
Analysis of Situational Leadership and Financial Compensation on Employee Performance Mediated by Motivation

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Abstract:

This study aims to investigate the effects of situational leadership and financial compensation on employee performance, with motivation as a mediating variable. A quantitative approach was employed, using structured questionnaires distributed to employees at dealerships in the Soloraya area. The sample was selected purposively based on criteria such as employment status, age (21–35), and residence, yielding at least 50 respondents. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares (PLS) in SmartPLS 4.0, including assessments of validity, reliability, multicollinearity, and structural relationships through R^2 , Q^2 , t-tests, and path coefficients. The results indicate that situational leadership positively and significantly influences motivation, while financial compensation positively and significantly affects both employee performance and motivation. However, motivation does not significantly impact employee performance and cannot mediate the effects of situational leadership or financial compensation. These findings suggest that organizations should focus directly on leadership practices and compensation structures to enhance performance. Future research may explore additional variables, broader geographic contexts, or qualitative methods for deeper insight into the interplay between leadership, compensation, motivation, and performance.

Keywords: *Compensation, Employee Performance, Motivation, Situational Leadership, Work Environment*

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1. Introduction

Leadership refers to the capacity to shape and direct the behavior of others toward achieving specific objectives, as reflected in how managers inspire and guide their subordinates to accomplish organizational aims (Hasanah et al., 2023). For an organization to operate effectively, it must prioritize professionalism and productivity to stay competitive in an increasingly globalized environment, emphasizing the continual growth of employees as a central motivational approach (Madyarti, 2021). Within this context, situational leadership becomes particularly vital since leaders are required to engage not only with internal team members but also with external stakeholders who possess varying interests and backgrounds. A leader's ability to recognize individual differences and situational factors determines their success in

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influencing subordinates; neglecting these aspects can result in ineffective leadership (Yustina et al., 2024), underscoring the adaptive and dynamic nature of situational leadership in promoting organizational advancement (Tampubolon, 2022).

Furthermore, the behavioral patterns associated with situational leadership have a substantial impact on employees' willingness to demonstrate creative work behaviors (Rahmawati & Setyowati, 2025). Leaders are expected to employ closing behaviors that establish a clear sense of direction, thereby boosting employees' enthusiasm, involvement, and commitment to executing innovative ideas (Lucky et al., 2022). Conversely, when supervisors terminate exploratory processes without offering constructive feedback or encouragement, employees' motivation to engage in creative problem-solving tends to diminish (Dinesh et al., 2024). Employee performance can be interpreted as the results achieved in carrying out designated responsibilities, which depend on an individual's expertise, experience, dedication, and time management factors essential to an organization's overall success (Ginting et al., 2021). Performance indicators generally encompass the amount and quality of output, adherence to deadlines, efficient resource usage, and the cultivation of interpersonal competencies (Ginting et al., 2021). To recognize and stimulate these efforts, organizations provide monetary rewards and other benefits as acknowledgment of employees' achievements, applicable to both permanent and contractual personnel. Financial compensation thus functions not only as recognition of performance but also as a motivational instrument that enhances productivity, delivered through both direct and indirect payment systems (Herawati et al., 2021).

To ensure employee satisfaction and support their ability to work effectively and efficiently, human resource management must focus on motivating its workforce (Uswatul Fitroh et al., 2024). Work motivation refers to the process of stimulating and directing employees to complete their duties and accomplish goals with awareness, responsibility, and enthusiasm. It acts as a driving force that helps individuals optimize their potential, strengthen determination, and build collaborative teamwork (Nata & Perkasa, 2023). Employee performance serves as a cornerstone of organizational success, and maintaining high performance levels requires nurturing strong commitment something that must be encouraged by the organization, especially through its leaders (Hanasi, 2023). Situational leadership plays a crucial role in encouraging subordinates to enhance their performance and achieve collective success. Key indicators of such performance include work quality, discipline, creativity, cooperation, competence, and accountability (Agustini et al., 2023). Thus, situational leadership can be interpreted as the capability to employ communication and behavioral strategies to influence others toward shared goals for organizational achievement.

Considering the aforementioned background, this research seeks to investigate the influence of leadership and financial compensation on employee performance, with motivation serving as an intervening variable. This study holds importance in providing insights into how effective leadership practices can strengthen employee performance within the Solo Raya region.

2. Theoretical Background

Theoretical Review of Leadership, Compensation, Motivation, and Employee Performance: Employee performance within an organization is shaped by multiple factors, including situational leadership, financial compensation, and work motivation. Situational leadership guides organizational direction and objectives, with leaders fulfilling interpersonal, informational, and decision-making roles to inspire, inform, and strategize effectively (Pertiwi & Atmaja, 2021; Madyarti, 2021). Financial compensation, such as salaries, incentives, and benefits, serves as tangible recognition of employees' contributions, influencing morale, productivity, and overall organizational success (Heriyanto, 2020). Meanwhile, work motivation drives enthusiasm, commitment, responsibility, and continuous self-improvement, directly impacting achievement and performance outcomes (Caissar et al., 2022). Consequently, performance reflects the measurable quality, quantity, and timeliness of work, integrating motivation, skills, knowledge, and clear task understanding to fulfill assigned responsibilities effectively (Setyo Widodo & Yandi, 2022).

The Effect of Situational Leadership on Motivation: Previous studies have examined the role of Situational Leadership on employee motivation. Ginting et al. (2021) found a significant relationship, indicating that increases in Situational Leadership positively affect employee motivation. Similarly, Siahaan et al. (2021) reported a positive effect of Situational Leadership on motivation with an estimated value of 0.769, suggesting that greater situational leadership enhances employee motivation. Hafidzi et al. (2023) also noted that an appropriate Situational Leadership style stimulates enthusiasm and drives employees to work more diligently, thereby improving performance. Based on these findings, the hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows:

H1. Situational Leadership has a significant effect on Motivation.

The Influence of Financial Compensation on Motivation: Financial compensation refers to the overall provision of rewards for both employers and employees, encompassing direct monetary benefits as well as indirect non-monetary benefits. These rewards received by employees as a result of their work in an organization may include salaries, wages, bonuses, incentives, and other allowances such as health benefits, holiday allowances, meal allowances, and leave payments. Previous studies have examined the effect of financial compensation on work motivation. Santika et al. (2023) found that financial compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation, indicating that higher financial rewards at PT. Bank Mandiri KCP Kerobokan increase employee motivation. Similarly, Fauzi et al. (n.d.) concluded that financial compensation positively influences the work motivation of employees at the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency of Makassar City. Based on these findings, the hypothesis of this study is formulated as follows:

H2. Financial compensation has positive effect on motivation.

The Influence of Motivation on Employee Performance: Previous studies have examined the effect of work motivation on employee performance. Gultom et al. (2022) found that work motivation positively and significantly influences employee performance at PT Perkebunan Nusantara III, PKS Aek Torop unit. Similarly, Kunci (2022) reported a t-value of 7.852 with a significance level of 0.000, indicating that work motivation has a relevant impact on performance. DwiYansah et al. (2021) also demonstrated that higher levels of work motivation correspond to higher employee performance at PT SJS, Yogyakarta branch. Based on these findings, this study hypothesizes that:

H3. Work motivation has positive affects employee performance.

The Influence of Situational Leadership on Employee Performance: Situational leadership is not merely a position or title, but encompasses the ability to motivate, inspire, and guide employees toward achieving shared goals. In today's competitive business environment, organizational performance is crucial, and situational leadership plays a central role in fostering a positive work environment by providing clear vision, strategic direction, and encouragement that maximizes individual contributions. Leadership styles whether transformational or transactional, authoritarian or democratic significantly influence employee motivation and performance. For instance, transformational situational leadership promotes innovation, while transactional leadership emphasizes clear exchanges between leaders and subordinates. Previous studies support this relationship: Muhammad and Alhamidi (2022) found that transformational leadership positively affects individual behavior, while Sinaga et al. (2023) highlighted that an inclusive organizational culture enhances the positive impact of situational leadership on employee performance. Effective communication between leaders and teams further strengthens understanding, reduces uncertainty, and amplifies the benefits of situational leadership. Based on these findings, the hypothesis of this study is:

H4: Situational leadership has a significant effect on employee performance.

The Impact of Financial Compensation on Employee Performance: Previous studies have examined the effect of motivation on employee performance. Nuruzzaman and Baroroh (2021) found that employee performance is significantly influenced jointly by motivation and financial compensation. Similarly, Xuecheng (2022) and Yani (2022) reported that financial compensation (X) has a positive and significant partial effect on Employee Performance at CV. Rizki Abadi, with a significance level of 0.0000. Furthermore, Andriani et al. (2022) concluded that increases in financial compensation also enhance employee performance. Based on these findings, this study hypothesizes:

H5. Financial compensation has positive effect on employee performance.

The Influence of Financial Compensation on Employee Performance Mediated by Motivation: Previous studies by Langda Aditya Wijaya (2020) and Satria Panji Herlambang and Sarman Sinaga (2022) indicate that financial compensation positively influences employee performance, with motivation serving as a mediating variable. These findings suggest that financial compensation can enhance employee

performance by fostering motivation. Based on these studies, the hypothesis of this research is formulated as follows:

H6: Financial compensation has positive effect on employee performance mediated by motivation.

The Influence of Situational Leadership on Employee Performance Mediated by Motivation: Previous studies have shown the significant role of situational leadership in enhancing employee performance through motivation as a mediating variable. Uswatul Fitroh and Ery Teguh Prasetyo (2024) found that the indirect effect of situational leadership on employee performance via motivation was greater than its direct effect. Similarly, Siregar et al. (2024) demonstrated that work motivation significantly mediates the relationship between situational leadership and performance, indicating that even without a direct effect, situational leadership can improve employee performance through enhanced motivation. Based on these findings, this study hypothesizes that:

H7. Situational leadership has positive effect on employee performance mediated by motivation

3. Methodology

This research adopts a quantitative methodology utilizing structured questionnaires to investigate the influence of Situational Leadership and Financial Compensation on Employee Performance, with Motivation serving as a mediating factor. The study population comprises employees working in dealerships within the Soloraya region, while the sampling process applied purposive techniques based on specific criteria such as employment status, age range (21–35 years), and area of residence. The total number of respondents aligns with the minimum of 50 participants suggested by Ferdinand (2014) and the 100–200 range recommended for SEM Chi-Square analysis by Hair et al. (2010). Data were primarily gathered through Google Forms and supplemented with secondary information from prior studies. Responses were measured using a five-point Likert scale. The analytical process involved descriptive statistics and Partial Least Squares (PLS) via SmartPLS 4.0, encompassing evaluations of the measurement model's convergent and discriminant validity, internal consistency (Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability), and multicollinearity (VIF). The structural model was then analyzed to examine inter-variable relationships using R^2 , Q^2 , t-statistics, and path coefficients to estimate both direct and indirect causal linkages among the independent, mediating, and dependent constructs (Ghozali, 2014–2019; Jogiyanto, 2015; Sugiyono, 2022).

4. Empirical Findings/Result

Research Overview

This study aims to examine the effects of situational leadership and financial compensation on employee performance, mediated by motivation, among employees working at dealerships in the Soloraya area. Using a survey method, data were

collected from 125 respondents through questionnaires and analyzed with Smart Partial Least Squares (Smart PLS).

Respondent Description

This section outlines the demographic profile of the 125 respondents based on age, gender, residence, and dealer affiliation.

Table 1.

Respondent Profile (Age, Gender, Residence, and Dealer Affiliation, n=125)

Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage
Age	17–25	68	54.40%
	25–35	55	44.00%
	>35	2	1.60%
Gender	Male	59	47.20%
	Female	66	52.80%
Residence	Surakarta	27	21.60%
	Sukoharjo	24	19.20%
	Klaten	31	24.80%
	Karanganyar	14	11.20%
	Sragen	10	8.00%
Dealer	Boyolali	19	15.20%
	Yamaha	59	47.20%
	Kawasaki	34	27.20%
	Honda	21	16.80%
	Suzuki	11	8.80%

Primary data sources processed 2025

The respondent profile is showed in the Table 1. indicates that the majority of participants are aged 17–25 years (54.4%) and slightly more females (52.8%) than males participated in the study. Regarding residence, respondents from Klaten (24.8%) and Surakarta (21.6%) are the most represented. In terms of dealer affiliation, Yamaha employees dominate the sample with 47.2%, followed by Kawasaki (27.2%), Honda (16.8%), and Suzuki (8.8%), suggesting that younger employees and Yamaha-affiliated staff form the primary demographic of the surveyed dealerships in the Soloraya area.

Outer Model Analysis

Table 2 shows all indicators have outer loadings >0.7, AVE >0.5, and composite reliability >0.6, meeting convergent validity (Ghozali, 2018; Huang et al., 2013). With reliability and composite values above 0.8 (Abdillah, 2015), all constructs are valid and reliable for further analysis.

Table 2.
Measurements of Variable, Reliability and validity Results

Variable	Items	Outer Loading	CA	CR	AVE
Employee Performance	My performance is superior to that of my colleagues with similar qualifications.	0,877	0,903	0,896	0,710
	My level of creativity in carrying out my primary job is good.	0,898			
	I am satisfied with my performance because it is mostly excellent.	0,720			
	My performance is better than that of employees in other companies with similar qualifications.	0,837			
	My awareness and confidence regarding attendance and work completion are good.	0,870			
Situational Leadership	Determine the importance of having a strong sense of purpose	0,864	0,870	0,861	0,708
	Emphasize the importance of having a collective sense of mission	0,737			
	Consider the moral and ethical consequences of decisions	0,868			
	Leadership is attentive to my concerns	0,888			
	Delegation of authority is accompanied by responsibility.	0,735			
Motivation	The organization creates a harmonious work environment.	0,873	0,902	0,895	0,706
	The organization is open to employee suggestions and ideas.	0,812			
	I can mentor others in my work group.	0,882			
	I prefer work that provides more physical security.	0,889			
	I believe that the company pays me according to my abilities.	0,893			
Compensation	I am satisfied with the financial compensation I receive.	0,878	0,908	0,903	0,721
	Given my level of education, I am happy with the financial compensation I receive.	0,802			
	The management will reward high-performing employees.	0,871			
	The company will give me a bonus if my work results meet or exceed the set targets.	0,797			

Primary data sources processed 2025

Table 2 presents the outer model analysis results, showing reliability and convergent validity for Situational Leadership, Compensation, Employee Performance, and Motivation.

Multicollinearity Test

Table 3 presents the multicollinearity test results using VIF to assess correlations among Situational Leadership, Compensation, and Motivation in predicting Employee Performance.

Table 3.
Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) Value

	Situasional Leadership	Compensation	Employee Performance	Motivation
Situasional Leadership			7,066	6,394
Compensation			18,193	6,394
Employee Performance				
Motivation			18,642	

Primary data sources processed 2025

The results indicate in table 3, most VIF values fall within the acceptable range of 1–10, two values exceed the threshold (Compensation = 18.193 and Motivation= 18.642). This suggests the presence of multicollinearity, which warrants further investigation and potentially corrective measures to ensure the robustness of the model.

Goodness of fit test

R-square (R^2)

Table 3 presents the R-square values, which reflect the proportion of variance in the endogenous variables explained by the exogenous constructs. In this study, Situational Leadership and Compensation serve as predictors of Employee Performance and Motivation.

Table 4.
R-square value

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Performance	0,869	0,866
Motivation	0,946	0,945

Primary data sources processed 2025

The results of table 4 indicate that Employee Performance is explained by 86.9% through Situational Leadership and Compensation, while Motivation is explained by 94.6%. The remaining variance in both constructs is influenced by factors not included in this model.

Q-square (Q^2)

Table 5 presents the Q-square (Q^2) values, which assess the predictive relevance of the research model. Situational Leadership and Compensation were tested as predictors of Employee Performance and Motivation.

Table 5.
Q-square values

	Q ² predict
Employee Performance	0,874
Motivation	0,949

Primary data sources processed 2025

The results of table 5 show Q² values of 0.874 for Employee Performance and 0.949 for Motivation, both of which exceed zero. These findings indicate that the research model possesses strong predictive relevance.

Hypothesis Testing

Direct Effect Test

Table 5 presents the results of the direct effect test, which examines the influence of Situational Leadership and Compensation on Employee Performance and Motivation. The significance of each relationship is evaluated using T-statistics and p-values.

Table 6.

	Direct Effect Test				
	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Situational Leadership -> Employee Performance	0,433	0,440	0,100	4,316	0,000
Situational Leadership -> Motivation	0,190	0,188	0,058	3,251	0,001
Compensation -> Employee Performance	0,401	0,400	0,147	2,736	0,006
Compensation -> Motivation	0,796	0,795	0,052	15,297	0,000
Employee Performance	0,119	0,109	0,164	0,726	0,468

Primary data sources processed 2025

The results of table 6 show that Compensation has a strong positive and significant effect on Motivation (T = 15.297, p = 0.000) and a significant effect on Employee Performance (T = 2.736, p = 0.006). Situational Leadership also significantly influences both Motivation (T = 3.251, p = 0.001) and Employee Performance (T = 4.316, p = 0.000). However, Motivation does not significantly affect Employee

Performance ($T = 0.726$, $p = 0.468$), indicating that it does not serve as a mediator between the independent variables and performance outcomes.

Indirect Effect Test

Table 7 presents the results of the indirect effect test, which evaluates the mediating role of Motivation in the relationship between Situational Leadership, Compensation, and Employee Performance.

Table 7.
Indirect Effect Test

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Employee Performance -> Motivation -> Employee Performance	0,023	0,019	0,032	0,703	0,482
Compensation -> Motivation -> Motivation	0,095	0,089	0,132	0,719	0,472

Primary data sources processed 2025

The results of table 7 indicate that Motivation does not mediate the relationship between Situational Leadership and Employee Performance, as shown by a T-statistic of 0.703 (<1.960) and a p-value of 0.482 (>0.05). Similarly, Motivation does not mediate the effect of Compensation on Employee Performance, with a T-statistic of 0.719 (<1.960) and a p-value of 0.472 (>0.05). Therefore, both Hypothesis 6 and Hypothesis 7 are not supported, suggesting that employee motivation is not a significant mediating factor in this model.

5. Discussion

The Influence of Situational Leadership on Employee Performance

The direct testing in this study revealed that situational leadership has a positive and significant effect on motivation, indicating that active communication and decision-making by leaders enhance employee performance. This finding aligns with previous research (Rezeki et al., 2024), which also found a significant impact of situational leadership on employee performance, while transformational leaders are able to inspire employees to participate fully and develop emotional commitment to organizational goals (Dianda et al., 2024).

The Influence of Financial Compensation on Employee Performance

The direct testing in this study found that financial compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance, indicating that higher compensation enhances employees' contributions to the organization. This finding aligns with previous studies showing that financial compensation positively and significantly influences employee performance Aslam et al., (2022) and significantly affects the performance of employees at the Tirta Kandilo Consumer Cooperative in Paser

Regency (Jumai, 2023). In contrast, motivation was found to have no positive or significant impact on employee performance, suggesting that motivation alone may not improve performance within this organization. This result differs from prior research indicating that increased motivation enhances individual work achievement, which in turn contributes to overall organizational performance (Nurhalizah & Oktiani, 2024), as motivation fundamentally underlies the work behaviors exhibited by employees (Wahyuni et al., 2023).

The Influence of Situational Leadership on Motivation

The results of this study indicate that situational leadership has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation, suggesting that leaders who actively communicate and make decisions can enhance employees' work motivation. This finding aligns with previous research showing that the effective application of situational leadership, tailored to subordinates' needs, can boost their enthusiasm and drive (Dermawan et al., 2018). Hypothesis testing at LAZNAS Yatim Mandiri Surabaya yielded an original sample of 0.494 with a T-statistic of 3.114, exceeding the threshold of 1.96, confirming the significant positive influence of situational leadership on work motivation (Purnamasari & Halik, 2019).

The Influence of Financial Compensation on Motivation

The direct testing in this study revealed that financial compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation, indicating that higher compensation increases employees' motivation to work for the company. This finding aligns with previous research demonstrating that financial compensation positively and significantly influences employee performance (NLKS Maryani & AAD Widyani, 2020) and work motivation (Aliyya et al., 2021).

The role of motivation in mediating the influence of Situational Leadership on employee performance

The results of this study indicate that motivation does not mediate the effect of situational leadership on employee performance, meaning that situational leadership does not influence employee performance through motivation. In other words, situational leadership cannot enhance employee performance by increasing motivation. This finding contradicts previous research by Dermawan et al. (2018), which found that work motivation contributed to the indirect effect of situational leadership style on employee performance at PT Anugerah Sinergi Raya. However, it aligns with Yeni (2020), who reported no significant effect of situational leadership on employee performance through work motivation as an intervening variable.

The role of motivation in mediating the influence of financial compensation on employee performance

The results of this study indicate that motivation does not mediate the effect of financial compensation on employee performance. In other words, financial compensation does not enhance employee performance by increasing motivation. This finding contrasts with previous research by NLKS Maryani and AAD Widyani (2020), which concluded that financial compensation positively and significantly affects employee performance through work motivation as an intervening variable. However,

it aligns with the study of Aliyya et al. (2021), which also found that financial compensation does not influence employee performance via work motivation.

6. Conclusions

This study concludes that situational leadership exerts a positive and significant influence on employee motivation, while financial compensation has a positive and significant effect on both motivation and employee performance. However, the findings reveal that motivation does not significantly impact employee performance and therefore does not serve as a mediating variable between situational leadership or financial compensation and employee performance. These results highlight the complexity of motivational factors within organizational settings and suggest that leadership style and compensation may directly influence performance without necessarily being mediated by motivation.

Future studies are encouraged to expand this research by examining employees from different regions or more specific organizational contexts to identify potential variations or similarities in outcomes. Scholars may also consider integrating or substituting additional variables, such as career development opportunities, work environment, group participation, or job satisfaction, to capture a more holistic understanding of performance determinants. From a methodological standpoint, adopting qualitative approaches—such as case studies, in-depth interviews, or participatory observations—could enrich the insights into the dynamic relationships among situational leadership, financial compensation, motivation, and employee performance, thereby offering a deeper contextual understanding beyond quantitative findings.

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