

THE INFLUENCE OF WORK INTEREST AND COMPETENCY THROUGH JOB SATISFACTION ON THE PERFORMANCE OF PT EMPLOYEES. MAJOR BOX CREATION TANJUNG MORAWA NORTH SUMATRA

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Abstract. A decline in employee productivity often stems from suboptimal work performance, which can impact overall company efficiency. This study aims to evaluate employee performance at PT. Tanjung Morawa Megah Box, North Sumatra, by analyzing the effects of work interest, competence, and job satisfaction, along with their interactions. Utilizing a quantitative research approach, data analysis was conducted using the Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) method to examine relationships between these variables. The findings indicate that competence significantly influences employee performance, as evidenced by a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. Similarly, work interest also has a significant and positive effect on performance, with a significance level of $0.002 < 0.05$. Job satisfaction acts as a crucial mediating variable in linking competence and work interest to performance, with a significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. The interaction analysis further highlights that enhancing employee competence and fostering job satisfaction can strengthen the impact of work interest on performance. When combined, work interest, competence, and job satisfaction contribute significantly to employee performance, with the overall model showing a strong significance level of $0.000 < 0.05$. These findings suggest that companies should focus on comprehensive training programs, employee motivation initiatives, and the development of a positive work environment. By prioritizing these aspects, organizations can enhance employee engagement and performance, ultimately driving business success and sustainability. Future research may explore additional factors such as leadership style, organizational culture, and career development opportunities to further refine strategies for improving workforce productivity.

Keywords: job interest and competence, job satisfaction, employee performance

I. INTRODUCTION

Human resources (HR) are resources, which are very important for a company or organization; without them, the company or organization cannot function. Educated and moral human resources are examples of human resources that are successful in business. They have the ability to produce something in the current millennial era. Good organizational behavior and academic competence are characteristics of high-quality human resources (Aisyah, 2020).

Employee performance is an important factor that affects productivity. This includes the ability to produce and sell packaging with high efficiency and quality. Efficient employees can increase production capacity, allowing companies to better meet market demand and increase the availability of products for sale. According to (Aisyah, 2020) performance can be defined as the implementation of a plan that has been prepared, consisting of the implementation of work management by employees who have the ability and intend to carry out their responsibilities.

Employee interest and competence also play an important role, because employees who are motivated by competence tend to work harder. However, lack of training, poor

management, and an unsupportive work environment can hinder productivity. Therefore, it is necessary to implement employee performance improvement strategies through continuous training, management improvement, process simplification, and the creation of a supportive work environment. Focus on improving employee performance needs to be considered in order to increase productivity and contribute to the long-term success of the company (Sugiarti, 2022).

Human resources are closely related to high productivity, so company leaders must pay attention to this. The company's goal of achieving profit increases along with increased productivity. Employee performance, which is an important asset in an organization, is greatly influenced by this increase in productivity. A worker's performance is the result achieved by a worker when they work according to certain criteria that apply to their job (Budiyanto and Mochklas, 2020). A study conducted by also supports this (Anggraini and Suhermin, 2021). The results of the study showed that the variables of job satisfaction, work commitment, and work competence have a positive and significant effect on employee performance.

Employee work interest and competence are two aspects that are often associated with individual performance in various studies. Work interest reflects the level of employee motivation and interest in their work, which affects how much effort and dedication they put into their work. Interest drives people to do what they like when they have a choice (Hermanto, 2020). In addition, research (Fahlepi, 2023) found that there is a positive correlation between the interest of Tebing Tinggi City Health Center employees in their work and their job satisfaction.

However, competence refers to the abilities, skills, and knowledge that employees have to do their jobs well. Employee performance is believed to increase significantly if these two components are optimized. Workers must have the work attitude needed to perform or complete tasks. They must also have the skills and knowledge needed to perform or complete the task (Astuti, 2020). This is also supported by research showing that employee job satisfaction and performance increase with competence, innovative behavior, and technology (Sukadana and Mahyuni, 2021).

The relationship between competence and job interest with employee performance is not always direct. Often, job satisfaction serves as a mediating variable that influences how employee job interest and competence impact their performance. The level of happiness and satisfaction of an employee with various aspects of their job, such as working conditions, rewards, and relationships with coworkers and superiors, is known as job satisfaction. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs are more likely to be more productive, more enthusiastic, and more committed to their jobs (Lusri, 2017).

Previous studies (Wibawa and Mayasari, 2020) found that job satisfaction and job competence positively and significantly affect employee performance. In addition, job satisfaction has a significant and positive effect on employee performance. As a result, the level of employee satisfaction is proportional to the level of employee performance. Job satisfaction is very important because employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be better. They may be more motivated to try hard and contribute positively to the community.

It is expected that this research will help the management of PT Kreasi Kotak Megah in creating effective methods to improve employee performance and satisfaction. Understanding the dynamics between work interest, competence, and job satisfaction will enable the company to develop more targeted programs. By implementing programs that increase employee work interest and competence and ensure their job satisfaction, PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa North Sumatra can achieve higher performance.

In PT Kreasi Kotak Megah, it is important to conduct research on how employee interest and competence can affect their performance and produce job satisfaction can be seen in the table 1.

The target was not achieved, as shown in the previous table. There was a significant decline with a sales target of 55,600 in 2023. This shows that employee interest, competence, and satisfaction with their work greatly affect their performance. Employees with high work interest and adequate competence

tend to feel more satisfied with their jobs, and high job satisfaction in turn will have a positive impact on performance, productivity, and achievement of sales targets. Therefore, employee performance evaluation is very important. The researcher used competence (X1), work interest (X2), job satisfaction (Z), and employee performance (Y) as independent variables in this study. The study entitled "The Effect of Work Interest and Competence Through Job Satisfaction on Employee Performance at PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa North Sumatra".

Table 1 Comparison of Sales Targets from 2021 to 2023

Month	Target /Ton	2021 sales	Sales Year 2022	Sale Year 2023
January	10.000	4.450	5.000	4.800
February	10.000	4.500	5.000	4.500
March	10.000	4.650	4.580	4.500
April	10.000	4.900	4.950	4.500
May	10.000	4.500	4.520	4.600
June	10.000	4.500	4.800	4.900
July	10.000	5.000	4.550	4.700
August	10.000	4.500	5.000	4.500
September	10.000	5.000	4.980	4.500
October	10.000	5.000	5.000	4.500
November	10.000	5.000	5.000	5.000
December	10.000	5.000	5.000	4.600
Total	120.000	57.000	58.380	55.600

Source: Processed Data

II. RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative method known as a traditional method because it has long been used in scientific research (Sugiyono, 2017). This method is based on the philosophy of positivism, which emphasizes concrete, empirical, objective, measurable, rational, and systematic principles. In addition, quantitative methods enable the discovery and advancement of new technology and science through analysis based on numerical and statistical data (Sugiyono, 2017). This study was conducted in Buntu Bedimbar Village, Bangun Sari, Tanjung Morawa District, Deli Serdang Regency, North Sumatra, with a research period from March to September 2024. The research population included all employees of PT Kreasi Kotak Megah totaling 242 people, with a sample of 151 respondents determined using the Slovin formula (Sugiyono, 2017). The sampling technique used was the quota method, where samples were selected based on a certain number in each job category. The data used consists of primary data obtained through interviews, questionnaires, and direct observation, as well as secondary data from journals, company reports, and related research documents (Sugiyono, 2017). Data collection techniques are carried out through literature studies, questionnaires containing structured questions, and field

observations to obtain in-depth information about the research object (Sugiyono, 2017).

Data analysis in this study uses the Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) method, which allows the analysis of causal relationships between exogenous and endogenous variables (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The analysis model consists of a measurement model (outer model) and a structural model (inner model). The outer model evaluates the validity and reliability of indicators using a convergent validity test, where the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) value must be more than 0.5 and the composite reliability must be more than 0.7 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). The inner model evaluates the strength of the structural model using the R-Square and Q-Square values, where an R-Square value of 0.75 indicates a strong model, 0.50 is moderate, and 0.25 is weak (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). Hypothesis testing is carried out using t-statistic analysis and probability values, with the criteria for accepting the hypothesis if the t-statistic is more than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05 (Ghozali & Latan, 2015). With this approach, the study is expected to provide in-depth insight into the factors that influence employee performance as well as recommendations for PT Kreasi Kotak Megah in improving the effectiveness of human resource management.

III. RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Outer Model Evaluation (Measurement Model)

The measurement results of this model indicate that the research indicators used are valid and reliable, or invalid and unreliable. Overall, the path followed by the research model is as follows:

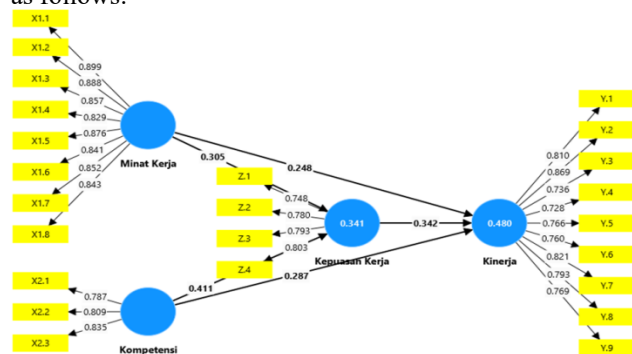


Figure 1 Outer Model Diagram

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

Work Interest Construction (X1) is formed and measured by eight indicators, X1.1–X8. Competency Construction (X2) is formed and measured by three indicators, X2.1–X2.3. Performance Construct (Y) is formed and measured by nine indicators, Y.1–Y.9. The Job Satisfaction construct (Z) is formed and measured by four indicators, Z.1–Z4.

1. Convergent validity

All research constructs, the value of the additional factor must be greater than 0.70 (greater than 0.70), according to Ghozali and Latan (2020). The external load value of each indicator on the research variable is shown here.

Table 2 Converget Validity Test Results

	Job (X1)	Interest (x2)	Competence (Y)	Performance (Z)
X1.1	0.899			
X1.2	0.888			
X1.3	0.857			
X1.4	0.829			
X1.5	0.876			
X1.6	0.841			
X1.7	0.852			
X1.8	0.843			
X2.1		0.787		
X2.2		0.809		
X2.3		0.835		
Y.1			0.810	
Y.2			0.869	
Y.3			0.736	
Y.4			0.728	
Y.5			0.766	
Y.6			0.760	
Y.7			0.821	
Y.8			0.793	
Y.9			0.769	
Z.1				0.748
Z.2				0.780
Z.3				0.793
Z.4				0.803

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

Since the external load value of each indicator is greater than 0.7 , all indicators of this research variable are valid, as shown in table 4.9 above. As a result, the questionnaire items can be used for subsequent analysis.

The average variance extracted (ave) value is another way to test convergent validity. The ave value must be greater than 0.5 (greater than 0.5).

Table 3 Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Average variance extracted (AVE)	
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.610
Performance (Y)	0.616
Competence (X2)	0.658
Job Interest (X1)	0.741

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

Job Interest (X1) has an AVE value of 0.741 or more than 0.5 , according to table 4.10, which shows that variable X1 has good convergent validity. Competence variable (X2) has an

AVE value of 0.658 or more than 0.5, and each variable shows good convergent validity. Job Satisfaction variable (Z) has an AVE value of 0.610 or more than 0.5, which shows that variable Z has good convergent validity. Performance variable (Y) also has an AVE value. Thus, each variable shows good convergent validity.

2. Discriminant validity

The results of the *discriminant validity test* are described here. The *cross-loading* value is used to test discriminant validity. The *cross-loading* values of each indicator are shown here. The *cross-loading* value of the indicator for one of the variables is considered valid for its discrimination if the *cross-loading* value of the indicator for the other variable is greater than the *cross-loading* value of the indicator for the first variable. as shown in table 4.

Table 4 Cross loading

	Job Interest (X1)	Competence (X2)	Performance (Y)	Job Satisfaction (Z)
X1.1	0.899	0.261	0.441	0.333
X1.2	0.888	0.284	0.444	0.432
X1.3	0.857	0.250	0.434	0.369
X1.4	0.829	0.193	0.348	0.336
X1.5	0.876	0.312	0.406	0.332
X1.6	0.841	0.313	0.433	0.364
X1.7	0.852	0.296	0.430	0.309
X1.8	0.843	0.264	0.415	0.488
X2.1	0.284	0.787	0.437	0.411
X2.2	0.268	0.809	0.457	0.459
X2.3	0.212	0.835	0.414	0.353
Y.1	0.410	0.403	0.810	0.379
Y.2	0.374	0.476	0.869	0.527
Y.3	0.513	0.413	0.736	0.453
Y.4	0.462	0.482	0.728	0.436
Y.5	0.290	0.420	0.766	0.518
Y.6	0.312	0.353	0.760	0.533
Y.7	0.377	0.469	0.821	0.384
Y.8	0.378	0.381	0.793	0.480
Y.9	0.305	0.395	0.769	0.484
Z.1	0.358	0.399	0.411	0.748
Z.2	0.413	0.451	0.548	0.780
Z.3	0.276	0.344	0.418	0.793
Z.4	0.289	0.372	0.461	0.803

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

As shown in the data presented in table 4.11 above, the indicators used to compile each research variable have the highest cross-loading values on the variables they form. The

results show that the metrics used in this study are undoubtedly valid.

3. Composite reliability

Composite reliability values are used to measure internal consistency in research if the research functions as a confirmator; conversely, composite reliability values are acceptable for exploratory research with composite reliability values between 0.6 and 0.7. The composite reliability values for each variable used by researchers are presented below (Ghozali and Latan, 2020):

This shows that all variables meet the composite suitability. As a result, it can be concluded that the work interest variable (X1) has a composite reliability value of 0.953 or more than 0.6, the competency variable (X2) has a value of 0.741 or more than 0.6, and the performance variable (Y) has a value of 0.794 or more than 0.6.

According to Ghozali and Latan (2020), the reliability test of the ability composite can be improved by using the Cronbach alpha value. The Cronbach alpha value for each research variable is shown in Table 5, but only if the value is more than 0.6:

Table 5 Cronbach's Alpha

	Cronbach's alpha
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.788
Performance (Y)	0.921
Competence (X2)	0.740
Job Interest (X1)	0.950

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

The results of the study showed that each variable in the study had the required Cronbach's alpha value. The work interest variable (X1) received a value of 0.950 or more than 0.7, the competency variable (X2) received a value of 0.740 or more than 0.7, the job satisfaction variable (Z) received a value of 0.788 or more than 0.7, and the performance variable (Y) received a value of 0.921 or more than 0.7.

1) Inner Model Evaluation

This examination process is used to determine whether exogenous or endogenous variables affect exogenous variables. The following figure shows the results of the structural model analysis.:

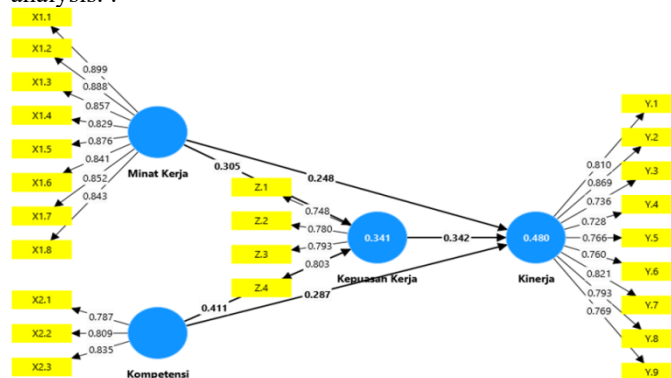


Figure 2 Inner Model Diagram

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

1. R-Square

The influence of each independent variable on each dependent variable can be measured using the estimated R-Square value. The estimated R-Square value can be seen in Table 6.

Table 6 R Square Values

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.341	0.332
Performance (Y)	0.480	0.470

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

a. Job satisfaction:

The R-Square value for the Job Satisfaction variable of 0.341 indicates that the model can explain about 34.1 % of the variation in this variable. Meanwhile, the adjusted R-Square value of 0.332 indicates that the model has undergone adjustments because many variables are used.

b. Performance:

The R-Square value of 0.341 for the Job Satisfaction variable indicates that the model can explain about 34.1 % of the variation in the variable, with higher values indicating the model's ability to describe the variability of endogenous variables. On the other hand, the adjusted R-Square value of 0.332 indicates that the model has been improved to account for the number of variables used.

2. Q-Square

The following calculation shows the *R-Square* value of all endogenous variables discussed in this study. A Q-Square value greater than zero indicates that the model has an appropriate predictive value:

Table 6 Q Square Values

	SSO	SSE	Q ² (=1-SSE/SSO)
Job satisfaction	604,000	485,738	0.196
Performance	1359,000	970,267	0.286

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

a. Job satisfaction:

Q-Square value for the Job Satisfaction variable is 0.196, indicating that the model has relevant but not too strong predictive ability in explaining the variability in Job Satisfaction. In other words, the prediction of Job Satisfaction based on the variables in the model can be considered adequate.

b. Performance:

Q-Square value for the Performance variable is 0.286, indicating better predictive ability than Job Satisfaction. This indicates that the model has quite good predictive relevance in explaining variability in performance based on the variables in the model.

Hypothesis Testing

By using the *bootstrapping procedure* in *SmartPLS 4.0*, significant estimated values for the path effects in the structural model can be obtained:

Table 7 Hypothesis Testing Results

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Job Satisfaction (Z) -> Performance (Y)	0.342	0.342	0.073	4,668	0,000
Competence (X2) -> Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.411	0.413	0.070	5,893	0,000
Competence (X2) -> Performance (Y)	0.287	0.288	0.079	3,657	0,000
Job Interest (X1) -> Job Satisfaction (Z)	0.305	0.309	0.078	3,933	0,000
Job Interest (X1) -> Performance (Y)	0.248	0.251	0.070	3,545	0,000

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

The parameter coefficient value and significant t-statistic value in the bootstrap algorithm report can be used to identify the significance of the hypothesis. The t-table value shows alpha 0.05 (5%) = 1.96. The parameter coefficient and significant t-statistic value are used to measure the significance of the hypothesis in the bootstrap algorithm report; the t-table value is 1.96 at a significance level of 0.05 (5%), and the calculated t-value is comparable to the t-table value.

Job satisfaction is significantly influenced by the competency variable at PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa North Sumatra, according to the t-statistic value above, with a coefficient of 0.411. The t-statistic value of 5.893 shows a strong influence, supported by a p-value of 0.000.

Table 8 Specific Indirect Effects

	Original sample (O)	Sample mean (M)	Standard deviation (STDEV)	T statistics (O/STDEV)	P values
Competence (X2) -> Job Satisfaction (Z) -> Performance (Y)	0.140	0.142	0.040	3,504	0,000
Job Interest (X1) -> Job Satisfaction (Z) -> Performance (Y)	0.104	0.105	0.034	3,097	0,002

Source: Processing Output with smartPLS 4.0

The initial sample value, p-value, or t-statistic value is used to determine whether the hypothesis (intervention) is accepted as a result of the direct influence between variables. This decision is acceptable only if the p-value is less than 0.05 or if the t-statistic value is greater than the t-table value.

With a t-statistic value of 3.097, the most significant variable in the model is the relationship "Competence (X2) -> Job Satisfaction (Z) -> Performance (Y)." This shows a significant relationship between competence and job satisfaction through performance as an intervention. As a result, the most significant variable.

This indicates that the competence in PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa North Sumatra is caused by the importance of the relationship between workers' abilities, their job satisfaction, and their performance. Due to high competence, employees tend to perform tasks better and feel more satisfied, which in turn encourages them to do more. This shows that employee competency development is very important to support the company's productivity and success.

1. The Influence of Work Interest on Job Satisfaction

The hypothesis study shows that work interest has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. This finding is in line with previous research by Fahlepi (2023), which found that work interest has a significant effect on job satisfaction. The results show that work interest at PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa North Sumatra is very important for increasing employee satisfaction. Employees who have a high work interest show how passionate and interested they are in their work, which directly affects how satisfied they are with their workplace. Employees who are highly interested in their work tend to be more motivated, take initiative, and feel appreciated, which results in a better work environment.

2. The Influence of Competence on Job Satisfaction

Based on the hypothesis test, it was found that competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction. These results are in line with research conducted by (Rohma, 2020), (Lilyana and Theodore, 2017) and (Wibawa and Mayasari, 2020) which concluded that competence has a positive and significant effect on a person's level of job satisfaction. The results show that competence has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction at PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa, North Sumatra. This shows that the level of employee competence, both in terms of skills, knowledge, and work attitudes, plays an important role in determining how satisfied they are with their jobs. Good competence allows employees to carry out tasks more effectively and efficiently, which ultimately increases their sense of satisfaction with their achievements and contributions in the workplace. Therefore, companies need to continue to support the development of employee competence through training, coaching, and evaluation, so that employee job satisfaction can continue to be improved.

3. The Effect of Work Interest on Performance

This study found that work interest has a positive and significant effect on performance. This finding is in line with the research of Edison et al. (2017), which also found that work interest has a positive and significant effect on performance.

The results show that work interest has a positive and significant effect on employee performance at PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa, North Sumatra. Employees with high interest tend to be more motivated, more enthusiastic, and more focused on their work, which ultimately results in better performance. Strong work interest encourages employees to work with greater dedication and responsibility, so that they can achieve more optimal work results. Therefore, companies must create a supportive work environment and allow employees to increase their interest in their workplace by providing rewards, career development opportunities, and a pleasant work atmosphere.

4. The effect of competence on performance

The results of the research hypothesis test show that competence significantly and positively affects performance. This finding is supported by research conducted by Wibawa and Mayasari (2020) and Krisnawati and Bagia (2021), which found that ability has a positive and significant impact on performance. The results show that competence has a positive and significant effect on worker performance at PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa, North Sumatra. This shows that employees with high skills, abilities, and technical knowledge can complete tasks more efficiently and effectively. Companies must continue to pay attention to improving their employees' competence through training, coaching, and periodic evaluations to ensure that employee performance remains at the expected level and is able to support the achievement of company goals.

5. The effect of job satisfaction on performance

According to the research hypothesis test, job satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on performance. Studies by Anggraini and Suhermin (2021) and Wibawa and Mayasari (2020) support this finding by stating that job satisfaction has a positive and significant impact on performance. The results of the study indicate that job satisfaction at PT. Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa, North Sumatra, has a positive and significant impact on employee performance. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to be more dedicated, more enthusiastic, and more productive, which overall results in better company performance. High job satisfaction indicates that employees have financial, emotional, and supportive work environment resources. Therefore, companies are advised to continue to create and maintain a conducive work environment, provide rewards for achievements, and maintain good working relationships so that employee job satisfaction is maintained and their performance can continue to improve.

6. The effect of job satisfaction on work interest and performance

According to the hypothesis test of this study, job satisfaction and work interest significantly and positively affect performance. This finding is in line with Edison et al. (2017). The results show that workers who are highly involved in their work tend to be more satisfied and productive. Strong work interest encourages workers to adapt to job demands, increase productivity, and maintain the quality of work results.

7. The impact of job satisfaction on performance from Competence.

According to the research hypothesis test, satisfaction is a way that competence has a positive and significant influence on performance by Wibawa and Mayasari (2020) and Alvani and Yuliharsi (2024). The conclusion of this study is that competence is a variable that can intervene in job satisfaction and performance variables at PT Kreasi Kotak Megah Tanjung Morawa in North Sumatra.

IV. CONCLUSIONS

The findings of this study highlight several key aspects of employee job satisfaction and performance. Firstly, employee interest significantly influences job satisfaction, as highly engaged employees tend to be more motivated and enthusiastic, fostering a positive work environment. Secondly, a strong correlation exists between employee competence and job satisfaction, with skilled and knowledgeable employees feeling more confident in their tasks, leading to higher satisfaction. Furthermore, employee interest plays a crucial role in performance, as those with a high level of interest are more dedicated, goal-oriented, and creative in completing tasks. Additionally, competence directly affects employee performance by enabling them to effectively apply skills and knowledge, particularly in adapting to new technologies. Job satisfaction also proves to be a key driver of productivity, as employees who feel valued and recognized tend to be more committed and efficient. The study emphasizes the importance of a holistic approach in human resource management, where a combination of job satisfaction and competence leads to improved employee performance. Based on these conclusions, several recommendations are proposed. Companies should focus on continuous training, creating a conducive work environment, and implementing recognition programs to enhance employee motivation. Future research should expand its scope across different industries, incorporate qualitative methods for deeper insights, and explore additional variables such as organizational culture and leadership style. Employees, on the other hand, are encouraged to be proactive in self-development through training and lifelong learning while maintaining their work motivation by setting clear personal and professional goals.

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