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The Role of Employee Enthusiasm and Work Comfort in Influencing Operational Performance at Superindo Bandar Lampung, with Reward and Punishment as a Mediating Variable

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Abstract

This study aims to analyze the effect of employee enthusiasm and working comfort on operational performance with reward and punishment as a mediating variable among employees of Superindo Bandar Lampung. This study is motivated by the importance of human resource quality in supporting productivity, service quality, and work efficiency in the modern retail sector. This research employed a quantitative approach using a survey method through the distribution of Likert-scale questionnaires to employees of Superindo Bandar Lampung. Data were analyzed using Partial Least Squares–Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM). The results show that employee enthusiasm and working comfort have a positive and significant effect on operational performance. In addition, both variables also have a positive and significant effect on reward and punishment. Reward and punishment have a positive effect on operational performance and partially mediate the relationship between employee enthusiasm, working comfort, and operational performance. This study contributes to the development of human resource management, particularly in improving operational performance through strengthening work motivation, working comfort, and the implementation of an effective reward and punishment system.

Keywords: employee enthusiasm, working comfort, reward and punishment, operational performance

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INTRODUCTION

The modern retail sector is one of the business fields that heavily relies on the quality of human resources in carrying out its operational activities. Unlike the manufacturing sector, which primarily emphasizes physical output, the retail industry places direct interaction between employees and customers at the core of service quality creation. Consequently, the operational performance of retail companies is largely determined by employees' ability to maintain productivity, deliver high-quality service, ensure work efficiency, and comply with established standard operating procedures (Pena et al., 2013), (Febrianty dkk, 2022), (Pratama, 2019)

As one of the modern retail companies operating in Bandar Lampung, Superindo faces challenges in maintaining stable operational performance amid increasingly intense business competition. In this context, employee enthusiasm emerges as a critical factor, as it is closely related to work spirit, emotional engagement, and commitment to tasks. Employees with high levels of enthusiasm tend to demonstrate greater productivity, stronger discipline, and a higher capacity to provide excellent customer service. Moreover, strong employee enthusiasm can help reduce absenteeism and turnover rates, which are common issues in the retail industryl (Marisa, 2024), (dkk. Febrianty, 2021), (Rustini, N. M., Pratama, M., & Mada, 2019), (Febrianty, 2017)

In addition to employee enthusiasm, work comfort also plays a significant role in supporting organizational performance. A conducive work environment, adequate facilities, harmonious social relationships, and a fair work system can enhance employees' focus and productivity. Work comfort fosters a positive workplace atmosphere, enabling employees to feel valued and develop a stronger sense of attachment to the organization (Rafiq, 2019), (Febriyanti et al., 2021), (Pratama, 2025)

On the other hand, reward and punishment serve as important mechanisms in shaping and reinforcing employee behavior. Rewards, such as bonuses, incentives, recognition, and promotion opportunities, can motivate employees to perform better, while punishment in the form of warnings or disciplinary sanctions functions to maintain discipline and ensure consistency with organizational standards. The fair and consistent implementation of reward and punishment systems is expected to strengthen the influence of employee enthusiasm and work comfort on improving operational performance (Putra & Damayanti, 2020), (Febrianty, 2025)

Previous studies have indicated that employee enthusiasm, work comfort, and reward and punishment are closely interconnected in enhancing organizational performance. However, research that specifically examines the mediating role of reward

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and punishment in the relationship between employee enthusiasm and work comfort on operational performance remains limited, particularly within the context of the modern retail sector at Superindo in Bandar Lampung (Karami, 2013), (D. Febrianty dkk, 2025) Based on these considerations, this study aims to analyze the effect of employee enthusiasm and work comfort on operational performance, with reward and punishment acting as a mediating variable among employees of Superindo in Bandar Lampung.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employs a quantitative approach using a survey method to objectively and systematically examine the relationships and effects among the research variables. A quantitative design is selected as it enables the generation of numerical data that can be analyzed using statistical techniques to test the proposed hypotheses. The type of research applied is explanatory research, which aims to identify and explain causal relationships among variables, particularly employee enthusiasm, work comfort, reward and punishment, and operational performance.

The study is conducted at Superindo in Bandar Lampung, which serves as the research setting. This location is selected because Superindo represents a modern retail company characterized by high operational intensity and frequent direct interaction between employees and customers. Such conditions are highly relevant to the variables under investigation, especially those related to work enthusiasm, workplace comfort, reward and punishment systems, and their impact on operational performance.

The population of this study consists of all employees of Superindo Bandar Lampung who are involved in operational activities, including service staff, cashiers, warehouse personnel, administrative staff, and managerial employees. The sampling technique used is total sampling (census), where all members of the population are included as respondents. This approach is chosen because the population size is manageable, allowing for comprehensive data collection and enabling the results to more accurately reflect the actual conditions within the organization.

Data are collected using a structured, closed-ended questionnaire developed based on the indicators of each research variable. The questionnaire applies a Likert scale ranging from 1 to 5, representing responses from strongly disagree to strongly agree. Employee enthusiasm is measured through indicators such as work spirit, intrinsic motivation, emotional engagement, and job commitment. Work comfort is assessed through physical work environment, social relationships, workplace facilities, and a sense of security at work. Reward and punishment are measured using indicators including

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rewards, incentives, bonuses, disciplinary actions, and work discipline. Meanwhile, operational performance is evaluated through work productivity, service quality, work efficiency, and compliance with standard operating procedures.

Prior to data analysis, the research instrument is tested for validity and reliability to ensure that each item accurately and consistently measures the intended constructs. Validity testing is conducted to assess the accuracy of the instrument in measuring the research variables, including convergent validity and discriminant validity. Reliability testing is performed using Cronbach's Alpha and Composite Reliability to evaluate the internal consistency of the measurement results.

Furthermore, data analysis in this study utilizes Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) based on Partial Least Squares (PLS) with the assistance of SmartPLS software. The SEM-PLS approach is chosen because it allows for the simultaneous analysis of relationships among latent variables, including both direct and indirect effects, and does not require strict assumptions regarding data distribution. The analysis is carried out through two stages: evaluation of the measurement model (outer model) and evaluation of the structural model (inner model). The outer model is used to assess the validity and reliability of the constructs, while the inner model is used to examine the strength of relationships among variables through R-square values, path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values.

A hypothesis is considered accepted if the t-statistic value exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. Through these analytical procedures, this study is expected to provide robust and reliable findings in explaining the influence of employee enthusiasm and work comfort on operational performance, with reward and punishment acting as a mediating variable among employees of Superindo Bandar Lampung.

RESEARCH RESULT

The respondent characteristics are presented to provide an overview of the Superindo employees' profile, including gender and length of service. This information aims to identify the diversity of respondents' answers in completing the questionnaire and serves as a basis for a more comprehensive understanding and interpretation of the data analysis results. Additionally, these characteristics help ensure that the sample is representative and allow for a more nuanced interpretation of how different demographic groups may influence the research findings. This also supports the validity of the study by providing contextual insight into the respondents' background.

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Tabel 1. Respondent Characteristics Based on Gender

Gender	Persentase
Male	48,2%
Female	51,9%

Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Table 2. Respondent Characteristics Based on Length of Employment

Length of Employment	Frequency	Persentage
1-2 Year	58	43,7%
2-3 Year	43	31,9%
3-4 Year	19	14,8%
> 4 Year	12	9,6%

Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Measurement Model Evaluation (Outer Model)

The analysis begins with an evaluation of the outer model using SmartPLS to assess the validity and reliability of each construct. Convergent validity is examined based on outer loading values, with a threshold of ≥ 0.70, while values ranging from 0.50 to 0.70 are still considered acceptable. In addition, the Average Variance Extracted (AVE) must exceed 0.50. Reliability is evaluated through Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, both of which should meet the minimum criterion of ≥ 0.70. The results indicate that all constructs satisfy the required standards of validity and reliability, confirming that the measurement model is adequate and can be used for further analysis.

Table 3. Results of Convergent Validity Test: Average Variance Extracted (AVE)

Variable	AVE	Note
Employee Enthusiasm (X1)	0.654	Valid
Work Comfort (X2)	0.769	Valid
Reward & Punishment (M)	0.690	Valid

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Operational Performance (Y)	0.788	Valid

Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Based on Table 1, all variables in this study have Average Variance Extracted (AVE) values above 0.50. Employee Enthusiasm (X1) has an AVE value of 0.654, Work Comfort (X2) is 0.769, Reward and Punishment (M) is 0.690, and Operational Performance (Y) is 0.788. Thus, it can be concluded that all constructs have met the criteria for convergent validity and are considered valid for use in this study.

Construct Reliability Test

In addition to convergent validity, the evaluation of the measurement model also includes testing construct reliability. This test aims to assess the internal consistency of each variable in the study. Construct reliability can be measured using Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha, where a variable is considered reliable if it achieves a value greater than 0.70. Furthermore, reliability testing is essential to ensure that each indicator within a variable produces stable and consistent measurement results when repeated. Therefore, the findings of the study become more accurate and dependable in explaining the relationships among the variables being examined.

Table 4. Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Note
Employee Enthusiasm (X1)	0.737	0.850	Reliabel
Work Comfort (X2)	0.700	0.870	Reliabel
Reward & Punishment (M)	0.850	0.881	Reliabel
Operational Performance (Y)	0.731	0.899	Reliabel

Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Based on Table 4, all variables in this study have Composite Reliability and Cronbach's Alpha values above 0.70. Employee Enthusiasm (X1) has a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.737 and a Composite Reliability of 0.850, Work Comfort (X2) has values of 0.700 and 0.870, Reward and Punishment (M) shows 0.850 and 0.881, and Operational Performance (Y) records 0.731 and 0.899. Thus, it can be concluded that all constructs

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meet the reliability criteria and demonstrate a good level of internal consistency, indicating that the measurement instruments used in this study are reliable.

Structural Model Evaluation (Inner Model)

After the measurement model is confirmed to be valid and reliable, the next step is to evaluate the structural model (inner model). This evaluation aims to assess the model's ability to explain the relationships among the latent variables in the study.

R-Square Test

The coefficient of determination (R-Square) is used to determine the extent to which the independent variables can explain the dependent variable. R-Square values are generally categorized into three levels: weak, moderate, and strong, depending on their magnitude.

Table 5. Nilai R-Square

Variable	R-Square	Note
Reward & Punishment (M)	0.659	Strong
Operational Performance (Y)	0.639	Strong

Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Based on Table 5, the R-Square values indicate that the Reward and Punishment variable (M) has a value of 0.659 and Operational Performance (Y) has a value of 0.639. Both values fall into the strong category, suggesting that the independent variables in this study are able to explain the dependent variables effectively. This implies that the research model has a strong explanatory power in describing the relationships among variables.

Hypothesis Test

Hypothesis testing is conducted to examine the relationships between variables in this study. The evaluation is based on the path coefficient values, t-statistics, and p-values. A hypothesis is considered accepted if the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05, indicating a statistically significant effect between variables.

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Table 6. Results of Direct Effect Testing

Variable Relationship	Sample Mean	T-statistic	P-value	Desicion
X1-Y	0.192	1.944	0.052	Rejected
X1-M	0.457	3.931	0.000	Accepted
X2-Y	0.262	3.068	0.002	Accepted
X2-M	0.414	3.190	0.001	Accepted
M-Y	0.417	3.471	0.001	Accepted

Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Based on the test results, the effect of Employee Enthusiasm (X1) on Operational Performance (Y) has a t-statistic value of 1.944 and a p-value of 0.052. These values indicate that the effect is not significant, as the t-statistic is less than 1.96 and the p-value is greater than 0.05; therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H1) is rejected.

The results also show that Employee Enthusiasm (X1) has a significant effect on Reward and Punishment (M), with a t-statistic of 3.931 and a p-value of 0.000. This indicates a positive and significant relationship, leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis 2 (H2).

Furthermore, the effect of Work Comfort (X2) on Operational Performance (Y) yields a t-statistic of 3.068 and a p-value of 0.002. As these values meet the significance criteria, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted.

Similarly, Work Comfort (X2) is found to significantly influence Reward and Punishment (M), with a t-statistic of 3.190 and a p-value of 0.001. This result confirms a positive and significant effect, thus supporting Hypothesis 4 (H4).

Finally, Reward and Punishment (M) has a significant effect on Operational Performance (Y), as indicated by a t-statistic of 3.471 and a p-value of 0.001. Since the t-statistic exceeds 1.96 and the p-value is below 0.05, Hypothesis 5 (H5) is accepted.

Table 7. Hasi Results of Indirect Effect Testing (Mediation Analysis)

Mediation Path	T-statistic	P-value	Decision
X1 - M - Y	2.590	0.010	Accepted

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X2 – M - Y	2.418	0.016	Accepted

Source: Processed data using SmartPLS 4 (2026)

Based on the results of the indirect effect test, the relationship between Employee Enthusiasm (X1) and Operational Performance (Y) through Reward and Punishment (M) has a t-statistic value of 2.590 and a p-value of 0.010. These values meet the significance criteria, where the t-statistic is greater than 1.96 and the p-value is less than 0.05. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 (H6) is accepted, indicating that Reward and Punishment acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between Employee Enthusiasm and Operational Performance. Furthermore, the results show that the relationship between Work Comfort (X2) and Operational Performance (Y), mediated by Reward and Punishment (M), has a t-statistic value of 2.418 and a p-value of 0.016. These findings indicate that the indirect effect is statistically significant, leading to the acceptance of Hypothesis 7 (H7). This suggests that Reward and Punishment also serves as a mediator in the relationship between Work Comfort and Operational Performance, reinforcing its important role in enhancing employee performance outcomes.

DISCUSSION

The Effect of Employee Enthusiasm on Operational Performance

The findings indicate that Employee Enthusiasm does not have a significant effect on Operational Performance, as reflected by a t-statistic of 1.944 and a p-value of 0.052. Therefore, Hypothesis 1 (H1) is rejected. This suggests that employees' enthusiasm alone is not sufficient to directly enhance operational performance in a significant manner. This condition may occur because operational performance is influenced not only by work enthusiasm but also by other factors such as work systems, supervision, the work environment, and organizational policies. Even when employees demonstrate high enthusiasm, the absence of adequate supporting systems may limit improvements in operational performance.

The Effect of Employee Enthusiasm on Reward and Punishment

The results show that Employee Enthusiasm has a positive and significant effect on Reward and Punishment, with a t-statistic of 3.931 and a p-value of 0.000. Thus, Hypothesis 2 (H2) is accepted. This indicates that higher levels of employee enthusiasm are associated with more effective implementation of reward and punishment systems.

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Employees with strong enthusiasm tend to be more disciplined, productive, and responsible, increasing their likelihood of receiving rewards. Conversely, lower enthusiasm may lead to decreased performance, which can result in the application of punishment.

The Effect of Work Comfort on Operational Performance

The analysis reveals that Work Comfort has a positive and significant impact on Operational Performance, with a t-statistic of 3.068 and a p-value of 0.002. Therefore, Hypothesis 3 (H3) is accepted. This finding suggests that a comfortable work environment contributes to improved employee performance. A supportive work environment fosters a conducive atmosphere, reduces stress, and enhances employees' focus in completing their tasks. Adequate facilities, harmonious relationships, and a sense of security are key elements in improving operational outcomes.

The Effect of Work Comfort on Reward and Punishment

The results indicate that Work Comfort positively and significantly affects Reward and Punishment, as shown by a t-statistic of 3.190 and a p-value of 0.001. Thus, Hypothesis 4 (H4) is accepted. This implies that a comfortable work environment facilitates the effective implementation of reward and punishment systems. Employees who feel comfortable at work are generally more emotionally stable and more compliant with organizational rules, enabling the fair and consistent application of rewards and sanctions.

The Effect of Reward and Punishment on Operational Performance

The findings demonstrate that Reward and Punishment has a positive and significant effect on Operational Performance, with a t-statistic of 3.471 and a p-value of 0.001. Accordingly, Hypothesis 5 (H5) is accepted. This highlights the important role of reward and punishment systems in enhancing employee performance. Rewards increase motivation as employees feel appreciated, while punishment helps maintain discipline and adherence to organizational standards. Together, they create a more structured and effective work system.

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The Mediating Role of Reward and Punishment in the Relationship between Employee Enthusiasm and Operational Performance

The mediation test shows that Employee Enthusiasm significantly influences Operational Performance through Reward and Punishment, with a t-statistic of 2.590 and a p-value of 0.010. Therefore, Hypothesis 6 (H6) is accepted. This indicates that Reward and Punishment acts as a mediating variable in this relationship. Although Employee Enthusiasm does not directly influence Operational Performance, its effect becomes significant when supported by an effective reward and punishment system. This suggests that employee enthusiasm can better translate into performance when reinforced by appropriate organizational mechanisms.

The Mediating Role of Reward and Punishment in the Relationship between Work Comfort and Operational Performance

The results also reveal that Work Comfort affects Operational Performance through Reward and Punishment, with a t-statistic of 2.418 and a p-value of 0.016. Thus, Hypothesis 7 (H7) is accepted. This confirms the mediating role of Reward and Punishment in this relationship. A comfortable work environment can more effectively improve operational performance when accompanied by a fair reward and punishment system. Employees not only feel physically and psychologically at ease but are also motivated to perform better due to clear recognition and supervision mechanisms.

CONCLUSION

Based on the findings, it can be concluded that Employee Enthusiasm does not have a direct and significant effect on Operational Performance. However, it demonstrates a positive and significant effect on Reward and Punishment, indicating that employee enthusiasm contributes more effectively to performance when it is supported by a structured system of incentives and disciplinary measures. This suggests that enthusiasm alone is insufficient to directly drive operational outcomes unless it is properly channeled through organizational mechanisms. Work Comfort, on the other hand, is found to have a positive and significant effect on both Operational Performance and Reward and Punishment. This implies that a conducive and supportive work environment not only enhances employees' ability to perform their tasks efficiently but also strengthens the effectiveness of reward and punishment systems. Employees who feel comfortable in their work environment are more likely to respond positively to organizational policies and performance management practices. In addition, Reward and Punishment significantly

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enhances Operational Performance, highlighting its critical role as a managerial tool in directing employee behavior toward organizational goals. A fair, transparent, and consistent implementation of rewards and sanctions can motivate employees to improve their performance while maintaining discipline within the organization. Furthermore, the mediation analysis confirms that Reward and Punishment plays a significant mediating role in the relationship between Employee Enthusiasm and Work Comfort on Operational Performance. This indicates that both enthusiasm and work comfort indirectly influence performance through the presence of an effective reward and punishment system. In other words, the impact of psychological and environmental factors on performance becomes stronger when supported by appropriate managerial practices.

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