



Fueling the mediating role of work ethics in the relationship between intrinsic motivation and work performance

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ABSTRACT

Many manufacturing workers spend most of their time in workshops, and the work environment significantly impacts factory employees & productivity. Prior research on performance has predominantly focused on occupational roles, and little is known about the antecedent in this field. This study examines the connection between intrinsic motivation, work ethics, and performance. The respondents to this study were manufacturing employees. It is important to research the manufacturing sector because it is a major cause of environmental damage. This is shown by the sector's increasing environmental impact, which is attracting international attention. The manufacturing industry is characterized by a high level of occupational risk. To determine whether intrinsic motivation directly affects work performance. The manufacturing sector has been a pivotal contributor to the growth and prosperity of developing countries, including Indonesia. A total of 120 questionnaires were collected from 178 participants in West Java, Indonesia. SMART PLS was used for measurement and structural equation modeling, with data investigated using SEM. The results of this study indicate that intrinsic motivation only influences work performance when mediated by work ethics. Aside from this, the relationship between intrinsic motivation and work ethics demonstrates a direct influence, and work ethics directly influence work performance. It is noteworthy that intrinsic motivation has no discernible impact on the performance of manufacturing sector workers. The findings offer firms seeking to enhance employee performance and advance sustainable human resources practices in the manufacturing sector a set of actionable insights

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INTRODUCTION

In today's fast-paced business environment, where customer demand is constantly evolving, manufacturing systems are increasingly moving towards customisation while maintaining the expected level of responsiveness. Furthermore, there is a growing focus on the human factors, with the dual objective of enhancing work conditions, such as safety, and mitigating the risks associated

with new technologies (Keshvarparast et al., 2024). Numerous workers in the manufacturing sector devote most of their time to productive tasks in workshops. However, past research has demonstrated that the workplace environment was a significant factor influencing the productivity of manufacturing employees (Mathews & Khann, 2016). Prior research on performance has focused on work roles, and the antecedent in this area is still scant (Campbell & Wiernik, 2015). Empirical analyses ignore individual values (Grabowski et al., 2021). Each person's aptitude level can be used to assess their work performance. Businesses are responsible for monitoring employee output and fostering an environment conducive to high productivity. Various factors can affect work performance, some of which originate internally as internal motivation and others externally as external motivation (Hasanah et al., 2020). Due to many employees not being reprimanded and held accountable, employee performance will decline due to negative factors such as leaders providing inappropriate motivation in the form of gifts for good performance.

Intrinsic motivation has been demonstrated to play a significant role in shaping work ethics and overall performance in the manufacturing sector in Indonesia. Empirical evidence has demonstrated that intrinsic motivation, which is derived from within the individual, such as personal satisfaction and a sense of accomplishment, can result in elevated levels of employee engagement, productivity, and job satisfaction (Sulistamtama et al., 2024; Wibowo & Abadiyah, 2019). In the context of the manufacturing sector in Indonesia, intrinsic motivation has been found to positively influence employees' productive behavior and work ethics. A study conducted in Sidoarjo, Indonesia, demonstrated that intrinsic motivation, in conjunction with self-efficacy and transformational leadership, exerts a substantial influence on employees' productive behavior (Wibowo & Abadiyah, 2019). This suggests that when employees are intrinsically motivated, they are more likely to exhibit strong work ethics and contribute positively to the organization's goals. Additionally, a systematic literature review highlighted the importance of a supportive work environment, including autonomy, positive interpersonal support, and high-performance work systems, in enhancing intrinsic motivation and employee productivity (Sulistamtama et al., 2024). This indicates that fostering a work culture that supports intrinsic motivation can lead to better work ethics and overall performance in the manufacturing sector.

Each employee's output can be compared to their talent level. To be regarded as an outstanding employee, every employee must contend with one another to complete their work on time. Intrinsically motivated employees will feel at ease because their accomplishments, awards, and responsibilities will please them, and motivation will arise from within. External rewards or punishments do not influence an intrinsically motivated employee but instead perform his job in a way that makes him joyful, leading others to believe he is being rewarded for his efforts (Rachmawati & Ketut, 2016).

The organization expects that adhering to the code of ethics and behavioral norms will establish an environment where all employees are loyal, trustworthy, and morally upright in pursuing company goals. Both management and employees are expected to improve their performance and become more professional. Organizations that adhere to ethical standards are more likely to experience a sense of attachment and responsibility for organizational success (Asha'ari et al., 2023). The rich cultural variety of work ethics observed around the world stands as a testament to the diversity of global cultures. Whether originating domestically or internationally, these cultural ideas serve as a remarkable illustration of the diversity that contributes to the vibrancy of the global landscape (Japhet, 2021).

This research was conducted in an Indonesian manufacturing company in the Bekasi Area. It is crucial to research the manufacturing sector, as it has been identified as a significant contributor to various forms of environmental degradation (Kusumastuti & Herachwati, 2024). This is evidenced by the sector's increasing trend of environmental impact, which is attracting international attention. It is thought that this is due to the significant roles played by labour, capital and technology transfer (Izzudin et al., 2022). The manufacturing sector has been a pivotal

contributor to the growth and prosperity of developing countries (Lee, 2019). While the large and medium manufacturing industries undoubtedly play an important role in the Indonesian economy, it is worth noting that this sector is currently experiencing some inconsistency in growth, both in terms of output and labour productivity (Ulkhay, 2022). Those engaged in the professions of safety, health, and the environment are demonstrating a growing interest in the concept of sustainability. Furthermore, Ranasinghe et al. (2024) posited that an examination of the extant literature reveals a growing interest in understanding the implications of a workforce in the manufacturing sector. The manufacturing industry is characterized by a high level of occupational risk (Amirah et al., 2024). A significant number of safety and health issues have been identified in this sector. This study examines the connection between intrinsic motivation, work ethic, and job performance. This research answers the call of Grabowski et al. (2021) to analyze the link between work ethic and intrinsic motivation. Due to the growing interdependence of the world's industries, economic globalization has increased the significance of individual performance at work (Koopmans, 2014).

The objective of this study is to gain insight into the relationship between intrinsic motivation and work performance. In particular, the aim is to ascertain how work ethics affect work performance by developing an empirical model. The following section outlines the structure of the paper. Section 2 presents a review of the existing literature on intrinsic motivation, work ethics and work performance. Section 3 presents the research methodology, provides justification for the selected sample and respondents. This section also provides an account of the questionnaire development process, followed by a description of the data analysis methodology. Subsequently, the paper presents the findings of the study, accompanied by a discussion and an analysis of the implications. The final section presents the conclusions of the study and outlines potential avenues for future research.

Work Performance (WP), WP refers to how well and efficiently an employee has carried out his or her job responsibilities (Arif et al., 2020). WP refers to the documented results of assigned duties and initiatives over a specified period (Tsauri, 2013). Work performance is crucial to the profitability of an organization. Work performance is essential to the company's human resources growth because employees who continuously produce high-quality work are rewarded by management with higher compensation and benefits packages. Different disciplines conceptualize and operationalize individual work performance in various ways (Koopmans et al., 2011). It was demonstrated by Bellingan et al. (2024) that programs designed to improve the general well-being of employees in a factory setting have the potential to enhance overall performance and well-being. The personal evaluation of employee work performance is an effective method of measuring the knowledge created in an organisation. This is because it is important to assess the impact of knowledge creation practices on employee efficiency, effectiveness and timeliness in completing tasks (Sujatha & Krishnaveni, 2018). The findings of study Amornkitvikai & Charoenrat (2024) suggest that the presence of skilled labor may have a beneficial impact on a firm's technical efficiency within the manufacturing sector.

Intrinsic Motivation (IM), Intrinsic motivation is exemplified by a strong desire to work that arises from an appreciation for the significance of the task (Suryadi & Efendi, 2019). The premise underlying the principles of intrinsic motivation is that people are naturally motivated to pursue ends that derive from their most deeply held beliefs (Grabowski et al., 2021). Intrinsically motivated employees will experience the emotion that results from engaging in "rewards" activities that they find fascinating and enjoyable (Yunita, 2020). Since external factors constrain them less, intrinsically motivated employees are likelier to take initiative, take pride in their work, and be creative. When someone categorises an activity as more enjoyable than work, or as a goal that has already been attained, it demonstrates that the individual is intrinsically motivated to pursue it (Fishbach & Woolley, 2024).

Previous research indicated that intrinsic motivation positively impacts employee performance, meaning that the greater an employee's intrinsic motivation, the greater their desire to effectively complete their work to meet the company's performance criteria (Suryadi & Efendi, 2019). Internal (the worker's motivation) and external (the rewards and recognition one receives for one's efforts) factors contribute to the development of one's work performance. The extent to which a person fulfills the expectations for a certain level of performance influences their future performance-results instrumentalities and, by extension, their future motivation (Waldman, 1994). Previous research in the Islamic country established a connection between IM and WE, especially this ethics implement Islamic values (Al-Douri et al., 2020; Hafiz et al., 2013), H1: IM has a significant relationship with WP. H2: IM has a significant relationship with WE.

Work Ethics (WE), The ancient Greek term *ethos*, from which we derive the word "ethics," refers to the characteristics or standards that emphasize right and wrong (Chaudhary et al., 2023; Husin & Kernain, 2020). Work Ethics are the attitudes and beliefs held by an individual or organization regarding what comprises good or ethical conduct in the workplace, and they are readily apparent in the worker's actions (Budianto et al., 2017). As a branch of philosophy, the study of ethics aims to gain insight into human behavior to develop recommendations that will be accepted by a wide variety of individuals (Hasanah et al., 2020) A person with a strong work ethic values hard work, punishes laziness, honors their commitments, and aspires to excellence in everything they do (Grabowski et al., 2021). Due to their strong commitment to improving the quality of their work, those with a positive work attitude can participate in establishing workplace objectives and standards. An individual's work ethic is reflected in how they prioritize tasks, participate in team efforts, feel about financial and non-financial rewards, and are eager to climb the corporate hierarchy (Gheitani et al., 2019). The study conducted by Asha'ari et al. (2023) on Malaysian manufacturing companies demonstrated that the Islamic work ethic is a pivotal factor in the integration of sustainable design and social sustainability. The upholding of ethical values, such as courtesy and respect, is of paramount importance in the conduct of civil servants in their dealings with the public (Busenan, 2024). It could be argued that the value of work ethics lies in their capacity to provide a framework for employees to operate within and uphold the principles and standards of the organisation, thereby contributing to its success (Ur Rehman et al., 2023)

Success relies heavily on achievement, whether individual prowess or team members' efforts toward a common objective. The unique combination of personality traits, skill sets, and work ethic that makes up an employee's performance on the job can be measured by the results attained. H3: WE have a significant relationship with WP. H4: WE mediate the effect of IM on WP

RESEARCH METHOD

This investigation was conducted in Jawa Barat, Indonesia. As evidenced by data from the Ministry of Industry, the manufacturing sector represents the largest contribution to the national gross domestic product (GDP) in the second quarter of 2021, amounting to 17.34% despite the ongoing impact of the global pandemic (Ulkhaq, 2022). IM research questions were adopted from (Kuvaas et al., 2017). The employees were asked how they felt about their jobs, including whether they were enjoyable, meaningful, exciting, and inspired. The WP has five indicators from Kuvaas et al. (2017) research, asking about employees' feelings, such as their effort to perform his/her duties. Work ethics has five adopted indicators (Nurhasanah et al., 2022). These indicators include accountability, positivity, self-control, tenacity, and learning. Data collection and analysis are heavily weighed in this study since they are crucial to the quantitative research methodology. Data was collected at the manufacturing company to ascertain employee perceptions of work performance in the Bekasi Area, Indonesia. Participants' anonymity was guaranteed, and they could opt-out anytime. With a total of 178 questionnaires, the manufacturing workforce was polled. It is evident that PLS-SEM is a suitable methodology for the analysis of non-normal

distribution data with a small sample size, as evidenced by the research conducted by (Hair, Jr. et al., 2017). The validity of the study is supported by the finding that the data set utilised, which consists of 190 samples, falls within the acceptable parameters for such data sets in terms of generalisability. The decision to employ a quantitative methodology was informed by the numerous advantages of the self-administered questionnaire approach. These include the speed and cost-effectiveness of the method, as well as its capacity to mitigate social desirability bias without compromising data sensitivity (Asha'ari et al., 2023; Bryman, 2003). One hundred and twenty (120) out of 178 surveys were returned for a return rate of 67.42 percent, representing the total number of surveys collected. This study included 120 personnel, including 97 males (80.81%) and 23 females (19.19%) ranging in age from 20 to 30 years (18.33%), 31 to 40 years (40.83%), 41 to 50 years (39.17%), and more than 50 years (1.67%). 1- 5 years (34.17%), 6-10 years (48.33%), and more than ten years (17.5%) was the duration of employment for respondents; 69 (57.5%) had a high school, 12 (10%) had an associate degree, and 39 (32.5%) had a bachelor's degree, as displayed on Table 1.

Table 1. Characteristics of Respondents

Item	n (%)
Gender	
Male	97 (80.81%)
Female	23 (19.19%)
Age	
20 to 30 years	22 (18.33%)
31 to 40 years	49 (40.83%)
41 to 50 years	47 (39.17%)
> 50 years	2 (1.67%)
Work Experience	
1- 5 years	41 (34.17%)
6-10 years	58 (48.33%)
> 10 years	21 (17.5%)
Educational	
High school	69 (57.5%)
Associate Degree	12 (10%)
Bachelor Degree	39 (32.5%)

SMART PLS was used for measurement and structural equation modeling, with data investigated using SEM. All the constructs in the study were measured using the measurement model first, and then the items had a loading vary from 0.706 to 0.844 (WP), 0.712 to 0.779 (WE), and 0.752 to 0.902 (MI). Table 2 shows that the test's reliability was measured using composite reliability (CR) and Cronbach alpha, exceeding 0.70, which are reliable.

Table 1. Validity & Reliability

			CA	CR	AVE
Intrinsic			0,848	0,898	0,689
Motivation	MI_1	0,840			
	MI_2	0,752			
	MI_3	0,902			
	MI_4	0,819			
Work Ethics			0,813	0,869	0,571
	WE_1	0,776			
	WE_2	0,738			
	WE_3	0,770			
	WE_4	0,779			
Work Performance	WE_5	0,712			
			0,836	0,883	0,603

WP_1	0,813
WP_2	0,773
WP_3	0,737
WP_4	0,706
WP-5	0,844

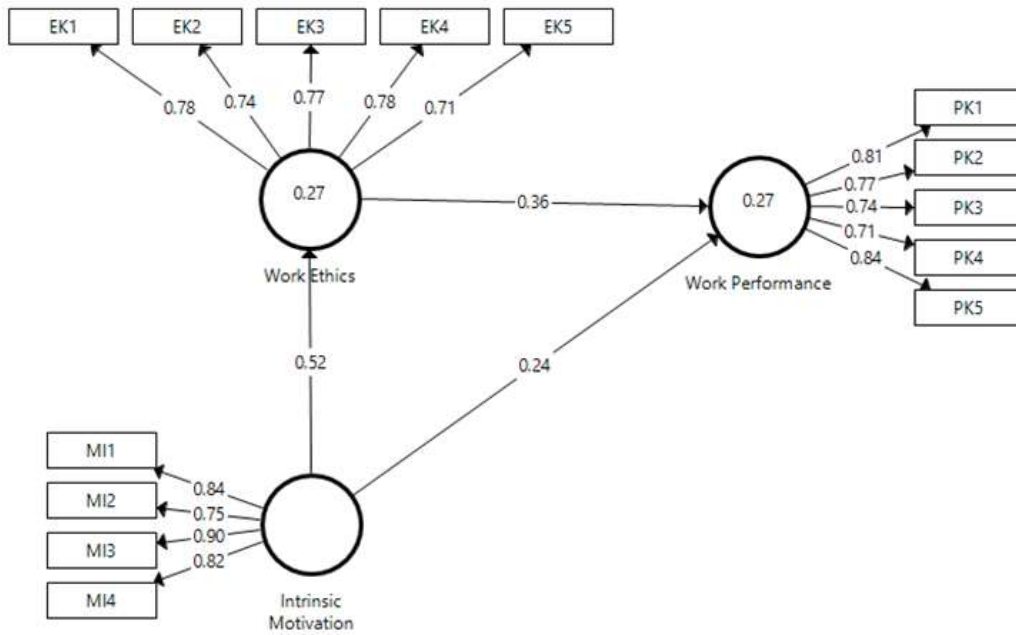


Figure 1. Analyzing Path Coefficients

RESULTS AND DISCUSSIONS

The study examined the effect of IM and WE on EA (Table 3).

Table 3. Hypothesis Testing

	Beta	T Value	P Value	Finding
IM -> WP	0,238	1,781	0,082	Rejected
IM -> WE	0,518	6,756	0,000	Accepted
WE -> WP	0,359	3,216	0,001	Accepted
IM -> WE -> WP	0,186	2,833	0,005	Accepted

The R2 value depicted in Figure 2 was computed using the structural model by following the procedures outlined below:

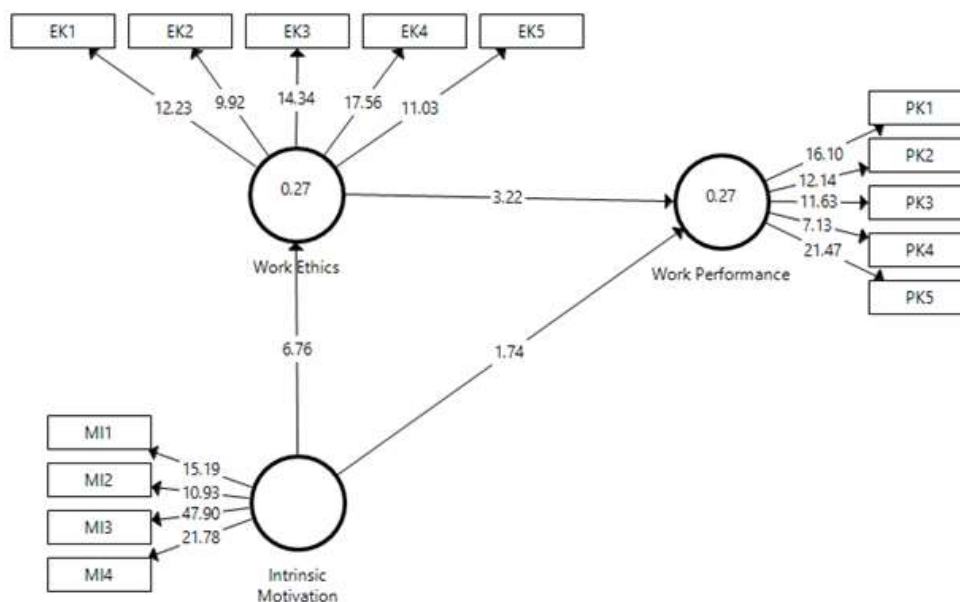


Figure 2. The structural model's outcomes

The study evaluated the influence of IM and WE on work performance. The relationship between IM and work performance is insignificant ($b = 0.238$, $t = 1,739$, $\rho = 0.082$), as the p -value > 0.05 . Consequently, H1 was unsupported. Work effort and quality might be predicted without the need for any substantial interaction terms. The level of intrinsic motivation among employees considerably impacts their work performance, with a positive association observed for those with strong intrinsic motivation and a negative association observed for those with low intrinsic drive (Kuvaas & Dysvik, 2009). This study's findings are consistent with research on catering employees of small and medium-sized businesses, which indicates that IM does not influence work engagement (Sari et al., 2022). Izzudin et al., (2022) posits that the remuneration of industrial employees has increased at a consistent rate over the past two decades. In the manufacturing sector, the elevated remuneration of employees has been identified as a contributing factor to the industry's decline. It would be beneficial for employees to feel supported by their company in addition to having a solid connection to their work and company (Lubis et al., 2024). Moreover, it has been suggested that ethics and values based on religion can assist employees in differentiating between behaviours that are considered desirable and undesirable, which can have a positive impact on their performance (Japhet, 2021).

The significance of the second criterion for the direct relationship between IM and WE is supported by the ρ -value = 0.000 and $\beta = 0,518$. Motivated employees are more productive, less likely to engage in illicit or corrupt behavior, and more likely to be job-satisfied (Saqib et al., 2022). Intrinsic motivation often includes a strong work ethic, defined as engaging in work because employees value it (Grabowski et al., 2021). Greater IM use was associated with increased persistence in the completion of work tasks (Fishbach & Woolley, 2024). The most beneficial aspect of intrinsic motivation is that it demonstrates the extent to which individuals derive satisfaction from performing a specific task, precisely because it is the correct course of action (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013). Furthermore, it is noteworthy to observe the manner in which group intrinsic motivation fosters cohesion among individuals. These individuals are united by a shared set of motivations, and they derive pleasure from the challenges and the subsequent satisfaction that this endeavour engenders.

The third hypothesis, which predicted a significant positive relationship between WE and WP, is substantiated ($\beta = 0,359$ and p -value = 0,001). Work ethics gives employees a sense of fairness and psychological ownership, which can significantly impact an organization's ethos, fostering a sense of organizational identification among employees (Akhmadi et al., 2023). Mitonga-Monga (2016) revealed that the ethics culture in the workplace, as reflected in the perception of ethical leadership for shaping the ethos of ethics at work and the level of worker engagement in a developing nation. The findings of this study are consistent with those of (Aji & Cori, 2019; Asha'ari et al., 2023). Employees who exhibit robust work ethics are inclined to exhibit higher levels of organisational commitment and engage in activities that foster the welfare of the organization (Ur Rehman et al., 2023).

The t-value of 2.833 in Table 3 indicates that the indirect effect of IM on work performance is significant. A company's commitment to ethical standards, particularly in interpersonal and workplace ethics, can significantly impact its employees' engagement, dedication, and satisfaction due to the diversity of moral dilemmas that arise in the workplace (Gheitani et al., 2019). An intrinsically motivated person will work on a solution because he or she appreciates the thrill and sense of accomplishment that comes with overcoming obstacles (Hafiz et al., 2013).

CONCLUSION

The findings offer firms seeking to enhance employee performance and advance sustainable human resources practices in the manufacturing sector a set of actionable insights. In this investigation, intrinsic motivation did not directly impact the work performance of manufacturing production division employees. This study demonstrates that intrinsic motivation only influences work performance when work ethics mediates it. This study indicates that the intrinsic motivation of each employee plays a minor role. Even though most workers have six to ten years of experience, this is insufficient to increase intrinsic motivation. Therefore, businesses need to cultivate an environment conducive to employee motivation. Intrinsic motivation and performance exhibit a positive and significant relationship when work ethics mediate. According to the results of this study, workers who believe that work ethics are practiced at their company are more likely to demonstrate responsibility, discipline, and diligence. After empirical corroboration, the findings may serve as the basis for educative courses that could influence how motivation and attitude toward work affect performance. These determinants have consequences for personnel management and job assignment. In the case of an individual exhibiting a lack of intrinsic motivation; one method of enhancing motivation is to link work with the provision of support for one's family, which provides an immediate incentive (Fishbach & Woolley, 2024).

The study's findings demonstrate the importance of work ethics as a total mediation variable, which connects IM and WP. The findings of this study add to the richness of self-determination theory. Aside from this, leaders play a role in their ability to implement a persuasion-based strategy that seeks to alter the beliefs and behaviors of those they lead. The degree of intrinsic motivation is a significant predictor of persistence and performance in the workplace, academia, and health behaviours (Fishbach & Woolley, 2024). Considering fundamental changes regarding the nature of work, companies must undertake a comprehensive job analysis to re-identify job descriptions and the requisite employee qualifications (Wijanarko & Sekarkinasih, 2024). In the contemporary business environment, there is an increasing emphasis on corporate social responsibility and business ethics. Consequently, leaders are expected to demonstrate ethical behaviour more than ever before (Yidong & Xinxin, 2013).

The following discussion outlines the way the findings of this research can inform policy decisions. Firstly, it is necessary to identify the key motivational factors. By ascertaining the intrinsic motivators of workers, policymakers can devise programmes and initiatives that will foster these motivations. For instance, if personal growth and job satisfaction are identified as

significant motivators, policies can be designed to provide training and development opportunities. Second, improving the work environment is also a key consideration. Research can highlight the importance of a supportive work environment in enhancing intrinsic motivation. Policies can therefore be formulated to ensure that workplaces provide the necessary support, such as autonomy, positive interpersonal relationships and recognition of achievement. Thirdly, the following section looks at improving job satisfaction. Evidence from research can facilitate the identification of factors that contribute to job satisfaction. Tailoring policies to address these factors, such as ensuring fair pay, facilitating work-life balance and providing opportunities for career advancement, can then be facilitated.

The limitations of our study must be considered when evaluating the results. Our respondents were factory workers who had completed high school, and we compiled all of our information at once from a single source. To generalize the results of this study, additional research is required to evaluate respondents from different demographic groups. This investigation utilized quantitative methodologies. To be able to use mixed research methods will necessitate additional study. Using mixed methods allows researchers to acquire both breadth and depth of understanding and evidence by combining qualitative and quantitative research techniques. It is anticipated that research issues and their challenges can be overcome by employing blended methodologies. We examined manufacturing employees' perception of intrinsic motivation to determine its influence on work ethics and performance. Future researchers may postulate different mechanisms for these associations, such as sustainable employability and technological capability.

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