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Leadership Style and Reward Systems as Drivers of Employee Work Motivation in the Manufacturing Industry

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Abstract: Employee work motivation is essential for improving organizational performance. Nonetheless, earlier research has shown varying results concerning how leadership approaches and incentive structures affect workers' motivation, and there is a scarcity of concrete data from the manufacturing field, especially within the galvanized steel sector. Drawing on Self-Determination Theory, this study examines how leadership style and reward influence employee work motivation by emphasizing the role of organizational support and recognition in fulfilling employees' psychological needs. A quantitative study that involves 107 permanent employees at an Indonesian galvanized steel company, used questionnaires, along with multiple linear regression. The results suggest that both the type of leadership and the rewards have a noteworthy and positive impact on employees' motivation at work; however, the reward component appears to exert a more powerful influence. In this sense the research extends the support for Self-Determination Theory within manufacturing, and it also gives practical direction for boosting employee motivation by applying leadership that is more aligned and reward mechanisms that are well designed.

Keyword: Leadership Style, Reward, Work Motivation, Manufacturing Industry, Human Resource Management.

INTRODUCTION

In today's increasingly cutthroat business environment, organizations are forced to keep improving their overall performance, for those organizational goals to happen and to maintain lasting competitiveness. Meanwhile, human resources have become a key organizational factor, not only in theory but also in practice, as employees play a direct role in implementing organizational strategies and managing daily operational activities. Consequently, businesses must guarantee that their staff is eager to engage productively and fulfill their duties to the best of their abilities. A key element that significantly influences employees' ability to work efficiently is their motivation at the workplace (Van den Broeck et al., 2021).

Work motivation is about those inner and outer forces that kind of push employees to reach organizational goals, in a way. When motivation is higher, employees tend to show

stronger commitment, deeper involvement, and better performance, so it becomes essential for overall organizational effectiveness (Kaviya et al., 2025). Also, earlier research seems to verify that work motivation enhances employee performance, supports engagement, and even strengthens job satisfaction, which means it plays a pretty big role in organizational success (Ramadan Wardiansyah et al., 2024).

Among the factors that may influence employee motivation, leadership style is frequently identified as an important determinant. Leaders play a significant role in directing employees, communicating organizational goals, facilitating decision-making, and creating a supportive work environment. Consequently, it is essential for companies to guarantee that workers are eager to engage productively and fulfill their duties to the best of their abilities. A significant element that influences this is work motivation. Effective leadership can inspire employees to feel appreciated, trusted, and engaged in company endeavors, consequently enhancing their readiness to aid in the organization's success (Al-Hmesat et al., 2025). This viewpoint is backed by the findings of (Rahmat & Wahyuningtyas 2022), which revealed that transformational leadership positively and considerably influences employee motivation. They also suggest that when a leader gives clear guidance, invites employee participation, and helps shape a supportive, organizational environment then employees tend to have greater motivation levels, in other words it's easier to reach higher drive. In addition to leadership style, reward systems are also considered important in influencing employee motivation. Rewards serve as a means for organizations to acknowledge the contributions and successes of their employees. This recognition can come in various forms, including financial aspects like salaries, bonuses, and incentives, as well as non-financial methods such as acknowledgment and opportunities for career advancement. When workers view rewards as equitable and suitable, they tend to feel more encouraged to enhance their performance and support the achievement of organizational objectives (Blancaflor et al., 2023).

This research is based on Self-Determination Theory (SDT), which emphasizes that motivation is influenced by fulfilling three essential psychological requirements: autonomy, competence, and relatedness (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Under SDT employees often show higher levels of drive when they feel genuinely supported, valued, and capable of doing their job effectively. Within organizational settings, leadership practices can strengthen employees' sense of relatedness through support, communication, and involvement in workplace activities, while reward systems can help employees build a stronger feeling of competence through recognition and appreciation of what they contribute. Therefore, employees who experience supportive leadership and receive appropriate rewards are more likely to develop stronger work motivation because their psychological needs are fulfilled. Self-Determination Theory provides a relevant framework for understanding how leadership styles and incentive systems influence employee motivation in the workplace.

Although the relationships among leadership style, reward, and work motivation have been widely examined, previous studies have reported inconsistent findings. Leadership behaviors are extensively acknowledged as significant elements within organizations that can boost employee motivation by satisfying fundamental psychological requirements such as autonomy, proficiency, and social connections (Ryan & Deci, 2020; Van den Broeck et al., 2021). From the lens of Self Determination Theory, staff are more inclined to build up stronger work motivation when their leaders offer support, help create involvement, and acknowledge employees' efforts in a positive way, that's usually what happens though. Still, the empirical results aren't fully consistent across different organizational contexts, and sometimes it feels like the picture is a bit blurry. (Said & Baskara, 2024) found that leadership style did not significantly influence the variables examined in their study. Similarly, research examining reward and work motivation has also produced varying results. (Sustiyatik & Sari, 2023) found a kind of positive link between reward and the overall work

drive, like, it hints that employees can end up more motivated when companies offer proper acknowledgment as well as compensation, not just one or the other. However, (Alam et al., 2024) contended that management and organizational strategies do not consistently yield the same results, as the reactions of employees can vary based on the circumstances within the organization and the nature of the work setting. Such varying results indicate that the effects of leadership approaches and incentives on employee motivation may differ, may change depending on the organizational context(s) and needs more investigation, because honestly, it's not always the same.

In addition to the inconsistency of previous findings, empirical evidence from the manufacturing sector remains relatively limited, particularly within the galvanized steel industry. Most previous studies have focused on service organizations, educational institutions, and public-sector environments, while studies conducted in manufacturing settings remain relatively scarce. Manufacturing organizations operate in environments characterized by production targets, operational discipline, and performance-oriented work systems, which might affect how employees react to leadership methods, and reward structures. It matters to look at how leadership style relates to reward, and how that links with employee motivation, especially in a manufacturing environment, to see if earlier results still make sense here.

With all that in mind, the present study examines how leadership style and incentive mechanisms influence employee motivation within a galvanized steel manufacturing company. The study contributes to the field of human resource management by providing practical and empirical evidence from a manufacturing context that reflects actual organizational operations, an area that has received relatively limited attention in previous research. The results are expected to deliver both conceptual and practical takeaways about the ingredients that drive employee motivation inside organizations.

H1: Leadership style has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation.

H2: Reward has a positive and significant effect on employee work motivation.

H3: Leadership style and reward simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on employee motivation.

METHOD

This research employed a quantitative methodology to investigate how leadership styles and reward systems influence the motivation of employees at work. A quantitative method seemed suitable as it enables the objective assessment of the connections between different variables, and it also facilitates hypothesis testing through statistical methods. The study was conducted within a galvanized steel production firm located in North Jakarta, Indonesia. This setting was selected because employee motivation plays a critical role in supporting productivity, operational efficiency, and overall organizational performance in manufacturing environments characterized by production targets and operational demands.

The group involved in this research comprised 145 individuals employed by the organization. To determine the number of participants needed, the Slovin formula was applied, incorporating a 5% error margin. This gave a minimum sample requirement of 107 respondents. The respondents were chosen through purposive sampling, based on these points: (1) being a permanent employee of the company, (2) having served at least one year, and (3) being involved actively in daily operational activities. These points were set so the participants would have enough experience and understanding of the company's leadership practices, its reward systems, and the work environment. In the end, 107 valid replies were obtained and then included in the final analysis.

Tabel 1. Respondent Characteristics (n = 107)

Characteristics	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	94	87.9
	Female	13	12.1
Age	< 25 Years	2	1.9
	25–34 Years	39	36.4
	34–44 Years	54	50.5
	≥ 45 Years	12	11.2
Educational Background	High School/Vocational School	69	64.5
	Diploma (D1–D4)	3	2.8
	Bachelor–Doctoral Degree (S1–S3)	35	32.7
Length of Service	1–3 Years	30	28.0
	> 3 Years	77	72.0

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

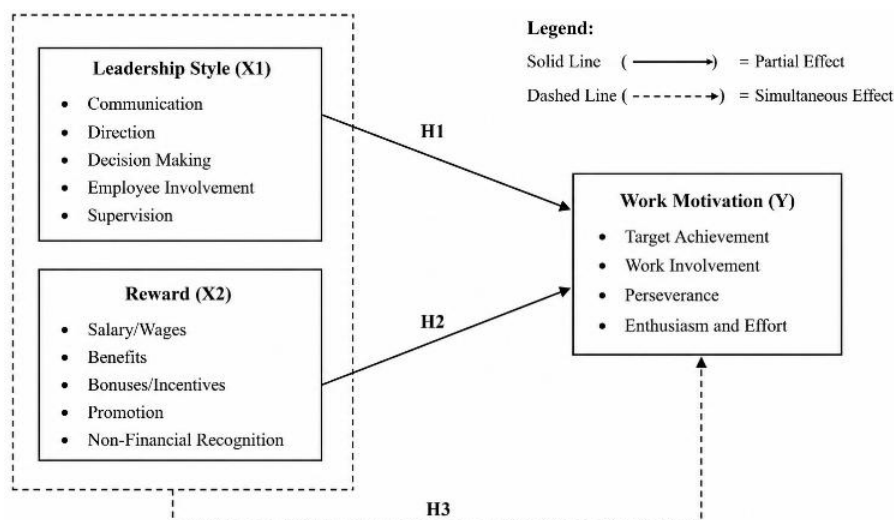
The chart indicates that a significant portion of the participants were male workers at 87.9%, whereas female workers constituted merely 12.1% of those surveyed. Regarding age, the largest segment of respondents fell within the 34 to 44 age brackets, accounting for 50.5%, followed by the 25 to 34 age categories at 36.4%. As for educational background, most respondents had finished high school or a vocational school track, 64.5%, and then it kind of continues. While 32.7% held bachelor's to doctoral degrees, which is kind of where it lands. Furthermore, most respondents had worked for more than three years (72.0%), indicating that they possessed sufficient experience and understanding of the company's leadership practices, reward systems, and work environment. Therefore, the respondents were considered capable of providing relevant information regarding the variables examined in this study.

Information was gathered using a generally organized survey, distributed online through Google Forms in January and February of 2026. The survey used a five-point Likert scale, going from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree). Before distribution, the questionnaire underwent a review process to ensure that each item was clearly formulated and appropriately aligned with the variables being measured. Participation was optional, and individuals were informed that their responses would remain private and utilized solely for scholarly objectives. Leadership style was measured using indicators proposed by (Al-Hmesat et al., 2025), including communication, direction, decision making, employee involvement, and supervision. Reward was measured using indicators adapted from (Blancaflor et al., 2023), namely salary or wages, benefits, bonuses or incentives, promotion opportunities, and non-financial recognition. Meanwhile, work motivation was measured using indicators developed by (Kaviya et al., 2025), including target achievement, work involvement, perseverance, and enthusiasm and effort.

The information that was collected was looked at using the Statistical Package for the Social Sciences (SPSS). At first, descriptive statistics were applied to describe the characteristics of the participants. The soundness of the instruments was tested using the Pearson Product Moment correlation approach, whereby items on the survey were deemed valid if the correlation coefficient surpassed the necessary minimum and the significance level remained under 0.05. Reliability was looked at with Cronbach's Alpha (>0.70). After checking the classical assumptions, multiple linear regression was run, along with t-tests, an F-test, and finally R^2 , to see how leadership style together with reward affects employee work motivation.

Based on Self-Determination Theory and earlier empirical studies, this research investigates how leadership style, and the reward systems, moderately affects employee work motivation. In this setup, leadership style and reward are handled as separate independent variables, while work motivation is the dependent one. The theoretical framework illustrates

the anticipated relationships between the variables examined in this research, and it provides the basis for testing the hypotheses.



Source: Developed by the authors based on Al-Hmesat et al. (2025), Blancaflor et al. (2023), and Kaviya et al. (2025).

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

Validity Test Results

Tabel 2. Validity Test Results

Variable	Number of Items	r Count Range	r Table	Significance Level	Result
Leadership Style	8	0.537 – 0.738	0.190	< 0.05	Valid
Reward	8	0.539 – 0.776	0.190	< 0.05	Valid
Work Motivation	8	0.525 – 0.635	0.190	< 0.05	Valid

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The validity assessment was carried out to see if the items in the questionnaire could, in a sense, effectively and accurately evaluate the intended variables. The results showed that every single item made for leadership style, rewards, and work motivation met the required validity standards in full, without any issues. Every item recorded a correlation coefficient exceeding the minimum limit of 0.190, along with a significance level lower than 0.05. These results demonstrate that the items successfully represented their respective constructs in an effective and accurate manner. Consequently, every questionnaire item was deemed valid and appropriate for the following phases of data analysis.

Reliability Test Results

Tabel 3. Reliability Test Results

Variable	Cronbach's Alpha	Threshold	Result
Leadership Style	0.785	0.70	Reliable
Reward	0.778	0.70	Reliable
Work Motivation	0.704	0.70	Reliable

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The test results about reliability suggest that all the research variables showed good internal consistency, which is what we expected. Leadership style got a Cronbach's Alpha of 0.785, then reward came next with 0.778 and work motivation sat at 0.704. Because every

value was above the suggested cutoff 0.70, the measurement tool was treated as reliable. In other words, the questionnaire items were consistent when they were capturing their related constructs. Therefore, the responses can be used confidently in subsequent analyses, as the measurement scale demonstrates adequate internal consistency.

T-Test Results

Tabel 4. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Hypothesis	Beta	t-value	Sig.	Result
Leadership Style → Work Motivation	0.423	5.993	0.000	Supported
Reward → Work Motivation	0.475	6.724	0.000	Supported

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The t-test was done to check the individual influence of leadership style and incentives on how motivated employees feel at work. The results show that leadership style has a positive and statistically significant effect on work motivation, seen from a t-value of 5.993 and a significance level of 0.000 which sits lower than the usual significance cut-off of 0.05. This finding indicates that leadership style has a substantial influence on employee motivation. This suggests that employees are likely to experience higher motivation when they are influenced by effective leadership characterized by clear communication, guidance, and assistance. Therefore, H1 is validated.

Moreover, the results reveal that rewards also have a positive and significant effect on employee motivation for work. The t-value of 6.724 and a significance level of 0.000 indicate that employees are more likely to exhibit enhanced motivation levels when they perceive that their efforts and contributions are recognized through appropriate rewards. As a result, H2 is validated.

Furthermore, the standardized coefficient for reward ($\beta = 0.475$) is slightly higher than that of leadership style ($\beta = 0.423$). This suggests that although both variables play an important role in enhancing employee motivation, reward has a relatively stronger influence on work motivation among the respondents. In other words, employees appear to be particularly motivated when they perceive that the organization provides fair and meaningful rewards for their performance.

Multiple Linear Regression Results

Tabel 5. Multiple Linear Regression Results

Variable	Unstandardized Coefficient (B)	Standard Error	Standardized Coefficient (Beta)	t-value	Sig.
Constant	11.275	1.827	-	6.173	0.000
Leadership Style	0.294	0.049	0.423	5.993	0.000
Reward	0.374	0.056	0.475	6.724	0.000

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

A multiple linear regression analysis was run to look at how far leadership style and reward really affect employee work motivation. From the output it seems that both things go in a positive direction, meaning they each help motivation. Leadership style shows a regression coefficient of 0.294, so when leadership practices get better, employee motivation tends to rise as well. Put differently, employees are usually more driven when they get clear guidance along with support, plus those practical channels of communication that their leaders use to keep things aligned.

On the other hand, reward also gives a positive regression coefficient of 0.374, which suggests that motivation grows as the reward system works better and feels more meaningful.

This indicates that workers are more likely to exhibit genuine excitement and maintain their dedication when they feel that their efforts are recognized, respected, and acknowledged by the company.

Based on these results, the regression equation can be expressed as:

$$\text{Work Motivation} = 11.275 + 0.294(\text{Leadership Style}) + 0.374(\text{Reward})$$

The equation shows that both leadership style and reward contribute positively to employee work motivation. Furthermore, reward appears to have a slightly stronger influence than leadership style, as reflected by its higher regression coefficient. This indicates that although strong leadership is crucial for boosting employee motivation, a suitable incentive structure is especially vital in inspiring employees to excel and support the objectives of the organization.

Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test Results

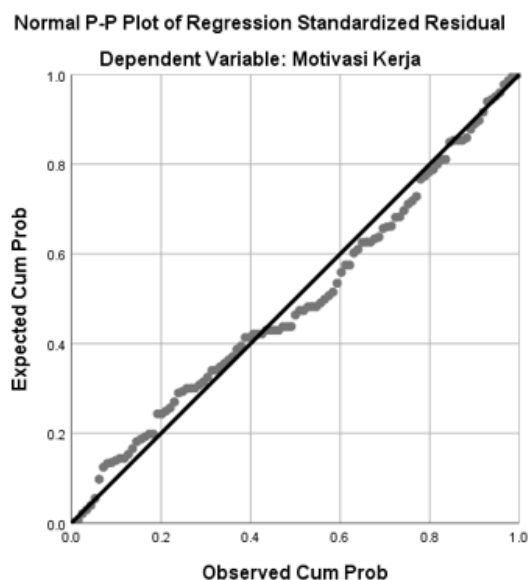
Tabel 6. Kolmogorov–Smirnov Normality Test Results

Test Statistic	Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)	Decision
0.074	0.189	Normally Distributed

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The findings from the Kolmogorov–Smirnov normality assessment shows that the residuals tend toward normal distribution, moderately. This observation is also corroborated by the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value, 0.189 which kind of supports the same idea, which exceeds the typical significance cutoff of 0.05. In conclusion, the residuals do not deviate significantly from a normal distribution, indicating that the normality assumption has been satisfied. Therefore, the regression model should be employed for the next rounds of work, like further analyses and hypothesis testing, with some confidence.

Normal P-P Plot



Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

Figure 1. Graphic of Normal P-P PLOT

The Normal P–P Plot indicates that the data points of the residuals are relatively near the diagonal line and generally align with its trajectory. However, there are minor variations at certain locations, yet the overall view remains aligned with that diagonal

line. This implies that the residuals are approximately normally distributed, showing no significant departure from normality. Consequently, the visual check of the Normal P–P Plot lines up quite closely, with what the Kolmogorov–Smirnov test shows, it seems like the normality premise for the regression model stays in place. Consequently, the data are regarded as workable for additional regression analysis, and for the related hypothesis testing.

Multicollinearity Test Results

Tabel 7. Multicollinearity Test Results

Variable	Tolerance	VIF	Result
Leadership Style	0.833	1.200	No Multicollinearity
Reward	0.833	1.200	No Multicollinearity

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The multicollinearity test was run to see if there was a real, kind of strong link between the independent factors that went into the regression model. The outcomes show that leadership style and reward each have a tolerance score of 0.833, and Variance Inflation Factor (VIF) values of 1.200. These numbers fit the common guideline where tolerance is higher than 0.10 and VIF remains below 10. It looks like there isn't a multicollinearity issue among the independent variables at all.

In other words, leadership style and reward are measuring slightly different sides of the study, and they do not really overlap too much with each other. Because of that, both predictors can be inserted in the regression model at the same time, and the regression analysis can proceed, without the kind of worries that often come from multicollinearity.

Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Tabel 8. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Variable	Significance Value	Criterion	Result
Leadership Style	0.213	> 0.05	No Heteroscedasticity
Reward	0.315	> 0.05	No Heteroscedasticity

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The heteroscedasticity test was did using the Glejser method, to see if the residual variance stayed the same across each observation. In general, a regression model is said to be free from heteroscedasticity when the significance score of every independent variable is above 0.05.

Based on the results, leadership style shows a significance value of 0.213, and reward records 0.315. Because both values are greater than 0.05, the residual variance can be viewed as steady over the whole dataset. This means the regression model doesn't show heteroscedasticity. So, the idea that the data has equal variance across all groups is probably true.

F-Test Results

Tabel 9. F-Test Results

F-value	Significance Value	Criterion	Result
68.427	0.000	Sig. < 0.05	Significant

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The F test was carried out to see how leadership style and rewards, together, really affect employee motivation. The output shows an F - value of 68.427 and a significance level

of 0.000. Since that significance value sits below 0.05, the regression model is judged as statistically meaningful, that's essentially the key point here.

Findings imply that leadership style and reward jointly affect employee work motivation. Put differently, the two independent variables, if taken together, contribute meaningfully toward describing the differences in employee work motivation. Overall, the results back up the model that was suggested, and they hint that leadership practices, along with reward systems, matter a lot in shaping the employees' drive inside the workplace.

Coefficient of Determination Results

Tabel 10. Coefficient of Determination Results

R	R Square (R ²)	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
0.754	0.568	0.560	1.927

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

The coefficient of determination, also known as R-squared, was used to show how much of the shift in employee work motivation could be tied to leadership style and rewards. From the output, the R Square came out to 0.568, so about 56.8% of the changes in employee work motivation seem related to leadership style and rewards. The rest, 43.2%, might be due to other factors that were not included in this study.

The Adjusted R Square was 0.560 and it indicates the model still has a strong capacity to account for the data, even after factoring in the number of variables that were used in the analysis. Furthermore, the Std. Error of the Estimate was 1.927, indicating a relatively small average difference between the observed values and those predicted by the regression model. This finding suggests that the model provides a reasonably accurate fit in explaining employee work motivation.

Also, leadership style plus reward account for 56.8% of the variation in employee work motivation. still, 43.2% is left over, which means other elements could be at play, but they were not part of the present study. Earlier research has pointed out that work motivation can be shaped by things like organizational culture, job satisfaction, work setting, employee engagement, career development opportunities, and psychological empowerment. So, in future work, researchers may bring in these additional variables, to get a fuller and more nuanced grasp of employee motivation.

Hypothesis Testing Results

Tabel 11. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis	Relationship	Beta (β)	t-value	Sig.	Decision
H1	Leadership Style → Work Motivation	0.423	5.993	0.000	Supported
H2	Reward → Work Motivation	0.475	6.724	0.000	Supported
H3	Leadership Style and Reward → Work Motivation	F = 68.427	-	0.000	Supported

Source: Research Data Processed by the Author (2026)

Hypothesis testing was carried out to see what happens to employees' work motivation when different leadership styles and types of rewards are considered. The findings show that leadership style does positively, and significantly, affect work motivation. This can be seen in the standardized coefficient (β) of 0.423, then the t-value comes in at 5.993, and the significance level sits at 0.000. This part supports H1, meaning that if leadership style gets better, then the employee work motivation tends to go up. In other words, there is an association, not just an idea, because those numbers are strong.

Reward was also found to have a positive influence, and this part seemed significant, on work motivation. The standardized coefficient, (β) came out to be 0.475, the t-value was 6.724 and the significance value was 0.000. This supports H2, meaning employees tend to be more motivated when they feel the reward system is fair and meaningful, not just something done in a formal way.

Then the F-test results show an F-value of 68.427 and a significance value of 0.000, that means leadership style and reward, together, make a significant difference on employee work motivation. Findings support H3, and they also show that both variables help explain the variations in work motivation in a more real way. Between the two independent variables, reward has a slightly stronger influence on motivation than leadership style. Can see it from the bigger standardized coefficient value, where reward has $\beta = 0.475$ compared to leadership style at $\beta = 0.423$. In other words, both factors matter, but employees feel more pushed to perform when their efforts and contributions are seen and recognized through an effective reward system, and not the other way around.

Discussion

From these findings it seems like leadership style has a positive and statistically meaningful impact on employee work motivation ($\beta = 0.423$; $t = 5.993$; $p < 0.001$). This may mean that employees tend to feel more motivated when their leaders give clear directions, communicate effectively, and provide ongoing assistance in getting the tasks done, especially when it comes to their responsibilities. A positive leadership style helps build a work environment where employees feel appreciated, trusted, and motivated to help achieve the company's goals. So, employees usually become more excited, dedicated, and ready to do their jobs well. These results show how leadership plays a key part in creating a work environment that helps keep employees motivated and promotes good behavior at work.

The findings in this study seem to sync up with past research, showing that strong leadership can make employees more driven, and more likely to pursue their day-to-day tasks with purpose. It kind of fits the usual pattern, even if it's not perfectly identical, because motivation tends to rise when direction is clear. (Teoh et al., 2022) explained that transformational leaders can inspire staff to grow their capabilities while also building a common direction, and a clearer feeling of purpose inside the organization. This same angle is backed up by (Jiatong et al., 2022), who reported that when leadership is strong it helps boost employee engagement and organizational loyalty, which then, apparently feed into stronger work motivation. Also, (Sokolic et al., 2024) noted that leadership approaches marked by effective communication, encouragement, and employee participation tend to create a positive effect on employee motivation as well as organizational performance. Overall, these studies suggest that capable leadership makes it easier for employees to feel involved, stay committed and, to be more ready to contribute toward the organization's objectives.

The consistency of these findings across Indonesian organizations suggests that effective leadership contributes to positive employee outcomes regardless of organizational setting. Although (Saragih et al., 2021) examined employee performance rather than work motivation, their findings strengthen the argument that leadership remains an important organizational resource for improving employee outcomes.

The study results indicate that rewards have a positive, and important, influence on employees' motivation to perform their tasks. The beta value comes at 0.475, the t value is 6.724 and the p value is under 0.001. Honestly, it really stands out. Among the independent variables that were looked at, reward showed up as the strongest predictor of employee motivation. This outcome implies that employees tend to stay motivated when they believe their efforts, achievements, and contributions get noticed by the organization. It can be

through financial incentives, growth and career development chances, or even a simple acknowledgment for good performance, and still, rewards can help employees keep their drive and commitment. If employees also think that rewards are allocated fairly, and they match what they contribute, then they are usually more ready to put in extra effort to reach organizational objectives.

Out of the two main factors looked at, reward was the biggest one that affected how motivated employees were to do their work. This is shown by the higher standardized number, which is 0.475 for reward, compared to 0.423 for leadership style. This finding suggests that employees in the manufacturing sector place considerable importance on the rewards they receive in return for their efforts and contributions. In a work environment characterized by production targets and operational demands, employees may perceive rewards as a tangible form of organizational recognition, which strengthens their motivation to perform effectively.

This study's results match earlier research that shows how reward systems help motivate workers. (Figueiredo et al., 2025) said that reward systems are important for shaping employee behavior and making them more committed to the organization by making them feel appreciated for their work. This finding is also backed by (Zeshan et al., 2025), who noted that performance-driven rewards help reinforce the bond between employee effort and organizational recognition, and it really leads to stronger motivation and engagement overall. In addition, (Almadana-Abón et al., 2024) found that both financial and non-financial rewards contribute to a more favorable work experience by strengthening employees' sense of being appreciated and support from the organization. Taken together, these findings suggest that employees become more motivated when organizations acknowledge their contributions through fair, yet meaningful reward structures.

The present findings are also supported by (Damayanti & Wulansari, 2024), who emphasized the importance of compensation as an organizational practice that shapes employees' attitudes and work-related behaviors. Their study found that paying employees fairly has a big impact on their desire to stay with a company. It's also interesting because employees tend to be more satisfied when they feel the rewards they receive are fair, and when those rewards match what they have done. Basically, it's like the perception of equity and appropriateness really steers them. Although their study focused on turnover intention rather than work motivation, the findings reinforce the argument that fair compensation, as an important component of organizational reward systems, contributes to more positive employee attitudes and strengthens employees' willingness to contribute to organizational goals.

Leadership style together with reward, jointly has a strong impact on employee motivation for work ($F = 68.427$; $p < 0.001$) and this result accounts for about 56.8% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.568$). In short, the findings imply that these two things work in a sort of tandem way, they complement each other, when it comes to boosting motivation. The rest of the differences, maybe around 43.2%, likely come from other organizational circumstances plus individual elements that weren't covered here, not just these two.

This study's results match what was found before, showing that employee motivation comes from both their own traits and the company's environment. Van den (Van den Broeck et al., 2021) found that when workers' internal and external needs are met, their motivation usually increases, which makes sense in practice as well (Ryan & Deci, 2020) also underline that employees tend to be more motivated when the work setting supports their psychological needs and it also recognizes their contributions properly, not just formally. (Vo et al., 2022) noted that motivation is shaped not only by personal needs but also by organizational and social conditions that encourage employees to remain engaged in their work. In addition, (Grant & Shandell, 2022) highlighted that supportive workplace relationships and a positive

organizational environment can encourage employees to invest greater effort in achieving organizational goals. These findings suggest that employee motivation is more likely to grow when organizations combine effective leadership practices with reward systems that make employees feel valued and appreciated, in a kind of straightforward way.

This research adds to the widening understanding in human resource management, offering results particularly tied to the manufacturing field, with a focus on the galvanized steel industry. In that area, research on employee motivation is still rather sparse, empirical studies remain not that common or hard to find. The results demonstrate that both leadership style and reward systems are important determinants of employee motivation, with reward emerging as the more influential factor among the variables examined.

CONCLUSION

This study looked at how different leadership styles and rewards affect the work motivation of employees in a company that makes galvanized steel. The results show that both the way a leader leads and the rewards given can boost employee motivation, and rewards seem to have a bigger impact. These results show that how motivated employees are depends on having good leadership and a fair way of rewarding them in the company.

From a theoretical point of view, this study expands on Self-Determination Theory by providing real evidence that support from the organization through leadership and recognition of employees through rewards makes a difference, somehow contribute to employee work motivation in a manufacturing context. The findings also enrich human resource management literature by demonstrating that organizational practices jointly influence employee motivation, particularly in production-oriented work environments.

From a practical perspective, the findings indicate that organizations should integrate effective leadership practices with fair and meaningful reward systems as complementary human resource management strategies to enhance employee motivation and improve overall organizational performance.

This study has a few limitations that are worth noting. First, the research used a cross-sectional design, it's harder to track how employee motivation might shift over time. Second, the sample came only from employees of a single galvanized steel manufacturing company, and that could narrow how broadly the findings apply elsewhere. Third, the research model examined only the direct effects of leadership style and rewards on work motivation, without assessing potential mediating or moderating mechanisms. Because of that, future studies could use more inclusive research designs, by bringing in mediating or moderating elements, like employee engagement, organizational culture, job satisfaction, or psychological empowerment, and by working with wider samples across different industries to make the conclusions more general.

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