

Performance Allowance and Work Environment as Determinants of Employee Performance in the Public Sector: Evidence from Merauke Regency.

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ABSTRACT

This study examines the effects of performance allowances and work environment on employee performance at the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency, Indonesia. The research was motivated by the need to enhance public sector productivity through effective human resource management in a decentralized administrative context. Using a quantitative explanatory design, data were collected from 129 civil servants selected through purposive sampling. Data analysis employed multiple linear regression using IBM SPSS Statistics 26. The findings reveal that both performance allowances and the work environment significantly and positively influence employee performance, both individually and simultaneously. Performance allowances function as extrinsic motivators that enhance accountability and work enthusiasm, whereas a supportive work environment strengthens psychological comfort, collaboration, and commitment. Among the two factors, the work environment demonstrated a stronger influence, underscoring the importance of non-financial determinants in sustaining performance. The study concludes that a synergistic combination of fair compensation policies and conducive workplace conditions is essential for optimizing employee performance in public organizations. Practical implications include policy reform in allowance structures, workplace modernization, and integrated capacity development strategies.

Keywords: Performance Allowance, Work Environment, Employee Performance, Public Sector Management, Merauke Regency

INTRODUCTION

Public organizations play a vital role in ensuring the effectiveness and efficiency of governance systems, particularly in the context of decentralized administrations such as Indonesia's regional governments. The performance of civil servants within local government institutions directly affects the quality of public services and the credibility of local administrations in implementing development policies. Employee performance, therefore, becomes a crucial determinant of how well a local government fulfills its administrative, social, and economic responsibilities. Within this framework, the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency serves as a strategic administrative unit responsible for coordinating regional development programs, policy implementation, and interdepartmental collaboration. Understanding the factors influencing employee performance in this institution is critical to enhancing public sector productivity and accountability.

Among the various determinants of employee performance, performance allowances and the work environment stand out as two interrelated dimensions shaping both individual motivation and organizational productivity. Performance allowances operate as extrinsic motivators that reward effort and achievement, fostering a sense of fairness and accountability among employees (Armstrong 2012). These allowances are not merely financial instruments but also policy tools that aim to strengthen performance-based governance and enhance employee morale. When properly implemented, performance allowances align personal aspirations with institutional objectives, thereby creating a culture of performance orientation within public organizations. However, without a supportive work environment, the motivational effects of such incentives may diminish, leading to inconsistencies between reward mechanisms and actual performance outcomes.

The work environment, encompassing both physical and psychosocial aspects, plays a crucial role in sustaining employee engagement and performance quality. Favorable physical conditions, positive interpersonal relationships, and an inclusive organizational climate contribute to psychological comfort and commitment at work (Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel 2023). Empirical evidence from Indonesian public institutions (Dyah Latu Nuswantari, Hutomo, & Mansyur, 2018) suggests that while performance allowances can enhance motivation, their effectiveness in improving performance is strongly mediated by environmental factors such as leadership support, communication quality, and workload balance (Tjilen, 2025). Hence, an integrative approach that combines fair compensation with a conducive work environment is essential to optimize employee performance in the public sector, particularly within regional administrative contexts.

However, empirical gaps remain concerning the *simultaneous relationship* among these variables in local government contexts. Most prior studies have examined performance allowances or work environment as separate factors, without analyzing their combined effect on motivation and performance, particularly within regional secretariats that have distinct administrative cultures and compensation systems. Additionally, contextual factors such as local governance structure, resource availability, and organizational culture may influence how performance-based incentives operate in practice (Mahmudi, 2019; Kim & Holzer, 2019). Therefore, this study aims to analyze (1) the effect of performance allowances on employee performance, (2) the influence of the work environment on employee performance, and (3) the simultaneous effect of performance allowances and work environment on employee performance at the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency. The findings are expected to contribute both theoretically—by expanding the literature on public sector performance management—and practically—by providing policy recommendations for improving human resource effectiveness in local governments.

LITERATURE REVIEW / THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK

Employee Performance

Employee performance refers to the level of achievement attained by employees in carrying out their responsibilities to accomplish the organization's vision, mission, and strategic objectives. According to Mangkunegara (2020), performance is the result of both work quantity and quality achieved by an individual in executing tasks based on their assigned responsibilities. High performance is influenced by factors such as skills, discipline, motivation, and commitment, while poor performance often results from weak supervision, unclear job descriptions, and low morale.

In the public sector, employee performance plays a pivotal role in determining institutional efficiency and service quality. The emphasis that public employees' effectiveness reflects the integrity of the bureaucratic system. Inadequate performance not only reduces service quality but also undermines public trust. Moreover, Locke and Latham's (2019) *Goal-Setting Theory* suggests that specific and challenging goals enhance performance through motivation and focus.

Performance indicators commonly include work quantity, work quality, timeliness, efficiency, discipline, and initiative (Nurjaya, 2021). These dimensions provide a comprehensive measure of how effectively public servants achieve expected results. Therefore, employee performance represents not merely the completion of tasks but also the realization of organizational values through competence and accountability.

Performance Allowance

Performance allowance (or *tunjangan kinerja*) is a monetary reward given to employees based on their individual and organizational performance outcomes. In Indonesia, this policy is regulated under the Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform (Permenpan RB) No. 63 of 2011, aiming to enhance productivity, discipline, and motivation among civil servants.

According to Mangkunegara (2020), performance-based pay is both a recognition of effort and a stimulus for continuous improvement. Handoko (2019) highlights that financial compensation motivates employees to exceed performance standards. This aligns with Herzberg's *Two-Factor Theory*, which differentiates between

hygiene factors—such as salary and working conditions—and motivators, including achievement and recognition (Herzberg, Mausner, & Snyderman, 2011). While financial incentives prevent dissatisfaction, intrinsic motivators foster long-term engagement.

From Maslow's *Hierarchy of Needs*, performance allowance satisfies lower-order needs related to financial security and stability, allowing employees to focus on professional growth. Vroom's *Expectancy Theory* further explains that employees are motivated when they believe their efforts lead to performance, and performance leads to rewards. Recent studies (Gupta & Shaheen, 2021; Kim, 2022) confirm that transparent and performance-based remuneration positively influences job satisfaction and productivity in public institutions.

Thus, a fair and measurable performance allowance system is vital for enhancing employee morale, institutional integrity, and the overall effectiveness of bureaucratic reform.

Work Environment

The work environment encompasses all physical, social, and psychological conditions that influence employee behavior and performance. Sedarmayanti (2018) distinguishes two main components: the physical environment (facilities, workspace, comfort, and safety) and the non-physical environment (interpersonal relationships, leadership style, and organizational culture).

A conducive work environment improves motivation and reduces stress, leading to higher performance (Rahayaan, 2019). Bakker and Demerouti (2017) in the *Job Demands–Resources Theory* emphasize that sufficient resources—such as supportive supervision, autonomy, and safe working conditions—enhance engagement and reduce burnout. Similarly, Rahman et al. (2020) found that supportive work environments significantly affect employees' emotional well-being and productivity.

In public administration, environmental factors such as effective communication, collaboration, and trust between leaders and subordinates determine the success of service delivery. Gupta and Shaheen (2021) observed that employees working in well-managed environments tend to demonstrate stronger commitment and performance consistency. Therefore, creating a balanced and supportive work environment is essential for improving both individual and organizational performance outcomes.

Conceptual Framework

The theoretical foundation of this study integrates the perspectives of **Motivation Theory**, **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**, and **Job Demands–Resources Theory**. These theories collectively explain how *performance allowance* (X_1) and *work environment* (X_2) influence *employee performance* (Y).

Performance Allowance (X_1) provides external motivation (hygiene and reward factors) that reinforces desirable behavior and encourages higher effort.

Work Environment (X_2) serves as a contextual factor that nurtures intrinsic motivation by improving comfort, communication, and psychological well-being.

Employee Performance (Y) is the outcome variable reflecting the effectiveness of task completion, quality of service, and organizational contribution.

Conceptual Framework:

Independent Variables (X):

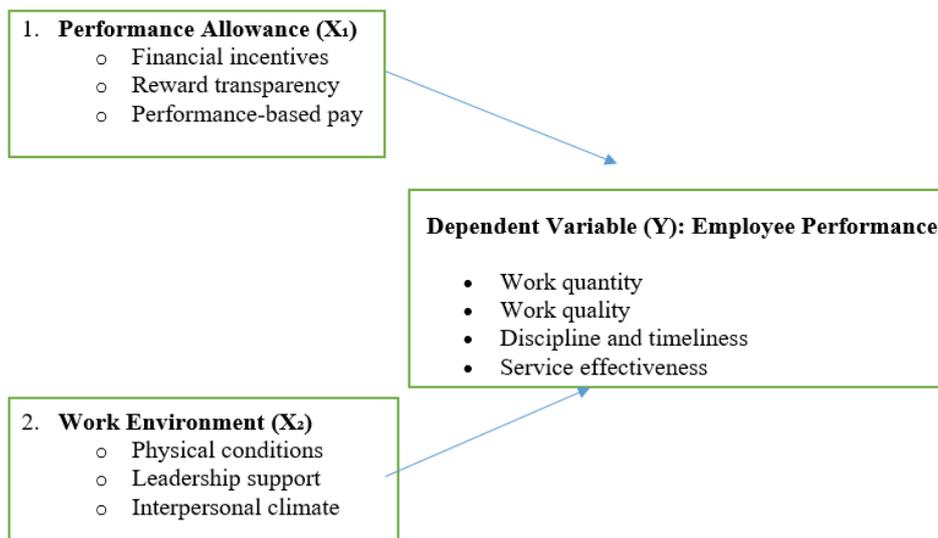


Figure 1. Conceptual framework illustrating the influence of performance allowance (X₁) and work environment (X₂) on employee performance (Y). The model is developed based on Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Alshmemri, Shahwan-Akl, and Maude 2017), Job Demands–Resources Theory (Bakker, Demerouti, and Sanz-Vergel 2023), and Expectancy Theory (Vroom, Porter, and Lawler 2015).

METHODS

Research Design

This study employed a **quantitative explanatory research design**, which aims to test hypotheses and explain the relationship between variables through statistical analysis. According to Sugiyono (2019), quantitative methods are based on the philosophy of positivism, characterized by objectivity, measurability, rationality, and systematic procedures. The explanatory design was chosen to identify the causal relationship between independent variables—**Performance Allowance (X₁)** and **Work Environment (X₂)**—and the dependent variable, **Employee Performance (Y)**, within the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency.

Population and Sample

The population in this study consisted of **190 civil servants** (Aparatur Sipil Negara, ASN) working at the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency. Based on the Slovin formula with a 5% margin of error, a total of **129 respondents** were selected as the study sample. The sampling technique used was **purposive sampling**, considering employees who had received performance allowances for at least one year and were directly involved in administrative and service functions. This approach ensures that the respondents possess sufficient experience and knowledge to assess the research variables accurately.

Data Collection Techniques

Data were collected through four complementary methods to enhance validity and reliability:

Questionnaire (Primary Data)

The main data collection instrument was a **structured questionnaire** using a **five-point Likert scale** (1 = strongly disagree to 5 = strongly agree). The questionnaire consisted of **30 statements** divided into:

- o **Performance Allowance (X₁)** – 10 items

- **Work Environment (X₂)** – 10 items
- **Employee Performance (Y)** – 10 items

Respondents evaluated each item based on their perceptions of work conditions and organizational practices.

Documentation (Secondary Data)

Secondary data were obtained from institutional documents such as:

- The organizational structure of the Regional Secretariat
- Employee demographic data
- Regulations on additional income or performance-based pay
- Annual performance reports
- Local government decrees concerning human resource management

Observation

Non-participatory observation was conducted to verify the physical work environment, employee interactions, and discipline practices. This method complemented quantitative data by providing contextual understanding of workplace conditions (Nasution, 2011).

Interviews

Structured interviews were carried out with key officials, including the Head of the Human Resource Division and section managers, to clarify policies related to performance allowances and workplace management. As Moleong (2014) notes, interviews in quantitative research serve as supporting or confirmatory data rather than the main data source.

Variable Operationalization

Each research variable was operationalized into measurable indicators based on relevant theoretical foundations. Table 1 presents the operational definition and measurement indicators for each variable.

Variable	Conceptual Definition	Indicators	Scale	Source
Performance Allowance (X₁)	Financial compensation provided based on employee performance achievements.	(1) Timeliness of allowance disbursement, (2) fairness and transparency, (3) alignment with performance targets, (4) adequacy of amount, (5) motivational effect.	Likert (1–5)	World Bank (2021); Silitonga (2024)
Work Environment (X₂)	The physical and non-physical conditions surrounding employees that influence their ability and motivation to perform.	(1) Physical comfort, (2) safety, (3) coworker relations, (4) communication patterns, (5) leadership support.	Likert (1–5)	Zhenjing et al. (2022); (Iis et al. 2022)

Employee Performance (Y)	The level of achievement of employees in carrying out their duties according to assigned responsibilities.	(1) Quality of work, (2) quantity of work, (3) timeliness, (4) discipline, (5) teamwork and responsibility.	Likert (1–5)	Robbins & Judge (2013); Nuswantari et al. (2018)
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Data Analysis Techniques

The collected data were analyzed using **IBM SPSS Statistics version 26**. The analysis procedure included:

Validity and Reliability Testing

Validity was assessed using Pearson’s product-moment correlation with a minimum r-value of 0.30.

Reliability was tested using Cronbach’s Alpha, where coefficients ≥ 0.70 indicated acceptable internal consistency.

Classical Assumption Tests

Prior to regression analysis, the data were tested for **normality**, **multicollinearity**, and **heteroscedasticity** to ensure compliance with linear regression assumptions.

Multiple Linear Regression Analysis

The main analysis used multiple regression to evaluate both partial and simultaneous effects of independent variables on employee performance, with the following model:

$$Y = \alpha + \beta_1 X_1 + \beta_2 X_2 + \epsilon$$

Where:

(Y) = Employee Performance

(X₁) = Performance Allowance

(X₂) = Work Environment

(alpha) = Constant

(beta₁, beta₂) = Regression Coefficients

(varepsilon) = Error Term

Hypothesis Testing

- **t-test** was conducted to examine the partial effects of X₁ and X₂ on Y.
- **F-test** was used to test the simultaneous effect of X₁ and X₂.
- The **coefficient of determination (R²)** measured the proportion of variance in employee performance explained by the two predictors.

Research Ethics

This study adhered to ethical research principles, including voluntary participation, respondent anonymity, and the confidentiality of all collected data. Permission for data collection was obtained from the Regional Personnel and Human Resource Development Agency (BKPSDM) of Merauke Regency.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Overview of Research Context

The selection of the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency as the research site is highly relevant considering its strategic administrative role in coordinating governmental functions and providing managerial support to regional leaders. With its complex organizational structure and a large number of civil servants, performance demands at the Secretariat are high.

This study focuses on two key factors that may influence employee performance: **performance allowances** and the **work environment**. Adequate and transparent allowances are expected to enhance employee motivation, while a supportive work environment contributes to comfort and productivity. The study thus provides both academic and practical value by offering insights for leadership in evaluating allowance policies, improving the work environment, and developing sustainable performance strategies.

Characteristics of Respondents

The study involved **129 respondents** who were employees of the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency. Respondent characteristics included gender, age, educational level, years of service, and job position. Most respondents were **male (52.71%)**, and the majority fell within the **40–49 age group (53.49%)**, reflecting a mature and productive workforce. Educationally, **SMA/SMK and undergraduate degree holders** dominated (42.64%), indicating adequate academic qualifications.

In terms of tenure, most respondents had long service periods, implying institutional loyalty. The majority served as **operational or staff-level employees**, whose perceptions represent the front line of administrative and bureaucratic work. Their views are thus essential in evaluating the impact of allowances and work environment on performance.

Instrument Validity and Reliability

Instrument testing confirmed that the research questionnaire was both valid and reliable.

- **Validity test results:** All 30 items (10 for each variable— X_1 , X_2 , and Y) met the criteria with **r-count > 0.173** and **Sig. < 0.05**, confirming item validity.
- **Reliability results:**
 - Performance Allowance (X_1): $\alpha = 0.865$
 - Work Environment (X_2): $\alpha = 0.827$
 - Employee Performance (Y): $\alpha = 0.848$

All values exceeded the 0.60 threshold, demonstrating strong internal consistency (Sugiyono, 2019; Hair et al., 2021).

Descriptive Statistics

Descriptive analysis indicates that all three variables are generally perceived positively:

- **Performance Allowance (X_1):** Mean = 41.08 → categorized as *good*
- **Work Environment (X_2):** Mean = 42.33 → categorized as *conducive*
- **Employee Performance (Y):** Mean = 41.25 → categorized as *high and consistent*

These results suggest that employees generally experience fair compensation, supportive environments, and satisfactory performance outcomes.

Classical Assumption Tests

To ensure the robustness of regression analysis, several assumption tests were conducted:

- **Normality:** The histogram and P–P plot show residuals distributed normally.
- **Multicollinearity:** VIF = 3.434 and tolerance = 0.291 → No multicollinearity.
- **Heteroskedasticity:** Scatterplot shows random residual distribution → No heteroskedasticity.
- **Autocorrelation:** Durbin-Watson value = 2.194 → within acceptable range (1.5–2.5).

These results confirm that the dataset meets the requirements for multiple linear regression analysis using **IBM SPSS Statistics 26**.

Regression Analysis

The results of multiple linear regression analysis are as follows:

$$Y = 34.087 + 0.052X_1 + 0.118X_2$$

where:

- (Y): Employee Performance
- (X₁): Performance Allowance
- (X₂): Work Environment

Interpretation:

- The **intercept (34.087)** represents baseline employee performance when both independent variables are zero.
- A **one-unit increase in Performance Allowance (X₁)** raises performance by **0.052 units**, holding X₂ constant.
- A **one-unit increase in Work Environment (X₂)** raises performance by **0.118 units**, holding X₁ constant.

The **correlation coefficient (R)** of **0.914** indicates a strong relationship between the variables, while the **coefficient of determination (R²)** of **0.836** shows that **83.6%** of performance variation can be explained by X₁ and X₂, with the remaining 16.4% influenced by other factors such as leadership style, motivation, or discipline.

Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis	Statement	Result	Conclusion
H1	Performance Allowance → Employee Performance	t = 4.469; Sig. = 0.000	Accepted (Significant Positive Effect)
H2	Work Environment → Employee Performance	t = 9.696; Sig. = 0.000	Accepted (Significant Positive Effect)

H3	X_1 & $X_2 \rightarrow$ Employee Performance	$F = 320.956$; Sig. = 0.000	Accepted (Model Significant)
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Thus, both variables—individually and simultaneously—positively and significantly affect employee performance.

DISCUSSION

The findings confirm that **performance allowances** have a significant positive impact on employee performance at the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency. This result is consistent with **Hasibuan (2017)**, who emphasizes that financial incentives act as extrinsic motivators that enhance work enthusiasm and productivity. Performance-based allowances encourage employees to align their efforts with organizational objectives, reinforcing accountability and motivation.

Furthermore, the **work environment** also exerts a strong positive influence, as indicated by its higher regression coefficient (0.118). A comfortable, supportive, and collaborative work environment enhances employees' psychological well-being and task efficiency. This finding aligns with **Sedarmayanti (2017)**, who asserts that conducive workplace conditions improve both satisfaction and performance. It also echoes **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory**, suggesting that non-monetary factors like relationships, recognition, and work conditions are vital to sustained performance improvement.

The simultaneous influence of both variables further demonstrates the **synergistic relationship** between compensation and the work environment. Adequate financial rewards motivate employees, while a conducive work environment maintains their commitment and creativity. The results validate previous findings by **Nuswantari et al. (2018)** and **Tambaip et al. (2023)**, emphasizing that effective human resource policies should integrate both material and non-material incentives to achieve optimal performance outcomes.

IMPLICATIONS

From a managerial standpoint, the findings underscore the necessity for an integrated policy approach that aligns financial incentives with workplace conditions to maximize employee performance. The BKPSDM Merauke should regularly evaluate the effectiveness of performance-based allowance systems, ensuring that they are fair, transparent, and directly linked to measurable performance indicators. Establishing a clear framework that ties rewards to specific outcomes will not only strengthen accountability but also motivate employees to achieve higher productivity levels and meet institutional goals.

In addition, improving the physical and psychosocial aspects of the work environment is equally vital. Investments in ergonomic workspaces, adequate lighting, and reliable digital infrastructure can enhance comfort, reduce fatigue, and streamline administrative efficiency. Furthermore, fostering a culture of open communication, collaboration, and respect within the workplace can create a supportive climate that promotes trust, innovation, and professional growth.

From a broader policy perspective, these efforts contribute to sustainable human resource development within the public sector. By harmonizing financial incentives with conducive working conditions, local governments can cultivate a performance-driven culture while maintaining employee well-being and institutional integrity. This balanced approach ensures that productivity improvements are sustainable and aligned with the principles of good governance.

CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Based on the results of descriptive and inferential statistical analyses, several conclusions can be drawn as follows:

Performance allowances have a positive and significant influence on employee performance. This finding confirms that financial incentives serve as external motivators that enhance employees' enthusiasm, responsibility, and commitment to achieving organizational goals. The greater the alignment between allowances and actual performance, the stronger the employees' motivation to improve their work outcomes.

The work environment has a stronger and more dominant influence compared to performance allowances. A supportive, safe, and collaborative work environment promotes psychological comfort, reduces work stress, and increases overall productivity. This result emphasizes that non-financial aspects—such as interpersonal relationships, leadership support, and workplace facilities—play an essential role in maintaining employee performance.

The simultaneous influence of both variables indicates that employee performance is shaped not only by material compensation but also by contextual factors that affect employee engagement and job satisfaction. Therefore, performance improvement strategies should adopt a balanced approach by integrating both financial and non-financial motivational dimensions.

Overall, this study empirically confirms that the synergistic interaction between fair compensation policies and a conducive work environment plays a crucial role in optimizing public sector performance, particularly within local government institutions such as the Regional Secretariat of Merauke Regency.

Recommendations

Based on these findings, several practical and policy-oriented recommendations are proposed:

Policy Review on Performance Allowances.

The Merauke Regency Government should periodically evaluate the structure and distribution mechanisms of performance allowances to ensure fairness, transparency, and alignment with measurable performance indicators. Linking allowances to performance outcomes and innovation metrics can strengthen accountability and productivity.

Work Environment Enhancement.

Efforts should focus on improving both the physical and psychological dimensions of the work environment. This includes modernizing office facilities, enhancing digital infrastructure, maintaining hygiene and safety standards, and fostering a positive organizational culture that encourages collaboration and open communication.

Human Resource Development.

Training and professional development programs should be integrated into regular performance management systems. Providing opportunities for capacity building can improve employees' competencies and job satisfaction, leading to higher organizational performance.

Sustainable Motivation Strategy.

Beyond short-term incentives, the Regional Secretariat should establish a sustainable motivation framework that combines intrinsic and extrinsic rewards—such as recognition programs, career development pathways, and participatory decision-making processes—to maintain long-term engagement.

Future Research Directions.

Future studies could expand the scope by incorporating other influential factors such as **leadership style, organizational commitment, and digital transformation readiness**, which may mediate or moderate the relationship between allowances, work environment, and performance. Comparative studies across different regional agencies would also enhance the generalizability of these findings.

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