



Ensuring Optimal Productivity: Linking Incentives, Safety Culture, and Output in the Food and Beverage Industry

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ABSTRACT

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This study explores the impact of rewards and work discipline on employee productivity, a leading food and beverage manufacturing company. The research aims to analyse how rewards influence productivity, with work discipline acting as a mediator. A quantitative, causal design was employed, using questionnaires, interviews, and observations to collect data from 100 respondents. The findings indicate that rewards, particularly performance-based incentives and bonuses, positively affect work discipline, thereby enhancing productivity. However, base salary adjustments and bonus transparency were found to be suboptimal. Work discipline, especially in areas such as safety compliance and task completion, plays a crucial mediating role in translating rewards into higher productivity. The study recommends restructuring reward systems to prioritise performance-based incentives while reinforcing discipline in critical areas. The research contributes to a deeper understanding of how rewards and discipline interact to improve manufacturing productivity, providing actionable insights for HR management in similar industries.

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INTRODUCTION

In an increasingly competitive global landscape, industries face pressure to improve productivity and maintain high-quality standards. This is especially true in the food and beverage manufacturing sector, where maintaining competitive advantage is crucial for survival. The key to sustaining this growth lies in optimizing human resources, as workers are essential to driving both innovation and productivity (Sulistyaningsih, 2023). By focusing on effective employee management strategies, particularly rewards and work discipline, companies can foster a motivated and productive workforce. Research shows that reward systems can significantly boost motivation and work discipline, which in turn improves overall productivity (Onavwie et al., 2023; Malik et al.,

2025). Given these dynamics, it is crucial for industries, especially those in the manufacturing sector, to examine and improve these practices (Kamble et al., 2023; Eslami et al., 2024). Therefore, understanding how to leverage rewards and work discipline to enhance teacher and employee performance is essential for creating a competitive, efficient, and sustainable work environment, thus making this research significant.

The food and beverage manufacturing industry is currently grappling with a major challenge: improving employee productivity amidst fierce competition and rising consumer demands. At PT. Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk. Cibitung, productivity has been inconsistent, with notable declines in recent months. The problem stems from a reward system that is not fully optimized, coupled with insufficient emphasis on work discipline. In addition, the lack of proper guidance and structured mentoring systems has hindered the ability of employees to innovate and reflect on their work. This research seeks to address these gaps by analyzing the effect of rewards on employee productivity and the role of work discipline as a mediating factor, as many companies in the food and beverage sector continue to overlook the link between employee motivation, rewards, and consistent performance outcomes.

At PT. Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk. Cibitung, despite efforts to improve employee productivity, fluctuations in production levels persist, highlighting inefficiencies in the current reward and discipline systems. Monthly production outputs have consistently fallen short of the set targets, with figures dropping below 80% in the later months of 2023. This decline is indicative of deeper issues, such as a lack of alignment between the rewards system and employees' motivation. Furthermore, work discipline remains inconsistent across different teams, impacting overall work efficiency and quality. While employees have been given financial and non-financial rewards, the limited application of performance-based incentives, coupled with a lack of strong disciplinary practices, has resulted in stagnation rather than improvement. This underscores the need for a more holistic approach that not only incentivizes employees but also instills stronger work discipline to ensure continuous improvement in productivity.

Previous research highlights the critical role of reward systems in boosting employee performance. Aldabbas et al (2025) emphasize that rewards both intrinsic and extrinsic are vital for increasing motivation and fostering commitment among workers. These studies suggest that well-structured rewards can enhance employee engagement and performance. However, much of the existing literature has been focused on urban industries or government sectors, and the research in rural or manufacturing settings is limited. Additionally, studies have often ignored the mediating role of work discipline in this

relationship. The research conducted by Hadijaya et al (2024) suggests that rewards linked directly to performance not only increase motivation but also improve organizational culture. However, despite these promising findings, the application of these principles in the food and beverage sector, especially in rural settings, remains under-explored, creating a gap that needs to be addressed.

A review of the literature reveals that while much research has addressed the positive impact of rewards on employee performance, few have examined the complex relationship between rewards, work discipline, and productivity, particularly in the context of the food and beverage manufacturing industry (Pei et al., 2025). Studies by Nadi (2023) explored the role of work discipline as a mediating variable in the relationship between rewards and employee performance, yet this concept remains under-researched in large-scale manufacturing companies like PT. Indofood. Furthermore, while existing studies have predominantly examined the impact of reward systems in government organizations and SMEs, this research aims to fill a gap by focusing on a large manufacturing company in a rural area, which presents a more complex organizational structure and reward system. This research will extend current knowledge by exploring how work discipline can mediate the effects of rewards on employee performance and productivity in a food and beverage company.

This study's novelty lies in its focus on a large-scale food and beverage manufacturing company and its examination of how rewards and work discipline interact to affect employee performance and productivity. While reward systems are widely studied, the specific role of work discipline as a mediator between rewards and productivity in a manufacturing context has not been extensively explored, especially in rural settings. The research will offer a fresh perspective by integrating both traditional Islamic values and contemporary management practices, reflecting the company's commitment to employee growth. By addressing this gap, the study will contribute significantly to the literature on human resource management in Islamic organizations, particularly those located in less urbanized areas, and offer practical insights for companies facing similar challenges.

This study aims to answer the research question: How can coaching and mentoring, implemented by school principals and managers, improve employee performance and productivity at PT. Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk. Cibitung? The argument is that when effectively implemented, coaching and mentoring can foster a collaborative environment, enhance reflective practices, and significantly improve work performance. The study hypothesizes that work discipline acts as a crucial mediator in this relationship, strengthening the impact of rewards on employee productivity. This research will provide empirical evidence that not only supports the significance of rewards and work discipline

but also demonstrates how these elements together can create a more productive and harmonious work environment. The findings will contribute to enhancing the effectiveness of human resource management policies at PT. Indofood and similar companies.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study uses a quantitative approach with a causal design to examine the relationship between Reward (X), Work Discipline (M), and Work Productivity (Y) among employees of PT Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk. Cibitung. Three variables are operationalized in ordinal scale indicators: Reward (salary, incentives, bonuses), Work Discipline (absenteeism, SOP compliance, time discipline), and Work Productivity (quality, quantity, time efficiency). Primary data were collected through questionnaires, interviews, and observations, while secondary data came from reports and journals. The study population was all company employees (90,770 people); sampling was determined using the Slovin formula with a margin of error of 10% and 100 respondents were taken purposively, focusing on lower management related to the production process and the PKB formulation team, with a composition of 42% men and 58% women.

The instrument was tested for validity using Pearson correlation (cutoff $r > 0.30$) and for reliability using Cronbach's Alpha (≥ 0.70 is considered reliable, $0.70 - 0.90$ is good). Descriptive analysis used frequency distribution and Likert scoring 1 - 5, including calculation of item classification ranges (100–180 to 420–500). Verification analysis included classical assumption tests (Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality, multicollinearity via Tolerance/VIF, heteroscedasticity via scatterplot and Glejser test), as well as path analysis to estimate direct, indirect (mediation), and total effects. Hypothesis testing was carried out using the t-test (partial), F-test (simultaneous), coefficient of determination (R^2/Kd) for the strength of the effect, and the Sobel test for the significance of mediation; interpretation of the level of closeness of the effect (Sugiyono, 2019).

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Result

Respondent Profile

The profile of 100 respondents of PT. Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk. Cibitung employees shows a gender composition of 42% male and 58% female; the majority are in the productive age with the largest portion of 46–55 years (31%), followed by 25–35 years (29%) and 36–45 years (27%). The educational background is dominated by Diploma (41%) and High School/Vocational High School (39%), while Bachelor's degree is 16%, Master's degree is 3%, and Doctorate is 1%. In terms of length of service, the majority have worked for 16–

20 years (39%), followed by 11–15 years (26%) and 5–10 years (21%). The combination of the dominance of experienced personnel, vocational-technical education, and a higher proportion of women reflects a mature and stable human resource structure, important capital for the effectiveness of reward policies, strengthening work discipline, and increasing productivity.

Descriptive Analysis

In general, incentives and bonuses have proven to be the most significant motivators. Employees perceive a clear link between work performance and rewards, enabling this variable pay mechanism to reinforce performance-oriented behavior. On the other hand, the salary base is not yet sufficient to drive productivity, and the bonus determination process is still perceived as unclear. For optimal impact, the company needs to clarify criteria, assessment processes, and communication of results, while reviewing the incentives for base salaries and the consistency of the application of performance indicators. Attendance discipline appears strong: employees consistently arrive on schedule, adhere to attendance rules, return on time after breaks, and maintain focus on work without engaging in extraneous activities. Compliance with work procedures and authorizations also appears good, indicating effective socialization of SOPs and a clear chain of command, resulting in a more organized and predictable workflow. However, the implementation of safety practices and the accuracy of task completion remain weak. This situation suggests the need to strengthen safety culture through regular training, adequate equipment availability, and supervision in production areas. Regarding timeliness, improvements can be focused on workload planning, prioritization, mentoring superiors, and closer progress monitoring to identify and resolve obstacles promptly.

Employee productivity reflects a strong capacity to meet targets, increase workloads when needed, manage time effectively, and maintain a work rhythm without a tendency to procrastinate. They also demonstrate the ability to complete tasks more quickly while maintaining quality, indicating process efficiency and good workflow mastery. However, there appears to be a gap between personal efforts to minimize errors and consistent adherence to formal quality standards. Recognition for quality output is also not yet strongly felt. Strengthening the quality system, including practical training, on-line mentoring, inspection checklists, and structured feedback and appreciation, needs to be prioritized to ensure work speed and volume align with guaranteed quality.

Hypothesis Test Results

The first stage analysis shows that Rewards have a significant effect on Work Discipline. The coefficient indicates a positive influence, with the

proportion of Discipline variance explained by Rewards amounting to approximately one-third of the total variation ($R^2 \approx 0.286$), so the error term for this model is relatively moderate ($e_1 \approx 0.844$). This finding confirms that improvements in the Reward system tend to be followed by improvements in discipline, as shown in the table below:

Table 1. First Stage Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	15.425	2.132		7.235	.000		
	REWARD	.488	.078	.535	6.269	.000	1.000	1.000

a. Dependent Variable: DISCIPLINE

The table below is a model summary explaining how much influence the first stage has on this research model:

Table 2. First Stage Summary Model

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.535 ^a	.286	.279	6.116

a. Predictors: (Constant), REWARD

b. Dependent Variable: DISCIPLINE

In the second stage, both Rewards and Work Discipline had a significant and positive effect on Work Productivity. The model explained most of the variation in Productivity ($R^2 \approx 0.872$), with a small error term ($e_2 \approx 0.357$). Practically, improving Reward policies and strengthening employee daily discipline move in tandem in driving higher productivity achievements, with the regression coefficients explained in the table below:

Table 3. Second Stage Regression Coefficients

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Collinearity Statistics	
		B	Std. Error	Beta			Tolerance	VIF
1	(Constant)	2.500	1.013		2.468	.015		
	REWARD	.496	.035	.602	14.033	.000	.714	1.401
	DISCIPLINE	.416	.039	.461	10.745	.000	.714	1.401

a. Dependent Variable: PRODUCTIVITY

The table below is a model summary explaining how much influence the second stage has on this research model:

Table 4. Second Stage Summary Model
Model Summary^b

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.934 ^a	.872	.870	2.346

a. Predictors: (Constant), DISCIPLINE, REWARD

b. Dependent Variable: PRODUCTIVITY

From the perspective of the influence path analysis, Reward has a strong direct influence on Productivity and also an indirect influence through Work Discipline. The magnitude of the indirect influence resulting from multiplying the Reward → Discipline path by Discipline → Productivity path is smaller than the direct influence, so the mediating role is reinforcing but not dominating. Thus, the total influence of Reward on Productivity is composed of a combination of the direct effect and the additional effect through discipline, according to the following path analysis results:

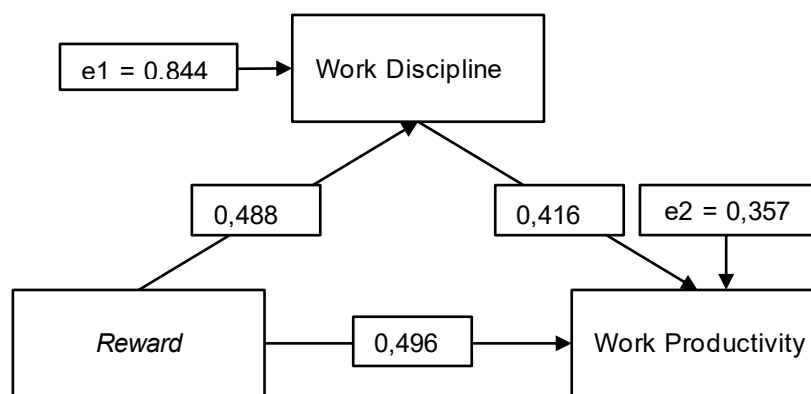


Figure 1. Research Model

The Sobel test confirmed that Work Discipline acted as a significant mediator ($p < 0.05$). Implicatively, managerial interventions that combine improved transparency and reward incentives with SOP enforcement, time management, and safety compliance will have the most optimal productivity impact, as they utilize both the direct and mediated channels through discipline.

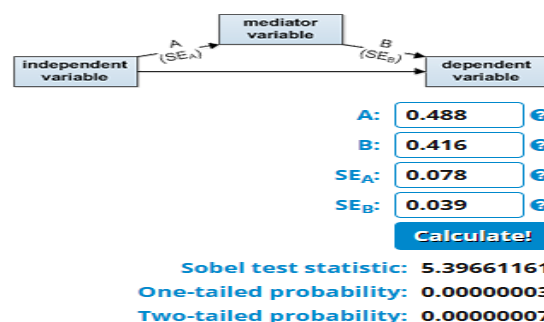


Figure 2. Research Variable

Discussion

The results of this study provide significant insights into the relationship between rewards, work discipline, and productivity, especially in the context of PT. Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk. Cibitung. The findings align with previous research that suggests rewards play a crucial role in improving employee performance, as seen in the work of Ayi et al (2024), who highlight the positive impact of rewards on motivation and work behavior. Similarly, Omolabi et al (2024) stress that a performance-based reward system enhances organizational culture and employee effectiveness. However, this study presents a nuanced view by emphasizing that rewards alone do not automatically translate into higher productivity unless coupled with strong work discipline (Ahmada et al., 2023; Devates et al., 2024). This is consistent with Orji et al (2024), who emphasizes that discipline is crucial for ensuring the effectiveness of incentive systems. The study novel contribution lies in recognizing work discipline as a critical mediator in this relationship, offering new insights into how rewards and discipline work together to enhance productivity (Zainun et al., 2025; Kusumah et al., 2025).

The research further contributes to the understanding of the interplay between rewards and work discipline. While studies such as those by Zainun et al (2025) have explored the impact of rewards on productivity, they have largely overlooked the mediating role of work discipline. This study clarifies this gap by demonstrating that work discipline, particularly in areas like safety compliance and task completion, plays a significant mediating role between rewards and productivity (Udhayanto et al., 2024; Putra et al., 2025). The Sobel test confirms that the indirect effect of rewards through discipline is present, though smaller than the direct effect of rewards on productivity (Wibowo et al., 2023; Sujimah, 2025). This finding underscores the importance of not just offering rewards but ensuring that they are effectively linked to disciplined behavior in the workplace. This contrasts with the assumption that rewards alone can drive performance without considering the broader work culture and disciplinary frameworks in place.

The study also diverges from previous literature by identifying specific components of the reward system that have differing impacts on productivity. While many studies, including those by Aduamah et al (2025) emphasize the general effectiveness of rewards, this research highlights that bonus mechanisms are more effective than base salary in boosting productivity. This finding suggests that employees are more motivated by performance-based incentives (Mathur, 2025; Thneibat et al., 2023). The difference between the impact of bonuses and base salary is critical, as it suggests that companies should design reward systems that prioritize performance-based incentives over fixed salary

components (Kusnanto et al., 2024; Xilola et al., 2025). This nuanced understanding helps refine the reward strategies in manufacturing environments where output targets are crucial.

From a theoretical perspective, the study enhances existing knowledge by incorporating work discipline as a behavioral mediator between rewards and productivity. This finding challenge traditional views where rewards are typically seen as the sole driver of performance. By introducing work discipline as a mediating factor, the research provides a more comprehensive framework for understanding how rewards impact productivity in manufacturing settings. This also has significant practical implications, suggesting that companies should not only focus on reward systems but also on enforcing discipline, particularly in areas like safety and task completion. As noted by Kusnanto et al (2024), operational discipline directly influences work quality and efficiency, and the findings of this study support the argument that without strong discipline, the effectiveness of reward systems can be undermined.

In practice, the study offers actionable recommendations for PT. Indofood and similar organizations facing productivity challenges. The results emphasize the need for a dual approach to managerial intervention: restructuring the reward system to enhance bonus transparency and base salary incentives while simultaneously strengthening operational discipline. Companies should focus on areas of weak discipline, such as safety compliance and task completion accuracy, to ensure that rewards translate into tangible improvements in productivity. These findings enrich the literature on reward and discipline systems and offer a practical roadmap for improving manufacturing productivity through a balanced approach. By applying these recommendations, organizations can foster a more productive and disciplined workforce, leading to sustainable improvements in performance.

CONCLUSION

The most significant finding from this study is the positive impact of rewards on both work discipline and productivity, with work discipline acting as an important mediator in this relationship. The research demonstrates that performance-based rewards, particularly incentives and bonuses, effectively encourage behavior aligned with organizational goals. However, base salary adjustments and the transparency of bonus determination processes remain suboptimal. On the process side, while attendance discipline and procedural compliance are relatively strong, there is still a need to strengthen areas such as safety compliance, task completion, and the internalization of quality standards. These findings emphasize that rewards alone are insufficient without a robust system of operational discipline and quality standards to support them.

This study contributes significantly to the understanding of the dynamics between rewards, work discipline, and productivity in the food and beverage manufacturing sector. By identifying work discipline as a mediator between rewards and productivity, this research presents a more nuanced understanding of how rewards translate into performance improvements. Additionally, the study's focus on the importance of clear, fair, and transparent compensation structures offers practical recommendations for companies seeking to enhance employee motivation and performance. The emphasis on safety, timely task completion, and quality in the disciplinary process adds value to the existing literature by providing a framework that integrates both performance incentives and operational discipline to improve productivity.

While this study provides valuable insights, it has several limitations. First, the research focused on a single company, PT. Indofood CBP Sukses Makmur Tbk., which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other organizations or industries. Future research could explore similar dynamics in different sectors to broaden the scope of understanding. Second, the study primarily relied on cross-sectional data, which restricts the ability to infer causal relationships over time. Longitudinal studies could provide more robust evidence of the long-term effects of rewards and work discipline on productivity. Finally, while the study identified key areas where operational discipline can be improved, further research is needed to explore the specific interventions that would most effectively enhance safety, task completion, and quality in manufacturing settings.

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