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The Effect of Perception of Effort - Reward Balance on Employee Satisfaction with the Meaning of Work as a Moderating Factor; Study at Islamic Hospitals

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Abstract: This study aims to investigate the influence of the Perception of Effort-Reward Balance (ERB) on employee satisfaction, moderated by the perception of the meaning of work, using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). Employing a quantitative causal associative method, primary data were collected from 1,039 employees across four Islamic hospitals in East Java and Central Java through a simple random sampling technique. The data were analyzed using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with the 'lavaan' package in R software. The results reveal that the Perception of Effort-Reward Balance (ERB) is significantly influenced by the Balance of Work Challenges - Capacity (BCC) and Perception of Self-Development Opportunities (PDO), but not by the Perception of Task Relevance - Skills (TRS). Moreover, ERB does not significantly affect Perception of Employee Satisfaction (PES) directly. However, the moderating variable, Perception of the Meaning of Work (PMW), shows a significant positive impact on the relationship between ERB and PES. This indicates that employees' perception of the meaning of their work enhances their satisfaction, even when their perceived balance of effort and reward is low. These findings suggest that organizations, particularly Islamic hospitals, should focus on enhancing the meaning of work for employees to boost job satisfaction, which can indirectly improve organizational performance and customer satisfaction. The study highlights the importance of non-material rewards and the role of spiritual leadership in fostering a meaningful work environment.

Citation: Feri D. Sampurno. The Effect of Perception of Effort - Reward Balance on Employee Satisfaction with the Meaning of Work as a Moderating Factor; Study at Islamic Hospitals Modern Journal of Social Sciences and Humanities 2023, 2(8), 59-66.

Received: 4th July 2023Revised: 11th July 2023Accepted: 28th July 2023Published: 4th Agst 2023

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Keywords: Effort-Reward Balance, Meaning of Work, Employee Satisfaction, Theory of Planned Behavior

1. Introduction

Every employee wants good appreciation from the company for the efforts they have made. Every effort employees make in terms of energy, thoughts, and time must be rewarded through money, self-esteem, and a clear career path [1]. Employees' rewards also influence their satisfaction level, including direct and immaterial rewards such as job satisfaction [2]. Inadequate recognition and rewards are among the top seven factors that lead to burnout [3]. Awards are influenced by opportunities to develop personal capacity, job security, appreciation and respect from superiors, and income factors [4]. A balance between effort and reward is the hope of every employee. Even in a study on mice, the preference for more accessible options increased significantly after experiencing a balanced reward-effort relationship [5]. Governments in Asian countries are urged to pay more attention to balancing work effort and rewards [6].

Employees who feel well-appreciated will feel satisfied. The service industry greatly emphasizes service quality, which is greatly influenced by employee job satisfaction. When service industry companies can make their employees satisfied with their work and build a work culture, customer satisfaction will be better [7]. Satisfied employees will provide optimal contributions to the company. Companies that take better care of their employees tend to grow and be successful; satisfied employees work more productively and are highly motivated [8]. Employee satisfaction is a factor that every company must pay attention to because one way to maintain a skilled workforce is to maintain employee job satisfaction. A strong and scientific correlation exists between employee satisfaction, customer satisfaction, and organizational performance [9].

Employee satisfaction is an emotional situation that reflects feelings of pleasure, which are the impact of assessing an employee's work, which is considered an achievement or a predictor factor in achieving work values. [10]. Employee satisfaction is not merely the impact of increasing remuneration. However, it is more caused by the quality of work life, good leadership style, regular training, job security, company image, and other personal characteristics of employees [11]. Employees appear more satisfied when they get opportunities in the form of training relevant to their duties and receive tremendous encouragement from management when optimal service SOPs are in place [9].

However, in reality, not all companies can achieve employee satisfaction. More than half of dissatisfied employees in the tourism and hospitality sector would consider moving to another job, with young people more likely to share their experiences via online job platforms [9]. Many researchers have found a relationship between job satisfaction and commitment to the organization, where organizational commitment tends to be triggered by job satisfaction [12]. The imbalance between effort and reward experienced by resident physicians has a negative impact on their well-being. Situations such as resident doctors who do not receive support from their superiors will experience higher levels of stress [13]. An imbalance of effort and reward is believed to be one of the factors in the prevalence of stress, depressive symptoms, and burnout [14].

Even though the company has tried to provide the best rewards, there are still dissatisfied employees. Healthcare reform in Germany and efforts to increase the remuneration of hospital doctors in Norway did not improve job satisfaction [15]. Quite a few employees will continue to demand appreciation even though the company has tried its best reward scheme. Companies tend to ignore efforts to increase employee satisfaction. Even though the research results show a positive correlation between employee and customer satisfaction [16].

This research is necessary because many companies need help increasing employee productivity due to their low level of satisfaction. When employees show positive emotions about their workplace, it indicates positive behavior, ultimately increasing their productivity and motivation [17]. Employee satisfaction levels will increase by managing the perception of balance between effort and reward. Employee satisfaction is not solely triggered by the awards they receive. Company goals can be a variable that triggers job satisfaction [18].

Several previous studies have paid attention to the role of the meaning of life as a mediator in difficult life situations. In the study, a significant role of the meaning of life was obtained in antisocial behaviors such as disobedience and bullying. The research also perceives that the meaning of life is a structured pattern for adolescents in resisting antisocial behavior [19]. Another study that specifically explored the impact of meaningfulness on the work atmosphere recommended that companies actively anticipate feelings of meaninglessness in employees by supporting moments of connection, desire to contribute, and avoiding boundaries, such as through job design, employee-driven professional development, organizational culture, management, and or leadership [20] On the other hand, research conducted on midwives shows indications that the meaning of

work they have helped to overcome the heavy workload and increase job satisfaction at a time when they have to provide high-quality services, especially in reproductive services, sexual health, and perinatal services [21]. By considering these results, the idea is obtained that the meaning of work can be a protective function for employees in difficult situations at work, which can be a moderating factor for the relationship between the perception of effort-reward balance and the perception of employee satisfaction.

Optimizing the meaning of working at Islamic hospitals is estimated to moderate the impact of the perceived workload balance in exchange for employee satisfaction. Many studies reveal the meaning of work, which is a source of meaning in life [22], [23]. Spiritual leadership enables employees to pursue higher life goals, meaningful work, and align themselves with the organization. Islamic spiritual leadership denotes promoting good deeds in harmony with Allah's commandments. Islamic spirituality teaches that work is a form of worship that must be carried out by upholding the values of self-discipline and responsibility. [24].

For the average worker, meaningfulness is work's most significant and valuable aspect. There is a main difference between meaning and meaningfulness, where meaning is defined as people's perception or interpretation of elements in their environment. Making meaning is a cognitive process in which people make sense of their experiences, where meaning can have a positive, negative, or neutral valence. In contrast, "meaningfulness" or "meaningful work" refers to "work that is experienced as highly significant and has more positive meaning for the individual" [23].

Islamic hospitals have noble values that frame the meaning of work and service, which can help increase the significance of immaterial perceptions. From an Islamic perspective, caring is a form of expression of someone who loves Allah and the Prophet. Caring signifies responsible action, sensitivity, and high enthusiasm for achieving perfection. In Islamic teachings, there are three levels of concern: intention, thought, and action [25].

This research examines the influence of the Perception of Effort – Reward Balance (ERB) on job satisfaction moderated by the variable meaning of work using the Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB). The Theory of Planned Behavior (TPB) begins by explicitly defining the behavior of interest regarding its target, the actions involved, the context in which it occurs, and the time frame. Each of these elements can be defined at varying levels of specificity or generality. However, all other theoretical constructs must correspond to behavior across all four elements once the behavior has been defined. It is known that TPB has been used significantly in efforts to understand and predict the emergence of behavior in various behavioral domains. Various behavioral domains observed using this theory include physical activity, drug abuse behavior patterns, travel mode choices, and even analyzing how consumers behave, people's behavior in adopting technology, and their efforts to maintain privacy and security [26]. It was found that life goals are closely related to healthy lifestyles, including modifiable behaviors [27]. A wealth of research and publications discusses the positive effects of broader goals on employee motivation and engagement [18].

Based on these theories, the researcher draws the hypothesis that the Perception of Effort-Reward Balance does not always affect the Perception of Employee Satisfaction. It is suspected that a moderation factor, namely the meaning of work, impacts the relationship between the two.

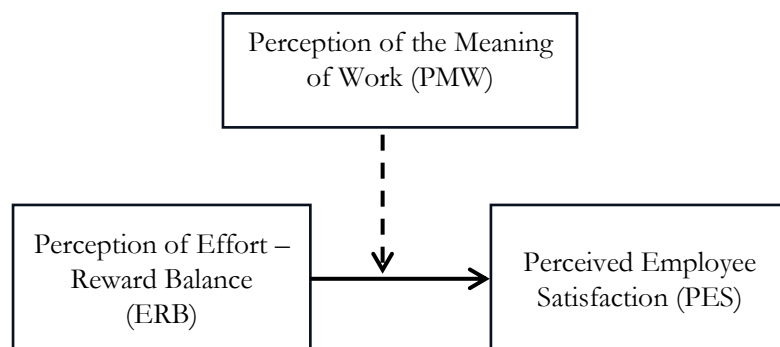
The author analyzed the Scopus scientific journal database page and showed that the research that had been carried out using the keyword employee satisfaction was 3,571 articles. Meanwhile, the number of studies found when researchers focused their search on the keywords employee satisfaction and reward found as many as 160 articles. However, the number of articles found when the keywords used were employee satisfaction, reward, and purpose resulted in 31 articles. It shows that the author's research

with variables still needs to be more common. Thus, the novelty value of this research is relatively high.

2. Materials and Methods

This study uses a quantitative causal relationship method, where this research method aims to find relationships that may occur in two or more variables studied [28]. The type of data is primary data from within the organization, obtained by conducting a survey to employees at 4 Islamic-based hospitals in East Java and Central Java with a simple random sampling technique. The total population of the 4 hospitals is 1,182 employees and a sample of 1,039 people or equal to 87.9% of the total population. The sample consists of levels and sections representing all types of employees in the hospital environment. The data was analyzed using R software with the 'lavaan' package to build and test the SEM model [29].

The variables analyzed are Perception of Effort-Reward Balance (ERB) as the independent variable, employee satisfaction as the dependent variable, and Perception of the Meaning of Work (PMW) as the moderating variable. The effort-reward balance dimension has three indicators: Perception of Balance of Job Challenges—capacity (BCC), Perception of Task Relevance—skills (TRS), and Perception of Self-Development Opportunities (PDO). The research model can be described as follows:



Employee satisfaction perception was obtained by asking, "I feel satisfied working at this hospital." respondents were given a choice with a likert scale of 4. Meanwhile, the perception of the meaning of work is obtained by asking, "By understanding the Goals/Mission of the Hospital; makes me feel that my work is important/meaningful". Understanding the purpose of an organization is part of having meaning in work, as it is explained that the meaning of work can be closely related to the purpose, reason for life, significance of life, and soul calling for the work [19][30],[31]. Similar to the question about the PES, respondents were given a choice with a likert scale of 4 for this question.

Data analyzed using Path Analysis. Path Analysis is a statistical technique used to test the comparative strength of direct or indirect relationship relationships between variables. In order to obtain data suitability, the researcher will use a series of parameters in conducting a matrix suitability test that correlates with two or more causal models, which were initially the researcher's hypothesis. Path analysis is also recognized as a methodological tool for analyzing interconnected quantitative data to understand the various causal processes underlying specific results. The Path Analysis method can be seen as a development of multiple regression analysis where, with this method, we can test the strength of the cause-and-effect system built from the hypothesis created [32].

The analysis procedure can be explained as follows:

Data collection

This research used a survey method to collect data. The respondents were employees from several Islamic Hospitals in East Java, Indonesia. The survey collected employee perceptions of the variables above.

Data Cleaning

It is an analysis process that examines irrelevant, erroneous, invalid, incomplete, incorrectly duplicated, or inappropriately formatted data. All such data needs to be modified or deleted.

Data Management

The author classifies, categorizes, and stores information so that the data obtained is easy to understand, refer to and draw conclusions from.

Data Exploration

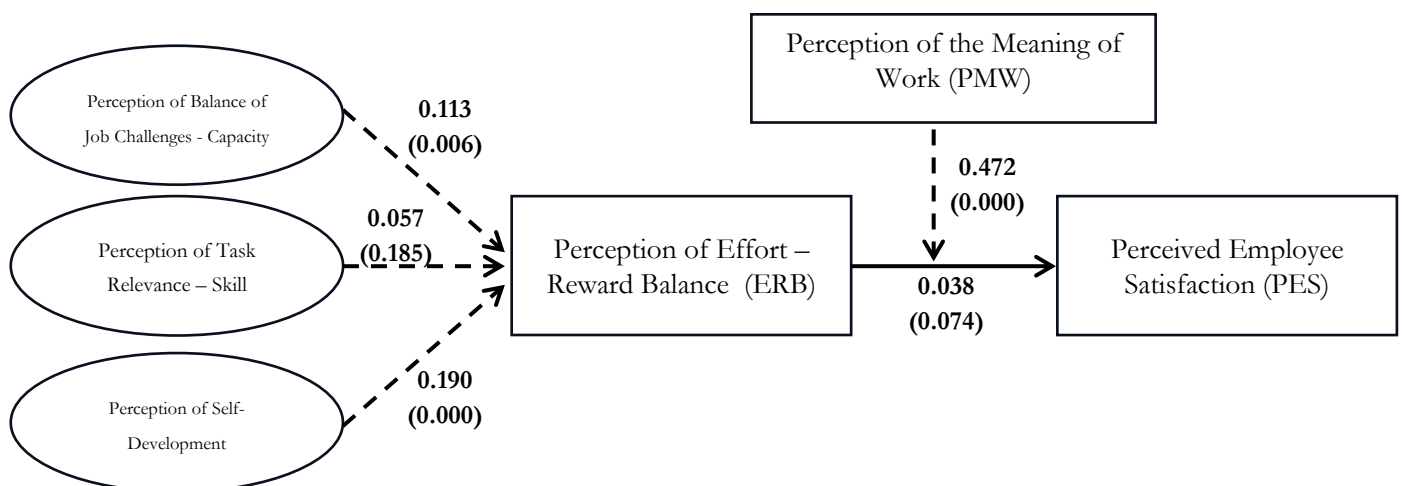
The steps are to recognize and understand the structure of the collected data and how the values are distributed, including whether there are extreme values and the relationships that occur in the data collection.

Data analysis

Data will be processed using Path Analysis techniques.

3. Results

The regression coefficient and significance were found based on SEM regression analysis results, as shown below.



Perception of Effort - Reward Balance (ERB) is significantly influenced by Perception of Balance of Work Challenges - Capacity (BCC) (Coefficient = 0.113, p-value = 0.006) and is also significantly influenced by Perception of Self-Development Opportunities (PDO) (Coefficient = 0.190, p-value = 0.000). Meanwhile, the Perception of Task Relevance-skill (TRS) does not significantly influence the Perception of Effort-reward balance (Coefficient = 0.057, p-value = 0.185).

On the other hand, the analysis results show that the Perception of Effort - Reward Balance (ERB) does not significantly influence the Perception of Employee Satisfaction (PES) (Coefficient = 0.038, p-value = 0.074). Furthermore, analysis of the moderating influence of Perceived Meaning of Work (PMW) on the relationship between Perception of Effort-reward balance and Perceived Employee Satisfaction (PES) shows a significant influence (Coefficient = 0.472, p-value = 0.000).

4. Discussion

Perception of Effort – Reward Balance (ERB) is significantly influenced by Balance of Work Challenges - Capacity (BCC) and Perception of Personal Development Opportunities (PDO); this confirms the results of previous research, which states that Rewards are influenced by opportunities to develop personal capacity, job security, appreciation. And respect from superiors besides the income factor [4]. However, ERB is not significantly influenced by the Perceived Relevance of Tasks - Skills (TRS); this shows that employees with tasks and functions that do not match their basic skills do not feel less appreciated.

Other findings in this research differ from previous research, which stated that Perceptions of Effort–Reward Balance (ERB) will directly and significantly affect Perceptions of Employee Satisfaction (PES). However, the results of this research show that ERB does not significantly affect PES.

Respondents generally perceive that the ERB where they work tends to be low, but the average for PES is relatively high. Researchers obtained results on the moderating variable, namely the Perception of Meaning of Work (PMW), showing a significant and positive influence on the relationship between the Perception of effort-reward balance (ERB) and Perception of Employee Satisfaction (PES). It indicates that the higher the meaning of work felt by employees, the higher the Perception of Employee Satisfaction (PES), even though the Perception of Business Balance - Rewards is low.

Referring to the theory of planned behavior (TPB), it can be explained that Islamic Hospitals' efforts to create meaning in their employees' work have increased employee satisfaction. As stated in the introduction to this research, Islamic Hospitals have noble values that frame the meaning of work and service, which can help increase the significance of immaterial perceptions. [25].

The actions taken by Islamic hospitals to provide spiritual reinforcement and remind employees of work goals can be suspected as a factor that develops confidence in employees that their existence is essential, meaningful, impactful, and valuable to the organization, which is believed to be able to increase employee self-esteem [24]. All of these perceptions and beliefs can be immaterial rewards for their efforts, even though they still consider the perception of material rewards low

5. Conclusion

This research found data that was different from the results of previous research, which stated that there was a significant influence of the Perception of Effort-Reward Balance (ERB) on the Perception of Employee Satisfaction (PES) where in the Islamic Hospital employees we studied, the average employee stated their perception towards Perception of Effort – Reward Balance (ERB) is relatively low. However, their Perception of Employee Satisfaction (PES) tends to be high.

Moderating factors influenced the relationship between the two, so their average PES tended to be high even though the ERB value was low because the Constitutional Court influenced it. The research results suggest that organizations and companies can build a better Meaning of Work for their employees to have better Job Satisfaction. It is known that high employee job satisfaction will significantly impact customer satisfaction [9].

This research provides an alternative for companies to manage their employee satisfaction. They should not make material appreciation the only factor that can increase employee satisfaction and ignore the function of strengthening good meaning for their employees, especially at the leadership level. The role of a leader is very significant in building a noble meaning of work in employees by implementing a spiritual leadership style [24].

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