comprehensive organizational effectiveness within this agro-industrial context.

Literature Review

Human Resource Management

Human Resource Management represents a strategic, integrated organizational approach encompassing workforce planning, talent acquisition, competency development, career management, compensation administration, and labor relations (Dessler, 2020). HRM facilitates knowledge extraction, skill optimization, and competency deployment essential for organizational success and competitive sustainability (Lee et al., 2024). Core HRM functions include systematic workforce planning ensuring adequate talent supply, comprehensive employee development programs building organizational capability, equitable compensation frameworks maintaining competitiveness, motivation systems driving performance excellence, disciplinary mechanisms ensuring compliance, and separation management facilitating organizational transitions (Noe et al., 2021).

Contemporary HRM emphasizes strategic alignment between individual capabilities and organizational objectives through sophisticated talent management systems. Effective human capital management requires integrated approaches balancing employee welfare considerations with organizational performance imperatives, implementing evidence-based practices optimizing both individual satisfaction and collective productivity (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Organizations prioritizing comprehensive HRM strategies demonstrate superior performance outcomes, enhanced employee retention, and strengthened competitive positioning within increasingly complex business environments (Becker & Gerhart, 2020).

Compensation

Compensation encompasses total remuneration packages including base salaries, performance incentives, benefits, and ancillary rewards provided to employees for organizational contributions (Milkovich et al., 2020). Modern compensation models emphasize performance-based systems tying remuneration directly to measurable outcomes, incentivizing productivity while aligning employee objectives with broader organizational goals (peopleHum, 2025). Strategic compensation design serves multiple organizational functions: attracting qualified talent through competitive offerings, motivating sustained high performance through incentive alignment, retaining valuable employees by recognizing contributions, and reinforcing desired organizational behaviors through reward structures (Martocchio, 2020).

Research demonstrates that equitable, competitive compensation systems significantly enhance employee satisfaction, organizational commitment, and performance outcomes (Newman et al., 2021). Compensation structures aligned with performance management processes create stronger linkages between individual efforts and organizational rewards, though implementation requires careful attention to fairness and transparency (Betterworks, 2024). Contemporary compensation trends emphasize total rewards approaches integrating financial and non-financial elements, transparent pay practices building trust, and flexible structures accommodating diverse workforce preferences (WorldatWork, 2023).

Career Development

Career development encompasses systematic organizational initiatives including continuous education, skills enhancement, promotional opportunities, and job rotations preparing employees for advancement while fostering organizational loyalty (Noe, 2020). Effective career development programs provide structured pathways enabling employees to acquire competencies, expand responsibilities, and progress through organizational hierarchies, simultaneously addressing individual growth aspirations and organizational succession planning requirements (Weng & McElroy, 2021). Organizations implementing robust career development frameworks demonstrate enhanced employee engagement, reduced turnover intentions, and improved talent pipeline quality (De Vos et al., 2020).

Strategic career management requires integration between individual developmental needs and organizational capability requirements, implemented through formal training programs, mentoring relationships, challenging assignments, and transparent advancement criteria (Sullivan & Al Ariss, 2021). Contemporary career development emphasizes continuous learning mindsets, adaptability to changing organizational contexts, and

self-directed professional growth complementing organizational support structures. Research confirms positive relationships between career development opportunities and multiple organizational outcomes including job satisfaction, organizational commitment, and sustained performance excellence (Kraimer et al., 2020).

Workload

Workload represents the quantitative and qualitative task demands assigned to employees relative to available capacity, time constraints, and resource availability (Schaufeli & Taris, 2021). Optimal workload management balances productivity requirements with employee capabilities, preventing both underutilization reducing engagement and overload causing stress, fatigue, and performance deterioration (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). Excessive workload constitutes a primary occupational stressor associated with reduced job satisfaction, impaired work-life balance, increased health complaints, and diminished organizational commitment (Maslach & Leiter, 2021).

Effective workload management requires systematic assessment of task complexity, time requirements, resource adequacy, and individual capability variations, implementing distribution mechanisms ensuring equitable allocation and realistic expectations (Gajendran et al., 2023). Organizations employing strategic workload planning demonstrate enhanced employee well-being, sustained productivity levels, and reduced turnover rates compared to those with reactive, crisis-driven approaches (Demerouti & Cropanzano, 2021). Contemporary workload considerations must address technological intensification, boundary management in flexible work arrangements, and individual differences in stress tolerance and work preferences (Kelliher et al., 2020).

Employee Performance

Employee performance represents the degree to which individuals fulfill assigned responsibilities, achieve predetermined objectives, and contribute value toward organizational goal attainment (Motowidlo & Kell, 2020). Performance assessment encompasses multiple dimensions including task proficiency reflecting core job requirements, contextual behaviors supporting organizational functioning, adaptive performance demonstrating flexibility in changing circumstances, and counterproductive behaviors detracting from organizational effectiveness (Campbell & Wiernik, 2020). Comprehensive performance evaluation considers both quantitative outcomes and qualitative contributions, recognizing that effective performance extends beyond simple productivity metrics (Aguinis, 2023).

Contemporary performance management emphasizes continuous feedback mechanisms replacing traditional annual review cycles, enabling real-time course corrections and developmental interventions (Pulakos & O'Leary, 2021). Modern approaches prioritize continuous feedback, data analytics, soft skills assessment, and employee well-being integration, fostering cultures of improvement while empowering workforce engagement (HR Lineup, 2024). Organizations implementing sophisticated performance management systems demonstrate superior talent optimization, enhanced employee development, and strengthened competitive performance (DeNisi & Murphy, 2021).

Research Hypotheses

H_1: Compensation significantly affects employee performance at PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
H_2: Career development significantly affects employee performance at PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
H_3: Workload significantly affects employee performance at PTPN IV Regional II Medan.
H_4: Compensation, career development, and workload simultaneously significantly affect employee performance at PTPN IV Regional II Medan.

Methods

Research Design

This investigation employs quantitative methodology examining theoretical relationships through variable interaction analysis using numerical data and statistical procedures (Creswell & Creswell, 2023). The research

design facilitates hypothesis testing regarding compensation, career development, and workload effects on employee performance within PTPN IV Regional II Medan's organizational context.

Population and Sample

The research population comprises 300 employees at PTPN IV Regional II Medan, from which 75 respondents were selected using Slovin's formula with 90% confidence level and random sampling techniques ensuring representative generalizability (Sekaran & Bougie, 2020). Sample selection employed probability sampling methods providing each population member equal selection opportunity, minimizing selection bias and enhancing external validity.

Data Collection

Primary data collection utilized structured questionnaires distributed to selected respondents, supplemented by direct observations and semi-structured interviews providing contextual insights. Secondary data sources included organizational documents, performance records, and relevant scholarly literature establishing theoretical foundations. Questionnaire instruments employed Likert-scale measurements capturing respondent perceptions regarding compensation adequacy, career development opportunities, workload appropriateness, and performance indicators (Cooper & Schindler, 2021).

Variables and Measurement

Dependent Variable: Employee Performance (Y) assessed through self-reported measures encompassing task completion, work quality, productivity levels, initiative demonstration, and responsibility fulfillment.
Independent Variables:

- Compensation (X_1): Evaluated through items measuring salary adequacy, bonus satisfaction, benefits comprehensiveness, and facility provision
- Career Development (X_2): Assessed via educational opportunities, training participation, promotion fairness, and advancement transparency
- Workload (X_3): Measured through target achievability, task difficulty, time pressure, and work-life balance perceptions

Data Analysis

Data analysis employed SPSS software conducting validity testing confirming measurement accuracy, reliability testing ensuring consistency, classical assumption tests verifying regression prerequisites (normality, multicollinearity absence, heteroscedasticity absence), multiple linear regression examining variable relationships, and hypothesis testing through t-tests (partial effects) and F-tests (simultaneous effects) supplemented by determination coefficient (R^2) calculation quantifying explanatory power (Hair et al., 2021).

Results and Discussion

Respondent Characteristics

Sample composition reveals predominant male representation (71%, n=53) compared to female participants (29%, n=22). Age distribution demonstrates balanced representation: 20-30 years (32%, n=24), 30-40 years (36%, n=27), and over 40 years (32%, n=24), indicating mature workforce composition. Educational attainment shows undergraduate degree prevalence (61%, n=46), followed by diploma holders (25%, n=19) and postgraduate degrees (13%, n=10). Tenure analysis indicates 47% possessing 5-10 years experience, 33% with 1-5 years, and 20% exceeding 10 years, reflecting moderate to substantial organizational experience.

Validity and Reliability Testing

Table 1. Validity Test Results - Compensation Variable

Variable	Statement	r-calculated	r-table	Status
Compensation (X_1)	X1.1-X1.12	0.763-0.834	0.361	Valid

All compensation measurement items demonstrated calculated correlation coefficients exceeding critical threshold (r-table = 0.361), confirming construct validity. Similar validity confirmation was obtained for Career Development, Workload, and Employee Performance variables, establishing instrument credibility for empirical analysis.

Table 2. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Items	Standard	Status
Compensation	0.956	12	0.6	Reliable
Career Development	0.912	12	0.6	Reliable
Workload	0.936	9	0.6	Reliable
Employee Performance	0.873	15	0.6	Reliable

Source: Processed with SPSS 25, 2025

Cronbach's alpha coefficients substantially exceed 0.6 threshold across all constructs, confirming internal consistency reliability and instrument suitability for hypothesis testing (Nunnally & Bernstein, 2020).

Descriptive Analysis

Respondent perceptions regarding compensation indicate general satisfaction with salary alignment (n=48 agreeing/strongly agreeing), though some dissatisfaction emerges concerning bonus distribution (n=26 expressing concerns). Positive evaluations extend to allowances and benefits, though facility maintenance requires attention.

Career development perceptions reveal generally positive assessments regarding educational background adequacy (n=45 agreeing/strongly agreeing), knowledge sufficiency (n=42), and training effectiveness (n=49). Company policies concerning rotation and promotion are recognized as fair and transparent, supporting career advancement opportunities.

Workload analysis reveals mixed perceptions: while 44 respondents acknowledge high targets and 46 find them challenging, 41 remain confident in achievement capability. Notably, 44 respondents report working during break periods or after hours, indicating workload occasionally exceeds regular working time, potentially risking burnout without intervention.

Employee performance self-assessments demonstrate strong commitment levels, with respondents reporting task prioritization (n=41 agreeing/strongly agreeing), efficiency (n=50), initiative (n=49), knowledge adequacy (n=55), and organizational commitment (n=54). These assessments suggest motivated, reliable workforce focused on performance standard maintenance.

Classical Assumption Tests

Normality Test: Kolmogorov-Smirnov test yielded significance value 0.200 ($p > 0.05$), confirming normal residual distribution. P-Plot visualization demonstrated data points clustered along diagonal reference line, validating normality assumption satisfaction.

Multicollinearity Test: Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values for Compensation (1.325), Career Development (1.334), and Workload (1.250) remained substantially below critical threshold ($VIF < 10$), confirming multicollinearity absence among independent variables.

Heteroscedasticity Test: Scatterplot examination revealed random point distribution without discernible patterns. Glejser test significance values—Compensation (0.332), Career Development (0.429), Workload (0.062)—exceeded 0.05 threshold, confirming homoscedastic residual variance.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

Table 3. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Model	**Unstandardized Coefficients**	**Standardized Coefficients**	**t**	**Sig.**
	B	Std. Error	Beta	
(Constant)	19.494	2.120		9.197

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients	Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
Compensation	0.168	0.038	0.227	4.432
Career Development	0.530	0.038	0.724	14.100
Workload	0.193	0.061	0.156	3.144

Source: Processed with SPSS 25, 2025

The regression equation: $Y = 19.494 + 0.168X_1 + 0.530X_2 + 0.193X_3$

Interpretation:

- Constant (19.494): Represents baseline employee performance when independent variables equal zero
- Compensation coefficient (0.168): One-unit compensation increase associates with 0.168 performance increase, holding other variables constant
- Career Development coefficient (0.530): One-unit career development increase corresponds to 0.530 performance increase, demonstrating strongest individual effect
- Workload coefficient (0.193): One-unit workload increase relates to 0.193 performance increase, controlling for other factors

Hypothesis Testing

Partial Significance Test (t-test)

Hypothesis 1 - Compensation Effect: T-calculated value (4.432) exceeds t-table critical value (1.997) with significance ($p < 0.001$) below 0.05 threshold, confirming H_1 acceptance. Compensation significantly and positively influences employee performance.

Hypothesis 2 - Career Development Effect: T-calculated value (14.100) substantially exceeds t-table (1.997) with significance ($p < 0.001$), confirming H_2 acceptance. Career development demonstrates strongest significant positive effect on employee performance.

Hypothesis 3 - Workload Effect: T-calculated value (3.144) exceeds t-table (1.997) with significance ($0.002 < 0.05$), confirming H_3 acceptance. Workload significantly and positively affects employee performance.

Simultaneous Significance Test (F-test)

Table 4. F-test Results

Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Regression	2169.979	3	723.326	144.771	.000
Residual	354.741	71	4.996		
Total	2524.720	74			

Source: Processed with SPSS 25, 2025

F-calculated value (144.771) exceeds F-table critical value (2.74) with significance ($p < 0.001$), confirming H_4 acceptance. Compensation, career development, and workload simultaneously significantly influence employee performance.

Determination Coefficient

Table 5. Coefficient of Determination

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error
1	0.927	0.859	0.854	2.235

Source: Processed with SPSS 25, 2025

Adjusted R-square value (0.854) indicates compensation, career development, and workload collectively explain 85.4% of employee performance variation, with remaining 14.6% attributed to unexamined factors including organizational culture, leadership effectiveness, or individual characteristics.

Discussion

Compensation Effect on Employee Performance

Statistical findings confirm compensation significantly and positively influences employee performance ($t = 4.432$, $p < 0.001$), supporting H_1. This relationship aligns with contemporary compensation research emphasizing performance-based systems that align individual efforts with organizational objectives, reporting 10-15% productivity increases (peopleHum, 2025). Fair, competitive remuneration encompassing salaries, incentives, and comprehensive benefits fosters enhanced motivation and organizational commitment, translating into superior work quality and productivity outcomes (Milkovich et al., 2020). At PTPN IV, equitable compensation signals organizational value for employee contributions, strengthening psychological contracts and encouraging discretionary effort investments (Newman et al., 2021).

Career Development Effect on Employee Performance

Career development demonstrates the strongest performance relationship ($t = 14.100$, $p < 0.001$), validating H_2. This robust association underscores professional growth opportunities' critical importance for sustaining high performance levels. Structured development programs providing training, advancement pathways, and transparent promotion mechanisms enhance competency acquisition while signaling organizational investment in employee futures (Noe, 2020). Employees perceiving genuine advancement opportunities demonstrate heightened engagement, skill development motivation, and organizational commitment, culminating in superior performance contributions (Kraimer et al., 2020). PTPN IV's career development initiatives appear particularly effective in cultivating workforce capability and retention.

Workload Effect on Employee Performance

Workload significantly influences performance ($t = 3.144$, $p = 0.002$), supporting H_3. This positive relationship, while initially counterintuitive, suggests appropriately challenging workloads within manageable parameters can stimulate performance through engagement maintenance and skill utilization (Bakker & Demerouti, 2023). However, descriptive findings revealing after-hours work patterns warrant caution, as sustained overload risks eventual burnout and performance deterioration (Maslach & Leiter, 2021). Optimal workload management requires balancing challenge provision with capacity constraints, implementing monitoring mechanisms preventing excessive demands while maintaining engagement through meaningful work (Schaufeli & Taris, 2021).

Simultaneous Effects Analysis

F-test results ($F = 144.771$, $p < 0.001$) confirm collective variable significance, validating H_4. The substantial adjusted R-square (0.854) demonstrates that compensation, career development, and workload collectively explain considerable performance variation, suggesting comprehensive HRM strategies addressing multiple dimensions yield superior outcomes compared to isolated interventions (Armstrong & Taylor, 2020). Integrated HRM approaches optimizing compensation, development opportunities, and workload balance enhance multiple performance dimensions including commitment, innovation, and sustained productivity (Wafy & Deka, 2024). Organizations must therefore adopt holistic perspectives recognizing performance determinant interdependencies rather than managing factors in isolation.

Conclusion

This investigation establishes that compensation, career development, and workload each significantly and positively influence employee performance at PTPN IV Regional II Medan, with career development demonstrating the strongest effect ($\beta = 0.724$, $t = 14.100$). Collectively, these variables explain 85.4% of performance variation (adjusted $R^2 = 0.854$), validating comprehensive human resource management importance for organizational effectiveness. Results emphasize strategic imperatives for equitable compensation systems, structured career advancement programs, and balanced workload distribution in cultivating motivated, capable, and productive workforces.

Recommendations

For PTPN IV Management:

1. Compensation System Enhancement: Implement regular compensation benchmarking against industry standards, ensuring competitiveness while maintaining internal equity. Consider performance-based incentive components linking rewards directly to measurable contributions.
2. Career Development Strengthening: Establish transparent career pathways with clearly defined competency requirements, progression timelines, and development resources. Expand training programs addressing emerging skill requirements while implementing mentoring systems supporting employee advancement.
3. Workload Management Optimization: Conduct systematic workload assessments identifying distribution imbalances, implementing monitoring mechanisms preventing excessive demands. Consider workforce expansion or task redistribution addressing after-hours work patterns preventing burnout.
4. Integrated HRM Strategy: Develop comprehensive human resource frameworks coordinating compensation, development, and workload policies, recognizing their interdependent effects on performance outcomes.

For Future Research:

1. Incorporate qualitative methodologies exploring underlying mechanisms linking compensation, career development, and workload to performance outcomes
2. Examine moderating variables including organizational culture, leadership quality, and individual characteristics affecting relationship strength
3. Conduct longitudinal designs tracking performance changes following HRM intervention implementations
4. Expand investigations across diverse organizational contexts and industries examining relationship generalizability

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