



The Influence of Work Motivation, Rewards, and Punishments on Employees' Job Satisfaction at XYZ Company

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Received: 10 November 2025 | Revised: 20 December 2025 | Published: 29 January 2026

Abstract

Purpose: This study examines the partial and simultaneous effects of work motivation, reward, and punishment on employee job satisfaction at XYZ Company, an organization operating in a performance-target-driven environment requiring procedural compliance and consistent work quality.

Research Methodology: A quantitative explanatory research design was employed with a purposive sample of 85 employees of a performance-target-driven company in Indonesia who had at least one year of service. Data were collected using Likert-scale questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression with SPSS. The instruments were valid and reliable, and all classical assumption tests (normality, multicollinearity, and heteroscedasticity) were satisfied.

Results: The regression results show that work motivation, reward, and punishment all have positive and significant partial effects on job satisfaction, with work motivation being the most dominant variable. The simultaneous test confirms that the three variables jointly have a significant effect on job satisfaction ($F = 42.615$, $p < 0.001$). The model explains 61.2% of the variation in job satisfaction ($R^2 = 0.612$).

Conclusions: Work motivation is the most dominant predictor of job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.387$), followed by reward ($\beta = 0.311$) and punishment ($\beta = 0.168$), supporting expectancy and equity theories in explaining employee satisfaction. Collectively, the three variables explain 61.2% of the variance in job satisfaction, indicating that satisfaction is primarily driven by motivational and reward-based HRM mechanisms within an integrated model.

Limitations: Cross-sectional design; self-report questionnaire data from a single organization; company name anonymized as 'XYZ Company' — limiting contextual specificity and external validity of the findings.

Contributions: This study shows that motivation, reward, and punishment jointly affect job satisfaction, explaining 61.2% of its variance and supporting integrated HRM practices.

Keywords: *Employee HRM, Expectancy Theory, Job Satisfaction, Punishment, Reward*

How to Cite: Pratama, Y. A., Susanti, S., & Pratama, R. M. (2026). The Influence of Work Motivation, Rewards, and Punishments on Employees' Job Satisfaction at XYZ Company. *Journal of People, Culture, and Organizational Growth (JPCOG)*, 1(1), 1–10.

1. Introduction

Human resources constitute a strategic asset that fundamentally determines organizational success in achieving its goals (Marlita et al., 2025). Organizations require not only technically capable employees but also employees who possess high work motivation, commitment, and satisfaction. Employee

performance is a primary indicator of organizational effectiveness, and job satisfaction, the positive emotional state arising from an employee's evaluation of their work and work experiences, is one of its most consistent predictors (Ariani & Mugiastuti, 2022; Judge et al., 2017; Robbins & Judge, 2017).

Three organizational factors have been identified as primary determinants of job satisfaction in the HRM literature. Work motivation — the internal and external drives that cause employees to expend effort, time, and energy in executing their work — is theorized to shape satisfaction through expectancy mechanisms: employees who believe effort generates valued outcomes experience work more positively. Rewards — organizational recognition for employee contributions, achievements, or appropriate behavior — create equity perceptions that directly influence felt appreciation and satisfaction (Armstrong, 2014; Felya et al., 2024). Punishment, the consequence of rule violations or failure to meet standards, has a dual potential: when applied fairly, it clarifies behavioral standards and reinforces organizational justice perceptions, contributing to satisfaction; when applied unfairly, it generates resentment and reduces satisfaction (Bandiyono et al., 2021; Ekowati et al., 2024).

While many prior studies position motivation, reward, and punishment as antecedents of employee performance rather than satisfaction, this study specifically models all three as simultaneous drivers of job satisfaction, addressing an identified gap in the Indonesian workplace research context. XYZ Company, as a target-driven organization requiring procedural compliance and consistent work quality, provides an appropriate organizational context for testing this integrated model. Four hypotheses were tested: H_1 (work motivation → job satisfaction positive), H_2 (reward → job satisfaction positive), H_3 (punishment → job satisfaction significant), and H_4 (simultaneous joint effect).

2. Literature Review

2.1 Job Satisfaction

Job satisfaction is defined as employees' positive attitude toward their work, arising from the evaluation of various work aspects (Haryanto et al., 2025; Kundori et al., 2025; Larasandi & Satrya, 2025). Judge et al. (2017) and Nugroho et al. (2025) identified job satisfaction as one of the most important constructs in organizational behavior, associated with organizational commitment, reduced turnover intention, enhanced performance, and organizational citizenship behavior (OCB). Maskur et al. (2025), Robbins and Judge (2017), and Sismiati et al. (2025) explain that job satisfaction reflects an employee's attitude toward their overall work experience, encompassing pay, promotion opportunities, supervision quality, co-worker relationships, and the work itself. In this study, job satisfaction was operationalized as employees' positive attitudes toward their work, recognition, work relationships, work environment, supervisors, co-workers, and the overall organizational system (Ngaliman et al., 2025; Prawira & Assa, 2025).

2.2 Work Motivation

Work motivation is the drive that influences the direction, intensity, and persistence of employees' work behavior (Udodiugwu et al., 2024). Expectancy theory specifies that motivation is determined by three beliefs: expectancy (effort → performance), instrumentality (performance → outcome), and valence (outcome value). Motivations can be intrinsic (achievement desire, responsibility, pride in work) or extrinsic (salary, bonuses, recognition, and career opportunities). Astuti and Amalia (2021), Eladira et al. (2024), and Konjala and Wulansari (2025) confirmed that work motivation has a significant positive relationship with job satisfaction and employee performance. In an organizational context, motivation manifests as work enthusiasm, target achievement orientation, responsible work commitment, persistence in challenging situations, and an intrinsic drive to develop competence (Hairul et al., 2024; Syafrizal et al., 2024).

2.3 Reward

Rewards are organizational recognition provided to employees for their contributions, achievements, competencies, or work behaviors consistent with organizational expectations (Armstrong, 2014; Okwise & Ndudi, 2023; Shalini, 2020). Rewards can be intrinsic (psychological satisfaction from work: feelings of achievement, recognition, and responsibility) or extrinsic (financial: salary, allowances, bonuses; non-financial: recognition, promotion, and training opportunities) (Ali & Anwar, 2021). Equity theory Adams (1965) predicts that employees evaluate fairness by comparing their input-outcome ratio with that of comparable others; when this ratio is perceived as equitable, employees experience satisfaction. Prastyowati et al. (2023), Syahril and Nurbiyati (2016), and Tirta and Erika (2020) confirm that both intrinsic and extrinsic rewards are positively related to job satisfaction.

2.4 Punishment

Punishment is an organizational consequence applied to employees who violate rules, fail to meet work standards, or exhibit behaviors inconsistent with organizational values (Bugdol & Puciato, 2023; Dessler, 2020). Punishment serves three organizational functions: maintaining discipline and clear standards, signaling organizational justice and rule enforcement consistency, and providing corrective guidance for behavioral improvement. Bandiyono et al. (2021) and Marlina et al. (2021) show that reward and punishment together influence employee discipline. Ekowati et al. (2024) and Juhász et al. (2022) further document that reward and punishment can operate through work discipline as a mediating mechanism. Critically, the relationship between punishment and satisfaction is contextually determined: fair, proportional, and procedure-based punishment contributes positively to satisfaction by reinforcing perceptions of organizational justice, whereas unfair, subjective, or excessive punishment reduces satisfaction and generates resentment (Yan et al., 2021).

3. Methodology

3.1 Design, Population, and Sample

A quantitative explanatory research design was employed to test the causal relationships between work motivation (X_1), rewards (X_2), punishment (X_3), and job satisfaction (Y). The research population comprised all employees of the Perusahaan XYZ. Purposive sampling with two criteria — active employment status and a minimum of one year of service — yielded 85 respondents. This sample size meets the minimum requirement for multiple linear regression analysis with three predictors, as suggested by (Hair et al., 2019).

3.2 Measurement and Data Collection

Closed Likert-scale questionnaires (scale 1–5) measuring four constructs were administered to all 85 respondents while guaranteeing respondent identity confidentiality. Operationalization: Work Motivation (X_1) indicators include achievement desire, work responsibility, intrinsic pride, extrinsic incentive response, and competency development aspiration. Reward (X_2) indicators include financial reward fairness, non-financial recognition, promotion transparency, training access, and performance appraisal. Punishment (X_3) indicators included punishment clarity, proportionality, procedural consistency, educational orientation, and perceived organizational justice. Job Satisfaction (Y) indicators include satisfaction with salary and benefits, promotion opportunities, supervision quality, co-worker relationships, and work content (Luthans, 2011); (Robbins & Judge, 2017).

3.3 Analytical Methods

Instrument quality: validity (Pearson product-moment; $r_{\text{table}}=0.213$ for $n=85$, $\alpha=5\%$); reliability (Cronbach's $\alpha > 0.70$). Classical assumptions: normality (Kolmogorov-Smirnov or histogram/P-P plot), multicollinearity ($\text{VIF} < 10$, tolerance > 0.10), and heteroscedasticity (Glejser test; sig $> 0.05 = \text{no}$

heteroscedasticity). Multiple linear regression: $Y = \alpha + \beta_1X_1 + \beta_2X_2 + \beta_3X_3 + e$. Partial significance: t-test ($\alpha = 0.05$). Simultaneous significance: F-test ($\alpha = 0.05$). Coefficient of determination: R^2 and Adjusted R^2 . Software: SPSS.

4. Results and Discussion

4.1 Results

4.1.1 Respondent Profile

Table 1. Respondent Characteristics — 85 Employees, Company XYZ

Characteristic	Category	N	%	Analytical Note
Gender	Male	49	57.6%	Male-dominated workforce
	Female	36	42.4%	
Age	31–40 years (dominant)	34	40.0%	Majority in prime productive age range
Education	Bachelor’s degree (S1, dominant)	–	–	Education level supports questionnaire comprehension
Tenure	1–5 years (dominant)	–	–	Meets purposive sampling criterion of ≥ 1 year

Source: Primary Data, 2024.

Based on Table 1, the respondents at Company XYZ consist of 85 employees, with a male-dominated workforce (57.6%) and a majority aged 31–40 years (40.0%), indicating a prime productive age range. Most employees hold a bachelor’s degree (S1), ensuring comprehension of the questionnaire, and the dominant tenure of 1–5 years meets the purposive sampling criterion of at least one year. These characteristics provide a representative profile for analyzing work motivation, rewards, punishments, and job satisfaction.

4.1.2 Instrument Quality

Table 2. Validity and Reliability Results — All Constructs (N = 85)

Variable	r-table	r-count Range	Validity	Cronbach’s α	Reliability
Work Motivation (X1)	0.213	> 0.213 ✓	Valid	0.879	Reliable ✓
Reward (X2)	0.213	> 0.213 ✓	Valid	0.861	Reliable ✓
Punishment (X3)	0.213	> 0.213 ✓	Valid	0.805	Reliable ✓
Job Satisfaction (Y)	0.213	> 0.213 ✓	Valid	0.892	Reliable ✓
Threshold	–	r-count > 0.213	–	> 0.70	–

r-table = 0.213 (n=85, df=83, $\alpha = 5\%$). All constructs were valid and reliable.

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Based on Table 2, all constructs— X_1 (Work Motivation), X_2 (Reward), X_3 (Punishment), and Y (Job Satisfaction)—exceeded the r-table value of 0.213, confirming their validity. Cronbach’s α values ranged from 0.805 to 0.892, indicating all constructs are reliable. These results demonstrate that the measurement instruments are both valid and internally consistent, suitable for subsequent analysis.

4.1.3 Classical Assumption Tests

Table 3. Classical Assumption Test Results

Test	Result	Criterion	Status
Normality	Data residuals normally distributed (K-S / P-P plot)	Normal distribution required	✓ Passed
Multicollinearity (VIF)	All VIF < 10; all Tolerance > 0.10	VIF < 10	✓ No multicollinearity
Heteroscedasticity (Glejser)	All variable sig > 0.05	sig > 0.05	✓ Homoscedastic

Source: SPSS Output, 2024. All classical assumptions are satisfied — the regression model is valid for inference.

Table 3 shows that all classical assumption tests required for multiple linear regression have been satisfied. The residuals are normally distributed based on the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test and P–P plot, indicating that the normality assumption is met. In addition, the multicollinearity test shows that all VIF values are below 10 and tolerance values are above 0.10, confirming the absence of multicollinearity among independent variables. Furthermore, the Glejser test results indicate that all significance values are above 0.05, demonstrating that the model is free from heteroscedasticity. Overall, these results confirm that the regression model is statistically valid and appropriate for hypothesis testing and further inference analysis.

4.1.4 Multiple Linear Regression Results

Table 4. Multiple Linear Regression Coefficients — Work Motivation, Reward, Punishment → Job Satisfaction

Variable	B (Unstd.)	β (Std.)	t-statistic	Sig.	H Decision
(Constant)	6.214	–	–	–	–
X1: Work Motivation	0.387	Highest β	–	< 0.05	H1 ACCEPTED ✓ — Dominant variable
X2: Reward	0.311	Middle β	3.821	0.000	H2 ACCEPTED ✓ — Highly significant
X3: Punishment	0.168	Lowest β	2.238	0.028	H3 ACCEPTED ✓ — Significant at $\alpha = 5\%$

Regression equation: $Y = 6.214 + 0.387X_1 + 0.311X_2 + 0.168X_3 + e$. All three variables showed a positive direction.

Source: SPSS Output, 2024

Based on Table 4, the multiple linear regression results indicate that work motivation, reward, and punishment all have positive and significant effects on job satisfaction, with work motivation as the most dominant variable ($\beta = 0.387$), followed by reward ($\beta = 0.311$) and punishment ($\beta = 0.168$). All hypotheses are supported, as shown by the significance values ($p < 0.05$), and the regression equation $Y = 6.214 + 0.387X_1 + 0.311X_2 + 0.168X_3 + e$ confirms that improvements in any of the three predictors lead to an increase in employee job satisfaction.

Table 5. Simultaneous Effect (F-test) and Coefficient of Determination

Statistic	Value	Criterion	Interpretation
F-statistic	42.615	–	Very high F-value
Sig. (F-test)	0.000	< 0.05	H4 ACCEPTED ✓ — Joint effect is highly significant
R ² (Coefficient of Determination)	0.612	–	Three variables explain 61.2% of job satisfaction variance
Unexplained variance	38.8%	–	Other factors included work environment, leadership, and compensation structure

Source: SPSS ANOVA and Model Summary Output, 2024.

Based on Table 5, the simultaneous test results indicate that work motivation, reward, and punishment jointly have a highly significant effect on job satisfaction, as evidenced by an F-statistic of 42.615 with

a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), leading to the acceptance of H_4 . In addition, the coefficient of determination ($R^2 = 0.612$) shows that the three variables explain 61.2% of the variation in job satisfaction, while the remaining 38.8% is influenced by other factors such as the work environment, leadership, and compensation structure.

4.2 Discussion

4.2.1 Effect of Work Motivation on Job Satisfaction

Work motivation has the most dominant positive effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.387$, the highest coefficient among the three predictors). This confirms H_1 and is theoretically grounded in expectancy theory: employees who believe that their efforts will generate performance outcomes and that those outcomes have personal value develop more positive evaluations of their work environment. In Company XYZ's target-driven context, employees whose work motivation is supported through clear goal-setting, supervisor support, appropriate responsibility allocation, competency development opportunities, and achievement recognition tend to experience higher satisfaction levels. This is consistent with [Astuti and Amalia \(2021\)](#), who confirmed a significant positive motivation-satisfaction relationship, and [Pancasila et al. \(2020\)](#), who found that work motivation positively affects job satisfaction in the Indonesian context. The practical implication is direct: motivation-building interventions generate greater satisfaction returns per unit of investment than reward or punishment adjustments, making motivation management the highest priority tool for Company XYZ.

4.2.2 Effect of Reward on Job Satisfaction

Rewards have a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.311$; $t = 3.821$; $\text{sig} = 0.000$ — the strongest t-statistic of the three), confirming H_2 . The $t = 3.821$ significance was the highest among the partial tests, indicating the most statistically robust relationship. Equity theory ([Adams, 1965](#)) provides a theoretical explanation: employees evaluate reward fairness by comparing their input-outcome ratios with those of comparable others. When rewards are perceived as fair, transparent, and contribution-aligned, employees feel valued, directly increasing job satisfaction. This is consistent with [Syahril and Nurbiyati \(2016\)](#) [Armstrong \(2014\)](#) total reward framework. Rewards do not need to be purely financial; recognition from supervisors, training opportunities, promotion pathways, and fair performance appraisals function as powerful non-financial rewards. Company XYZ should ensure that reward criteria are clearly communicated, applied consistently, and based on objective performance evidence rather than subjective judgment.

4.2.3 Effect of Punishment on Job Satisfaction

Punishment has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.168$; $t = 2.238$; $\text{sig} = 0.028$), thus confirming H_3 . This positive finding — counterintuitive to those who assume that punishment always reduces satisfaction — reflects an important theoretical nuance: punishment applied fairly, proportionally, procedurally, and with educational rather than punitive intent reinforces perceptions of organizational justice, clarifies behavioral boundaries, and creates a workplace where rule-following is rewarded and violations are consistently addressed. In environments without consistent punishment systems, rule-abiding employees may experience reduced satisfaction when they observe that noncompliance goes without consequence. The lowest beta coefficient (0.168) among the three predictors is analytically informative: while punishment contributes positively to satisfaction in this organizational context, its contribution is substantially smaller than that of motivation or reward. This aligns with the theoretical prediction that satisfaction is built more effectively through positive reinforcement mechanisms than through corrective ones. [Bandiyono et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Ekowati et al. \(2024\)](#) confirm related findings on reward-punishment discipline relationships. Perusahaan XYZ must ensure that punishment is not applied subjectively, excessively, or without clear procedural basis — the conditions under which punishment negatively impacts satisfaction.

4.2.4 Simultaneous Effect

The simultaneous F-test ($F = 42.615$; $\text{sig} = 0.000$) confirms H_4 with high significance. The $R^2 = 0.612$ indicates that work motivation, reward, and punishment together explain 61.2% of the variance in job satisfaction, which is a strong explanatory model for a three-predictor HRM study. This finding confirms the integrated nature of the three mechanisms: motivation provides the psychological energy for positive work engagement; rewards provide positive reinforcement and equity validation; and punishment provides the behavioral clarity and justice system that makes the organizational environment feel coherent and trustworthy. The 38.8% unexplained variance reflects legitimate influences outside this model — work environment quality, leadership style, compensation structure, job design, team dynamics, and individual personality factors — that future research can integrate to further specify the satisfaction determinant model. [Riyanto et al. \(2021\)](#) and [Pancasila et al. \(2020\)](#) confirmed comparable explanatory ranges for motivation-satisfaction models in the Indonesian context.

5. Conclusions

This study provides integrated empirical evidence of the effects of work motivation, reward, and punishment on job satisfaction at Perusahaan XYZ ($n = 85$). Four conclusions were drawn. First, work motivation has a positive and significant dominant effect on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.387$), confirming H_1 , and represents the strongest driver through goal clarity, supervisor support, recognition, and competency development. Second, reward has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.311$; $t = 3.821$; $\text{sig} = 0.000$), confirming H_2 , indicating that fair and transparent reward systems are the second most influential factor. Third, punishment also has a positive and significant effect ($\beta = 0.168$; $t = 2.238$; $\text{sig} = 0.028$), confirming H_3 , but contributes less than positive reinforcement mechanisms. Fourth, all variables jointly explain 61.2% of job satisfaction variance ($F = 42.615$; $\text{sig} = 0.000$), confirming H_4 and showing that an integrated HRM system significantly enhances job satisfaction.

Acknowledgements

The authors would like to express their sincere gratitude to the management and employees of XYZ Company for their cooperation and participation in this study. We also thank the Institut Informatika dan Bisnis Darmajaya, Bandar Lampung, for providing research support, guidance, and access to relevant resources. Special appreciation is extended to the colleagues and reviewers who offered valuable feedback, which greatly improved the quality and clarity of this manuscript.

Author Contributions

YAP contributed to conceptualization, data collection, data analysis, manuscript drafting, and final approval. S was responsible for research design, theoretical framework, methodology, manuscript revision, and final approval. RMP handled supervision, methodology, manuscript revision, and final approval.

Conflicts of Interest

The authors declare that there are no conflicts of interest that could have influenced, or be perceived to have influenced, the research presented in this article. This study was conducted in an objective and independent manner, and no financial, commercial, or personal relationships exist that may constitute a potential conflict of interest in relation to the design, implementation, analysis, interpretation, or publication of the findings.

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