

The Influence Of Motivation On Employee Performance: The Mediating Roles Of Employee Engagement And Green Work Environments In Erbil's Logistics Sector

Aso Rahman Mohammed^{1*}, Nadhim Saleem Mawlood², Sherwan Yaseen Hussein³

^{1*}Human Resource Management -Presidency of the Council of Ministers - Erbil 60 Meter Street. Communication-Digital Workplace. aso.juja84@gmail.com

²Ministry of higher Education. Kurdistan, Iraq. Nazm.salim@mhe-krq.org.

³Ministry of higher Education. Kurdistan, Iraq. sherwanyasin82@gmail.com

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ABSTRACT

This study seeks to examine how employee engagement and a green work environment mediate the relationship between motivation and performance among logistics company employees in Erbil, Kurdistan. Utilizing a causal quantitative research approach, this study distributed 165 questionnaires to logistics employees. These questionnaires were adapted from previous studies. Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) with Partial Least Squares. The findings revealed that motivation positively and significantly affects employee performance in logistics companies. Additionally, both a green work environment and employee engagement significantly mediate the link between motivation and performance. These results highlight the critical role of a green work environment and employee engagement in boosting motivation and performance in logistics firms. The study suggests that improving employee performance in logistics companies can be achieved by providing a green work environment and fostering employee motivation and engagement.

Keywords: motivation, employee performance, green work environment, employee engagement, logistic company

Introduction

The logistics sector is highly competitive, requiring organizations to manage human resources effectively to enhance employee performance and achieve their goals (Ogedengbe et al., 2011). In Kurdistan, 2,715,274 employees work across various companies (rudaw.net, 2023), all contributing to their organizations' success. Research consistently demonstrates that motivation positively impacts employee performance (Ramlal, 2004; Grant, 2008; Cherian, J., & Jacob, 2013). Additionally, the work environment plays a crucial role in influencing performance. A supportive work environment fosters effective interpersonal relationships and communication, leading to higher performance. Conversely, a disorganized and competitive environment can cause burnout and lower productivity (Leitão et al., 2021).

The importance of human resource management in boosting motivation and work engagement is increasingly recognized (Albrecht et al., 2015). Higher motivation correlates with better performance (Royani, 2023; Taryana et al., 2023). Companies aim to retain employees, making it essential to address their needs and well-being. Neglect, such as insufficient attention, low wages, and a poor work environment, can decrease productivity, which is the efficiency of turning inputs into valuable outputs (Pouliakas & Theodossiou, 2013). Improved productivity involves producing more and better-quality output with the same effort (Nusraningrum, 2018). Declines in productivity may result from decreased motivation and an unsupportive work environment (Shobe, 2018).

The discussion on how motivation impacts employee performance is rooted in theories of human behavior, including both intrinsic and extrinsic motivation. While the type of motivation may not be as crucial as overall job satisfaction, recent studies integrating green work environment factors with employee involvement have shown that committed organizational leaders can meet performance goals (Karatepe et al., 2022). Adopting

sustainable practices has become a key business strategy, where motivating employees to engage in eco-friendly practices does not compromise quality and efficiency (Tanveer et al., 2024).

In light of the reviewed literature, there is interest in studying logistics employees in Erbil to explore the effects of motivation, work environment, and engagement on performance. A preliminary survey of 30 logistics employees in Erbil revealed that 90% observed performance issues, with tasks often not completed on time. Additionally, over 85% felt that employees were dissatisfied with their jobs. Regarding the work environment, 90% disagreed that it was comfortable and well-equipped. There is also a significant problem with employee engagement, with 95% not feeling engaged or able to work continuously for extended periods. Based on these findings, further analysis will be conducted on the impact of motivation, work environment, and engagement on employee performance in Erbil, Kurdistan.

1. Literature review

1.1 Employee performance

Performance reflects the outcomes resulting from employees' actions, shaped by their expertise and skills. In an organizational context, employee performance is the cumulative effect of the skills, efforts, and abilities of all employees, contributing to enhanced productivity and goal attainment. Improved organizational performance indicates progress toward goals but necessitates increased employee performance efforts (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Employee performance is crucial for organizational success, and learning organizations significantly enhance it by offering training and development opportunities (Rana et al., 2016). Additionally, management standards for evaluating performance are essential, as they provide insights into actual performance and its alignment with benchmarks. When discrepancies are identified, these standards help realign outputs to desired levels (Hoyle, 2017). Employee performance is also influenced by their internal job satisfaction. Employees who are content with their jobs and the organization are more motivated to contribute effectively to achieving organizational goals (Paais, M., & Pattiruhu, 2020).

1.2 Motivation

Motivation is the force that drives the intensity, direction, and persistence of an individual's efforts toward achieving goals. Employees who are motivated generally perform better in their roles (Diefendorff et al., 2022). Early motivational theories include Maslow's hierarchy of needs, which arranges needs from physiological to self-actualization, and Herzberg's motivation-hygiene theory, which distinguishes between intrinsic motivators and extrinsic hygiene factors. According to Self-Determination Theory (SDT) by Ryan and Deci, motivation is categorized into intrinsic and extrinsic types. Intrinsic motivation comes from an inherent interest in the task itself, while extrinsic motivation is aimed at achieving specific external rewards (Jovanovic & Matejevic, 2014). Factors such as feeling that one's work is meaningful, having responsibilities, receiving recognition, and making progress contribute to individual motivation and enhanced workplace performance (Danish & Usman, 2010). Motivation, a psychological process, guides employee behavior and is closely tied to internal satisfaction and organizational dynamics (Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020).

2.3 Employee Engagement

Employee engagement involves individuals fully committing themselves to their roles within an organization. Research indicates that when employees are satisfied with their jobs and their organization, they are more motivated to invest their maximum effort toward achieving organizational goals. This level of engagement significantly enhances their performance (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). As organizations seek to boost their performance, improving efficiency and productivity has become essential for survival in a competitive market. Consequently, management is challenged to address market competition by focusing on increasing employee engagement, which in turn improves overall performance (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). Ajulo (2023) suggest that employee satisfaction is a key driver of engagement, as employees are unlikely to engage fully with their work unless they are satisfied with their roles. Additionally, organizations that offer training opportunities often see higher levels of engagement, as training enhances employees' skills and knowledge, making them more committed to their jobs (Albrecht et al., 2015). Management standards also play a crucial role in employee engagement by providing benchmarks for evaluating performance and facilitating self-assessment. Employees who assess their performance against these standards are motivated to stay engaged and meet expectations (Lavigna, 2013).

2.4 Green work environment

The work environment includes a wide range of elements such as tools, materials, methods, and the overall surroundings that affect both individual and group dynamics (Amabile, 1996). Key factors include cleanliness, music, and lighting, which collectively contribute to the workplace atmosphere (Kearney et al., 2023). A green work environment goes beyond these physical aspects to also encompass non-physical elements like inclusive work structures and supportive leadership, which are vital for creating a sustainable work culture (Tagliaro et al., 2024).

A green work environment plays a crucial role in mediating employee motivation and thereby enhancing performance (Rizvi & Garg, 2021). This comprehensive environment integrates both physical and intangible

factors to create a workspace that supports and improves performance by promoting sustainability and well-being. For instance, well-lit, clean, and spacious environments help reduce stress and improve mental clarity, leading to better performance (Majchrzak and Osuch, 2023). Additionally, incorporating green spaces and sustainable practices can elevate morale and align employee values with organizational objectives (Kearney et al., 2023).

Furthermore, Green HRM practices emphasize important non-physical aspects like effective leadership and communication (Rizvi & Garg, 2021), which are essential for connecting motivation with performance. These practices offer structural and emotional support, making employees feel valued and understood, which in turn enhances their motivation. Increased motivation fosters proactive behaviors toward sustainability and productivity, boosting overall performance (Tagliaro et al., 2024).

Indicators of a well-managed green environment not only include amenities and security but also features that directly impact employee motivation and satisfaction. Such environments foster a culture of environmental stewardship and enhance employees' sense of belonging and purpose, which are crucial for achieving superior performance (Kearney et al., 2023). By aligning motivation with performance, a green work environment ensures that employees' environmental awareness translates into productive outcomes, thus enhancing both individual and organizational productivity.

2.5 Conceptual Model and Hypotheses

Given the above information, the present research is conducted to investigate the effects of some factors on Employee performance. The hypotheses of the research are as follows.

H1: Motivation has a positive effect on the employee engagement.

H2: Motivation has a positive effect on the green work environment.

H3: Motivation has a positive effect on the employee performance.

H4: Employee engagement has a positive effect on the employee performance.

H5: Green work environment has a positive effect on the employee performance.

H6: Green work environment mediates the relationship between motivation and employee performance.

H7: Employee engagement mediates the relationship between motivation and employee performance.

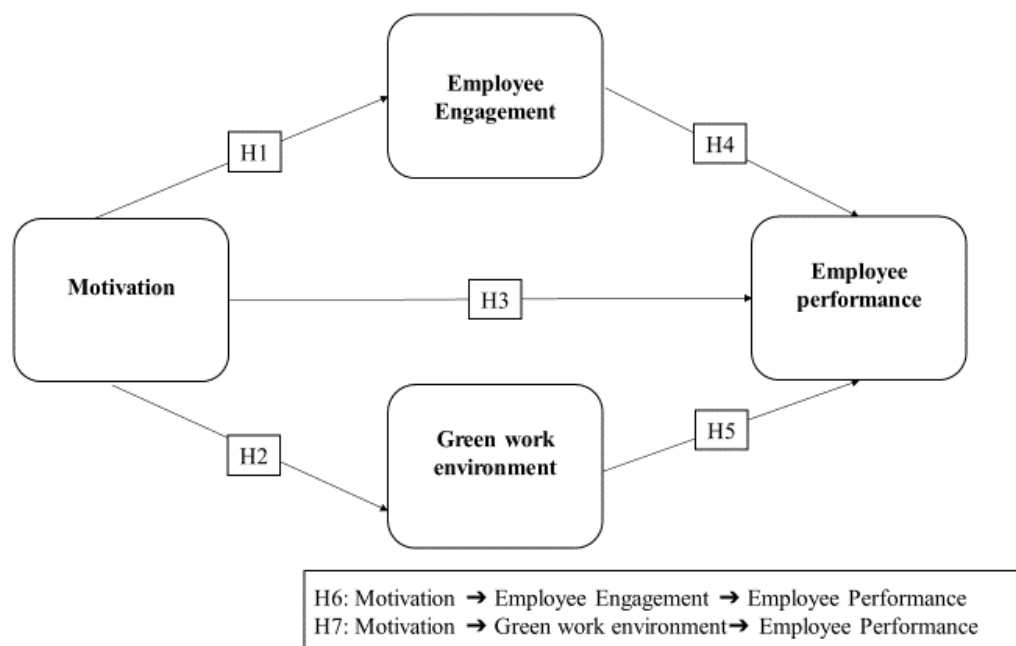


Figure 1- Conceptual Model of the Research

2. Methodology

This study utilized a quantitative causal approach by distributing questionnaires both online and offline. The sample consisted of an unspecified number of employees. According to Hair et al. (2017), for Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) analysis, the sample size should ideally be between 100 and 200 or 5 to 10 times the number of estimated indicators. In this research, the sample included 165 logistics employees in Erbil. The questionnaire, which was a modified version of an existing tool, contained 20 items and used a 5-point Likert Scale. It measured four constructs: employee performance with 5 indicators (based on Armstrong and Taylor, 2020), motivation with 5 indicators (based on Mathis et al., 2017), employee engagement with 5 indicators (based on Dessler, 2017), and a green work environment with 5 indicators (based on Sunyoto, 2012).

3. Data Analysis and Findings

The sample is predominantly male, comprising 59.39% of the respondents (98 individuals). In terms of age distribution, the age groups 26–35 years and 36–45 years represent substantial portions of the sample, with 27.88% (46 respondents) and 33.33% (55 respondents) respectively. Regarding educational qualifications, 15.15% of the sample (25 respondents) hold a diploma, while 38.18% (63 respondents) have a Bachelor's degree. The proportion decreases with higher educational levels: 23.64% of the sample (39 respondents) have a Master's degree, and 15.76% (26 respondents) hold a Doctoral degree. Additionally, 7.28% (12 respondents) have completed high school. In terms of employment type, a significant majority of respondents, 55.76% (92 individuals), work in public companies. Employment experience among the respondents varies: 13.94% (23 individuals) have less than one year of experience, 38.18% (63 individuals) have between one and five years, and 47.88% (79 individuals) have over five years of experience. Most respondents are at the employee level, making up 43.03% (71 individuals). Fewer hold supervisory roles (16.37%, 27 individuals) or middle management positions (19.39%, 32 individuals), and only 21.21% (35 individuals) occupy top management positions (Table 1).

Table1: Profile of respondents

Characteristics	Respondent	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	98	59.39
	Female	67	40.61
Age	< 25	21	12.73
	26 – 35	46	27.88
	36 - 45	55	33.33
	> 45	43	26.06
Qualification	High School	12	7.28
	Diploma	25	15.15
	Bachelor	63	38.18
	Master	39	23.64
	Doctor	26	15.76
Employment type	Public	92	55.76
	Private	73	44.24
Duration of employment experience	< 1 year	23	13.94
	1 – 5 years	63	38.18
	> 5 years	79	47.88
Position	Employee	71	43.03
	Supervisor	27	16.37
	Middle manager	32	19.39
	Top manager	35	21.21

Table 2 shows that both the composite reliability test and Cronbach's alpha values are satisfactory, indicating that all latent variables are reliable, as each has a composite reliability and Cronbach's alpha above 0.70. Thus, the questionnaire used in the research is deemed reliable and consistent. The collinearity statistics (VIF) indicate that the VIF values for indicators of Motivation, Green Work Environment, Employee Engagement, and Employee Performance are all below 5, suggesting that there are no issues with multicollinearity.

The R-Square value for the Green Work Environment variable is 0.346, which means that 34.6% of its variability is explained by the model's variables, specifically Motivation. For Employee Engagement, the R-Square value is 0.657, indicating that 65.7% of its variability is accounted for by both Motivation and Green Work Environment. The R-Square value for Employee Performance is 0.763, suggesting that 76.3% of its variability is explained by Motivation, Employee Engagement, and Green Work Environment. According to Hair et al. (2017), the Goodness of Fit of the structural model should be assessed using a predictive relevance value (Q²) of 0.848. This result implies that 84.8% of the variation in Employee Engagement and Employee Performance is explained by the independent variables (Motivation and Green Work Environment), demonstrating that the model has strong predictive relevance.

Table2: Construct Reliability and Validity

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	rho_A	Composite Reliability	AVE
Motivation	0.986	0.986	0.986	0.672
Employee performance	0.983	0.983	0.984	0.737
Green work environment	0.931	0.933	0.948	0.785
Employee engagement	0.927	0.928	0.948	0.821

Table 3 reveals that motivation has a significant positive impact on Employee Engagement, with a beta value of 0.119 ($p = 0.000$). Motivation also has a significant positive effect on Green Work Environment, as indicated by a beta value of 0.115 ($p = 0.000$), and on Employee Performance, with a beta value of 0.111 ($p = 0.000$). Furthermore, Employee Engagement significantly and positively influences Employee Performance, with a beta value of 0.128 ($p = 0.000$). The Green Work Environment also has a notable positive impact on Employee Performance, with a beta value of 0.231 ($p = 0.000$). Additionally, Table 3 shows a significant indirect effect of motivation on Employee Performance through Green Work Environment (beta = 0.151, $p = 0.000$) and Employee Engagement (beta = 0.191, $p = 0.000$). All research hypotheses have been tested and confirmed to exhibit significant effects.

Table3: Summary of hypotheses testing results for direct effect

Hypothesis	Original Sample (O)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics (O/STDEV)	P Values
Motivation -> Employee Engagement	0.119	0.004	30.925	0.000
Motivation -> Green Work Environment	0.115	0.003	36.746	0.000
Motivation -> Employee Performance	0.111	0.003	42.242	0.000
Employee Engagement ->Employee Performance	0.128	0.002	55.086	0.000
Green Work Environment -> Employee Performance	0.231	0.003	71.736	0.000
Motivation -> Employee Engagement -> Employee Performance	0.191	0.004	46.380	0.000
Motivation -> Green work environment-> Employee Performance	0.151	0.005	28.473	0.000

4. Discussion

Motivation significantly and positively influences the creation of a green work environment. Highly motivated employees contribute to making the workplace more environmentally friendly and enjoyable (Kearney et al., 2023). This relationship is crucial because a green work environment encompasses physical, social, and economic sustainability factors (Tagliaro et al., 2024). Motivated employees are key to promoting environmental stewardship, actively engaging in maintaining and protecting their surroundings (Osuch & Majchrzak, 2023). Research emphasizes the importance of motivation in driving proactive behaviors that lead to an environmentally sustainable workplace.

Motivation also impacts employee performance, with evidence indicating that higher motivation enhances performance (Diefendorff et al., 2022). Previous studies affirm that motivation is a significant factor influencing performance, making it critical for overall performance outcomes (Jovanovic & Matejevic, 2014). Theoretical models, such as path models, link motivation to engagement and, subsequently, to performance (Danish & Usman, 2010). This connection is supported by theories like self-determination (Paais and Pattiruhu, 2020) and expectancy-value theory (Diefendorff et al., 2022), highlighting the essential role of motivation in shaping employee attitudes and behaviors toward their roles and responsibilities.

Moreover, motivation profoundly affects employee engagement, suggesting that increased motivation typically leads to greater engagement with work. This strong influence of motivation on engagement is vital for fostering a positive work environment, where employees are more satisfied and actively involved in their tasks (Markos & Sridevi, 2010). Although the increase in employee involvement may be gradual, it plays a crucial role in organizational sustainability and growth (Kumar & Pansari, 2016). External motivational factors also positively impact work engagement, including both positive incentives (rewards) and negative motivators (penalties) (Albrecht et al., 2015). This distinction between positive and negative external motivators highlights the complexity of how motivational factors affect employee engagement (Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

Furthermore, a green work environment positively influences employee performance. An environmentally supportive and conscious workplace enhances performance (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). This is particularly relevant given growing concerns about environmental issues due to industrial activities. Alignment between individual values and the work environment, including job fit, organizational culture, and relationships with supervisors and peers, supports behaviors that align with both personal and organizational environmental goals.

Research also shows that a green work environment significantly boosts employee engagement. Employees in such environments are more likely to exhibit higher levels of commitment, enthusiasm, and a sense of challenge in their roles (Rana et al., 2016). Recent studies underscore the importance of integrating green initiatives with employee engagement strategies, suggesting that management should continue to invest in environmental sustainability efforts. This commitment reassures employees about the organization's

dedication to environmental preservation and fosters a culture of engagement and productivity (Lavigna, 2013).

Finally, employee engagement is shown to have a positive and substantial impact on performance. Engaged employees are more likely to perform well and feel a sense of belonging and ownership within the organization (Elnaga & Imran, 2013). Jobs involving diverse activities or skills, along with clear organizational goals and effective communication, typically result in higher levels of employee engagement.

This research suggests that logistics companies can enhance employee performance—characterized by higher output quality, efficiency, and effectiveness—by fostering a green work environment and encouraging motivation and engagement. These elements are crucial for shaping positive employee attitudes, such as teamwork, creativity, and a proactive work ethic (Diefendorff et al., 2022). Employee performance can be assessed using a comprehensive framework that includes indicators like work quantity, result quality, punctuality, cost-effectiveness, safety, attendance, adherence to policies, initiative, innovation, teamwork, and customer focus. Work quantity and result quality reflect productivity and customer satisfaction, while punctuality and cost-effectiveness pertain to operational efficiency. Safety and attendance signify social responsibility and reliability, and adherence to policies shows compliance with corporate standards. Initiative and innovation drive growth and adaptation, while teamwork and customer focus enhance both internal and external relationships. Analyzing these ten indicators provides a well-rounded assessment of overall employee performance and supports sustainable growth and excellence within an organization (Kumar & Pansari, 2016).

5. Conclusion

The results of the hypothesis testing show that employee performance in the examined logistics companies is notably influenced by factors such as motivation, employee engagement, and a green work environment. This emphasizes the importance of fostering employee motivation to promote active involvement in organizational activities and support a sustainable work environment, ultimately improving performance. These findings underscore the need for effective human resource management practices as a central element of the company's operational strategy. The study suggests implementing policies that nurture proactive employee attitudes, enhance workplace safety, and boost enthusiasm to improve performance. In conclusion, while the study provides useful insights into the factors affecting employee performance in logistics companies, it also highlights the necessity for ongoing research to further our understanding and refine human resource management practices to enhance organizational performance.

6. Limitations

This study is geographically confined to Erbil and its neighboring areas, which may not fully reflect conditions in other regions or countries, potentially limiting the generalizability of the findings. The sample, which is primarily male and drawn from the private sector, also raises questions about the study's representativeness. Additionally, the data collection tools were adapted questionnaires tailored for the Erbil logistics sector, requiring thorough documentation of the adaptation and validation processes to ensure methodological rigor.

7. Recommendation

Future studies should expand their geographical range to encompass more varied regions or countries and ensure a gender-balanced sample of public sector employees. Additionally, future research could delve deeper into the adaptation and validation of data collection tools for specific sectors, as well as explore other potential influences on employee performance, such as technological advancements, leadership styles, and organizational culture. These efforts would enhance the understanding of the interactions between the studied variables and improve the research's generalizability and methodological rigor. In particular, the section on green work environments should include more extensive research on green initiatives related to organizational policies on work motivation and employee engagement to provide a thorough examination of these essential factors.

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