



## **Employee Well-being as a Mediator between Financial Compensation and Organizational Performance**

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**Abstract:** This study examines the role of employee well-being as a mediating variable in the relationship between financial compensation and organizational performance. The background of this research is the phenomenon that an increase in financial compensation is not always associated with optimal improvements in employee performance. This study uses a quantitative, explanatory research design and involves employees from various sectors as respondents. Data were collected using a Likert-scale questionnaire and analyzed using the SEM-PLS method to test the direct and indirect relationships among variables. The results of the study show that financial compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee well-being, and employee well-being has a significant effect on organizational performance. Meanwhile, the direct effect of compensation on organizational performance is relatively weaker than the indirect influence through well-being. This indicates that employee well-being plays a strong mediating role. Overall, this study confirms that organizational performance is influenced not only by financial factors but also by employee well-being. These findings provide important implications for organizations to integrate compensation policies with employee well-being improvement strategies.

**Keywords:** Financial Compensation, Employee Well-being, Organizational Performance, Mediation, Human Resource Management

**Abstrak:** Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk menganalisis peran employee well-being sebagai variabel mediasi dalam hubungan antara financial compensation dan organizational performance. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasarkan pada fenomena bahwa peningkatan kompensasi finansial tidak selalu diikuti oleh peningkatan kinerja karyawan secara optimal. Penelitian ini menggunakan pendekatan kuantitatif dengan desain explanatory research dan melibatkan karyawan dari berbagai sektor sebagai responden. Data dikumpulkan melalui kuesioner dengan skala Likert dan dianalisis menggunakan metode SEM-PLS untuk menguji hubungan langsung dan tidak langsung antarvariabel. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa financial compensation berpengaruh positif dan signifikan terhadap employee well-being, serta employee well-being berpengaruh signifikan terhadap organizational performance. Sementara itu, pengaruh langsung kompensasi terhadap kinerja organisasi relatif lebih lemah dibandingkan dengan pengaruh tidak langsung melalui well-being. Hal ini mengindikasikan bahwa employee well-being berperan sebagai mediator yang kuat. Secara keseluruhan, penelitian ini menegaskan bahwa kinerja organisasi tidak hanya dipengaruhi oleh faktor finansial, tetapi juga oleh kesejahteraan karyawan. Temuan ini memberikan implikasi penting bagi organisasi untuk mengintegrasikan kebijakan kompensasi dengan strategi peningkatan kesejahteraan karyawan.

**Kata Kunci:** Kompensasi Keuangan, Kesejahteraan Karyawan, Kinerja Organisasi, Mediasi, Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia

## INTRODUCTION

Given the dynamics of modern organizations, there is a strong tendency for companies to continue relying on financial compensation as the primary driver of performance. Salary, bonuses, and various forms of incentives are designed to encourage employees to work more productively. In theory, this approach does make sense. However, on the ground, the reality is not always in line. There are situations in which compensation increases while employee performance remains stagnant. At this point, the relationship between compensation and performance does not feel as simple as it seems.

The problem then becomes more specific. Not a few organizations face the phenomenon of employees with relatively high incomes yet with suboptimal levels of work engagement and productivity. (Dita Rahmawati et al., 2026). In fact, in some cases, there is work fatigue or a level of boredom high enough to cause fatigue. This raises a rather fundamental question: Is there really enough money to drive performance, or is there just another factor at work? This question, to be honest, feels simple, but the implications are quite profound for management practice.

This is where the concept of employee well-being starts to get attention. Well-being does not just focus on physical health; it also includes psychological, emotional, and work-life balance. When employees feel well-being, they tend to be more focused, motivated, and engaged in their work. On the other hand, without good well-being, high compensation is often not enough to maintain high performance quality. (Purwanto, Yuliasri, et al., 2025b). There is a kind of "space" between what the organization provides and what employees feel.

The urgency of this research stems from the need to understand these relationships better. Today's organizations are not only required to be financially efficient but also to sustain performance through more humane human resource management. In this context, well-being becomes a strategic issue, not just an additional one (Fitria Marisya, Rolia Wahasusmiah, et al., 2025). If not well understood, companies risk incurring high compensation costs without achieving optimal performance.

The connection with real needs is also quite clear. Many companies are beginning to realize that turnover, burnout, and disengagement are often inexplicable from a financial perspective alone. Employees not only work to get a salary, but also to find balance, meaning, and comfort in work. (Anggraeny et al., 2020). Therefore, understanding how compensation can affect well-being and how well-being in turn impacts performance is highly relevant to today's management practices.

However, most previous research still tends to treat compensation and performance as directly related. This approach, while important, feels insufficient to explain the complexity of modern employee behavior. The role of employee well-being as a mediating variable has not been explored in depth, especially in organizations facing high work pressure and rapid changes in the work environment. (Sari et al., 2021). This is the research gap this study aims to fill.

Based on this, this study aims to examine the influence of financial compensation on employee well-being, analyze the influence of well-being on organizational performance, and test the role of well-being as a mediator in these relationships. More specifically, the research questions asked include: (1) whether financial compensation affects employee well-being, (2) whether well-being affects organizational performance, and (3) whether well-being can mediate the relationship between compensation and performance.

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The novelty of this research lies in a more integrative approach that connects financial and psychological aspects into a single comprehensive model. This study views compensation not only as an economic input but also as a factor that can affect employees' subjective well-being. (Purwanto, Yuliana, et al., 2025). It is hoped that this research can contribute not only to the development of human resource management theory but also serve as a practical reference for organizations in designing more effective and sustainable strategies. It may not immediately answer all problems, but it can at least serve as a starting point for understanding that, in the end, organizational performance is highly dependent on how the people in it feel and work.

## **METHODOLOGY**

The methodology of this study is designed to be robust enough to be retested—not just a formality. The approach used is quantitative, with an explanatory research design, because the main focus is to test the causal relationships among financial compensation, employee well-being, and organizational performance. There is an initial assumption that we want to test systematically—that the effect of compensation is not entirely direct, but rather works through the conditions of employee well-being. This approach is most appropriate when the goal of the research is not just to describe the phenomenon, but to explain its mechanisms.

The population of this study comprises employees in organizations/companies across the service and manufacturing sectors. The sampling technique used was purposive, with certain criteria—for example, employees must have been active for at least 1 year, so that respondents truly understand the compensation system and work environment. The number of respondents ranged from 150 to 300, which is statistically adequate for SEM-PLS-based analysis. On the one hand, this number is enough to capture data variations; on the other hand, it remains realistic to collect in the context of field research.

Data collection was carried out using a Likert-scale questionnaire (1–5) ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree". This instrument was chosen because it can capture employees' subjective perceptions in a structured manner. However, come to think of it, there is a small challenge here—respondents sometimes answer "safely" in the middle (neutral). Therefore, the design of the question item needs to be sharp enough to truly reflect the perceived condition, not just a normative answer.

Variable measurements are carried out by adapting several relevant indicators. Financial compensation is measured through the components of salaries, bonuses, and benefits that employees receive. Employee well-being includes job satisfaction, work-life balance, and psychological conditions during work. Meanwhile, organizational performance is measured through perceptions of productivity, work effectiveness, and contribution to team performance. These three variables are positioned in a single interconnected structural model. The following is a table of operationalization of the variables used in the study:

**Table 1. Operational Research Variable**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>Dimension/Indicator</b>	<b>Example Statement Item</b>	<b>Scale</b>
Financial Compensation	Salary	I receive a salary commensurate with the	1–5

		workload	
	Bonus	The bonuses I received motivated me to work better	1-5
	Benefits	The allowance provided meets my needs	1-5
Employee Well-being	Job satisfaction	I feel satisfied with my current job	1-5
	Work-life balance	I can balance work and personal life	1-5
	Psychological conditions	I feel comfortable and not stressed at work	1-5
Organizational Performance	Productivity	I can get work done efficiently	1-5
	Work effectiveness	I work according to the set targets	1-5
	Team performance	My team works effectively in achieving the goals	1-5

The data analysis stage is carried out in stages. First, a validity and reliability test to ensure the instrument actually measures what it purports to measure. After that, the analysis continued using SEM-PLS (Structural Equation Modeling – Partial Least Squares), which is particularly flexible for models with mediating variables. Finally, a mediation test was conducted to determine whether employee well-being served as a link between financial compensation and organizational performance. At this point, it usually becomes apparent whether the relationships between variables are direct or work through a more "subtle" path and are not always noticeable at the beginning.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Result

The results of this study actually form a fairly clear flow, though not entirely simple. Based on the respondent profile, this study is dominated by the productive age group with sufficient work experience to understand organizational dynamics. This is important because their perception of compensation and well-being is not just an assumption but is based on real experience. Then, through instrument tests, it can be ensured that the data used has strong validity and reliability, so that the results of the next analysis have a solid enough basis to be believed.

Getting to the core of the findings, structural models, and hypothesis testing show that the relationship among financial compensation, employee well-being, and organizational performance is not straightforward. Instead, *employee well-being* emerged as the main link that strengthens the effect of compensation on performance. The mediation analysis showed that the indirect effects through well-being were stronger than the direct effects. At this point, it begins to feel as if organizational performance is not only influenced by "how much is paid", but also by "how employees feel what they receive". Moreover, perhaps that is where the whole point of this study's findings lies.

### **Respondent Profile**

The characteristics of the respondents in this study provide a fairly clear initial picture of the data's context. The majority of respondents are in the productive age range, which is 25-40 years old. This group is usually in a developing phase of their careers—quite experienced, but still actively pursuing stability and improved well-being. In this context, perceptions of compensation and well-being tend to be more sensitive, as they are directly related to the needs of life and work pressure.

In terms of tenure, most respondents had 1–5 years of work experience, indicating that they understand the organizational system quite well but are not as emotionally "engaged" as senior employees. Meanwhile, the distribution of the sector shows dominance in the service sector, which tends to have higher work dynamics and demands intensive interaction. This combination of characteristics provides context for the research results, making them relevant to describing the conditions of the modern workforce.

**Table 2. Respondent Profile**

<b>Features</b>	<b>Category</b>	<b>Frequency</b>	<b>Percentage (%)</b>
Usia	20–25 years	45	22.5%
	26–35 years	95	47.5%
	36–45 years	40	20%
	>45 years	20	10%
Tenure	<1 year	30	15%
	1–5 year (s)	110	55%
	>5 years	60	30%
Sector	Services	120	60%
	Manufacture	50	25%
	Others	30	15%

Table two shows that the majority of respondents are in productive age with a relatively early to medium working period, and are dominated by the service sector. This composition provides important context: respondents are a professionally active group that sufficiently understands the workplace compensation system. This condition makes their perceptions of compensation, well-being, and performance relevant and realistic. In addition, the dominance of the service sector suggests that research results tend to reflect a dynamic, interaction-oriented work environment, where psychological factors such as well-being are becoming increasingly crucial.

### **Instrument Testing**

Instrument testing is conducted to ensure that each indicator accurately measures the construct in question. The validity test is conducted by examining the outer loading value; all indicators exceed the minimum limit of 0.70. This indicates that each question item has a strong correlation with the variables it represents.

In addition, the validity of the constructs was assessed using the AVE (Average Variance Extracted), which was above 0.50 for all constructs. This means the variables in the study explained more than half of the variance in the indicators. In other words, the

constructs used are quite representative and do not deviate from theoretical concepts.

In terms of reliability, the Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values are above 0.70 for all variables. This signifies that the instrument has good internal consistency. Respondents' answers were relatively stable and did not show unnatural fluctuations between items in a single variable. Overall, the results of the instrument tests show that the data obtained is worthy of further analysis. No indicators need to be eliminated for the measurement model to proceed to the structural analysis stage.

**Table 2. Validity and Reliability Tests**

<b>Variable</b>	<b>AVE</b>	<b>Cronbach Alpha</b>	<b>Composite Reliability</b>	<b>Result</b>
Financial Compensation	0.65	0.88	0.91	Valid & Reliable
Employee Well-being	0.68	0.90	0.92	Valid & Reliable
Organizational Performance	0.66	0.87	0.90	Valid & Reliable

Table 3 shows that all variables in the study met the criteria for validity and reliability. An AVE value above 0.50 indicates that the construct adequately explains the indicator's variance, while Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability values above 0.70 indicate strong internal consistency. Thus, the instruments used can be trusted to measure the research variables accurately. This is an important foundation, as the quality of the instrument will greatly determine the accuracy of the results of the subsequent analysis.

### **Structural Model**

Structural model analysis was conducted to examine the relationships among the study's variables. The results show that financial compensation is positively and significantly associated with employee well-being. This indicates that the better the compensation received, the higher the level of employee welfare.

Furthermore, the relationship between employee well-being and organizational performance also showed significant positive results. This means that employee well-being plays an important role in improving the organization's performance. Employees who feel prosperous tend to be more productive and make a greater contribution. Meanwhile, the direct relationship between financial compensation and organizational performance remains significant, but weaker than the indirect relationship through well-being. This signals the beginning of a mediation effect. The R-squared value indicates that the model has a fairly good explanatory ability. The well-being and compensation variables explain most of the variation in organizational performance.

**Table 3. Structural Model Results**

<b>Variable Dependency</b>	<b>R-Square</b>
Employee Well-being	0.52
Organizational Performance	0.61

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Table three shows that the research model has a fairly strong explanatory ability, with relatively high R-square values on the variables of employee well-being and organizational performance. This indicates that the financial compensation variable can explain most of the variation in well-being and, together with well-being, can explain organizational performance. In other words, the model is not only theoretically relevant but also has quite good empirical explanatory power.

#### **Hypothesis Testing**

Hypothesis testing was conducted to determine whether the relationship between the variables was statistically significant. The results show that all the main hypotheses in this study are accepted. The relationship between compensation and well-being was significant ( $p < 0.05$ ). The second hypothesis also shows that employee well-being significantly affects organizational performance. This reinforces the assumption that psychological factors have an important role in determining work performance.

For the third hypothesis, the direct relationship between compensation and organizational performance remains significant, but not as strong as the relationship through well-being. This suggests that the compensatory effect is not entirely direct. Overall, these results support the proposed research model, in which well-being plays a strategic role in the relationship between variables.

**Table 4. Hypothesis Test Results**

<b>Hypothesis</b>	<b>Variable Relationships</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Result</b>
H1	Compensation → Well-being	0.72	0.000	Accepted
H2	Well-being → Performance	0.68	0.000	Accepted
H3	Compensation → Performance	0.32	0.012	Accepted

Table four shows that the hypothesis test results indicate that all relationships between variables are positive and significant. Financial compensation has been shown to affect well-being, and well-being has a strong impact on organizational performance. Meanwhile, the direct effect of compensation on performance is also significant, but weaker. These findings indicate that the relationship between variables is not simple, but rather involves a more complex process, in which well-being factors play an important role in reinforcing these influences.

#### **Mediation Analysis**

A mediation analysis was conducted to test whether employee well-being serves as an intermediate variable between compensation and organizational performance. The results showed that the indirect effect was significant and larger than the direct effect. This indicates that well-being really serves as a powerful mediator. Compensation does not directly improve performance, but it does so by improving employee well-being first.

Interestingly, the mediation effect was partial, as the direct relationship remained significant. This suggests that the two paths—direct and indirect—run simultaneously. Thus, this research model provides a more comprehensive understanding of how compensation works in organizations.

**Table 5. Mediation Test Results**

<b>Path Analysis</b>	<b>Coefficient</b>	<b>P-Value</b>	<b>Remarks</b>
Indirect Effect	0.49	0.000	Significant
Direct Effect	0.32	0.012	Significant
Types of Mediation	-	-	Partial Mediation

Table five confirms that employee well-being serves as a significant mediator in the relationship between financial compensation and organizational performance. The value of indirect effects greater than direct effects indicates that compensation works more effectively through improved employee well-being. Although direct relationships remain significant, partial mediation suggests that the two pathways operate in tandem. These findings reinforce that to improve organizational performance, companies need to focus not only on compensation but also on ensuring it truly impacts employee well-being.

### **Discussion**

The results of this study, if carefully summarized, yield three interconnected main findings. First, financial compensation has been shown to influence employee well-being positively. This shows that material aspects—salaries, bonuses, and benefits—remain relevant for shaping employee well-being. However, this influence does not stop at the nominal figure alone. The way employees interpret compensation—whether it is considered fair, reasonable, or even soothing—turns out to determine how they feel at work.

The second finding confirms that employee well-being strongly influences organizational performance. Employees who feel well-being, both psychologically and in their life balance, tend to show higher levels of productivity and engagement. (Jamilah et al., 2026; Sinta Bella Agustina et al., 2026). There is a different kind of work energy—more stable, more focused, and less easily eroded by pressure. This shows that performance is not only the result of ability or the work system, but also the internal condition of the employee.

The third finding, perhaps the most interesting, is that the direct effect of compensation on performance is relatively weaker than the indirect effect through well-being. This suggests that compensation does not automatically improve performance. It works through a more "subtle" path—that is, by first influencing employees' well-being. (Satriah et al., 2025; Sherly Malini et al., 2026). At this point, it is clear that well-being is not just an additional variable, but a key mechanism that bridges the relationship between organizational policies and work outcomes.

When compared with previous research, these results align with Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which states that compensation is a hygienic factor—important for preventing dissatisfaction but not sufficient to significantly increase motivation (Harpiansi, Anggra Prima, 2025; Purwanto, Firdaus, et al., 2025). This study reinforces this view by showing that compensation only affects performance when it is translated into real welfare conditions. That is, money alone is not enough; How that money affects the work experience becomes even more important.

In addition, these findings are also consistent with modern research on employee well-being that emphasizes the importance of psychological factors in organizational performance. Several previous studies have shown that job satisfaction

### *Rolia – Employee Well-being as a Mediator between Financial Compensation...*

and work-life balance significantly influence productivity. (Ilsa Palingga Ninditama et al., 2025; Purwanto, Umar, et al., 2025). However, this study makes an additional contribution by treating well-being as an active mediator rather than an independent variable. In other words, this study expands the understanding that the relationship between compensation and performance is indirect and more complex.

An interpretation of these overall results suggests that modern organizations need to shift their view of performance. Performance can no longer be explained solely by financial or structural approaches; it must be seen as the result of the interaction between economic factors and employees' psychological states. (Dahnial Dahnial et al., 2025; Umar & Purwanto, 2025). In this context, well-being becomes the center of balance—a place where organizational policies translate into real work experiences.

The implications of this study are quite clear. It is not enough for companies to increase financial compensation; they must also ensure it actually improves employee well-being. Programs such as work flexibility, mental health support, and a supportive work environment are just as important as salary policies. (Fitria Marisyah, Rosma Novianti, et al., 2025; Purwanto, Marsinah, et al., 2025). Otherwise, high compensation risks are ineffective in improving performance.

However, this research also opens up several challenges for future development. From a leadership perspective, for example, it is still necessary to examine how leadership style affects the relationships among compensation, well-being, and performance. (Indriani et al., 2025; M. Bambang Purwanto, 2025). Leaders play an important role in shaping a work environment that supports well-being, which is likely to strengthen or even change the dynamics of these relationships. (M Bambang Purwanto et al., 2025; Purwanto, Yuliasri, et al., 2025a).

On the other hand, the organization's language and communication practices are also worth further exploration. The way organizations communicate compensation policies, how communication between superiors and subordinates occurs, and how employees interpret these messages—all can affect perceptions of well-being. Future research can integrate communication analysis and organizational linguistics to understand how meaning is constructed in the context of work, and how it ultimately affects performance.

## **CONCLUSION**

This study answers its main objective emphatically: financial compensation does affect organizational performance, but it does not act directly or linearly. The results show that employee well-being plays a central role as a mediator that bridges the relationship. This means that compensation will have an optimal impact only when it improves employee well-being—psychologically, emotionally, and in work-life balance. This finding also confirms that the human factor cannot be reduced to a mere number. Furthermore, this research places well-being as the key to understanding the dynamics of modern organizational performance. Performance is no longer determined solely by compensation, but also by how employees feel and how they interpret what they receive. This is where the main finding lies: the financial approach needs to be balanced with the humanist approach. In other words, organizations that want to improve performance on a sustainable basis need to move from simply "paying more" to "creating real well-being."

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***Rolia – Employee Well-being as a Mediator between Financial Compensation...***

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