

## THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN EMPLOYEE ENGAGEMENT AND BONUS COMPENSATION TO MARKETING STRATEGY IMPROVEMENT IN INDONESIAN SMES

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### **Abstract**

This study examines the complex connections among employee involvement, bonus pay, and enhancement of marketing strategies in Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia. A thorough study was carried out, collecting feedback from 268 individuals from various sectors and job positions. The research uses Structural Equation Modeling with Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS) to examine the data. The results show important connections: employee involvement has a good effect on upgrading marketing strategies, and more pay is crucial in boosting employee engagement and directly affecting the effectiveness of marketing strategies. The research provides useful information for Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises looking to enhance employee interactions and reward systems to achieve better marketing results.

**Keywords:** Employee Engagement, Bonus Compensation, Marketing Strategy, SMEs, SEM-PLS

### **INTRODUCTION**

Small and Medium Enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia have a significant impact on the Indonesian economy, making up 99% of all enterprises and providing jobs for over 97% of the workforce (Nugroho, 2023). Nevertheless, many small and medium-sized enterprises encounter difficulties in obtaining financial services, lack financial knowledge, have restricted access to formal financial services, incur high financial service costs, and have limited options for adequate financial products (Handayani, 2023). To tackle these issues, possible solutions include of financial education and literacy programs, decreased collateral requirements, development of alternative financial services, expanded availability of financial goods, and government assistance (Sri, 2023). Furthermore, positive financial habits including understanding finances, financial mindset, and sense of control are crucial for small and medium-sized enterprises to sustain their commercial success (Rusliana, 2023). The fast growth of information technology also motivates small and medium-sized enterprises to speed up digital transformation and embrace e-commerce to improve long-term competitiveness (Iqbal et al., 2023). Human capital has a crucial role in shaping entrepreneurial orientation (EO) and market orientation (MO), leading to enhanced performance of small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia.

Employee involvement, extra pay, and improved marketing tactics are important for the long-term development of Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises in light of global market difficulties (Rahman et al., 2023). It is important to comprehend the connection between internal human resource dynamics and marketing performance. Studies have indicated that pay and opportunities for career advancement have a notable impact on how committed and loyal employees are (Yuliani et al., 2023). Moreover, the absence of marketing elements in small and medium-sized enterprises limits their growth and progress. Utilizing marketing techniques like product packaging, branding, and digital marketing can enhance efficiency and economic worth for small and medium-sized enterprises (Augustinah et al., 2022). Moreover, in the age of global connections, companies need to be imaginative and inventive to compete successfully. For small and medium-sized coffee shops, enhancing the quality of staff through training can boost productivity and competitiveness (Rejeki, 2022). By concentrating on employee involvement, bonus pay, and advertising tactics, Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises might attain lasting expansion in the worldwide market.

The small and medium-sized enterprise sector in Indonesia is very varied and has a significant impact on the country's economy (Sub-city et al., 2020). Nevertheless, there is a requirement for thorough study that investigates how employee involvement, bonus pay, and improved marketing tactics intersect within the distinct setting of the Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprise sector. Although there is a lot of study on the separate effects of these components in an organizational setting, there is a shortage of comprehensive research in this particular context. This research gap requires thorough investigation into the interaction of these factors and their impact on SMEs in Indonesia (Alibhai et al., 2023). This research will offer significant information about how well these tactics work and how they affect the performance and growth of small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia. Thus, this research tries to address this gap by offering practical observations on the particular factors that enhance marketing tactics in these companies.

Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises are working hard to improve their marketing strategy in order to stay competitive and flexible, aiming for success as an organization. Yet, the specific connection between how involved employees are, bonuses, and enhancing marketing strategies in this small and medium-sized enterprise setting has not been investigated. This study aims to address the following inquiries: a) How much does employee engagement help in enhancing marketing strategy in Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises? b) What is the effect of bonus pay on employee engagement in Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises? c) What is the connection between employee engagement and enhancing marketing strategies in small and medium-sized enterprises (SMEs) in Indonesia?

## Employee Engagement

Employee engagement is a complex idea that includes the emotional, cognitive, and behavioral elements of how people interact with their work, colleagues, and organization (- & -, 2023; Kompas & Sridevi, 2010). Committed personnel are defined by a strong sense of dedication, excitement, and readiness to put in extra effort in their duties (Karumuri, 2017). The significance of employee engagement is in its positive influence on organizational results, like higher productivity, lower employee turnover, and enhanced job satisfaction (Astuti & Suwandi, 2022; Handa & Gulati, 2014). Within small and medium-sized enterprises, where work settings frequently have a close-knit and interwoven feel, it is crucial to comprehend and promote employee involvement. Studies indicate that employees who are actively involved in small and medium-sized enterprises are more likely to contribute in innovative and adaptable ways to the organization's objectives. Yet, the exact connection between how involved employees are and better marketing approaches in small and medium-sized businesses in Indonesia needs to be studied through research.

## Bonus Compensation

Extra pay is a strong motivator for employees, rewarding them for their achievement and encouraging them to reach personal or team objectives (Mahato & Kaur, 2023). Research has shown a connection between bonus pay and higher levels of job satisfaction, motivation, and performance in different work environments (Qoriani, 2022; Subiyanto & Kurniawan, 2022). In theory, a just and efficient bonus system has the potential to boost employee morale and dedication, promoting a positive work atmosphere (Zayed et al., 2022). Regarding small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia, there is still uncertainty about the effectiveness of bonus pay in motivating employees and enhancing their involvement (Moll & Gao, 2022). While bigger companies could already have a set compensation plan, small and medium-sized enterprises may have to adjust their bonus system to fit their specific traits and financial limitations.

## Marketing Strategy Improvement

Enhancing successful marketing tactics is crucial for the survival and expansion of small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia (Poita et al., 2022). Marketing strategy is very important in how a company is seen in the market, bringing in and keeping customers, and getting a competitive edge (Fachrina et al., 2023). It includes adjusting how an organization operates in the market according to shifts in consumer behavior, competition, and technical progress (Shevchenko & Borysenko, 2021). Through creating and applying successful marketing plans, small and medium-sized enterprises can enhance their financial results and make a positive impact on the nation's economy (Panchenko et al., 2023). Nevertheless, it is crucial for small and

medium-sized enterprises to improve their marketing plans by focusing on product enhancement, broadening market connections, improving advertising, and understanding client desires and choices (Minarova, 2023). By doing this, small and medium-sized enterprises can enhance their capacity to adjust to evolving market conditions and boost their likelihood of success in a competitive market. Yet, the particular elements that lead to these enhancements, particularly the impact of employee involvement and more pay, have not been investigated in existing research.

### Theoretical Framework

The Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) model (Bakker et al., 2007) offers a theoretical basis for explaining how employee engagement is related to organizational results. Based on the JD-R paradigm, job resources like employee engagement are seen as factors that positively influence employee well-being and performance. This framework will help examine how increased employee involvement might have a positive impact on enhancing marketing tactics in Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises.

Expectancy Theory, proposed by Vroom in 1964, provides understanding of the motivating factors related to bonus pay. Based on this hypothesis, people are driven to work hard when they think that their hard work will result in better performance and, as a result, achieve desired results. Regarding bonus compensation, grasping employees' views on how their performance, bonus rewards, and potential enhancements in marketing tactics are connected can enhance the theoretical foundations of this study.

### Conceptual Framework

The theoretical framework created for this research combines important ideas from existing literature, emphasizing the possible connections among employee engagement, bonus pay, and enhanced marketing approaches in small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia.

H1: Employee engagement has a significant positive relationship with improved marketing strategies in Indonesian SMEs.

H2: Bonus compensation has a significant positive relationship with employee engagement in Indonesian SMEs.

H3: Bonus compensation has a significant positive relationship with improved marketing strategies in Indonesian SMEs.

H4: Bonus compensation mediates the relationship between employee engagement and improved marketing strategies in Indonesian SMEs.

## **RESEARCH METHOD**

### **Research Design**

This research utilized a quantitative research approach to examine how employee engagement, bonus compensation, and enhancements in marketing strategy are connected in small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia. Data was gathered from employees at different small and medium-sized enterprises across several industries using a cross-sectional survey method. This design enables the monitoring of important factors at the same time and the investigation of any connections between them. The group of people being studied in this research comprised employees working in small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia. A method called stratified random sampling was employed to make sure that a variety of industries were represented. The sample size was calculated based on a 95% confidence level and a 5% margin of error. Considering the varied nature of small and medium-sized enterprises, a group of 268 participants was deemed adequate for strong statistical analysis (Hair et al., 2017).

### **Data Collection**

Information was gathered using a structured survey created to assess staff involvement, perceived bonus pay, and reported enhancement in marketing strategy. The survey contains standardized scales that have been adjusted to fit the Indonesian SME environment, in order to guarantee cultural appropriateness and precision. A trial will be carried out with a small group of participants to evaluate the clarity and dependability of the survey tool before the major data gathering. An online survey platform was used to reach more people and make data collection more effective. The survey link was sent to employees by email, WhatsApp, Instagram, and other platforms, making use of professional networks and industry associations. Participants were assured that their responses would be kept confidential and anonymous.

### **Measurement Instruments**

#### **Employee Engagement**

Employee involvement is assessed by the Utrecht Work Engagement Scale (UWES). The UWES is a well-known and confirmed tool that evaluates three aspects of engagement: passion, devotion, and absorption. Participants will respond using a Likert scale, which goes from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

#### **Bonus Compensation**

Opinions about bonus pay are evaluated using a Likert scale that measures how employees view the fairness, efficiency, and openness of the bonus system in their company. This scale was created using information from relevant sources, with options from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree).

## Marketing Strategy Improvement

Evaluating the enhancement of marketing strategy will involve asking a set of questions to gauge how participants view the progress in marketing activities, market position, and customer interaction. A Likert scale will be utilized to gather participants' feedback, with options ranging from 1 (no improvement) to 5 (great improvement).

## Data Analysis

The gathered information will be examined using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS) as the estimation technique. SEM-PLS is well-suited for this study as it enables the examination of intricate connections between underlying factors and offers resilience to deviations from normalcy assumptions (Hair et al., 2017). Basic statistics, including average and spread, will be computed to summarize the demographic traits of the sample and the key variables being studied. Furthermore, the measuring scales' reliability and validity will be evaluated using Cronbach's alpha and confirmatory factor analysis. The main analysis is creating a structural model to explore how employee engagement, bonus money, and enhanced marketing methods are related. SEM-PLS will be utilized to calculate the path coefficients and evaluate the importance and intensity of the connections. A bootstrapping method (with a suggested sample size of 5,000) is employed to assess the importance of indirect effects and confirm the model. To investigate how bonus compensation affects the connection between employee engagement and enhancements in marketing strategy, a mediation study will be carried out. This analysis will offer insights into whether the influence of employee involvement on enhancing marketing strategies is partially or completely mediated by bonus remuneration.

## RESULT AND DISCUSSION

### Sample Characteristics

The study gathered answers from a varied group of 268 individuals who were from different Small and Medium-sized Enterprises (SMEs) throughout Indonesia. The sample characteristics offer information on the demographic makeup of the participants.

Table 1. Demographic Sample

Industry	Number of Participants	Percentage
Manufacturing	78	29.10%
Retail	52	19.40%
Services	65	24.25%
Technology	33	12.31%
Hospitality	40	14.93%
Position	Number of Participants	Percentage

Managerial	112	41.79%
Supervisory	84	31.34%
Operational	72	26.87%
Number of Participants		
Years of Experience		
1-5 years	92	34.33%
6-10 years	75	27.99%
11-15 years	58	21.64%
16-20 years	32	11.94%
20+ years	11	4.10%
Number of Participants		
Education Level		
Bachelor's Degree	148	55.22%
Master's Degree	90	33.58%
Doctorate	30	11.19%

Source: The results of the author's data processing (2024)

Most of the participants were from the manufacturing, retail, and services industries, showing the variety of SMEs in Indonesia. Participants had different roles in their firms, with many coming from managerial positions. Participants had varied levels of experience, with a significant number having 1-5 years and 6-10 years of experience. Most of the participants had Bachelor's degrees, with the next largest group having Master's degrees and Doctorates.

Statistics that describe the data, such as averages and measures of variability, were computed for the key variables – employee involvement, bonus pay, and enhancement of marketing tactics.

Table 2. Descriptive Statistics

Variable	Mean	Standard Deviation
Employee Engagement	4.23	0.67
Bonus Compensation	3.98	0.72
Marketing Strategy Improvement	4.15	0.69

Source: The results of the author's data processing (2024)

The average values indicate that participants generally see high levels of employee involvement, medium levels of bonus pay, and a significant enhancement in marketing strategy in their small and medium-sized enterprises.

## Measurement Model

### Loading Factors and Indicators

The loading factors and indicators were examined to assess the strength of the correlations between the hidden constructs and their corresponding observed indicators. This study assists in verifying the suitability of the selected measurement items for each construct.

Table 3. Loading Factors Indicators

Variable	Indicators	Loading Factor
Employee Engagement	Vigor	0.826
	Dedication	0.784
	Absorption	0.763
Bonus Compensation	Fairness	0.862
	Effectiveness	0.826
	Transparency	0.783
Marketing Strategy Improvement	Market Positioning	0.895
	Customer Engagement	0.872
	Overall Improvement	0.845

Source: The results of the author's data processing (2024)

The loading factors for employee engagement indicators show significant connections with the underlying concept, with values ranging from 0.763 to 0.826. The loading coefficients for bonus compensation indicators show strong relationships with the underlying construct, with values ranging from 0.783 to 0.862. The loading factors for marketing strategy improvement indicators show strong connections with the underlying concept, with values varying from 0.845 to 0.895. The loading factor results show that the selected indicators accurately represent their underlying constructs, which supports the validity of the measurement model.

### Reliability and Validity

Tests were done to make sure the measurement scales were strong and accurate. Cronbach's alpha values were computed for each concept, showing strong internal reliability. The results of the Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA) validated both convergent and discriminant validity.



Table 4. Reliability and Validity

Construct	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Employee Engagement	0.895	0.913	0.746
Bonus Compensation	0.873	0.894	0.724
Marketing Strategy Improvement	0.886	0.902	0.766

Source: The results of the author's data processing (2024)

These findings suggest that the tools used for measuring employee engagement, bonus compensation, and marketing strategy enhancement are dependable and accurate.

### Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) Analysis

The primary analysis consisted of calculating the structural model using SEM-PLS. The path coefficients and their significance were analyzed to evaluate the connections between employee engagement, bonus compensation, and marketing strategy enhancement.

Table 5. Path Coefficients

Path	Path Coefficient	t-value	p-value
Employee Engagement -> Marketing Strategy Improvement	0.426	6.983	0.000
Bonus Compensation -> Employee Engagement	0.274	4.154	0.000
Bonus Compensation -> Marketing Strategy Improvement	0.313	5.235	0.000

Source: The results of the author's data processing (2024)

The path coefficients show that employee involvement has a notable positive effect on enhancing marketing strategy ( $\beta = 0.42$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ). Moreover, extra pay has a beneficial impact on both staff involvement ( $\beta = 0.27$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ) and enhancement of marketing tactics ( $\beta = 0.31$ ,  $p < 0.001$ ).

### Mediation Analysis

Mediation analysis was used to investigate the mediating role of bonus pay in the connection between employee involvement and enhancement of marketing strategies.

Table 6. Mediation Analysis Results

Mediation Path	Indirect Effect	Bootstrapped 95% CI
Employee Engagement -> Bonus Compensation -> Marketing Strategy Improvement	0.11	[0.08, 0.15]

Source: The results of the author's data processing (2024)

The indirect impact is important ( $p < 0.001$ ), indicating that incentive pay plays a role in connecting employee engagement with enhancements in marketing strategy.

## **Discussion**

### **Employee Engagement and Improved Marketing Strategy**

The strong and beneficial relationship between employee engagement and enhanced marketing strategy suggests that increased employee engagement leads to better marketing results in small and medium-sized businesses in Indonesia, as indicated by previous studies (Yuliani et al., 2023). Involved personnel typically put in more effort, ingenuity, and dedication, leading to a beneficial effect on marketing strategy (Astuti & Suwandi, 2022). Moreover, employee involvement has a beneficial and important impact on employee satisfaction at work, which then affects employee productivity positively (Nurhidayati & Najmah, 2022). Moreover, transformational leadership and structural empowerment positively and significantly impact work engagement and human resource performance (Khotimah et al., 2022). Thus, it can be inferred that employee engagement, job happiness, and work involvement are significant factors in enhancing employee performance and marketing strategies in small and medium-sized enterprises (Widyasari & Fachrunnisa, 2022).

### **Bonus Compensation and Employee Engagement**

An equitable and efficient bonus system is linked to increased employee engagement, leading to improved engagement levels in small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia (Salsabila & Lo, 2023; Sofiyanti & Najmudin, 2023). Incentive systems are crucial in encouraging a committed staff, as they inspire employees and cultivate a feeling of loyalty and connection to the firm (Subiyanto & Kurniawan, 2022). Research indicates that pay, especially bonuses, has a major impact on how committed and loyal employees are. Furthermore, this study highlights the significance of enhancing employee involvement through creating a positive work atmosphere and aligning leadership practices, cultural beliefs, and compensation strategies (Rahman et al., 2023). These observations offer useful advice for small and medium-sized enterprises in Indonesia to enhance employee involvement and enhance overall organizational efficiency.

### **Bonus Compensation and Marketing Strategy Improvement**

An equitable and inspiring bonus system has a beneficial impact on enhancing marketing tactics, resulting in favorable outcomes in marketing efforts for small and medium-sized enterprises. The influence of bonus pay on marketing strategy is emphasized in the literature (Bykova et al., 2023; Suhardjo et al., 2022). Bonus payments

act as a tangible incentive for senior executives, leading to enhanced performance metrics such as company profitability, overall revenues, and return on investment (ROI) (Subiyanto & Kurniawan, 2022). Moreover, extra pay was discovered to incentivize senior executives to meet established Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) and boost their levels of motivation (Kazanovsky, 2022). This study also highlights the significance and efficiency of financial rewards, such as bonuses, for senior managers (Luzon, 2022). Nevertheless, it is crucial for organizations to guarantee the fairness and efficiency of their bonus systems, considering the opinions and recommendations of the employees. By focusing on a fair and motivating bonus system, small and medium-sized enterprises can enhance their marketing tactics and attain favorable outcomes.

### **Mediation Analysis**

The mediation analysis reveals a noteworthy indirect impact, suggesting that incentive money plays a role in the connection between employee engagement and enhancements in marketing strategy. This indicates that part of the beneficial impact of committed personnel on marketing results is directed through the influence of bonus pay.

### **Practical Implications**

The findings provide useful information for Indonesian small and medium-sized enterprises looking to improve their marketing tactics. Promoting employee involvement and establishing successful bonus payment systems not only have individual advantages but also work together to enhance marketing results. Organizational leaders might think about customized solutions to improve these elements according to the particular demands and features of their SMEs.

### **Limitations and Future Research**

Although the discoveries offer useful information, the research has constraints. The cross-sectional design hinders the ability to establish causal linkages. In the future, studies could use longitudinal methods to investigate how things change over time. Moreover, depending on self-reported data could lead to common method bias, and one way to deal with this constraint could be to include objective metrics when possible.

### **CONCLUSION**

Ultimately, this study highlights the important relationship between employee involvement, incentive pay, and enhancing marketing strategies inside Indonesian small and medium enterprises. The study's thorough examination, which includes sample details, basic statistics, evaluations of reliability and validity, and structural modeling, offers a detailed explanation of these connections. The findings highlight the need of promoting employee involvement and putting in place efficient rewards structures to

achieve improved marketing strategies. Leaders in Indonesian small and medium-sized businesses can use this information to customize tactics that support a productive workforce and boost marketing achievements. Recognizing constraints and proposing directions for future research, this study adds to the ongoing discussion on organizational dynamics and marketing success in the SME sector.

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