The Effect Of Compensation On Employee Performance With Work Motivation As An Intervening Variable At The Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth And Sports Office

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Abstract

Providing appropriate compensation has an important role in improving employee motivation and performance in the work environment. This study aims to analyze the effect of compensation on employee performance through work motivation as an intervening variable at the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports Office. Using a causal associative quantitative method, this research was carried out at the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth, and Sports Office with a total of 96 respondents. The results of the analysis show that compensation has a significant effect on work motivation and employee performance, as evidenced by the T-Statistic value of 27.267 > 1.96 and the P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05 for the effect of compensation on motivation. In addition, work motivation is also proven to have a significant influence on employee performance, with a T-Statistic value of 6.764 > 1.96 and a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05. In Indirect Influence, it was obtained that motivation was able to intervene the influence between compensation and employee performance. This can be seen from the results of the T-Statistical value of 6.274 > 1.96 with a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05. This shows that there is an indirect influence between compensation and employee performance through motivation. The implications of these results suggest that organizations, especially government agencies, need to consider compensation policies that include not only salaries and benefits but also other forms of compensation such as non-financial rewards to improve employee motivation and performance. An effective and adequate compensation policy, accompanied by a work environment that supports motivation, will create a synergistic effect that can increase employee productivity and loyalty.

Keywords:
compensation; work motivation; Employee Performance

1. INTRODUCTION

Along with increasing global competition and rapid technological changes, public and private organizations are faced with the challenge of retaining and improving the performance of their employees (Rusman, 2022). In the context of the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office, employee performance is an important factor in achieving organizational goals and providing optimal public services. One of the factors that is believed to have a significant influence on employee performance is the compensation they receive. Adequate compensation can increase job satisfaction, motivation, and ultimately employee performance (Darmawan, 2022)

Compensation includes not only basic salary, but also various benefits, incentives, and other awards given to employees as a form of recognition for their contributions to the organization (Wibowo, 2017). Good compensation can motivate employees to work harder and achieve organizational targets. However, in practice, the relationship between compensation and employee performance is often influenced by various other factors, one of which is work motivation. Work motivation can act as an intervening variable that strengthens or weakens the influence of compensation on employee performance (Handoko, T. Hani, 2020)

Work motivation is the internal impulse that directs, controls, and maintains a person's behavior to achieve a certain goal (Robbins & Judge, 2017). Employees who have high work motivation tend to be more productive, enthusiastic, and committed to their work. On the other hand, employees who are less motivated tend to experience decreased performance, dissatisfaction, and even turnover. Therefore, it is important for organizations to understand how compensation can increase work motivation, which in turn will have a positive impact on employee performance (Rulianti & Nurpribadi, 2023).

Recent issues show that many organizations, including government agencies, face challenges in managing employee compensation and work motivation. Several previous studies have indicated that while financial compensation is important, other factors such as recognition, career development opportunities, and work environment also play an important role in improving employee motivation and performance (Fauzi et al., 2022). In the context of the Dairi District Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office, it is important to evaluate the extent to which the compensation provided can improve employee motivation and performance, as well as identify other factors that may affect this relationship.

According to (Akbar, Mada Faisal, et al, 2021) states that compensation is all forms of financial returns and benefits that employees receive as part of an employment relationship. Furthermore (Sutrisno, E, 2017) said that "compensation is one of the important functions in human resource management (HRM)".

Meanwhile (Hasibuan, Malayu SP, 2017) states that compensation is all income in the form of money, direct or indirect goods that employees receive as compensation

for services provided to the company. The compensation can be in the form of direct or indirect finance, and the award can also be indirect.

In this study, the definition of compensation refers to the opinion of Hasibuan (2017) which states that all income in the form of money, direct or indirect goods received by employees as compensation for services provided to the company

To measure the compensation variable in this study, the author refers to the theory (Hasibuan, Malayu SP, 2017) which states, in general, there are several compensation indicators, namely:

1) Salary;
2) Wages;
3) Incentive wages;
4) Office facilities;
5) Allowances

In addition to compensation, work motivation is also an important factor in influencing performance. Pinder in (Tremblay et al., 2009) defines motivation as a set of energetic forces that come from within as well as outside an individual, to initiate a behavioral relationship with respect to work and to establish form, supervision, intensity and continuity. While (Robbin & Judge, 2015) defines motivation as a process that describes the intensity, direction and perseverance of an individual to achieve his goals.

To measure motivation in this study, refer to the indicators set by (Robbin & Judge, 2015) as follows:

1) Awards,
2) Social Relations,
3) Living Needs,
4) Success at Work.

Managing compensation and increasing work motivation is an important strategy in maximizing employee productivity and performance in various agencies. According to (Afandi, 2018) Employee performance is the result of work that can be achieved by a person or group of people in a company in accordance with their respective authorities and responsibilities in an effort to achieve organizational goals illegally, not violating the law and not contrary to morals and ethics.

Meanwhile, according to (Mangkunegara. A.A. P, 2020) employee performance is the achievement of employee work results based on quality and quantity as work achievements in a certain period of time adjusted to the duties and responsibilities of a group in the organization in carrying out the main tasks and functions that are guided by norms, operational standards, procedures, criteria and measures that have been set or that apply in the organization.

To measure employee performance, this research refers to the theory (Afandi, 2018) as follows:

1) Quantity of work;

2) Quality of work;
3) Efficiency in carrying out duties;
4) Work discipline;
5) Initiative;
6) Accuracy;
7) Leadership;
8). Honesty; and
9) Creativity.

This study aims to fill the gap in the literature by exploring the effect of compensation on employee performance through work motivation as an intervening variable. Based on the author's initial observations, it was found that some employees felt that the compensation they received was not proportional to the workload and responsibilities they carried. This has an impact on their motivation and performance levels. In addition, the lack of appreciation and recognition for the hard work of employees is also an issue that needs to be addressed. The concept of this research is as illustrated in the following conceptual framework drawing:
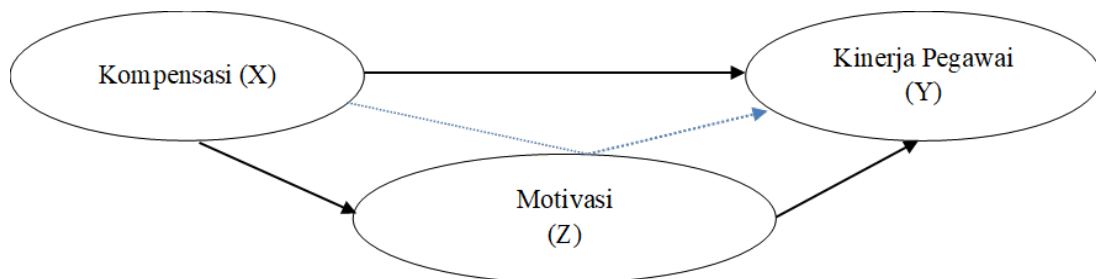

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

2. RESEARCH METHODS

This type of research is a casual associative quantitative research. This research was carried out at the Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office of Dairi Regency which is located at Jl. Ahmad Yani No.115, Batang Beruh, Sidikalang District, Dairi Regency, North Sumatra. The time of this research will be carried out starting from September to November 2024. According to (Sugiyono, 2018) population is a generalization area consisting of objects/subjects that have certain qualities and characteristics that are determined by the researcher to be studied and then drawn conclusions. The population in this study is the entire number of employees in the Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office of Dairi Regency with a total of 96 employees with the following characteristics:

Table 3.1 Details of Popolation at the Tourism, Culture Office, Youth and Sports of Dairi Regency

No.	Status	Number (Person)
1.	ASN	37
2.	Honorary	59
	Sum	**96**

Source : Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office

The sampling technique used in this study is a saturated sample. According to (Sugiyono, 2019) Saturated sampling is a sample selection technique when all members of the population are sampled where all populations in this study are sampled, totaling 96 employees

The data that will be used from this study is the data from the results of the questionnaire distributed to respondents consisting of all employees in all divisions. The data analysis technique used in this study is a quantitative data analysis method using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Square (PLS) using SmartPLS 3.0 software.

Meanwhile, the feasibility test that will be used in this study is the outer *model* test in order to obtain *an outer loading* value that meets the requirements *of validity and reliability.* Testing the structural model (Inner model) which includes a determination coefficient test (R2) to measure how far the model is able to explain the variation of bound variables. R^2

The Goodness fit test is used to determine the extent to which the observed data is in accordance with the theoretical distribution assumed by the model or hypothesis (Ghozali & Latan, 2015) and the hypothesis test (T-Statistic Test) which consists of *a path coeficients* test to test how the direct influence of each independent variable individually on its bound variable as well as the indirect influence of the intervening variable in influencing its independent variable on its bound variable.

This test is used to determine the direction of the relationship between variables (positive/negative). If the value is 0 to 1, then the direction of the relationship between the variables is declared positive. Meanwhile, if the value is 0 to -1, then the direction of the relationship between the variables is declared negative. A hypothesis is said to be accepted if the statistical t value is greater than the t of the table. According to (Ghozali & Latan, 2015) the criterion of t-value table is 1.96 with a significance level of 5%

3. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

3.1. Results

Outer Model *Analysis*

The outer *model* test in this study uses algorithm analysis in *SmartPLS software version 3.0,* in order to obtain *outer loading* values that meet *the validity and reliability requirements.*

1) Convergent Validity Test Results

The convergent validity of the measurement model with reflexive indicators can be seen from the correlation between the score of the item/indicator and the construction score. Based on the results for outer loading, it shows that there is an indicator that has a loading below 0.60 and is not significant. The following is presented as the results of the outer loading value in the following table.

Table 2. *Outer Loading*

Indicators	*Outer Loading*	Information
Compensation (X)		
KOMP1	0.820	Valid
KOMP2	0.940	Valid
KOMP3	0.865	Valid
KOMP4	0.860	Valid
KOMP5	0.906	Valid
Motivation (Z)		
MT1	0.863	Valid
MT2	0.901	Valid
MT3	0.957	Valid
MT4	0.893	Valid
Employee Performance (Y)		
KP1	0.820	Valid
KP2	0.813	Valid
KP3	0.809	Valid
KP4	0.848	Valid
KP5	0.890	Valid
KP6	0.791	Valid
KP7	0.842	Valid
KP8	0.908	Valid
KP9	0.879	Valid

Source : Output Smart PLS, 2024

Based on Table 2, it can be seen that all indicators have a *loading factor* value of > 0.60. According to (Ghozali, Imam & Latan, 2015) states that the indicator is declared valid if it has a loading *factor* value of > 0.60. Thus, it can be stated that all indicators in this study are declared valid and can be carried out further research. The following is shown in the form of a structural model as shown in the following image:
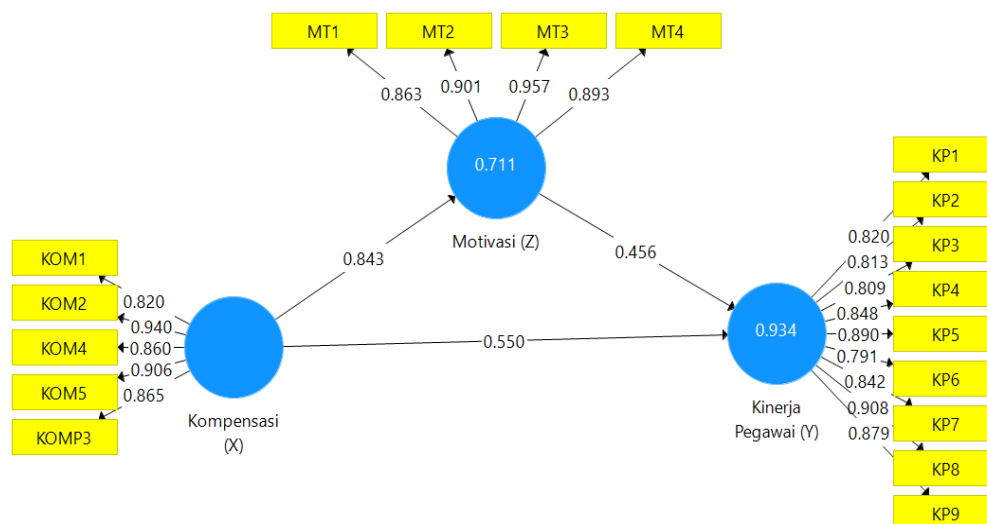

Figure 1. Outer Model Test Results

2) Discriminate Validity *Test Results*

The next test is to test the validity of discrimination, this test aims to determine whether a reflective indicator is a good measurement for its construction based on the principle that the indicator is highly correlated with its construction. The following are the results of cross loading from the discrimination validity test as shown in the following table:

Table 3. *Discriminant Validity*

Indicators	Employee Performance (Y)	Compensation (X)	Motivation (Z)
KOMP1	0.743	**0.820**	0.663
KOMP2	0.928	**0.940**	0.854
KOMP3	0.782	**0.860**	0.704
KOMP4	0.848	**0.906**	0.690
KOMP5	0.793	**0.865**	0.777
KP1	**0.820**	0.777	0.714
KP2	**0.813**	0.726	0.662
KP3	**0.809**	0.730	0.658
KP4	**0.848**	0.906	0.690
KP5	**0.890**	0.774	0.863
KP6	**0.791**	0.759	0.901
KP7	**0.842**	0.797	0.803
KP8	**0.908**	0.833	0.839
KP9	**0.879**	0.795	0.831
MT1	0.890	0.774	**0.863**
MT2	0.791	0.759	**0.901**
MT3	0.838	0.730	**0.957**
MT4	0.799	0.781	**0.893**

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2024

Based on table 4, it can be seen that the *cross loading value* in each indicator and variable is greater than other variables and indicators, the cross loading of the compensation variable shows that the cross loading of the variable indicator is greater than the cross loading of other latent variables, the cross loading of the motivation variable indicator shows that the value *of the cross loading* indicator is greater than the other latent variables, *Cross loading of* employee performance variables also shows a greater cross loading value of the indicator than the cross loading of the latent variable. Based on this data, it can be stated discriminatively *that* the cross loading *results* are considered valid.

3) Composite reliability *test results*

The test further determines the reliable value with *the composite reliability* of the indicator block that measures the construction. A construction value that is said to be reliable if the indigo *composite reliability* is above 0.60. In addition to looking at *the composite reliability* value, the reliable value can be seen in the variable construct value with *the alpha cronbachs* of the indicator block that measures the construct. A construct is declared reliable if the *cronbachs alpha value* is above 0.7. The following is a table of

loading values for the construct of the research variables resulting from running the Smart PLS program in the following table.

Table 4. *Construct Reliability and Validity*

Indicators	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Extracted Variance (AVE)
Employee Performance (Y)	0.950	0.957	0.715
Compensation (X)	0.926	0.944	0.773
Motivation (Z)	0.925	0.947	0.817

Source: *Smart PLS Output,* **2024**

Based on Table 4, it can be explained that the AVE value in each variable tested has a value of > 0.5, which shows that all variables in this study meet the *criteria for discriminant validity*. To determine the reliability in this study, *the composite reliability* value is used. The accepted value for the reliability level is > 0.7. Based on these criteria, it can be seen that all variables in this study have a > value of 0.70 so that it can be stated that all variables tested meet the reliability of the construct.

Structural Model Evaluation (*Inner Model*)

Evaluation of the structural model (*inner model*) is carried out to ensure that the structural model built is robust and accurate. The stages of analysis carried out in the evaluation of the structural model are seen from several indicators, namely:

1) Determination Coefficient Test Results (R^2)

The determination coefficient test (R^2) is used to see the influence of certain independent latent variables on dependent latent variables whether they have a substantive influence. Based on the data processing that has been carried out using the SmartPLS 3.0 program, the R Square value is obtained as shown in the following table.

Table 5. R Square Results

Variable	R Square	Adjusted R Square
Employee Performance (Y)	0.934	0.932
Motivation (Z)	0.711	0.707

Source: *Smart PLS Output,* **2024**

Based on table 5, it is known that the R square Adjusted value of the Motivation variable is 0.707 or 70.70% which means that the influence of Compensation on Motivation is in a high category, meaning that the more Compensation increases, the more Motivation will increase. Meanwhile, the R Square value on the Motivation variable is 0.934 or 93.40%, which means that the influence of Compensation on

Motivation is 93.40% and the remaining 6.60% is influenced by other variables that have not been studied. Meanwhile, the R Square Adjusted value of the employee performance variable is 0.932 or 93.20%, which means that Compensation affects employee performance by 93.20% or in the very high category, meaning that Compensation can significantly improve employee performance. Furthermore, the R square value of the Employee Performance variable is 0.934 or 93.40%, which means that Compensation affects Employee Performance by 93.40%, while the remaining 6.60% is influenced by other variables that have not been studied.

2) Goodness of Fit *Test Results*

The Goodness of Fit test is a statistical method used to evaluate how well the tested model or statistical distribution matches the observed data. The Goodness of Fit test aims to determine the extent to which the observed data corresponds to the theoretical distribution assumed by the model or hypothesis. The goodness of fit model test can be seen from looking at the NFI value on the program. If the NFI value is > SRMR and the closer it is to 1, then the better the model (good fit). Based on the data processing that has been carried out using the SmartPLS 3.0 program, the Fit Model values are obtained as follows.

Table 6. Model Fit

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.084	0.084
d_ULS	1.193	1.193
d_G	2.244	2.244
Chi-Square	539.517	539.517
NFI	0.6,05	0.605

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2024

Based on table 7, it can be seen that the NFI value is 0.605 > 0.084 so that it can be stated that the model in this study has sufficient *goodness of fit* and is suitable to be used to test the research hypothesis.

Hypothesis Test Results

After conducting an inner model analysis, the next thing is to evaluate the relationship between latent constructs in order to answer the hypothesis in this study. The hypothesis test in this study was carried out by looking at T-Statistics and P-Values. The hypothesis was declared accepted if the *T-Statistics value > 1.96* and the P-Values < 0.05. The following are the results of *Path Coefficients* of direct influence between variables as shown in the following table.

Table 7. *Path Coefficients*

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (|O/STDEV|)	P Values	Result
Compensation (X) -> Employee Performance (Y)	0.550	0.562	0.066	8.333	0.000	**Rejected**
Compensation (X) -> Motivation (Z)	0.843	0.849	0.031	27.267	0.000	**Accepted**
Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.456	0.444	0.067	6.764	0.000	**Accepted**

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2024

Based on the data in Table 8, it can be stated that there is a positive and significant influence between compensation and employee performance. This can be seen from the T-statistic value of 8.333 < 1.96 with a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05. This means that if the compensation is increased, the performance of employees will increase significantly. This result answers the first hypothesis in this study, namely that rejecting Ho and accepting Ha or Compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office

Furthermore, on the effect of compensation on motivation, data on the T-Statistical value of 27.267 > 1.96 with a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05 so that it can be stated that compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee motivation at the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office. This can be interpreted that if compensation is increased, employee motivation will increase significantly. This statement answers the second hypothesis, which is to accept reject Ho and accept Ha.

Furthermore, on the influence of motivation on employee performance, data was obtained that the T-Statistic value was 6.764 > 1.96 with a P-Value value of 0.000 < 0.05 which means rejecting Ho and accepting Ha or motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This indicates that if motivation increases, the performance of employees tends to increase significantly. To answer the fourth hypothesis, it can be seen in the indirect influence between variables as shown in the following table.

Table 8. Indirect Effect (Pengaruh Tidak Langsung)

Variable	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (IO/STDEVI)	P Values	Result
Compensation (X) -> Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.384	0.377	0.061	6.274	0.000	Accepted

Source: Output Smart PLS, 2024

Based on table 8, it can be explained that motivation is able to intervene the influence between compensation and employee performance. This can be seen from the results of the T-Statistical value of 6.274 > 1.96 with a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05. This shows that there is an indirect influence between compensation and employee performance through motivation. These results provide insight into how motivational intermediary variables can intervene the relationship between Compensation and employee performance at the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office.

3.2. Discussion

The findings in this study can be strengthened by referring to the findings of previous relevant studies. In the context of the effect of compensation on employee performance, this finding states that there is a significant influence between compensation and employee performance. The results of these findings are supported by the findings of Ashary, (2022) and (Fatimah & Ratnasari, 2017) which state that compensation has a significant effect on employee performance.

Theoretically, these findings also strengthen theories that state the importance of compensation in human resource management, such as the theory of Hasibuan, Malayu SP, (2017) and the views of other experts. Thus, this study adds relevant empirical evidence in the management literature, especially related to the relationship between compensation and employee performance.

The implications of these findings also suggest that organizations, including government agencies, need to pay more attention to compensation policies to improve employee performance. With the significant influence of compensation on performance, agencies are expected not only to provide adequate compensation in the form of salaries and benefits, but also to consider various other forms of compensation that can provide job satisfaction and motivation for employees.

In terms of the effect of compensation on employee work motivation. The findings of this study show that there is a positive influence of compensation on employee work motivation in line with previous studies, as revealed by

Mangkunegara, (2017) and (Siagian, 2023). According to Mangkunegara (2017), compensation provided fairly and appropriately can increase employee motivation, because employees feel appreciated for their contributions. Similarly, Siagian (2023) emphasized that good compensation can cause a sense of satisfaction and higher morale in employees, which ultimately has an impact on increasing their work motivation.

The implication of these findings is that organizations need to understand that compensation is not just about financial rewards, but also about recognition and appreciation for the employee's work. When employees feel valued through adequate compensation, they will be more motivated to work with dedication and contribute optimally to the organization. Therefore, an effective compensation policy will support the creation of strong work motivation among employees, which has the potential to increase their productivity, work quality, and loyalty to the organization.

Support from previous research further strengthens the importance of this relationship. Research conducted by Fatimah & Ratnasari, (2017) and Ashary (2022) also found that compensation has a significant effect on employee work motivation. Both studies stated that with appropriate compensation, employees feel more valued and motivated to provide better work results. These findings emphasize that effective compensation not only affects performance, but also plays an important role in improving employee work motivation.

Furthermore, on the influence of motivation on employee performance, the results of this finding are supported by the results of research conducted by (Wandi et al., 2022) which explains that there is a positive and significant influence between motivation and employee performance. Robbins and Judge (2015), who stated that motivation has an important role in determining the intensity, direction, and perseverance of employees at work. According to them, high motivation will direct employees to achieve targets more effectively and efficiently. In addition, Pinder (2008) in Tremblay et al. (2009) also stated that motivation is an internal and external energy force that influences work behavior, which ultimately contributes to improved performance.

The implication of these findings is that organizations need to focus on factors that can increase employee work motivation, such as rewards, career development opportunities, a conducive work environment, and fairness in the compensation system. Policies that support employee motivation will encourage them to work more productively and results-oriented. This can also create a positive work culture and encourage employee loyalty to the organization.

Furthermore, indirect influence through motivation is able to intervene the influence between Compensation on employee performance. This finding is supported by previous research by Fatimah & Ratnasari (2017) and Ashary (2022**)** who found that motivation is able to strengthen the positive influence of compensation on performance. This indicates that organizations that want to improve employee

performance optimally need to pay attention to these two aspects at the same time, because they support each other in increasing the effectiveness and productivity of employees.

The implications of these findings are that it is important for organizations to not only focus on compensating, but also creating a work environment that supports employee work motivation. Compensation policies accompanied by motivational enhancement efforts, such as career development opportunities, non-financial rewards, and recognition, will create a stronger synergistic effect on employee performance.

4. CONCLUSIONS AND SUGGESTIONS

4.1 Conclusion

From the results of the data analysis of the research results and discussions described above, it can be concluded that:

1. There was a positive and significant effect between compensation and motivation. This can be seen from the T-statistical value of 8.333 < 1.96 with a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05. This means that if the compensation is increased, the performance of employees will increase significantly.
2. On the effect of compensation on employee work motivation, data on T-Statistical values of 27.267 > 1.96 with P-Value values of 0.000 < 0.05 so that it can be stated that compensation has a positive and significant effect on work motivation at the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office.
3. On the influence of motivation on employee performance, data was obtained that the T-Statistic value was 6.764 > 1.96 with a P-Value value of 0.000 < 0.05 which means rejecting Ho and accepting Ha or motivation has a positive and significant effect on employee performance.
4. In the indirect influence, the results of the T-Statistical value of 6.274 > 1.96 with a P-Value of 0.000 < 0.05 were obtained. This shows that there is an indirect influence between compensation and employee performance through motivation. This shows that there is an indirect influence between compensation and employee performance through motivation. These results provide insight into how motivational intermediary variables can intervene the relationship between Compensation and employee performance at the Dairi Regency Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office.

4.2 Suggestion

Based on the findings, the discussion and conclusion of the study can be suggested to the Tourism, Culture, Youth and Sports Office of Dairi Regency as follows:

1. For institutions, it is advisable to implement a compensation policy that is not only financial-based but also includes aspects such as rewards and career development opportunities. This is important to improve employee motivation and performance, so that they feel valued and contribute optimally to the organization.
2. For students, this research can be a reference to understand the importance of intervening variables such as motivation in the study of human resource management. This understanding can help in developing a more in-depth analysis of the factors that affect employee performance in various sectors.
3. For future researchers, it is recommended that this study be expanded by adding other variables, such as job satisfaction or organizational commitment. These additional variables can enrich the analysis of the relationship between compensation, motivation, and employee performance, resulting in more comprehensive insights.

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