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The Influence of Final-Year Students' Perceptions of Compensation and Work Environment on Interest in Applying for Jobs in Ponorogo

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Abstract

Introduction: A factor that causes someone has a interested in applying for a job are needs to fulfill. There are five levels of needs, namely physiological, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization. The purpose of this study is to determine the influence of compensation and work environment on interest in applying for a job. The relationship between compensation and the work environment with job application interest indicates that both factors play a significant role in attracting prospective job applicants. Adequate compensation reflects the company's appreciation for employees' efforts and capabilities, thereby increasing individuals' interest in applying for a position. Compensation is not limited to salary alone, but also includes allowances, bonuses, incentives, health insurance, and other facilities provided by the company. The more competitive the compensation offered, the greater the individual's interest in joining the organization. In addition to compensation, the work environment is also a factor that influences job application interest. A comfortable, safe, and conducive work environment, along with positive social relationships, can create a sense of comfort for prospective employees. The work environment encompasses physical conditions such as cleanliness, lighting, and workplace facilities, as well as non-physical conditions such as communication among employees,

organizational culture, and supervisory support. Companies with a positive work environment tend to attract greater interest because they are perceived as being able to provide comfort and support employee productivity. This study was conducted among final-year students in Ponorogo, as final-year students are considered to have the readiness to choose their careers after completing their education. This study used a quantitative approach. The population consisted of 4,069 final-year students in Ponorogo, with 98 respondents selected using probability sampling. Data were collected through questionnaires and analyzed using multiple linear regression. The results of this study indicate that compensation has a positive and significant influence on interest in applying for jobs. The work environment has a positive and significant influence on interest in applying for jobs. Simultaneously, compensation and the work environment have an influence on interest in applying for jobs.

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INTRODUCTION

In facing business competition, companies need to have competent human resources (Kaur & Kaur, 2022). Human resources are the main driving force in carrying out operational and strategic activities, thus playing an important role in the success of a company (Chakraborty & Biswas, 2021). The first step a company can take is through recruitment (Basalamah et al., 2020). Recruitment activities are two-way in nature, meaning that companies seek human resources candidates who meet the established criteria, while job applicants seek jobs that suit their interests (Acikgoz, 2019).

The factors that motivate someone to apply for a job are the needs that must be met. According to Abraham H. Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory, there are five levels of basic human needs, namely physiological needs, safety, social, esteem, and self-actualization (Maslow, 1954). Physiological needs occupy the lowest position in the hierarchy. In the context of interest in applying for a job, physiological needs can be interpreted as the desire to obtain compensation to meet primary needs such as food, clothing, and shelter. Compensation is considered when choosing a job because the primary purpose of working is to earn a salary. Compensation influences job seekers' interest in applying for jobs (Maularahmah & Kurniawati, 2022), (Sinaga & Pramudita, 2023) and (Catur Sasi Kirono et al., 2025).

Furthermore, safety ranks one level above physiological needs in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. In addition to compensation, another important factor that can influence a person's interest in applying for a job is the work environment. The work environment is an important consideration because it is where individuals carry out their daily work activities. The amount of salary offered will not provide additional value if employees do not feel safe at work. This sense of safety encompasses aspects of workplace safety, the location of the workplace, and the surrounding environmental conditions. Disturbances from the environment, such as noise, inadequate lighting, unpleasant odors, and extreme temperatures, can also affect comfort and interest in working at a company. In the studies by (Widianti & Amelia, 2024) it was stated that the work environment influences interest in applying for a job. However, a different finding was reported by (Catur Sasi Kirono et al., 2025), who found that the work environment does not influence someone's interest in applying for a job.

Social needs are the third level in the hierarchy of needs, where humans as social beings have the urge to socialize with others. In the context of the workplace, the social environment is an important consideration for someone when choosing or applying for a job. The social environment in a company reflects the atmosphere of life and patterns of interaction among employees, which can influence work comfort and productivity (Fasbender & Drury, 2022).

The need for recognition is part of the fourth level in Maslow's hierarchy of needs. This need reflects an individual's desire to gain recognition, status, and respect from others (Maslow, 1954). The fulfillment of this need plays an important role in shaping an individual's self-confidence and self-esteem, which ultimately can influence motivation and performance in various aspects of life, including in the workplace (Prasetyo et al., 2023). Furthermore, the need for self-actualization occupies the highest position in the hierarchy of needs. At this stage, individuals are driven to develop their full potential and achieve meaningful personal accomplishments. An individual's interest in applying for a job is often driven by their desire to continue developing and obtaining opportunities for self-development (Seo et al., 2025). In an organizational context, self-actualization can be realized through various activities, such as professional training, utilizing individual potential, and enhancing work skills and competencies (Schoofs et al., 2024).

Based on data from the (Badan Pusat Statistik Kabupaten Ponorogo, 2025), it was recorded that the number of the labor force increased during the period from 2020 to 2024.

This increase indicates a trend of growth in labor force participation in Ponorogo Regency over a five-year period. Therefore, the researcher was interested in conducting an initial observation of final-year students in Ponorogo Regency who were interested in applying for jobs after completing their studies at university. In this observation, researchers posed a series of questions related to the aspects individuals consider when forming their perceptions, which ultimately influence their interest in applying for jobs. These questions were focused on determining whether interest in applying for jobs is influenced by factors such as the compensation offered and workplace conditions, both of which are examined within the framework of Maslow's hierarchy of needs theory.

Table 1. Labor Force Population in Ponorogo Regency by Age Group, 2020–2024

Age group	2020	2021	2022	2023	2024
(1)	(2)	(3)	(4)	(5)	(6)
15-19	19.936	20.820	12.960	17.255	15.063
20-24	32.017	33.852	33.315	45.337	46.946
25-29	40.546	41.362	39.122	46.940	54.053
30-35	41.607	42.160	41.235	54.327	56.259
36-39	50.970	50.845	49.224	62.255	62.877
40-44	53.407	56.424	52.991	61.837	64.428
45-49	59.559	59.841	57.832	63.395	63.517
50-54	58.119	57.830	60.688	59.213	65.154
55-59	55.252	55.302	55.965	55.882	60.336
60+	102.368	105.436	124.582	126.929	129.617
Sum	**513.781**	**523.872**	**527.914**	**593.370**	**618.250**

Source: Statistics Indonesia (BPS), 2025

AZ told the researcher that he was interested in applying for a job after completing his studies. However, in the job search process, AZ stated that compensation was not a major consideration. AZ prioritized jobs that matched his competencies. In his view, companies that offer high salaries usually also demand higher competencies from employees, or give them a heavier workload. The next interview was conducted with CS. CS informed the researcher that she was interested in applying for a job. When considering job options, CS did not place much emphasis on the compensation offered or the work environment conditions. Instead, she prioritized the type of products or services produced by the company. For example, since CS is a user of Ms. Glow skincare products, she has an interest in working for that company. This is based on her belief that she understands the product characteristics and the company's background, making her feel more confident and interested in contributing to it. Another informant, CO, told the researcher that he was interested in applying for a job. However, when considering job options, CO did not pay much attention to the amount of compensation offered or the working environment. He stated that his main goal in applying for a job was to gain work experience that he could later use as a foundation for starting his own business.

Based on interviews conducted with several final-year students in Ponorogo, it was found that each subject had different motivations in forming their perceptions of interest in applying for jobs. These differences indicate that the factors influencing interest in applying for jobs are not singular, but are influenced by individual considerations, such as suitability with competencies, interest in company products, and the desire to seek experience. Additionally, the researcher also identified a gap in previous research findings. Therefore, based on the background of the problem, the researcher is interested in examining the theory

and conducting a study to analyze the effect of compensation and work environment on job application interest.

RESEARCH METHOD

In line with the objective of this study, namely to examine the effects of variables X_1 and X_2 on Y, multiple linear regression analysis was employed as the appropriate statistical technique. The research used quantitative methods with a total population of 4069 students. This study selected as its population final-year students in Ponorogo who were enrolled at IAIN Ponorogo, Muhammadiyah University of Ponorogo, Darussalam Gontor University, Sunan Giri Islamic Institute of Ponorogo, STKIP PGRI Ponorogo, and Merdeka University of Ponorogo. This population was chosen because final-year students are considered to have a greater level of readiness to make career decisions upon completing their higher education.

The sample was selected using a probability sampling method, specifically proportionate stratified random sampling, which is appropriate when the population comprises heterogeneous elements that are proportionally distributed across different strata (Sugiyono, 2015). The sample consisted of members of the population who were selected as research subjects (Sugiyono, 2017). The sample used in the study consisted of 98 respondents, which was determined based on calculations using the Slovin formula.

$$n = \frac{N}{1 + (N \times E^2)}$$

Information:

n = samples taken

N = population size

E = tolerance of 10%

$$n = \frac{4069}{1 + (4069 \times 0{,}1^2)}$$

$$n = \frac{4069}{1 + (40{,}69)}$$

$$n = \frac{4069}{41{,}69}$$

$$n = 97{,}60$$

The sample size was calculated using the Slovin formula, which yielded a value of 97.60, rounded up to 98 respondents.

Data collection in this study was conducted through the distribution of online questionnaires using Google Forms. Questionnaires are a data collection technique consisting of a number of questions or statements answered by respondents. To facilitate data processing and analysis, the researcher used a likert scale as a measuring tool. The likert scale is used to measure the attitudes, opinions, and perceptions of individuals or groups toward a social phenomenon (Roni Priyanda, 2022).

The data analysis technique using the SPSS 22 application is carried out in three stages, namely instrument test, classical assumption test, and hypothesis test. The data were obtained from the distribution of questionnaires to 98 respondents.

The hypotheses used are:

1. H0: Compensation does not have a positive and significant influence on interest in applying for jobs.
   Ha1: Compensation has a positive and significant influence on interest in applying for jobs.
2. H0: The work environment does not have a positive and significant influence on interest in applying for jobs.
   Ha2: The work environment has a positive and significant influence on interest in applying for jobs.
3. H0: Compensation and work environment simultaneously have no positive or significant influence on interest in applying for a jobs.
   Ha3: Compensation and work environment simultaneously have a positive and significant influence on interest in applying for a jobs.

This study examines one dependent variable, job application intention (Y), and two independent variables, namely compensation (X_1) and work environment (X_2). The operational definitions and indicators of these variables are presented in Table 2.

Table 2. Research Variables and Operational Definitions

No	Variable	Definition	Indicators	Source
1	Job Application Intention (Y)	Job application intention refers to an individual's interest in obtaining employment, which begins with efforts to seek information regarding job vacancies. Based on the information obtained, prospective employees subsequently evaluate alternatives and make decisions regarding the company to which they intend to apply.	a. Need for employment b. Job information search c. Job choice determination d. Decision making	Komang Dede Permadi dan I Gusti Salit Ketut Netra, "Pengaruh Reputasi, Kompensasi dan Lingkungan Kerja Terhadap Minat Melamar Pekerjaan Oleh Mahasiswa Universitas Udayana," E-Jurnal Manajemen Unud 4, no. 10 (2015).
2	Compensation (X_1)	Compensation refers to the remuneration provided by an organization to employees in return for their contributions in	a. Salary b. Incentives c. Benefits d. Facilities	Simamora, Manajemen Sumber Daya Manusia (Yogyakarta: STIE YKPN, 2004)

No	Variable	Definition	Indicators	Source
		terms of labor, skills, and intellectual efforts.		
3	Work Environment (X_2)	Work environment refers to the conditions surrounding employees while performing their work activities.	a. Working atmosphere b. Relationships with co-workers c. Availability of work facilities	Alex Nitisemito, Manajemen Dan Sumber Daya Manusia (Yogyakarta: BPFE UGM, 1992).

Source: Data processed by the author, 2022.

RESULT AND DISCUSSION

RESULT

1. Instrument test

1) Validity Test

The validity level was assessed by comparing the calculated correlation coefficient (r-count) with the critical value from the r-table. An instrument is considered valid and appropriate for use if r-count > r-table. For a sample size of 30 and a significance level of 5%, the r-table value was 0.361. The table below presents the validity test results for each item of the research questionnaire.

Table 3. The Results of Instrument Validity Test

Variable	Item	r-count	r-table
Interest in Applying for a Jobs (Y)	1	0.419	0.361
	2	0.493	0.361
	3	0.544	0.361
	4	0.455	0.361
	5	0.419	0.361
Compensation (X_1)	1	0.728	0.361
	2	0.559	0.361
	3	0.697	0.361
	4	0.494	0.361
	5	0.569	0.361
Work Environment (X_2)	1	0.757	0.361
	2	0.732	0.361
	3	0.692	0.361
	4	0.669	0.361
	5	0.570	0.361

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

Based on the results of the instrument validity test, all questions are valid, so the instrument is suitable for use as a test tool.

2) Reliability Test

Reliability was measured by looking at the Cronbach's Alpha value in the SPSS output. Based on the reliability test results, a Cronbach's Alpha value of 0.858 was obtained.

According to the Gliem table, this result is considered high, so the instrument is suitable for use as a test tool.

Table 4. Reliability Test Results

Reliability Test	
Cronbach's Alpha	Question Points
0,858	15

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

2. Classical Assumption Test

1) Normality Test

The test was conducted by analyzing the significant results obtained from the SPSS output. If the significance value is greater than 0.05, it means that the data is normally distributed.

Table 5. Normality Test Results

One-Sample Kolmogorov-Smirnov Test			
			Unstandardized Residual
N			102
Normal Parameters	Mean		0.0000000
	Std. Deviation		1.91958168
Most Extreme Differences	Absolute		0.097
	Positive		0.041
	Negative		-0.097
Test Statistic			0,097
Asymp. Sig. (2-tailed)			0,020[c]
Monte Carlo Sig. (2-tailed)	Sig.		0.277[d]
	99% Confidence Interval	Lower Bound	0.266
		Upper Bound	0.289

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

From the normality test, the result sig 0.277 > 0.05 was obtained, so it can be said that the data is normally distributed and suitable for testing at the next stage.

2) Linearity Test

This test was conducted by analyzing the significant results that appeared in the SPSS output. If the significance value is greater than 0.05, then there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable.

Table 6. Linearity Test Results

ANOVA Table							
			Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
Unstandardized Residual * Unstandardized Predicted Value	Between Groups	(Combined)	251.914	59	4.270	1.491	0.087
		Linearity	0.000	1	0.000	0.000	1.000
		Deviation from Linearity	251.914	58	4.343	1.517	0.079
	Within Groups		120.250	42	2.863		
	Total		372.164	101			

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

From the linearity test, the result sig 1.000 > 0.05 shows that there is a linear relationship between the dependent variable and the independent variable.

3) Multicollinearity Test

The test was conducted by looking at the SPSS output results. If the VIF value is ≥ 0.10 and VIF < 10, then there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables.

Table 7. Multicollinearity Test Results

Coefficients[a]			
Model		Collinearity Statistics	
		Tolerance	VIF
1	COMPENSATION	0.915	1.093
	WORK ENVIRONMENT	0.915	1.093

a. Dependent Variable: INTEREST IN APPLYING FOR JOBS

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

From the multicollinearity test, the results obtained were a compensation VIF of 1.093 and a working environment of 1.093, which are greater than 0.10 and less than 10, so it can be concluded that there is no multicollinearity between the independent variables.

4) Autocorrelation Test

Testing through Durbin Watson analysis, where Durbin Watson is located at dU < dW < 4 – dU with a significance value of 5%.

Table 8. Autocorrelation Test Results

Model Summary[b]					
Model	R	R Square	Adjusted R Square	Std. Error of the Estimate	Durbin-Watson
1	0.797[a]	0.636	0.625	1.879	2.116

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

From the autocorrelation test, the Durbin Watson value obtained was 2.116, while the dU value can be seen in the Durbin Watson table. For the dU value with k = 2 and N = 102, the value obtained is 1.7175, and 4 – dU is 2.2825. Therefore, it can be written as 1.7175 < 2.116 < 2.2825. Thus, it can be concluded that there is no autocorrelation because the condition dU < dW < 4 – dU is satisfied.

5) Heteroscedasticity Test

The heteroscedasticity test was conducted using natural logarithm transformation or Park's test with the Geister method. If the coefficient value is greater than 0.05, then the model is declared free of heteroscedasticity. Based on heteroscedasticity testing, compensation sig values of 0.572 and work environment sig values of 0.681 were obtained, which are greater than 0.05, meaning that there is no heteroscedasticity problem.

Table 9. Heteroscedasticity Test Results

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	-0.188	1.497		-0.126	0.900
	COMPENSATION	-0.030	0.052	-0.059	-0.566	0.572
	WORK ENVIRONMENT	0.035	0.085	0.043	0.412	0.681

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

3. Hypothesis Test

1) t-test (partial)

Table 10. t-test results

Coefficients[a]						
Model		Unstandardized Coefficients		Standardized Coefficients		
		B	Std. Error	Beta	t	Sig.
1	(Constant)	2.688	1.283		2.096	0.039
	COMPENSATION	0.181	0.045	0.267	4.039	0.000
	WORK ENVIRONMENT	0.723	0.073	0.657	9.938	0.000
a. Dependent Variable: INTEREST IN APPLYING FOR JOBS						

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

a) Based on the table, it is known that the significance value for the compensation variable is 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, from these results, Ha1 is accepted, which means that compensation partially has a significant influence on the interest in applying for jobs among final year students in Ponorogo.

b) Based on the table, it is known that the significance value for the work environment variable is 0.000 < 0.05. Thus, from these results, Ha2 is accepted, which means that the work environment partially has a significant influence on the interest in applying for jobs among final year students in Ponorogo.

2) F-test (simultaneous)

Table 11. F-test results

ANOVA[a]						
Model		Sum of Squares	df	Mean Square	F	Sig.
1	Regression	568.591	2	284.295	75.626	0.000[b]
	Residual	372.164	99	3.759		
	Total	940.755	101			
a. Dependent Variable: INTEREST IN APPLYING FOR JOBS						
b. Predictors: (Constant), WORK ENVIRONMENT, COMPENSATION						

Source: SPSS Management Data 2022

According to the F test results, the significance value is 0.000 < 0.05. These results indicate that Ha3 is accepted, which states that there is a simultaneous influence of compensation and work environment variables on interest in applying for jobs.

The Influence of Compensation on Job Application Intention

The research results indicate that compensation has a positive and significant influence on job application intention among final-year students in Ponorogo. This finding is supported by a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05), indicating that the better the compensation offered by a company, the higher the students' intention to apply for a job. The coefficient of determination of 0.210 shows that compensation is able to explain 21% of the variation in job application intention.

These findings indicate that compensation aspects, such as salary, incentives, allowances, insurance, and work facilities, are important considerations for students in choosing a job. For prospective job seekers, compensation is not only viewed as a source of income but also as a form of appreciation for the contributions made to the company. This study is consistent with the research conducted by (Gisheila et al., 2024) and (Aulia et al., 2026), which concluded that compensation offered by companies has a significant influence on an individual's intention to apply for a job.

The Influence of Work Environment on Job Application Intention

The results of the study indicate that the work environment has a positive and significant influence on job application intention among final-year students in Ponorogo. This is evidenced by a significance value of 0.000 (< 0.05). In addition, the coefficient of determination of 0.539 shows that the work environment is able to explain 53.9% of the variation in job application intention, meaning that its influence is greater than that of compensation.

These findings indicate that students do not only consider financial aspects, but also pay attention to the working environment conditions they will encounter. A comfortable and conducive work environment, harmonious interpersonal relationships among employees, and adequate work facilities can increase prospective applicants' interest in a company. This study supports the research conducted by (Putri & Biringkanae, 2024), which states that the work environment has a significant influence on job application intention.

The Effect of Compensation and Work Environment on Job Application Intention

The results of the study indicate that compensation and work environment simultaneously have a positive and significant effect on job application intention among final-year students in Ponorogo. The significance value of the F-test of 0.000 (<0.05) shows that these two variables jointly influence job application intention. In addition, the coefficient of determination of 0.604 indicates that compensation and work environment are able to explain 60.4% of the variation in job application intention, while the remaining 39.6% is influenced by other factors not examined in this study.

These findings indicate that students' intention to apply for jobs is influenced by a combination of compensation offered and the working environment conditions within a company. Companies that are able to provide competitive compensation as well as a comfortable and supportive work environment have a greater opportunity to attract prospective applicants' interest. Therefore, these two factors should be a primary concern in recruitment strategies to enhance a company's attractiveness among job seekers, particularly students who are about to enter the workforce.

CONCLUSION

Theoretically, this study strengthens and extends Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs Theory in the context of job-seeking behavior, particularly among students as prospective employees. The findings indicate that each level of needs in Maslow's hierarchy plays a role in shaping job application intention. In addition, this study enriches the organizational behavior literature by emphasizing that individuals' decisions to apply for jobs are influenced not only by economic factors but also by psychosocial factors reflected in the work environment.

Practically, the results of this study provide recommendations for companies and institutions in the employee recruitment process. Companies need to provide competitive compensation systems to fulfill the basic needs of applicants, while also creating a comfortable, conducive work environment. A strategy that integrates these two aspects is expected to increase a company's attractiveness, expand the pool of potential applicants, and improve the quality of recruited human resources.

Based on the analysis that has been conducted, the results of this study can be summarized as follows.

1. The significance of the t-test results (X_1 against Y) shows a value of 0.000 < 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a significant positive influence between compensation and interest in applying for jobs among final year students in Ponorogo. This indicates that the higher the compensation offered, the greater the interest in applying for jobs among final year students in Ponorogo.
2. The significance of the t-test results (X_2 against Y) shows a value of 0.000 < 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a significant positive influence between the work environment and interest in applying for jobs among final year students in Ponorogo. This indicates that the better the work environment, the greater the interest in applying for jobs among final year students in Ponorogo.
3. The significance of the F test results (X_1, X_2 against Y) shows a value of 0.000 < 0.05, so it can be concluded that there is a simultaneous influence between compensation and work environment on the interest in applying for jobs among final year students in Ponorogo.

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