

THE EFFECT OF REWARDS AND PUNISHMENT SYSTEMS ON EMPLOYEE WORK PRODUCTIVITY



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Abstract

This study examines the influence of reward and punishment systems on employee productivity at PT. CB Enterprise, a mid-sized manufacturing company located in Cirebon City, Indonesia. The company has experienced fluctuating productivity levels, which prompted management to explore internal motivational strategies. However, prior to this study, no systematic evaluation had been conducted to determine the actual impact of such mechanisms within the company's operational context. A quantitative research design was employed involving 100 employees as the total population sample. Data were collected using a structured questionnaire with Likert-scale responses, covering three key constructs: reward system, punishment system, and employee productivity. Each construct was measured using multiple validated indicators. Data analysis was performed using SPSS 26, including validity and reliability tests, classical assumption tests, and multiple regression analysis. The results indicate that the punishment system has a significant and positive effect on employee productivity, suggesting that disciplinary enforcement plays a crucial role in shaping work behavior. Conversely, the reward system showed no statistically significant influence. This does not suggest that rewards are irrelevant, but may indicate a misalignment between current reward strategies and employee expectations, especially regarding non-financial or intrinsic incentives. The findings provide insights into how structured punishment can reinforce productivity in certain organizational cultures, while also highlighting the need to reevaluate existing reward schemes. This study contributes to the broader discourse on human resource practices in Indonesian enterprises and calls for more context-sensitive incentive models in future research.

Keywords: Rewards System, Punishment, Work Productivity

INTRODUCTION

In recent years, productivity stagnation has become a pressing issue at global, national, and local levels. Globally, countries are struggling to maintain competitive productivity growth amid demographic changes and technological disruptions (Geering et al., 2024). For instance, the United Kingdom faces regional disparities that affect productivity and, consequently, the standard of living across areas (McCann & Yuan, 2022). China contends with rigid market dynamics and resource misallocations, which hinder efficiency (Brandt et al., 2020). Meanwhile, Italy has experienced long-term productivity stagnation, diverging from its European counterparts (Jirasavetakul & Zhang, 2022).

While these international examples highlight structural productivity barriers, they also offer valuable lessons on why micro-level analysis is crucial especially within developing economies like Indonesia. The relevance of these cases lies in their illustration of how institutional, organizational, and policy-level variables directly influence productivity outcomes at the firm level.

At the national level, Indonesia faces similar challenges. Productivity remains uneven across sectors due to inadequate labor reallocation from low-productivity to high-productivity industries, a legacy of the country's slow structural transformation (Ikhsan et al., 2022). According to BPS, Indonesia's labor productivity growth rate between 2019 and 2023 averaged only around 2.3% annually, reflecting persistent inefficiencies in the workforce allocation and performance (BPS, 2023).

One such firm, PT. CB Enterprise operates in Cirebon and exemplifies the productivity challenges faced by medium-scale companies in Indonesia. Fluctuating productivity levels have prompted management to implement internal measures to boost employee performance, one of which is the adoption of a rewards and punishment system. These systems are expected to influence employees' work motivation, discipline, and ultimately productivity.

While various studies have assessed reward or punishment mechanisms individually, few focus explicitly on their combined impact on employee productivity within the context of Indonesian mid-size enterprises. Moreover, given the inconclusive evidence regarding the direct relationship between financial incentives and productivity in similar companies (Rahmah & Sari, 2023), there is a need to investigate this dynamic further.

Therefore, this study aims to determine the extent to which the implementation of a reward and punishment system affects employee productivity at PT. CB Enterprise. By examining both motivational drivers and deterrent effects at the micro-organizational level, this research contributes to the broader discourse on enhancing firm productivity in emerging economies.

REVIEW OF LITERATURE

Employee Work Productivity

Employee work productivity is a key determinant of organizational success, often reflecting the efficiency and motivation of a company's workforce. While Prastikasari and Sunardi (2025) define productivity as the output generated by employees, Putri et al. (2023) emphasize the balance between inputs and outputs with a focus on process efficiency. Baiti

et al. (2020) offer a broader perspective, linking productivity to time-based performance indicators.

However, these definitions though valid individually require synthesis. When applied to a manufacturing context like PT. CB Enterprise, productivity should not only be measured by output volume but also by behavioral and motivational dimensions, such as discipline, morale, and consistency (Nursaumi et al., 2022). Garnasih (2017) further categorizes productivity into two: physical (quantitative) and value-based (qualitative), which together provide a holistic lens to assess employee output.

In the context of this study, a synthesized understanding is necessary: employee productivity refers to the ability of workers to consistently produce measurable output in alignment with organizational goals, while maintaining work discipline, motivation, and quality standards. This framework is particularly relevant for PT. CB Enterprise, which operates in a labor-intensive industry and depends heavily on individual performance metrics.

Recent studies, such as Supriyadi et al. (2020) highlight that productivity in Indonesian SMEs is significantly influenced not just by operational tools, but also by intrinsic motivation and clear reward-punishment frameworks. This reinforces the necessity of viewing productivity as a multidimensional construct.

Rewards System

The rewards system refers to the formal and informal mechanisms used by organizations to recognize and reinforce desirable employee behavior. Suyono et al. (2022) identify three key dimensions of rewards: financial, intrinsic, and non-financial. Financial rewards include salary and bonuses, while intrinsic rewards involve recognition and empathy. Non-financial rewards refer to status, empowerment, or representation.

Akbar and Subariyanti (2023) argue that rewards can enhance job satisfaction and performance when they align with employee values and job roles. However, merely offering financial benefits often proves insufficient. Employees at PT. CB Enterprise, for example, are more likely to respond to developmental incentives like training or promotion opportunities than to cash-based rewards (Rahmah & Sari, 2023). This observation is echoed by Uzochukwu et al. (2023) in the Nigerian hospitality sector, where intrinsic rewards proved more impactful than monetary ones.

In contrast to studies suggesting direct causality, Salman and Olawale (2021) found that reward systems may yield limited productivity effects unless designed with employee engagement in mind. This highlights the importance of tailoring reward strategies to the organizational context.

In sum, for PT. CB Enterprise, an effective reward system, must go beyond monetary incentives and focus on career development, social recognition, and inclusive participation to maximize employee productivity. The first hypothesis put out in this study is based on earlier research and is:

H1 : The better the rewards system, the higher the employee work productivity.

Punishment

Punishment, derived from the Latin word *punire*, refers to disciplinary measures taken to correct rule violations. In organizational settings, Rosmawati and Indra (2024)

define punishment as a regulatory response to non-compliance, while Rahmah and Sari (2023) see it as a motivational mechanism to uphold standards.

Two types of punishment are widely acknowledged: preventive punishment meant to deter undesirable behavior before it occurs, and repressive punishment imposed after a rule violation has taken place (Wibisono & Siharis, 2022). At PT. CB Enterprise, these forms manifest in verbal warnings, formal reprimands, suspensions, or terminations, depending on the severity of the infraction.

Nurvadila et al. (2023) showed that in PT. Wuling Kumala Cabang Mamuju, punishment had a stronger effect on productivity than rewards, indicating its role in reinforcing discipline. Putra and Damayanti (2020) observed similar results among GrabCar drivers, where penalties led to improved punctuality and service consistency.

Nevertheless, a balanced approach is necessary. Excessive punishment may demotivate employees, whereas transparent and fair enforcement improves compliance and productivity (Suhartini, 2019). Therefore, at PT. CB Enterprise, the punishment system should not function solely as a deterrent but as a structured method to promote accountability, discipline, and long-term behavioral change. The second hypothesis put out in this study is based on earlier research and is:

H2 : The better the punishment, the higher the work productivity.

RESEARCH METHOD

This research employs a quantitative approach with an explanatory design to examine the influence of rewards and punishment systems on employee work productivity at PT. CB Enterprise. The choice of quantitative methods allows for the measurement of relationships among variables through statistical analysis using SPSS version 26. The primary data was collected using a structured questionnaire, which was developed based on theoretical constructs and adapted from previous validated instruments (Rahmah & Sari, 2023; Suyono et al., 2022). The questionnaire used a Likert scale ranging from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree) to capture respondent perceptions. To ensure clarity and comprehensiveness, each variable in the study was operationalized through multiple indicators:

1. The reward system variable (X1) consisted of 9 items, covering dimensions of financial, intrinsic, and non-financial rewards (Trihudyatmanto & Sukardi, 2023).
2. The punishment variable (X2) included 8 items, capturing both preventive and repressive aspects of disciplinary actions (Wibisono & Siharis, 2022).
3. The employee work productivity variable (Y) comprised 7 items, measuring aspects such as output quality, efficiency, discipline, and employee morale (Nursaumi et al., 2022).

To ensure instrument validity, a content validity check was conducted by consulting two academic experts in human resource management, followed by a construct validity test using Pearson correlation. All items were declared valid as the calculated r-value exceeded the r-table value of 0.195 ($N = 100$, $\alpha = 0.05$). Reliability testing using Cronbach's Alpha showed a value of 0.829, exceeding the threshold of 0.6, indicating that all instrument items were internally consistent (Heryana, 2022).

The population in this study included all employees of PT. CB Enterprise, totaling 100 individuals. Given the manageable population size, the study employed a saturated sampling technique, using the entire population as the sample (Amin, 2023). Data collection was carried out in March 2025 through offline distribution of the questionnaire, ensuring respondent anonymity and data confidentiality. The data were analyzed using SPSS to perform several statistical procedures, including descriptive analysis, validity and reliability testing, multiple linear regression, and classical assumption tests (normality and multicollinearity). The final regression model was tested to determine the influence of the independent variables (reward and punishment) on the dependent variable (employee productivity), following the formula:

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

This methodological framework allows the research to test hypotheses rigorously while providing replicable steps for future studies.

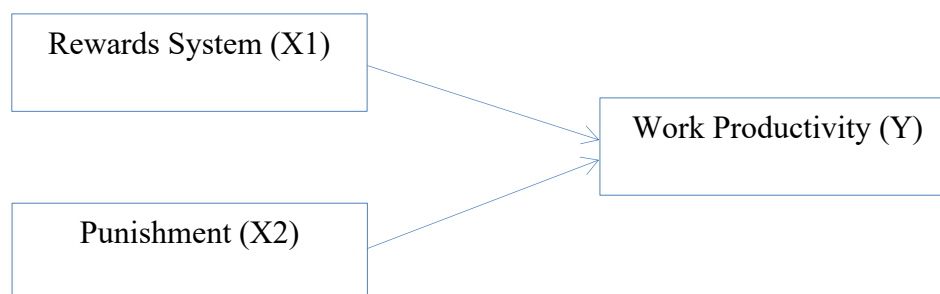


Figure 1.
Research Model

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

1. Respondent Characteristics

Respondents in this study were categorized according to a number of factors, including age, gender, and education level. To understand the relationship between the respondent profile and the research variables, an explanation of these characteristics is provided. Additionally, the results of the data analysis are shown in Table 1 below based on respondent characteristics:

Table 1.
Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender, Age, Education and Length of Work

Respondent Characteristics	Number of Respondents	
	Unit Number	Percentage
Gender		
Male	83	83%
Female	17	17%
Age		
20 – 24 years	25	25%
25 – 35 years	40	40%

36 – 45 years	22	22%
> 46 years	13	13%
Education		
High School/Equivalent	55	55%
Bachelor	30	30%
Master	15	15%
Length of Work		
< 5 years	35	35%
5 - 10 years	40	40%
> 10 years	25	25%

Source: Data processed in 2025

The demographic profile of the 100 employees at PT. CB Enterprise reveals a workforce that is predominantly male (83%), with the largest age group being 25–35 years (40%). Most employees hold a high school diploma (55%) and have between 5 to 10 years of work experience (40%). While these statistics are useful descriptively, they also offer interpretive potential. For instance, younger employees or those with mid-level tenure may respond differently to punishment systems due to a greater sensitivity toward job security and career advancement (Salman & Olawale, 2021). Likewise, the dominance of high school-level education might shape how reward systems are perceived, particularly the value placed on non-financial rewards such as recognition or involvement in decision-making. Therefore, these characteristics are not just descriptive but may influence how employees internalize motivational stimuli, which ultimately impacts their productivity.

2. Validity Test

A validity and reliability test is often performed for every study that includes a questionnaire as a research tool. The purpose of this validity test is to confirm that each assertion in each questionnaire is accurate. When $N = 100$ and $\alpha = 5\%$, the statement items are deemed acceptable if the adjusted statement-total correlation, or computed r , is higher than the table r (0.195).

Table 2.
Results of Validity Test

Reward System Variables			
Questionnaire Items	r Count	r Table	Information
Item 1	0,432	0,195	Valid
Item 2	0,446	0,195	Valid
Item 3	0,627	0,195	Valid
Item 4	0,632	0,195	Valid
Item 5	0,458	0,195	Valid
Item 6	0,417	0,195	Valid

Item 7	0,425	0,195	Valid
Item 8	0,516	0,195	Valid
Item 9	0,743	0,195	Valid
Punishment Variables			
Item 1	0,473	0,195	Valid
Item 2	0,269	0,195	Valid
Item 3	0,472	0,195	Valid
Item 4	0,720	0,195	Valid
Item 5	0,600	0,195	Valid
Item 6	0,592	0,195	Valid
Item 7	0,868	0,195	Valid
Item 8	0,756	0,195	Valid
Employee Productivity			
Item 1	0,623	0,195	Valid
Item 2	0,752	0,195	Valid
Item 3	0,426	0,195	Valid
Item 4	0,560	0,195	Valid
Item 5	0,570	0,195	Valid
Item 6	0,817	0,195	Valid
Item 7	0,616	0,195	Valid

Source: Data processed in 2025

The results from Table 2. showed that all items across the three variables (reward system, punishment, and productivity) were statistically valid with r-values greater than the threshold of 0.195, and Cronbach's Alpha reached 0.829, indicating excellent internal consistency. Interestingly, some items showed higher correlation values (e.g., $r = 0.743$ for a reward item and $r = 0.868$ for a punishment item), suggesting that certain indicators were more aligned with respondents' experiences. This implies that aspects like disciplinary clarity and recognition may have been more salient within the organizational context of PT. CB Enterprise. However, while no item fell below the threshold, future research might refine or expand the lowest-performing indicators to enhance measurement sensitivity and dimensional breadth (Heryana, 2022; Supriyadi et al., 2020).

3. Reliability Test

Since the Cronbach's Alpha value is more than 0.6, the reliability test findings, which are shown in table 5, indicate that all of the study variables are dependable.

This indicates that all of the research questionnaires utilised in this study are trustworthy tools for measurement.

Table 3.
Reliability Test Results

N	Cronbach's Alpha Value	Information
24	0,829	Reliable

Source: Data processed in 2025

4. Classical Assumption Test

By comparing the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value to the 5% significance criterion (0.05), the Kolmogorov-Smirnov technique is used to test for normality. Information with a normal distribution has a value larger than 0.05, whereas information without a normal distribution has a value less than 0.05.

When there is no correlation between independent components, the best regression model is identified using multicollinearity testing. If there is a relationship between independent factors, the factors do not have orthogonal properties, or the correlation between them is zero. Multicollinearity may be detected using the variation inflation factor (VIF) and the tolerance number. The regression model is regarded as having no multicollinearity if the tolerance value exceeds 0.10 and the VIF is less than 10. The normalcy and multicollinearity test results are displayed below.

Table 4.
Normality and Multicollinearity Test Results

Normality Test		
One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
N		100
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.068 ^c
Multicollinearity Test		
Variable	Tolerance	VIF
Reward System	.926	1.080
Punishment	.926	1.080

Source: Data processed in 2025

The normality test using the Kolmogorov-Smirnov method yielded a significance value of 0.068, which exceeds the 0.05 threshold, indicating that the data is normally distributed. Similarly, the multicollinearity test showed tolerance values of 0.926 and VIF values of 1.080 for both independent variables, suggesting no multicollinearity concerns. These results confirm that the assumptions of linear regression were met, thus reinforcing the robustness of the model used to test the research hypotheses.

5. Multiple Regression Analysis

Table 5.
Multiple Regression Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
(Constant)	2.484	4.070		1.765	.005
Reward System	.122	.095	.0214	1.287	.201
Punishment	.650	.090	.0599	7.252	.000
Adjusted R Square = .527					
F Statistics = 32.035 and sig. 0.000					

Source: Data processed in 2025

Based on the findings of Table 8, the independent variable of the rewards and punishment system can explain 52.7% of the variation in employee work productivity, with a 52.7%, or 0.527, Adjusted R Square value. This indicates that these factors contribute significantly to increasing employee work productivity. Meanwhile, additional factors not included in this study model have an impact on the remaining 47.3%.

The regression model is extremely successful in describing the variance of employee labour productivity in this study, as indicated by the estimated F value in Table 8 of $32.035 > F \text{ table } 3.090$, or sig. value $0.000 < 0.05$. The regression equation may be expressed as follows using the multiple linear regression analysis findings displayed in Table 8: $Y = 2.484 + 0.122 X_1 + 0.650 X_2 + e$. With effect levels of 0.122 and 0.650, respectively, the incentives system variable and the punishment variable positively affect employee job productivity.

The significance value, according to the first hypothesis test findings, is $0.201 < 0.05$. This suggests that employee work productivity (Y) at PT. CB Enterprise is not significantly impacted by the incentives system variable (X1). Therefore, it can be said that the hypothesis that says that employee productivity increases with the quality of the incentives system is **rejected**. The findings of this investigation align with the findings of the research (Abidin & Prawirosumarto, 2024), which shows that the rewards system has no effect on productivity.

Most PT. CB Enterprise workers prefer to be motivated by non-monetary (intrinsic) benefits, including training, promotions, recognition, and involvement in significant decision-making and difficult tasks, although (Rahmah & Sari, 2023) showed that different respondents have different motivational preferences. Since different employees have different levels of motivational preferences, this study shows that although employee reward systems can motivate workers, they do not always have an impact on worker productivity. PT. CB Enterprise management should further improve employee motivation through a number of different incentive schemes because these incentives must be able to increase worker productivity and dedication, both of which are important for the company to grow and gain a competitive advantage over competitors.

The significance value, according to the findings of the second hypothesis test, is $0.000 < 0.05$. This suggests that employee labour productivity (Y) is significantly impacted by the penalty variable (X2). With an influence level of 0.650, the punishment variable has a positive effect on worker productivity. Therefore, it can be said that the theory that says that the more severe the penalty, the more productive the labour will be is **accepted**. The study's findings support those of (Rahmah & Sari, 2023) and (Suhartini, 2019), who discovered that the punishment variable had a partly real impact on productivity.

Employees who behave inconsistently with the rules and regulations in force at PT. CB Enterprise will receive three warning letters. Employees who commit violations and there is no change or improvement in their work, the company will temporarily suspend or terminate the employee's employment period. Meanwhile, if employees commit crimes, the company will release employees from their duties. Punishment is needed as a deterrent effect, and motivated employees will behave better. Employee productivity can also increase. One of the main principles that must be upheld by PT. CB Enterprise to achieve employee productivity is punishment.

These results underscore the need for context-specific incentive strategies, as not all organizations benefit equally from standard financial rewards. Moreover, they raise critical questions about the psychological contract between employer and employee, especially in environments where extrinsic rewards are perceived as inadequate or inconsistently distributed.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings of this study, it can be concluded that the punishment system at PT. CB Enterprise has a statistically significant and positive effect on employee work productivity. Employees appear to respond more strongly to clearly enforced disciplinary measures, which create a structured and accountable work environment. This suggests that a well-implemented punishment system can function not only as a deterrent but also as a behavioral reinforcement mechanism in organizations with hierarchical structures and clearly defined rules. Conversely, the rewards system, as measured in this study, did not show a statistically significant influence on productivity. However, this result should be interpreted with nuance. While the aggregated effect of rewards was not significant, this does not imply that all forms of rewards are ineffective. The questionnaire did not isolate financial, intrinsic, and non-financial rewards in separate models; thus, it is possible that certain forms, such as recognition, professional development, or promotion opportunities may still carry contextual value for certain employee groups, especially those with higher tenure or specific motivation profiles. Therefore, the lack of effect may reflect a misalignment between reward structures and employee expectations, rather than the absence of motivational influence altogether. Overall, the results highlight the importance of customizing motivational strategies. PT. CB Enterprise may benefit from redesigning its reward system to include more differentiated, personalized incentives that match employee needs and values. Moreover, while punishment has proven effective in this context, it should be applied consistently and fairly to maintain morale and avoid unintended negative consequences.

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