Workload, incentives, and job satisfaction: Their influence on employee retention

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Abstract
Purpose: This study aims to analyze the effect of workload, incentives, and job satisfaction on employee retention.

Methodology: The data collection method used a questionnaire conducted on respondents, namely employees of UD. Agung Rejeki with a saturated sampling technique. The data analysis technique in testing the research hypothesis used linear and multiple regression analysis techniques and the Sobel Test.

Results: 1) there is a positive and significant effect between workload variables on employee retention; 2) there is a positive and significant effect between incentives on employee retention; 3) there is a negative effect between workload on job satisfaction; 4) there is a positive and significant effect between incentives on job satisfaction; 5) there is a positive and significant effect between workload, incentives, and job satisfaction on employee retention; 6) job satisfaction is able to mediate the relationship between workload and employee retention; 7) job satisfaction is able to mediate the relationship between incentives and employee retention.

Conclusions: This study found that workload and incentives have a positive and significant influence on employee retention. However, workload has a negative impact on job satisfaction, while incentives actually increase job satisfaction. In addition, job satisfaction itself has been proven to have a positive and significant effect on employee retention. Job satisfaction also acts as a mediator in the relationship between workload and employee retention, as well as between employee incentives and retention. This shows that to increase employee retention, companies need to pay attention to workload and provide adequate incentives to maintain job satisfaction levels.

Limitations: The study was limited to companies in Lampung, the potential for questionnaire bias, the approach was only quantitative, and did not consider external factors such as organizational culture and leadership.

Contribution: This research reinforces the importance of implementing GHRM in improving employee performance and organizational sustainability, as well as encouraging follow-up research with qualitative approaches and external factors.

Keywords: *Employee Retention, Incentives, Job Satisfaction, Mediating Factors, Workload*

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1. Introduction

Employee retention is a major challenge for companies in maintaining a stable and quality workforce. Employees with high retention rates tend to be more loyal and productive, and thus, they can make a positive contribution to the company. However, in reality, many companies have difficulty retaining their employees due to various factors, such as excessive workloads and less than optimal incentives.

According to Hernawan and Srimulyani (2021), employee retention is a company's effort to retain its employees so that they remain in the organization, which aims to help achieve organizational goals optimally. This fact is supported by Khaeruman (2021), who stated that to keep employees motivated, loyal, and disciplined, managers need to manage and pay attention to them well to prevent turnover and decreased work enthusiasm. Employee retention management is an important aspect of companies' responsibility for the sustainability of human resources.

As a company engaged in the horticultural and basic food trade, Agung Rejeki Trading Enterprise (UD) faces challenges in retaining its workforce. With 68 employees spread across three warehouses and six kiosks, as well as the storage of imported and local horticultural products that require strict management. Employees often face a high workload to ensure effectiveness and efficiency. If not managed properly, this condition can cause stress and fatigue and increase employee turnover rates. Good employee management is stated by Sudaryono and Sutianingsih (2023) that work motivation, organizational culture, and work discipline must be managed properly so as to improve employee performance. In addition to workload, incentives play an important role in increasing employee retention rates. Incentives that are given fairly and competitively contribute to increased job satisfaction. This, in turn, has a positive impact on employee loyalty to the organization. Effective incentives are not only limited to financial compensation but also include non-financial rewards, such as recognition of performance, career development opportunities, and the creation of a conducive work environment. Widiantari, Astrama, and Purwaningrat (2024) explained that job satisfaction influences employee performance by the company providing regular training, meeting employee needs, providing promotions according to their competencies, and motivation to feel more comfortable at work.

Rapid digital transformation has significantly impacted user behavior across various sectors, including education, business, and public services. However, there remains a substantial gap in the effective utilization of technology by individuals and organizations, particularly in developing countries such as Indonesia (Kurniawati, Idris, Handayati, & Osman, 2021). Although digital literacy continues to grow, not all segments of society have equal access to or the ability to use digital technologies optimally. In this context, a critical question arises: to what extent does the adoption of digital technology influence the performance effectiveness of individuals or organizations, and what are the key barriers to its adoption?. This problem statement is particularly relevant given that numerous digitalization policies are often not accompanied by adequate human resource readiness or supporting infrastructure. This study offers a novel contribution by examining the impact of digital technology adoption on individual and organizational performance in the local context of a developing country, specifically Indonesia. Unlike previous research that predominantly focuses on macro-level analyses or developed country settings, this study adopts a micro-level perspective and explores the real challenges faced by users with varying levels of digital literacy and limited infrastructure support. Additionally, it highlights the gap between digital policy implementation and actual readiness on the ground, an area that remains underexplored in the current literature.

Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workload, incentives, and employee retention. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to have high work motivation and a tendency to remain in the organization. Conversely, low job satisfaction can encourage employees to seek job opportunities elsewhere. Ahiruddin, Kuswarak, and Fauziah (2021) stated that job satisfaction has a positive effect on improving employee performance in the moderate category. One type of incentive is the provision of an award. Sutianingsih and Yulianto (2021) wrote the results of the study that job promotions have a negative but insignificant effect on employee job satisfaction and job promotions have a negative but insignificant effect on employee performance. Previous research has not addressed the relationship between workload and incentives on employee retention, mediated by job satisfaction. Previous research has only examined the linear relationship between workload and performance, as well as the linear effect of incentives on performance. Other studies only partially examine workload and job satisfaction, as well as incentives for job satisfaction.

2. Literature review
2.1. Workload
Aprelyani (2025) defines workload as the number of tasks, responsibilities, and demands imposed on an employee. This definition includes various activities that must be carried out, including the difficulty and complexity of the work. Priatmoko and Ahsani (2024) stated that a disproportionate workload will have an impact on stress, especially those that have exceeded a moderate level will have a negative impact, namely low job dissatisfaction. Handoko (2021) explained that workload includes both the amount and type of work that employees must complete. If the workload is too high, it can negatively impact individual performance and well-being; therefore, effective human resource management is needed. The findings of the study by Rahmisyari, Husin, and Musafir (2021) show that workload has a significant influence on employee morale. In addition, work conflict has a significant impact, and simultaneously, both variables influence employee morale. Referring to the research results of Rahmisyari et al. (2021), workload indicators consist of: 1) the amount of work targets given to be completed; 2) work results that must be completed within a certain time; 3) making decisions quickly; 4) dealing with unexpected events; and 5) workload that must be completed within a certain time.

2.2. Incentives
Incentives are a form of extrinsic motivation provided by organizations to encourage better employee performance. Priatmoko and Ahsani (2024) explained that compensation has a positive and significant effect on employee job satisfaction, while workload has a negative and significant impact. Job satisfaction also has a positive and significant effect on employee performance. Compensation affects performance directly and indirectly through job satisfaction as a mediating variable. Conversely, the negative effect of workload on performance becomes insignificant when it is mediated by job satisfaction. Sutianingsih and Yuliyana (2023) provide another perspective: incentives can improve employee work discipline, which is also driven by other factors, such as a good work environment and leadership. Research by Karim, Silalahi, and Yunita (2023) also supports the importance of providing incentives. They found that incentives had a positive and significant effect on employee performance. In addition, incentives, work motivation, and work stress affect performance simultaneously. The difference in this study lies in the combination of independent variables used, namely work motivation, and the focus on employee performance as the dependent variable.

According to Khaeruman (2021), incentives are a form of reward outside the basic salary given to employees based on their performance. The provision of this incentive is intended to encourage increased motivation and improve work performance. High work enthusiasm is the main factor that drives employees to work hard. Incentive study by Konjala and Wulansari (2025) stated that incentives are encouragements given to employees so that they work according to or exceed predetermined standards. The main purpose of providing incentives is to optimally maintain and improve employee performance. Incentives also function as a form of appreciation for work achievements; the higher the achievement, the greater the reward. Ratnasari and Mahmud (2020) show that both salary and incentives significantly affect employee performance. However, between the two, incentives have a more dominant influence, as indicated by the higher Standardized Coefficient Beta value on the incentive variable compared to salary.

According to Khaeruman (2021), there are several indicators used in providing incentives to employees, including: 1) Performance, namely the amount of incentives given based on the achievement of work results obtained by employees in a certain period; 2) Length of Service, that incentives are given based on the duration of employee work time which can be calculated daily, weekly, monthly, or even hourly, depending on the work system implemented by the organization; 3) Seniority, referring to the length of service of employees in the organization is also a consideration in providing incentives; 4) Needs, is the level of decent living needs as one of the indicators of providing incentives; and 5) Job Evaluation, job position in the organizational structure is a determining factor in the amount of incentives.

2.3. Employee Retention
According to Darmayanti, Perizade, Isnurhadi, and Yuliani (2024) that employee retention is influenced by several factors such as the level of employee engagement, the quality of communication between

team members and management, a fair and competitive compensation system, adequate leadership quality, clear career development opportunities, quality training and development programs, work flexibility, level of job satisfaction, and objective and transparent performance evaluation. Hanifah and Waskito (2022) wrote that employee connections to their organizations determine whether they leave their positions or stay. This theory is also introduced as a theory that explains why employees stay in organizations. Savitri, Taufiq, and Iskandar (2022) employee retention is the company's ability to maintain and retain talented and potential employees to be loyal or remain loyal to work in the company.

Disa and Djastuti (2019) show a significant relationship between employee retention and two main factors: career development and rewards. Both have been shown to have a positive and significant influence on long-term employee retention. According to Disa and Djastuti (2019), employee retention is measured by the following indicators: 1) a conducive work environment; 2) collaboration and team support in work; 3) opportunity to achieve career goals; 4) certainty about a clear career path; 5) additional incentives other than salary; 6) awards that are in accordance with job responsibilities; 7) clear description of tasks and responsibilities; 8) guidance provided in carrying out tasks and responsibilities; 9) assurance of equal opportunities for all employees; and 10) good relationships with superiors and co-workers.

2.4. Job Satisfaction

According to Harianja and Saputro (2024), high levels of job satisfaction can improve employee performance. This influence increases if the company encourages the emergence of work motivation and career development in its employees. Regarding job satisfaction, Maulidah, Ali, and Pangestuti (2022) explained that job satisfaction has a negative and significant effect on turnover intention. Job satisfaction mediates the influence of emotional intelligence on turnover intention. Companies need to improve the job satisfaction of their employees by providing appreciation, awards, and a comfortable work space. Kuswandi (2023) explained that work discipline, job satisfaction, and work supervision have a positive and significant effect on employee performance, both individually and collectively. This strengthens the position of job satisfaction as an important factor in improving employee performance. The results of Damayanti and Sutianingsih (2023) show that worker productivity is highly correlated with their level of satisfaction at work. The results show that problems related to leadership and religiosity are mediated through job satisfaction, which ultimately affects employee performance.

According to Sutrisno, Herdiyanti, Asir, Yusuf, and Ardianto (2022) stated that compensation invested by management in employees has an effect on improving employee performance in the company. Motivational encouragement significantly improves the quality of employees' performance. Job satisfaction among employees can improve the quality of employee performance. According to Luthfiana and Rianto (2023), job satisfaction reflects the overall level of employees' likes or dislikes of various aspects of their work. Job satisfaction is subjective because it is the result of an individual's assessment of what is received from their work. According to Garg, Dar, and Mishra (2018), job satisfaction indicators include: 1) working conditions, 2) duties and responsibilities, 3) compensation, 4) interpersonal relationships, and 5) development opportunities.

2.5. Relationship between Variables

Workload and incentives are two important factors that affect employee performance, but their influence is not always direct or consistent. A high workload tends to decrease job satisfaction if it is not balanced with adequate support or compensation. Conversely, fair and attractive incentives can increase job satisfaction because employees feel appreciated for their contributions to the organization. A high level of job satisfaction motivates employees to work more optimally, thus creating a positive effect on productivity and loyalty. Thus, job satisfaction is an important mechanism that explains how workload and incentives affect overall work attitudes and behaviors.

The thinking framework in this study is compiled to describe the relationship between the variables studied, namely workload (X_1) and incentives (X_2) as independent variables, employee retention (Y) as the dependent variable, and job satisfaction (Z) as a mediating variable. The job satisfaction variable acts as a mediator that can strengthen or weaken the influence of the independent variables (workload

and incentives) on the dependent variable (retention). This means that job satisfaction is an important factor that bridges the impact of workload and incentives on employees' decisions to remain in the organization.
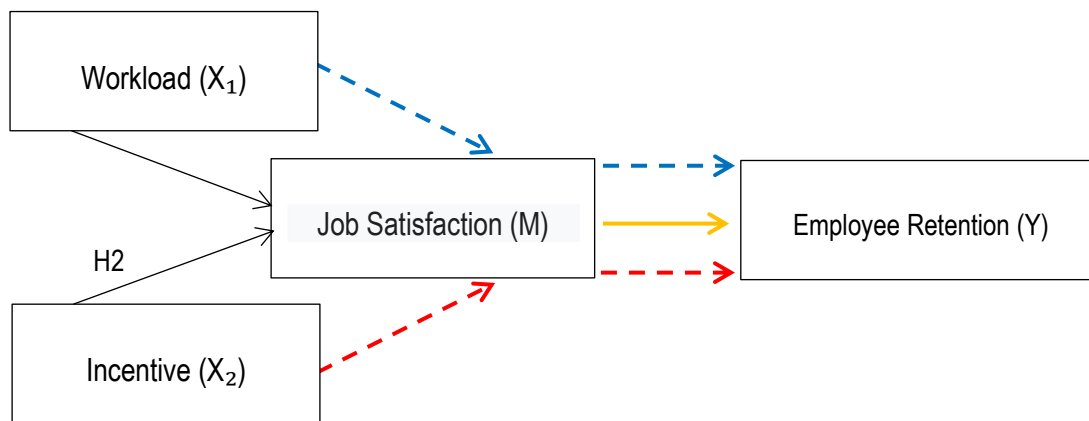

Figure 1. Thinking Framework

———————> Direct relationship
----------> Indirect relationship
Workload factor (X_1) (Rahmisyari et al., 2021)
Incentive factor (X_2) (Khaeruman, 2021)
Employee Retention Factor (Y) (Disa & Djastuti, 2019)
Job Satisfaction Factor (M) (Garg et al., 2018)

Based on the theoretical basis and previous empirical findings, this study formulates the following hypotheses:
H1: Workload has a positive and significant influence on employee retention.
H2: Incentives have a positive and significant influence on employee retention.
H3: Workload has a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.
H4: Incentives have a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction.
H5: Job satisfaction and employee retention are positively and significantly related.
H6: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between workload and employee retention.
H7: Job satisfaction mediates the relationship between incentives and employee retention.

3. Methodology
3.1. Population, Sample, Sampling Technique
The population consists of all employees of UD.Agung Rejeki, including daily, contract, and monthly salary employees. The number of daily employees is 15, contract employees 48, and employees with monthly salaries are 5. The total population was 68. According to Sugiyono (2018), saturated sampling is a sample selection technique in which all members of the population are sampled. The sampling technique used was saturated sampling. The saturated sample technique was chosen because the research population is small and easy to reach, so that all members can be respondents. This approach allows for a comprehensive picture of the population, increases data accuracy, and reduces the potential for bias without the need to generalize. Researchers uphold research ethics. Martono (2015) states that research ethics are a set of norms or standards of behavior that must be upheld by researchers during all stages of research activities. These ethics include principles that guide the actions of researchers, starting from the preparation of research designs, the process of collecting data in the field (through interviews, distributing questionnaires, observations, and requests for supporting data), preparing research reports, to the stage of publishing research findings.

3.2. Data Source

The research data were obtained from Primary Data in the form of responses to questionnaires that were given to respondents, namely, UD employees. Agung Rejeki Colomadu. Interviews with the owners of UD. Agung Rejeki and staff. Secondary Data were obtained from books and previous research journals relevant to this study.

3.3. Data Collection Techniques

The main instrument for data collection in this study was a closed questionnaire with a five-point Likert scale, as suggested by Rukajat (2018). Interviews were conducted with company owners to gather additional information regarding workload, incentives, and aspects that influence employee job satisfaction and retention.

3.4. Data Testing Techniques

Data processing and analysis were performed using SPSS software version 26. The test techniques used include 1) the Prerequisite Test, which consists of Pearson's product-moment correlation validity test and Cronbach's alpha coefficient reliability test, and 2) the Classical Assumption Test. Consisting of Normality, multicollinearity, autocorrelation, and heteroscedasticity tests; 3) Model Accuracy Test, using the coefficient of determination test (Adjusted R Square) and F Test; 4) Hypothesis Test, using the t Test (Partial) to test the effect of each independent variable (workload, incentives, and job satisfaction) on employee retention; Sobel Test, used to measure the indirect effect of independent variables (workload and incentives) on employee retention through the mediating variable (job satisfaction).Hypothesis testing in this study has limitations because samples cannot be selected randomly due to the small population (68 respondents). Samples that are too small can cause errors in rejecting the incorrect null hypothesis. Small samples can also cause non-normal distributions, which can make the Sobel test inaccurate.

4. Results and discussion

4.1. Results

Types of incentives available at UD. Agung Rejeki can be categorized, the first is Financial Incentives (monetary) in the form of; 1) performance bonuses, which are given when employees reach or exceed targets. For example, employees who exceed sales targets are given additional salary bonuses; 2) Sales Commission, calculated based on the percentage of sales results obtained directly by employees; and 3) Allowances, additional money to help with certain costs. For example, transportation allowances for out-of-town assignments, meal allowances of IDR 20,000 for working overtime; 4) Profit Sharing Program, employees get a share of the company's profits, for example, at the end of the year, the company distributes 10% of net profit to all employees; 5) Holiday allowances.

The second type of incentive is a Non-Financial Incentive. This incentive is not in the form of money but in the form of facilities, recognition, or opportunities. Incentives in this case are: 1) Awards or Appreciation, giving recognition for hard work, given the cost of performing Umrah or Hajj; 2) Training and Education Opportunities, providing training to learn to operate certain equipment; 3) Job Promotion, providing a position increase as a form of appreciation; 4) Work Facilities, providing facilities in the form of motorbikes that make travel more comfortable, providing laptops or smartphones to support promotions on social media. The third type of incentive is Team-Based Incentives. A form of appreciation for workgroups, not individuals. This incentive is in the form of 1) Team Bonus, if the team target is achieved, all team members get a bonus; 2) Team Building Activities, joint events to increase cohesiveness in the form of outbound, company picnics, or trips out of town. From the number of questionnaire items distributed to respondents, the mean, percentage, and category obtained data related to the variables of workload, incentives, employee retention, and job satisfaction.

Table 1. Summary of Respondent Tabulation

No	Item Indikator	Mean	Prosentase	Kategori
1	Workload	4,60	94,90	High
2	Incentives	4,55	99,31	High
3	Employee Retention	4,54	98,14	High
4	Job Satisfaction	4,55	97,06	High

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

Based on the table above, it can be written that the respondents gave a good response with high involvement. Furthermore, the questionnaire items were tested for prerequisites for validity testing (Pearson's product-moment correlation) and reliability testing (Cronbach's alpha). The results are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Validity Test Results

No	Item Indikator	Jumlah item	Rerata r hitung	Kategori
1	Workload	15	0,521	Valid
2	Incentives	15	0,434	Valid
3	Employee Retention	30	0,326	Valid
4	Job Satisfaction	15	0,439	Valid

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The r table value was 0.24 at α 0.05. The calculated r value for all questionnaire items for each variable was greater than the r table value. The criteria used to determine the validity of the item were to compare the calculated r value of each item with the r table at a significance level of α = 0.05 and a certain number of respondents; in this case, the r table value was 0.24. Based on the results of the validity test, all calculated r values for each statement item in each variable were greater than the r table (calculated r > 0.24). This shows that all items in the questionnaire used have high validity and are suitable for use as research instruments to measure the variables. It was concluded that all questionnaire items met the valid criteria.

Table 3. Reliability Test Results

No	Item Indikator	Jumlah item	% Case Processing Summary	Cronbach's Alpha
1	Workload	15	100	0,708
2	Incentives	15	100	0,704
3	Employee Retention	30	100	0,687
4	Job Satisfaction	15	100	0,708

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

Referring to Sugiyono (2018), in this study, the value of the% Case Processing Summary calculated is 100%, and the Cronbach's alpha value in sequence for each variable is in the range of 0.60–0.799. Based on the results of data processing, the Case Processing Summary value shows 100%, which means that all respondent data have been processed completely without any missing or unfilled data. Furthermore, the Cronbach's alpha value for each variable was in the range of 0.60 to 0.799, which according to the reliability interpretation guidelines is included in the category of "strong" or "quite reliable". Thus, all instruments used in this study were reliable and could be used to measure research variables consistently. The normality test on 68 samples is very important in the next test stage. The related influence is on the hypothesis test stage and Sobel test. The results of the normality test are shown in Table 4.

Table 4. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test		
		Unstandardized Predicted Value
Normal Parameters	Mean	136.1176471
	Std. Deviation	3.89260091
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)		.200

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The data test result table shows that the Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed) value for the variable (X1) workload 0.2 > 0.05. The conclusion is that the samples are normally distributed. A multicollinearity test was conducted to determine whether there was a high correlation between independent (free) variables in the linear regression model. The results of the multicollinearity test are presented in Table 5.

Table 5. Multicollinearity Test Results

Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	Workload (X_1)	.154	6.483
	Incentives (X_2)	.101	9.881
	Job Satisfaction (Z)	.238	4.198

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The workload tolerance value (X1) was 0.154 > 0.1, and the VIF value was 6.458. This indicates that there is no multicollinearity. The incentive tolerance value (X2) is 0.101 > 0.1, and the VIF value is 9.689. This indicates that there is no multicollinearity. The job satisfaction tolerance value (Z) was 0.238 > 0.1, and the VIF value was 4.196. This indicates that there is no multicollinearity. An autocorrelation test was conducted to determine whether there is a relationship (correlation) between the residual values in a regression model with the previous residual values in a time series. The results of the autocorrelation test are presented in Table 6.

Table 6. Autocorrelation Test Results

ANOVA					
Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1 Regression	1015.207	3	338.402	212.640	.000
Residual	101.852	64	1.591		
Total	1117.059	67			

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The results of the autocorrelation test obtained a Durbin-Watson test value of 1,591. This value is based on the Durbin-Watson value classification; therefore, this value is in the criteria for no autocorrelation. A heteroscedasticity test was conducted to determine whether there was inequality in the residual variance (error) for each predictor value in the regression model.

Table 7. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
	B	Std. Error	Beta		
Workload (X_1)	-.025	.063	-.120	-.400	.691
Incentives (X_2)	-.240	.127	-1.007	-1.886	.064
Job Satisfaction (Z)	.022	.059	.090	.373	.710
Employee Retention (Y)	.226	.078	1.128	2.883	.005

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

According to the output table "Coefficients" the Abs_RES variable acts as the dependent variable. Based on the output above, the significance value (Sig.) for the workload variable (X_1) is 0.691,

Incentive (X_2) is 0.064, and Job Satisfaction (Z) is 0.710. The significance value of the three variables was > 0.05; thus, according to the basis for decision-making in the Glejser test, it can be concluded that there are no symptoms of heteroscedasticity in the regression model. The Model Accuracy Test (often called Goodness of Fit) aims to assess how well the regression model explains the relationship between the independent and dependent variables. The coefficient of determination is shown in Table 8.

Table 8. R Square Test Results / Determination Coefficient Value

Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate
1	.953	.909	.905	1.262

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The R value (correlation) obtained was 0.953, which means that the correlation between the independent and dependent variables was very strong. The R Square value of 0.909 means that the contribution of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable simultaneously is 65.8%. The adjusted R Square value of 0.647 means that the contribution of the influence of the independent variable on the dependent variable simultaneously that has been adjusted is 64.7%. The F Test results show the simultaneous influence of the independent variable and the dependent variable. The R Square test results are presented in Table 9.

Table 9. R Square Test Results / Determination Coefficient Value

	Model	Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
	ANOVA					
	Regression	1015.207	3	338.402	212.640	.000
1	Residual	101.852	64	1.591		
	Total	1117.059	67			

Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The calculated F value according to the test results was 212.640. The F-table value was 2.75. The calculated F value is greater than the F table, so it is concluded that there is a significant influence between Workload (X_1), Incentives (X_2), and Job Satisfaction simultaneously on Employee Retention (Y). Based on the significance value of 0.00 < 0.05, it can be concluded that there is a significant influence between the independent variable of workload (X_1) on incentives (X_2), and the mediating variable of job satisfaction (Z) simultaneously on employee retention (Y). The t-test in linear regression is used to measure the influence of each independent variable on the dependent variable. The results of the t-test and hypothesis test are presented in Table 10.

Table 10. Results of Hypothesis Testing/t-Test X_1, X_2, and Y

Model	Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.	Correlations		
	B	Std. Error	Beta			Zero-order	Partial	Part
(Constant)	58.765	3.053		19.251	.000			
1 Workload (X_1)	-.008	.100	-.007	2.077	.039	.875	-.009	-.003
Incentives (X_2)	1.142	.113	.960	10.070	.000	.953	.781	.378

Dependent Variable: Employee Retention (Y)
Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The significance value of workload (X_1) on employee retention was 0.039 < 0.05. This means that the hypothesis stating that there is a positive and significant influence of workload on employee retention can be accepted. Based on the value of the t-table, the value is 1.99714. The calculated t value of workload (X_1) for employee retention was 2.077.

The calculated t value> t table, namely 2.077 > 1.99714. This means that the hypothesis of a positive and significant influence of workload on employee retention can be accepted. The results of the hypothesis test above differ from those of similar research by Rahmisyari et al. (2021), which states that workload has a negative effect on employee work enthusiasm. This is also different from similar research by Priatmoko and Ahsani (2024), who concluded that workload has a negative and significant impact on employee job satisfaction. At UD. Agung Rejeki, it can be explained that the high workload is intended for the purpose of efficiency and effectiveness of work. The relationship between employees and company owners is built on good communication so that company policies receive support from employees. Efforts to maintain employee retention to avoid turnover have been made and have a positive impact on the sustainability of production. The workload borne by employees is a logical consequence so that production can run well.

4.2. Discussion

The results of this study are in line with the findings of Hermawan, Wulandari, Buana, and Sanjaya (2021) which stated that incentives have a positive and significant effect on employee performance. This is also in line with the conclusions of research by Sutianingsih and Yuliyana (2023), who stated that the compensation factor has a significant effect on work discipline. The incentives provided by the UD. Agung Rejeki are significantly able to keep employees from leaving their jobs. This also shows that incentives are an attraction that employees expect to receive. Incentives are also a factor in employees comfort at work. From the data above, if we compare the regression values of workload (X_1) and incentives (X_2) on employee retention, it is 0.008 compared to 1.142.

Quantitatively, it can be concluded that incentives contribute more to employee retention than do workloads. In regression analysis, the regression coefficient (β) shows the magnitude of the change in the dependent variable (employee retention) due to a one-unit change in the independent variable, assuming that other variables remain constant. The regression coefficient value of 1.142 on the incentive variable means that every one-unit increase in incentive (for example, in the form of increased compensation, bonuses, or benefits) will increase the employee retention score by 1.142 units. Conversely, the coefficient value of 0.008 for the workload variable indicates that every one-unit increase in workload only increases the retention score by 0.008 units. Thus, the influence of incentives on employee retention is directly stronger and more substantial than that of workload because the coefficient value is much larger.

Table 11. Results of Hypothesis Testing/t-Test X_1, X_2, and Z

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	10.494	4.021		2.610	.011
	Workload (X_1)	-.004	.132	-.005	-.034	.973
	Incentives (X_2)	.852	.149	.877	5.702	.000

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction (Z)
Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

Based on the results of the test, the significance value of workload (X_1) on job satisfaction (Z) was 0.973 > 0.05. This means that the hypothesis stating that there is a positive and significant influence of workload on job satisfaction is rejected. The significance value of incentive (X_2) on job satisfaction (Z) is 0.000 < 0.05. This means that the hypothesis stating that there is a positive and significant influence of incentives on job satisfaction can be accepted. Based on the t table, the value was 1.99714. The calculated t value of workload (X_1) on job satisfaction (Z) is 0.034 < 1.99714. This means that the hypothesis stating that there is a positive and significant influence of workload on job satisfaction is rejected. Based on the t table, the value was 1.99714. The calculated t value of incentive (X_2) on job satisfaction (Z) is 5.702 > 1.99714. This means that the hypothesis stating that there is a positive and significant influence of incentives on job satisfaction can be accepted.

The incentive variable (X_2) has a positive and significant effect on job satisfaction (Z), which can be associated with several types of incentives provided by the company. Both daily, contract, and monthly employees receive incentives that meet their expectations. Employees receive incentives in the form of holiday allowances, weekends off, family allowances if a family member is sick, death benefits, and year-end holidays. Contract employees receive incentives in the form of completing their work targets. Direct incentives are provided if work targets are met. Contract employees also receive meal money if they work more than eight hours a day. The work targets achieved allow the company to carry out its operations efficiently and effectively to increase profits. Monthly employees receive incentives in the form of transportation money if they receive assignments out of town. All daily and monthly employees who have worked for more than 30 years receive allowances to perform Umrah or Hajj pilgrimages. Monthly employees in the staff position receive allowances in the form of credit or internet quota to support their duties. Sobel test for the relationship between the independent variable of workload (X_1) and the dependent variable of employee retention (Y) through job satisfaction (Z) as the mediating variable. The B value and standard error (X_1) against Z are shown in Table 12.

Table 12. Sobel Test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.730	4.373		4.740	.000
	Workload (X_1)	.689	.063	.802	10.889	.000

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction (Z)
Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

Table 13. Calculate the value of B and the standard error of Z against Y

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	63.802	4.586		13.912	.000
	Incentives (X_2)	.633	.096	.601	6.608	.000
	Job Satisfaction (Z)	.418	.111	.342	3.759	.000

Dependent Variable: Employee Retention (Y)
Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The calculation results showed a two-tailed probability value of 0.00037001, which was below the significance level of $\alpha = 0.05$. This value indicates that the indirect effect is statistically significant; therefore, it can be concluded that job satisfaction acts as a mediating variable in the relationship between workload and employee retention. Thus, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is an important factor that bridges the influence of workload on the retention of employees. This means that although a high workload can influence an employee's decision to stay in an organization, it is greatly influenced by the level of job satisfaction. Employees who are satisfied with their jobs tend to have higher retention rates, even though they face heavy workloads. Therefore, organizations need to ensure that workloads are well managed and supported by policies that can increase job satisfaction to maintain employee retention levels.

Sobel test for the relationship between the independent variable incentive (X_2) and the dependent variable employee retention (Y) through the mediating variable, job satisfaction (Z). The B values and standard errors (X_2) against Z are shown in Table 14.

Table 14. Sobel Test Results

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	20.730	4.373		4.740	.000
	Incentives (X_2)	.689	.063	.802	10.889	.000

Dependent Variable: Job Satisfaction (Z)
Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

Table 15. Calculate the value of B and the standard error of Z against Y.

Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients	t	Sig.
		B	Std. Error	Beta		
1	(Constant)	63.802	4.586		13.912	.000
	Incentives (X_2)	.633	.096	.601	6.608	.000
	Job Satisfaction (Z)	.419	.111	.342	3.759	.000

Dependent Variable: Employee Retention (Y)
Source: Reseacher, SPSS 2025

The two-tailed probability result is 0.00035943, which is < 0.05; therefore, it can be interpreted that the job satisfaction factor is able to mediate incentives on employee retention. This finding indicates that providing good incentives not only has a direct impact on employees decisions to stay in the company but also indirectly increases employee retention through increased job satisfaction. In other words, employees who feel satisfied because they receive incentives that are appropriate and in accordance with their contributions tend to have greater loyalty and a desire to continue working in the company. Therefore, it can be concluded that job satisfaction is an important mediating variable and a bridge of influence between company incentive policies and employee retention efforts. Organizations need to view incentives not only as a direct motivational tool but also as part of a job satisfaction improvement strategy that has an impact on long-term retention.

This study presents a new perspective by examining employee retention in the context of medium-scale trading businesses in the horticulture and basic food distribution sector, which is rarely studied and has different work characteristics from other sectors, such as banking, education, or manufacturing. This study empirically tests the mediating role of job satisfaction in the relationship between workload and incentives on employee retention through the Sobel test and finds that job satisfaction plays a significant role that has not been discussed in depth in previous studies. The findings of this study indicate that incentives have a greater influence on employee retention than workload, thus challenging the common assumption that workload management is the primary factor in retaining employees. At UD Agung Rejeki, fair and attractive incentives have proven more effective in increasing retention.

5. Conclusions
5.1. Conclusion
The conclusion of this study indicate that workload has a positive and significant influence on employee retention, while incentives also have a positive and significant influence on employee retention. However, workload has a negative and significant influence on job satisfaction, whereas incentives have a positive and significant influence on job satisfaction. Furthermore, job satisfaction positively and significantly influenced employee retention. In addition, job satisfaction can mediate the relationship between workload and employee retention, as well as mediate the relationship between incentives and employee retention.

5.2. Limitations
This study has several limitations that need to be considered. First, the scope of the research is limited to the context of a specific organization or company, so the results cannot be generalized widely to various other industry sectors. Second, the approach used was quantitative; therefore, it did not delve

deeply into employees' subjective perceptions or experiences related to workload, incentives, and job satisfaction. Third, the data obtained were from self-reported questionnaires, which have the potential to cause social desirability bias or misperceptions of respondents. Fourth, other variables such as leadership style, organizational culture, and economic conditions were not included in the model, even though these factors may also affect job satisfaction and employee retention. Therefore, follow-up studies with a qualitative approach and a wider range of variables are strongly recommended to enrich these findings.

5.3. Suggestions
1. Suggestions for Further Research.
   a. Future research should add other variables that have the potential to influence employee retention, such as organizational climate, leadership style, and work motivation.
   b. Conduct research in different sectors or industries to determine the consistency of the results and increase the generalizability of the findings.
2. Suggestions for Practitioners (Human Resource Development or Field Supervisors)
   a. Therefore, organizations must pay more attention to workload management to avoid a decrease in job satisfaction, which negatively impacts employee retention.
   b. Practitioners should design an incentive system that is fair, transparent, and in accordance with employee contributions to increase satisfaction and loyalty and as a preventive effort before turnover occurs.
3. Suggestions for Management
   a. Balancing workload with available capacity and resources to avoid negatively impacting job satisfaction.
   b. Optimizing the incentive system as a retention strategy is important, as it has been proven to have a direct and indirect influence on employees decisions to stay.
   c. Job satisfaction is a key indicator in HR management, given its strategic role in mediating various factors of employee retention.

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