



RESEARCH ARTICLE

Enhancing Employee Performance in Sasirangan MSMEs: The Power of Engagement and Motivation

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Abstract

This research examines the impact of employee engagement on the performance of employees within Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin, with motivation serving as a mediating factor. The results reveal that employee engagement influences performance both directly and indirectly through motivation. High levels of engagement foster a positive connection between employees and the organization, which in turn strengthens their dedication and enhances the quality of their work. Motivation, whether intrinsic or extrinsic, plays a critical role as a mediator, amplifying the effect of employee engagement on performance. These findings are consistent with Social Exchange Theory, which posits that mutually beneficial relationships between employees and organizations lead to improved overall outcomes. From a practical perspective, this study highlights the importance of implementing strategies that enhance employee engagement for MSMEs, particularly Sasirangan MSMEs. Initiatives such as recognizing employee contributions, providing opportunities for personal growth, and cultivating a supportive work environment can significantly boost employee motivation, thereby improving performance. By fostering a culture of engagement, MSMEs can increase both the quantity and quality of work, contributing to greater organizational success and long-term sustainability. These insights enhance the theoretical understanding of employee engagement and offer actionable strategies for MSME managers to optimize performance through a motivated and engaged workforce.

Keywords: Employee engagement, employee performance, motivation, MSMEs, Social Exchange Theory

Introduction

MSMEs (Micro, Small, and Medium Enterprises) play an important role in the Indonesian economy, contributing to job creation and poverty reduction (Aprilia et al., 2025; Enaifoghe, 2024; Maksum et al., 2020; Sari, 2021). The MSME sector in Indonesia accounts for 99.8% of total employment and more than 95% of all companies in the country (Maksum et al., 2020). MSMEs also significantly reduce unemployment by creating productive jobs (Mahohoma, 2018; Octaviani, 2023; Quintás et al., 2018; Saputera et al., 2021). However, despite having great potential, MSMEs face major human resource management challenges, affecting their performance and competitiveness (Rajab & Sugi, 2024; Rostini et al., 2024; Vernandia et al., 2025). While intensifying market competition, the survival of MSME businesses is strongly reliant on the ability to enhance performance. Optimal performance in MSMEs not only includes quantitative aspects such as productivity and efficiency, but also the quality of work results that can provide added value for customers and society (Adeola et al., 2023; Min et al., 2023; Odoom & Mensah, 2019). Therefore, factors that affect employee performance need to be considered, including employee involvement.

The MSME sector in Indonesia continues to grow rapidly, including Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin, which is known for its traditional fabric products with high artistic and cultural value (Yuli et al., 2023). Sasirangan MSMEs have great potential to introduce the richness of local culture to a broader market, but like many other MSMEs, the sector also faces significant challenges in managing human resources that have a direct impact on their performance and competitiveness (Ahyati et al., 2021; Mapalieu & Idajati, 2022;

Skripsiana et al., 2024). Therefore, factors that affect employee performance, such as employee engagement, need to be the primary focus in efforts to strengthen competitiveness and ensure the long-term success of Sasirangan MSMEs.

Good performance in the context of MSMEs includes quantitative aspects such as productivity, efficiency, and the work results that can provide added value for customers and society (Pengemanan et al., 2023; Ulhaq et al., 2024). Therefore, to survive and develop, Sasirangan MSMEs need to pay attention to factors that can affect the performance of their employees. One of the factors that plays an important role in improving employee performance is employee engagement. Employees who feel engaged, committed, and active in their work tend to perform better. Employee engagement includes commitment to the organisation, participation in activities, and emotional and physical connection (Meenakshisundaram, 2017; Sinha, 2021).

Employee engagement is an important aspect affecting performance in various organisations, including MSMEs. Social Exchange Theory, proposed by Homans (1958), states that social relations, including the relationship between employees and the organisation, can be understood as mutually beneficial exchanges. When an organisation provides support through recognition, self-development opportunities, or policies that support their well-being, employees feel they have received positive rewards, encouraging them to improve their performance (Salleh et al., 2020). Studies indicate that engaged employees perform better due to their sense of responsibility towards their work and the organization (Dixit & Sinha, 2021; Hudoyo et al., 2018; Tia et al., 2022)

In addition, employee involvement also plays a role in increasing motivation, both intrinsic and extrinsic. High employee motivation will encourage them to work harder, positively impacting their performance (Ahmeti, 2023; Hoxha & Ramadani, 2024). Social Exchange Theory explains that when employees feel valued by the organisation, they feel more motivated to contribute to their organisation (Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005). Intrinsic motivation, which comes from personal satisfaction in work, can improve the quality of work, while extrinsic motivations, such as

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rewards and promotions, can increase the quantity and efficiency of work (Hudoyo et al., 2018). In the context of Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin, employee involvement can strengthen their motivation, ultimately leading to improved employee performance.

While many studies, such as those by Meenakshisundaram (2017) and Sinha (2021), focus on large companies, there is limited research on MSMEs, particularly those with distinct characteristics like Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin. This study aims to fill this gap by exploring the relationship between employee engagement, motivation, and performance in Sasirangan MSMEs. It also develops a more comprehensive performance measurement, including work quality, quantity, task completion speed, and adaptability. The research will analyze the effects of employee engagement on performance, employee involvement on motivation, motivation on performance, and test motivation's mediating role. This study will provide insights into how employee involvement and motivation can enhance performance in Sasirangan MSMEs.

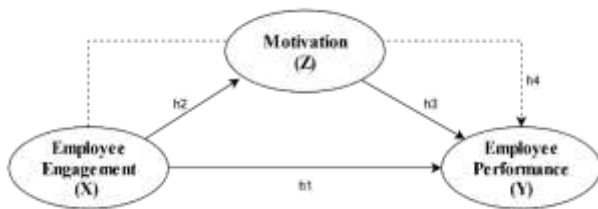


Figure 1. Research Model

Method

This study uses a quantitative approach with a survey design to analyse the influence of employee involvement on performance, the influence of motivation on performance, and the role of motivation as a mediating variable. To analyse the relationships between these variables, this study used PLS-SEM, an effective method for handling data with complex relationship structures and relatively small samples (Hair et al., 2017). The study focuses on the Batik and Knitted Fabric Industry (KBLI) employees, explicitly targeting the Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin. The population for this research consists of 79 employees of the Sasirangan MSMEs, as sourced from the Department of Cooperatives and SMEs (Dinkop, 2023). This sample size was determined based on the criteria provided by Krejcie and Morgan (1970), which offers a reliable method for selecting an adequate sample size.

The variables studied in this study include Employee Engagement (X), Motivation (Z), and Employee Performance (Y). Employee engagement is measured through commitment to the organisation, participation in activities, emotional engagement, and physical engagement (Alistoun & Upfold, 2014; Meenakshisundaram, 2017; Sinha, 2021). Employee motivation is divided into intrinsic and extrinsic motivation, which is measured based on the internal and external motivations that affect the achievement of goals (Ahmeti, 2023; Hoxha & Ramadani, 2024). Employee performance is measured in terms of work quality, quantity of work, speed of task completion, and adaptability (Hudoyo et al., 2018; Kurniawati & Raharja, 2023).

The questionnaire uses a 5-point Likert scale to measure the variables of employee engagement, motivation, and performance. Before filling out the questionnaire, respondents were informed of the research's purpose and guaranteed confidentiality. Respondents' participation is voluntary, giving them complete freedom to participate in the study without coercion and ensuring that the data collected can reflect the authentic opinions and experiences of the respondents. The data collected will then be analysed using PLS-SEM, an effective method in dealing with complex relationships between variables and testing the direct and indirect influences (mediation) between variables (Hair et al., 2017).

Results and Discussion

Respondent Profile

Table 1. Demographic Profile

Category	Frek.	Percent
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Gender		
Man	26	39.4%
Woman	40	60.6%
Total	66	100.0%
Tenure		
1-2 years	13	19.7%
3-5 years	26	39.4%
Over 5 years	27	40.9%
Total	66	100.0%
Education		
SD	6	9.1%
SLTP	45	68.2%
High School	12	18.2%
Bachelor	3	4.5%
Total	66	100.0%
Age		
18-25 years	12	18.2%
26-35 years	22	33.3%
36-45 years	25	37.9%
46-55 years	7	10.6%
Total	66	100.0%

Source: Data processed, 2025

Table 1 shows the demographic information in this study, which shows that the majority of Sasirangan MSME employees in Banjarmasin consist of women (60.6%), with most having a working period of more than five years (40.9%) and a junior high school education background (68.2%). Most respondents were in the productive age group, ranging from 26 to 45 years old (71.2%). These demographic characteristics reflect an experienced workforce, but with relatively low levels of education, which can potentially affect their engagement and performance levels. Employees with longer tenures generally show higher emotional and physical engagement, while younger employees tend to be more receptive to external motivation and innovative change. Therefore, Sasirangan MSME management needs to design policies that consider differences in age, education, and work experience to optimise employee engagement and performance through relevant training programs and create a supportive work environment for all demographic groups.

Outer Model

Table 2. Outer Loadings and Construct Validity

Variable	Outer Loadings	Information
Employee Engagement (X)		
e.g.1	0.853	Valid
E.g.2	0.842	Valid
E.g.3	0.859	Valid
E.g.4	0.915	Valid
Employee Performance (Y)		
Emp.1	0.778	Valid
Emp.2	0.884	Valid
Emp.3	0.846	Valid
Emp.4	0.866	Valid
Motivation (Z)		
Word.1	0.835	Valid
word.2	0.750	Valid
word.3	0.815	Valid
word.4	0.906	Valid

Source: Data processed, 2025

The findings in Table 2 and Figure 2 show that all indicators employed to assess the constructs in this research display outstanding construct accuracy. Employee Engagement (X), the indicators of Commitment to Organisation (0.853), Participation in Activities (0.842), Emotional Involvement (0.859), and Physical Involvement (0.915) all have Outer Loadings exceeding 0.7, confirming valid measurement of employee engagement. Employee Performance, the indicators of Work Quality (0.778), Work Quantity

(0.884), Task Completion Speed (0.846), and Adaptability (0.866) also show significant Outer Loadings, with Work Quantity demonstrating the highest loading at 0.884. Motivation, the indicators of Intrinsic Motivation (0.835), Extrinsic Motivation (0.750), Need for Achievement (0.815), and Self-Development Involvement (0.906) all exceed the 0.7 threshold, with Self-Development Involvement having the highest value at 0.906.

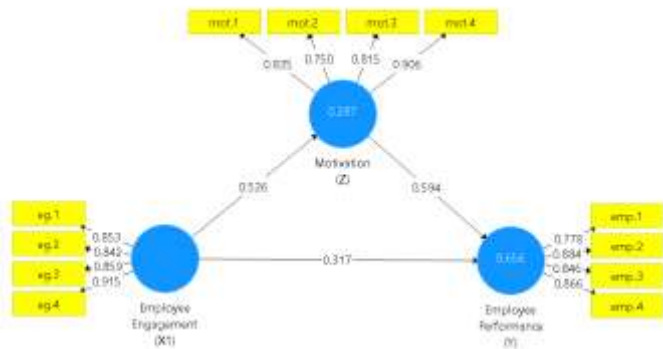


Figure 2. Outer Model

Table 3. Construction Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted (AVE)
Employee Engagement (X)	0.890	0.924	0.753
Employee Performance (Y)	0.866	0.909	0.713
Motivation (Z)	0.847	0.897	0.686

Source: Data processed, 2025

Table 3 presents the reliability and validity results for the study's constructs, assessed using Cronbach's Alpha (α) and Average Variance Extracted (AVE). Employee Engagement (X) has an α of 0.890 and AVE of 0.753, reflecting high reliability and strong construct validity. Employee Performance (Y) shows an α of 0.866 and AVE of 0.713, demonstrating solid reliability and validity. Motivation (Z) has an α of 0.847 and AVE of 0.686, which is still above the acceptable threshold, supporting its validity. These findings confirm the reliability and validity of the model.

Table 4. Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)

Construct	Employee Engagement (X)	Employee Performance (Y)	Motivation (W)
Fornell-Larcker Criterion			
Employee Engagement (X)	0.868		
Employee Performance (Y)	0.636	0.845	
Motivation (Z)	0.536	0.764	0.828
Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT)			
Employee Performance (Y)		0.723	
Motivation (W)		0.597	0.869

Source: Data processed, 2025

Table 4 displays the results of the Fornell-Larcker Criterion and Heterotrait-Monotrait Ratio (HTMT) tests, confirming strong discriminant validity for the constructs in this study. The Fornell-Larcker Criterion shows that Employee Engagement (X), Employee Performance (Y), and Motivation (Z) all have values exceeding their correlations with other constructs, indicating good discriminant validity. The HTMT values, all below 0.90, further validate this, with the value between Employee Performance (Y) and Motivation (Z) being 0.869, which remains within the acceptable range. These findings support the robustness and reliability of the proposed model.

Table 5. Inner VIF Values

	Employee Engagement (X)	Employee Performance (Y)	Motivation (W)
Employee Engagement (X)		1.403	1.000
Employee Performance (Y)			1.403
Motivation (Z)			

Source: Data processed, 2025

Table 5 shows the Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values, indicating low multicollinearity. With VIFs of 1.403 and 1.000 for the relationships between Employee Engagement (X) and Motivation (Z), and Employee Engagement (X) and Employee Performance (Y), the results indicate that multicollinearity is not an issue, enabling valid and dependable analysis.

Hypothesis Testing

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	P Values
Employee Engagement → Employee Performance	0.317	0.321	0.099	3.212	0.001
Employee Engagement → Motivation	0.536	0.546	0.114	4.685	0.000
Motivation → Employee Performance	0.594	0.591	0.120	4.956	0.000
Employee Engagement → Motivation → Employee Performance	0.319	0.316	0.074	4.295	0.000

Source: Data processed, 2025

Table 6 and Figure 3 indicate that all hypotheses are supported, with T-statistics exceeding 1.96 and P-values below 0.05. Employee Engagement (X) significantly influences Employee Performance (Y) (T-statistic = 3.212, P-value = 0.001), driving performance. Engagement also strongly boosts Motivation (Z) (T-statistic = 4.685, P-value = 0.000), while Motivation positively affects Performance (T-statistic = 4.956, P-value = 0.000). Furthermore, Motivation mediates the relationship between Engagement and Performance (T-statistic = 4.295, P-value = 0.000).

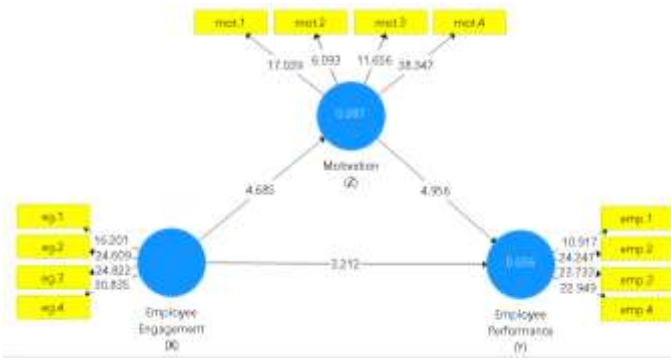


Figure 3. Inner Model

R Square

The R-squared values in Figure 3 provide insight into the model's ability to explain the variation in the dependent variables. For Employee Performance (Y), the R-squared value of 0.656 shows that the model explains 65.6% of the performance variation, indicating a strong link between the independent variables and performance. This suggests that the model effectively captures the factors influencing employee performance. However, for Motivation (Z), the R-squared value of 0.287 indicates that only 28.7% of the variation in motivation is explained, pointing to a weaker relationship.

Model Fit

Table 7. Model Fit Summary

Fit Summary	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.089	0.089
d_ULS	0.615	0.615
d_G	0.548	0.548
Chi-Square	180.245	180.245
NFI	0.713	0.713

Source: Data processed, 2025

Table 7 summarizes the model fit, indicating a good alignment with the data. Key indices such as SRMR (0.089), d_ULS (0.615), and d_G (0.548) suggest a strong fit, with SRMR below 0.10 indicating a good fit. The identical Chi-Square value of 180.245 for both models further supports this. While the NFI value of 0.713 is slightly below the ideal 0.90, it still indicates a reasonable model fit. These results confirm that the model is valid, reliable, and suitable for further analysis.

PLS Predict

Table 8. PLS Predict

Type	Metric	RMSE	MAE	MAP	Q ² _predict	
PLS	Emp.1	1.093	0.853	33.960	0.273	
	Emp.2	0.923	0.682	23.624	0.269	
	Emp.3	1.179	0.885	44.636	0.234	
	Emp.4	0.982	0.722	30.704	0.315	
	Word.1	1.244	0.997	44.531	0.189	
	word.2	0.932	0.614	25.402	0.042	
	word.3	1.149	0.875	40.146	0.132	
	word.4	0.928	0.628	31.042	0.316	
	LM	Emp.1	1.117	0.897	34.092	0.241
		Emp.2	0.965	0.724	24.488	0.202
Emp.3		1.218	0.887	44.398	0.183	
Emp.4		1.006	0.754	30.784	0.282	
Word.1		1.263	1.031	44.271	0.164	
word.2		0.952	0.649	26.781	-0.002	
word.3		1.209	0.925	43.007	0.039	
word.4		0.892	0.573	26.065	0.367	

Source: Data processed, 2025

Table 8 presents the results of the PLS Predict analysis, highlighting the model's strong predictive performance. Key metrics such as RMSE (0.923 to 1.179), MAE, MAPE, and Q²_predict indicate relatively low prediction errors, especially for indicators like emp.2 and emp.4, where the predictions align closely with observed values. Lower MAPE values suggest high prediction accuracy. Most

Q²_predict values exceed 0.1, confirming the model's solid predictive capacity. However, indicators like mot.2 and mot.3 have lower Q²_predict values, indicating challenges in prediction. Despite this, the PLS model outperforms the LM model, which shows higher RMSE, MAE, and negative Q²_predict values. These findings emphasize the PLS model's superior predictive accuracy, making it a reliable tool for forecasting employee engagement, motivation, and performance outcomes in this study.

Discussion

The hypothesis testing results in this study provide valuable insights into the relationships between employee engagement, motivation, and performance within Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin. The findings reveal that these interconnected variables significantly shape organizational outcomes, with employee engagement and motivation contributing to improved performance. This highlights the theoretical and practical importance of fostering employee engagement and motivation to drive performance and ensure long-term growth in MSMEs.

Hypothesis 1 (H1) examined the relationship between employee engagement and performance, revealing a substantial positive impact. The T-statistic of 3.212 and the P-value of 0.001 confirm that higher employee engagement leads to better performance. This finding supports Social Exchange Theory, which posits that engaged employees develop emotional and reciprocal connections with their organization, leading to increased commitment, productivity, and work quality. Engaged employees are more likely to take ownership of their tasks and contribute effectively to organizational success.

Hypothesis 2 (H2) explored the effect of employee engagement on motivation, with the results demonstrating a highly significant relationship (T-statistic = 4.685, P-value = 0.000). Engaged employees exhibit higher intrinsic and extrinsic motivation levels, further driving performance. This finding aligns with Social Exchange Theory, suggesting that when employees feel supported and valued by their organization, their motivation is enhanced. Additionally, these results support the work of Alistoun & Upfold (2014), who highlighted employee engagement as a key factor in boosting motivation and fostering greater organizational contributions.

Hypothesis 3 (H3) investigated the direct impact of motivation on employee performance. The results, with a T-statistic of 4.956 and a P-value of 0.000, confirm that intrinsic and extrinsic motivation are crucial for improving employee performance. Motivated employees are more dedicated, productive, and committed to achieving organizational goals. These findings are consistent with the research of Hoxha & Ramadan (2024), who emphasized that motivation, whether driven by internal satisfaction or external rewards, is essential in enhancing work outcomes.

Finally, Hypothesis 4 (H4) tested the mediating role of motivation between employee engagement and performance. The T-statistic of 4.295 and P-value of 0.000 confirm that motivation significantly mediates the relationship between engagement and performance. This suggests that higher employee engagement leads to greater motivation, enhancing performance. The results support mediation theory and emphasize the importance of organizational strategies that cultivate engagement and motivation to optimize employee performance and contribute to overall business success.

Limitations of The Study

The limited sample of employees from Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin may restrict the generalizability of the findings to other MSME sectors with different characteristics. Therefore, further research is recommended to expand the sample size to ensure the results are more representative and reflect a broader range of contexts within MSMEs.

Conclusions and Recommendations

This study underscores the critical role of employee engagement in enhancing employee performance within Sasirangan MSMEs in Banjarmasin. The results confirm that employee engagement directly improves performance while also boosting motivation, which subsequently positively influences work outcomes. These findings highlight that mutually beneficial relationships between employees and the organization foster greater commitment, leading to higher work quality and productivity. Additionally, motivation serves as a key factor in the connection between engagement and performance, emphasizing the importance of strategies that promote engagement to optimize results.

To optimize employee performance, Sasirangan MSMEs should focus on developing policies that actively promote employee engagement. This can be achieved through recognizing employees' contributions, providing opportunities for skill development, and creating a supportive and inclusive work environment. Fostering a culture of engagement will not only increase motivation but also enhance work quality and productivity, ultimately improving performance outcomes. By implementing these strategies, Sasirangan MSMEs can strengthen their competitive position in the market, ensuring long-term success and sustainability.

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