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Incentives as mediating variables in the relationship between antecedent factors and employee productivity: A systematic literature review

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Abstract

In today's fast-changing business landscape, organizations are continually seeking ways to improve their employees' productivity. An important component of achieving such a goal is understanding the impact of performance on employees' productivity. This measure, also called labor productivity, is a key indicator of employees' efficiency and displays the quantity of output generated over a given time span. High productivity serves to develop a culture of excellence within organizations, leading to improved workplace environments. Productivity is directly linked to organizational success and profitability, as it ensures effective utilization of resources, higher output, and competitiveness within the marketplace. Understanding the many factors influencing employees' productivity within the organization is critical. It has previously been noted that employees' habits, quality of output, and time management play a vital role in productivity measurement. It's important, however, to understand that organizational productivity among employees cannot be solely attributed to personal effort and abilities. External factors such as motivation, working environment, and their level of satisfaction have a major impact on employees' productivity. Rewards, especially, have been cited as intervening variables in the relationship between antecedent variables and employees' productivity.

Keywords: Antecedent factors, Employee productivity, Incentives, Motivation, Organizational performance, Systematic literature review.

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1. Introduction

Organizations are constantly seeking strategies to improve the output of their employees in the fast-changing modern corporate environment [1]. A key component of reaching this goal is realizing how much staff productivity depends on performance. Representing the production generated within a certain period, this statistic, also known as labor productivity, is a crucial gauge of staff efficiency [2]. A culture of excellence within companies depends on higher production, which also shapes workplace conditions. Since it guarantees effective resource use, higher production, and more market competitiveness, increased productivity is directly linked with organizational performance and profitability [3]. One must have a strong awareness of the several elements influencing employee performance within the company. Based on past research, employee behaviors, output, and time management have been identified as main elements to consider in determining production [4, 5]. Still, one should also take into account external elements, including motivation, the circumstances under which one is working, and job satisfaction, which help to define employee productivity in addition to personal efforts and abilities [3, 6]. Particularly, incentives have been found to be mediators between antecedent events and employee performance.

Studies on how incentives affect employee productivity and how they work as mediators in the link between antecedent elements and productivity have lately attracted more and more attention. Incentives, then defined as bonuses or awards given to staff members to inspire them and improve their performance, Kusuma claims that incentives greatly and favorably affect employee performance [7]. This suggests that people who feel they can meet their requirements by performing well at their employment are driven to work harder, so producing better performance. Still, all the sources disagree over whether or not incentives can boost employee output. Some think that incentives can lower general output and undermine natural drive [2]. On the other hand, a thorough meta-analysis grounded on 25 years of study refutes this and comes to the conclusion that rewards do not destroy motivation and productivity. These different points of view point to the need to look at the intricate interaction of incentives, antecedent factors, and employee performance. Organizations that want to inspire employees and raise their output must make suitable decisions on the use of incentives. One should evaluate what kind of incentives to provide, how fair reward programs are seen to be, and how closely incentive programs fit the activities and values of a company.

Whether they be financial or non-financial, incentives clearly play a crucial part in determining employee productivity [7]. Many cases from companies and literature show how well incentives inspire workers and increase output [2]. Still, there have been cases where incentive distribution has been shown to lower production, suggesting that the relationship between incentive and productivity is not as straightforward and direct as first assumed. These first findings help to identify the research issue of this study: the function of incentive as a mediator between antecedents and employee productivity.

To address this research challenge, a systematic literature analysis will be carried out to examine and assess the body of current studies that have investigated how incentives operate as mediators between antecedent events and employee productivity. The paper will review studies examining the effects on employee performance, motivation, and involvement of various types of incentives, both financial and non-financial, including physical ones. Under examination will also be studies on how antecedent factors such as job satisfaction, organizational environment, and leadership styles affect incentive effectiveness, Salah [8]. This thorough evaluation of the literature will help to close gaps and discrepancies in the current body of information regarding how incentives as mediators influence the relationship between antecedent conditions and employee productivity.

2. Methodology

A strong methodology will be used to finish a systematic literature review (SLR) looking at how incentive and antecedent variables affect worker output in corporate environments. SLR is a scientific method meant to lower bias by means of a rigorous, organized approach of research. Figure 1 shows the three processes identification, screening, and eligibility derived from Shaffril et al. [9] utilized in the approach employed for this study. These rules serve to guarantee that a comprehensive assessment anchored on appropriate studies is carried out. Through the SLR, one seeks to lower bias and provide an objective, comprehensive assessment of the corpus of current content. Once the procedure ends, the data will be synthesized and investigated to provide a perceptive study for the project. The outcome of this systematic literature study will enable one to understand how incentives function as mediators between antecedent factors and worker productivity [10].

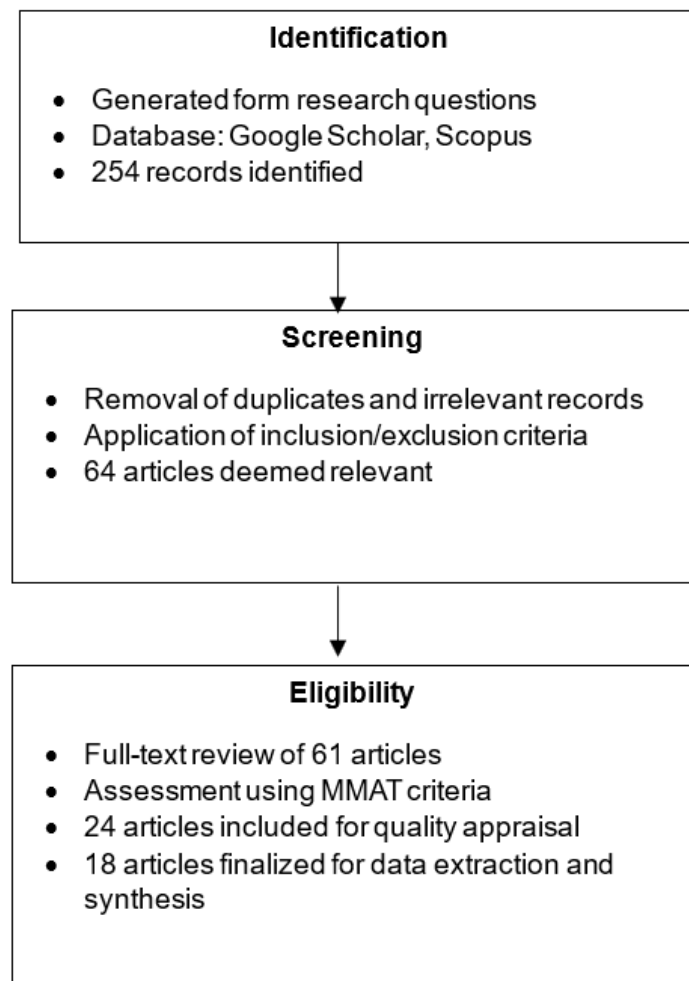


Figure 1.
Systematic Literature Review (SLR) Process Flow.

2.1. Identification

The SLR's identification phase focused on locating relevant studies on how incentives affect the connection between antecedent factors and worker productivity. The essential terms for this research were "antecedent factors affecting productivity," "employee productivity factors," "incentives in the workplace," and "organizational productivity factors." References to past studies and an online thesaurus helped to expand these key words. To reduce the likelihood of retrieval bias, the search strategy was broadened over numerous electronic databases per the advice of Durach et al. [11]. The main databases utilized to find relevant papers were Google Scholar and Scopus, chosen for their great volume of academic literature, including peer-reviewed publications, conference proceedings, and research reports over the past decade [12].

Particularly chosen for its excellent variety of types of articles spanning numerous sources, including academic journals, conference proceedings, master's and Ph.D. theses, book chapters, and unpublished works, was Google Scholar. A temporal cut-off helped the review remain current with fresh developments in the sector. Moreover, included in the Google Scholar database were hand searches and snowballing, two human methods meant to generate an exhaustive list. Scopus used key terms to build a search string including wildcard characters, Boolean operators (OR, AND), and truncation. Many times, the search terms were assessed and revised to exclude studies with non-corresponding participants, thus omitting financial incentives or healthcare environments, to match the topic of review by eliminating false-positive results.

The resulting final search string used was:

TITLE-ABS-KEY(("incentives in the workplace" OR "workplace incentives" OR "employee incentives" OR "performance incentives") AND ("antecedent factors affecting productivity" OR "determinants of productivity" OR "productivity antecedents" OR "factors influencing productivity") AND ("employee productivity factors" OR "factors affecting employee productivity" OR "employee performance factors" OR "determinants of employee productivity") AND ("organizational productivity factors" OR "factors affecting organizational productivity" OR "organizational performance determinants" OR "determinants of organizational productivity"))

In the identification phase, 254 papers in all came from both databases. 164 irrelevant, outdated, or out-of-scope for the study papers were removed after hand screening through related key phrases. Consequently, 64 papers turned out to be qualified for inclusion in order to go through the next round of screening.

2.2. Screening

Two hundred fifty-four documents in all were gathered from both databases during the identifying phase. One hundred sixty-four irrelevant, outdated, or out-of-scope papers for the study were removed after hand screening through similar key terms. Thus, sixty-four papers were determined to be qualified for inclusion to proceed through the next level of screening.

Table 1.
Inclusion and Exclusion Screening Criteria.

Criteria	Inclusion	Exclusion
Timeline	Between 2000 - 2023	< 2000
Language	English	Non-English
Field	Social Sciences, Businesses	Non-social sciences
Article Type	Indexed Journal – Research Articles	Non-indexed journals, articles reviews, book chapters, book series, conference and proceeding, theses, reports

2.3. Eligibility

Reviewing every article helps one determine whether it relates to the goals of the research [9]. 61 papers in all were examined at this point to be included into the project. Examining the title, abstract, and substance of every article, the screening method sought to ascertain whether it fit the inclusion criteria and would be appropriate for tackling the study aims. 37 articles were thus omitted because they lacked empirical data or because their emphasis was not on social sciences or the function of incentives as mediators in the link between antecedent conditions and worker productivity. The 24 articles that remained were then chosen for quality review. With at least three criteria satisfied for each manuscript to be qualified for the next step, we screened all 24 papers for five well-specified criteria using the Mixed-method Appraisal Tool. We applied this instrument since the included studies applied mixed-method research approaches with qualitative elements [13]. Out of this process, eighteen papers satisfied the criteria and were forwarded to data extraction and analysis.

2.4. Data Extraction and Analysis

Qualitative synthesis data used for this study fit the chosen papers, depending on the integration concept was gathered [14]. The review approach for each of the eighteen included papers was a focused analysis of the abstract, results, and conclusion. Examined and organized, the acquired data helped to identify trends, findings, and significant issues regarding the role of incentives as a mediator between antecedent variables and workers' output. We only collected data suitable for the study and responded to the research query. Recurrent themes and patterns uncovered in the data collection and analysis stage help to present a full picture of the problem. This approach allowed for significant understanding and, based on the facts, conclusions. Table 2 accumulates the discovered tendencies.

Table 2.
Table of Findings- Systematic Literature Review.

No.	Author/Year	Title	Patterns and Trends				
			Incentive Systems	Employee Productivity	Organizational Culture	Employee Motivation	Organizational Performance
1	Jegatheeswari and Anandi [1]	A Study on the Effect of Incentives on Employees Performance	/	/		/	
2	Parashakti and Lukertina [7]	Is Employee's Performance Influenced by Incentives and Work Motivation?	/	/		/	
3	Salah [8]	The Influence of Rewards on Employees Performance	/	/	/	/	
4	Taba [10]	Mediating effect of work performance and organizational commitment in the relationship between reward system and employees' work satisfaction	/	/	/	/	
5	Zakaria, et al. [2]	Employee's Productivity: The Most Dominant Factors		/	/	/	
6	Bonner and Sprinkle [15]	The effects of monetary incentives on effort and task performance: theories, evidence, and a framework for research	/	/		/	
7	Condly, et al. [16]	The Effects of Incentives on Workplace Performance: A Meta-analytic Review of Research Studies I	/		/		/
8	Daniel [17]	Effects of Incentives on Employees Productivity	/	/	/		
9	Al-Bawaia, et al. [18]	The impact of corporate culture and employee motivation on organizational effectiveness in the Jordanian banking sector			/	/	/
10	Andika and Darmanto [19]	The effect of employee empowerment and intrinsic motivation on organizational commitment and employee performance		/		/	/
11	Arshad, et al. [20]	Impact of prosocial motivation on organizational citizenship behavior and organizational commitment: The mediating role of managerial support			/	/	/
12	Butt, et al. [21]	Individual knowledge management engagement, knowledge-worker productivity, and innovation performance in knowledge-based organizations:		/	/		/

No.	Author/Year	Title	Patterns and Trends				
			Incentive Systems	Employee Productivity	Organizational Culture	Employee Motivation	Organizational Performance
		the implications for knowledge processes and knowledge-based systems					
13	lis, et al. [22]	The Effect of Career Development And Work Environment On Employee Performance With Work Motivation As Intervening Variable At The Office Of Agriculture And Livestock In Aceh		/	/	/	
14	Leitão, et al. [23]	Quality of work life and organizational performance: Workers' feelings of contributing, or not, to the organization's productivity			/	/	/
15	Nguyen, et al. [24]	Factors that influence employee performance: motivation, leadership, environment, organizational culture, work achievement, competence and compensation	/	/	/	/	
16	Riyanto, et al. [25]	Effect of work motivation and job satisfaction on employee performance: Mediating role of employee engagement		/		/	/
17	Suastini and Damayanthi [26]	The Effect of Indirect Compensation on Employee Performance: Case Study at the Khayangan Dreams Villas, Bali, Indonesia	/	/			
18	Taheri, et al. [27]	Impact of working environment on job satisfaction			/	/	/

3. Results

The main objectives of this systematic literature review (SLR) are to investigate how incentives affect worker satisfaction and performance as well as their mediation in the link between antecedent conditions and worker productivity [10]. Table 2 offers a complete list of current studies looking at several facets of workplace dynamics. These studies mostly aim to grasp the interactions of incentive systems, employee productivity, organizational culture, employee motivation, and general organizational performance. A major focus of current research is now on the utilization of incentives as mediators in the link between antecedent elements and worker productivity. Examining the intricate interactions among incentive systems, employee productivity, organizational culture, employee motivation, and organizational performance shows a clear focus of study results gathered in Table 2.

The literature indicates that individuals are realizing the complicated nature of worker productivity and the significant influence incentives have in defining employee performance and happiness. A close examination of the chosen studies exposes several factors affecting the success of incentive programs meant to increase worker performance. They consist of alignment between incentives and organizational goals, leadership and management's contribution to a recognition and reward culture, and the effect of individual as well as team-level incentives on influencing employee motivation and satisfaction. Moreover, emphasized in the literature is the importance of analyzing the contextual differences among various organizational settings and the several consequences of incentive systems across various sectors and workforce demographics.

Numerous studies have shown that staff motivation and performance are regularly much influenced by incentive programs. Studies by Jegatheeswari and Anandi [1], Parashakti and Lukertina [7], and Salah [8] all indicate, for example, a beneficial link between well-organized incentive systems and developments in employee performance. These findings reveal that motivating employees to achieve higher production calls for financial and non-financial rewards. Analyzing the connection between incentive systems and worker productivity reveals a complicated mix of components affecting employee motivation and satisfaction. Although more recent studies, including those by Jegatheeswari and Anandi [1], Parashakti and Lukertina [7], and Salah [8], highlight the need for non-monetary incentives in driving performance improvements, even if monetary incentives have always been the main motivator for raised productivity. This study emphasizes the need for a deeper awareness of the numerous incentive systems that could effectively influence worker performance and satisfaction in different organizational situations.

Furthermore, emphasized by literature is the need to match incentive systems with organizational goals and to establish a recognition and reward culture by management and leadership. When employees believe their labor is recognized and rewarded based on what is valued by and helpful to the company, they show increased engagement and satisfaction with their jobs [1, 7]. This indicates that developing an organizational culture that allows incentive systems to be successful and have maximum influence on workers' productivity depends significantly on leadership and management. Furthermore, a primary focus of current research is still on how individual and team-level incentives influence employee motivation and job satisfaction. Learning how different kinds of incentives affect various workforce segments and sectors is crucial, as it helps design incentive systems tailored for different organizational environments to enhance employee satisfaction and performance by understanding the various effects of different kinds of incentives.

Research also explores the mediating and moderating roles that employee motivation and organizational culture must play to support organizational effectiveness. Al-Bawaia et al. [18], for example, discuss how employee motivation and company culture impact organizational effectiveness with particular reference to Jordanian banks in 2022. This study claims that organizational performance depends on a good and efficient organizational culture enhanced by high employee engagement [3]. It also underlines how engaging employees and growing them as entrepreneurs for companies depend on a robust compensation structure. Studies of the whole show that organizational culture, employee motivation, and rewarding systems are fundamental parts; incentives can be mediators between antecedent elements and worker productivity. The studies underline how policies, procedures, and organizational structures should be built to help employees and recognize their achievements, thereby increasing their motivation, output, and company growth.

Another fascinating result is related to employee empowerment and intrinsic motivation, as suggested by Andika and Darmanto [19]. This study claims that empowering employees and improving intrinsic motivation results in higher organizational commitment and improved employee performance, so raising organizational productivity. Important motivators for intrinsic motivation have been identified as autonomy, mastery, and purpose; so, focus is given on designing surroundings that support these elements. The interaction of employee empowerment, intrinsic motivation, and organizational performance indicates the requirement of a thorough approach to grasp and grow employee engagement and productivity. Generally, this overview of the literature emphasizes the need of incentive supply in terms of increasing organizational performance and motivation. According to the studies, one of the main elements raising employee enthusiasm and, hence, organizational effectiveness is incentive distribution. Therefore, the findings suggest that companies should implement appropriate compensation systems, create a friendly corporate culture, and enable employees to raise output and motivation by means of appropriate tools.

4. Discussion

The results of this review integrate the interrelatedness of incentive regimes, employee productivity, organizational culture, employee motivation, and organizational performance. The discussion delves into how these factors contribute to successful workplaces and what they imply for management practice.

Incentive Systems and Employee Productivity: Much research emphasizes the important role incentive systems play in raising worker output. Changing ideas of incentive systems and worker productivity suggest a movement towards a more

comprehensive understanding of antecedent-incentive-worker satisfaction and performance interdependencies. Although new research highlights that non-monetary rewards greatly help to improve performance, monetary awards have been at the forefront as financial incentives are the focus. Furthermore, important questions in the research are how incentive systems relate to organizational goals, leadership, and management's involvement in building a recognition and reward culture, and how individual and team-level incentives affect employee motivation and satisfaction.

Empirical data from studies by Jegatheeswari and Anandi [1] and Parashakti and Lukertina [7] show how important well-organized incentive systems are for raising employee performance. Salah [8] also provides evidence as she discovered a direct correlation between employee output and incentives. Consensus across these studies shows that both financial and non-financial incentives do influence workers to generate more at their places of employment. This validates the notion provided by Bonner and Sprinkle [15], that is, that incentives, if focused on organizational objectives, have an impact on effort and task performance among workers.

Organizational Culture and Employee Motivation: The way organizational culture influences employee motivation and, hence, organizational performance is still another important issue. Al-Bawaia et al. [18] demonstrate how a positive business culture drives employee enthusiasm, so improving organizational effectiveness particularly for Jordanian banks especially considering It shows that the culture of a company greatly influences employee attitude and behavior, which influences general performance by means of which Andika and Darmanto [19] underline once more the need of employee empowerment and intrinsic motivation. This study suggests that empowering employees and fostering an environment favorable of intrinsic motivation can help them to have a higher dedication to the company and enhance performance.

Mediating and Moderating Factors: Many research also investigates mediating and moderating elements influencing the incentive systems, employee motivation, and performance relationship. For example, Taba [10] examines how organizational commitment and job performance balance the link between reward schemes and employee satisfaction. It suggests that perceived job satisfaction and commitment are among the several organizational factors that affect the complex incentive influence on employee performance and satisfaction. Finally, looking at incentive systems as mediators between antecedent events and worker output presents a complicated and multifarious picture. Implications suggest to more study to create contextual incentive systems that would maximize employee performance and happiness for a variety of organizational settings.

Specific Factors Affecting Employee Performance: Apart from broad issues, studies on particular causes affecting employee performance, including the workplace, opportunities for career growth, and pay policies, are also highlighted. With regard to career development and the work environment, Iis et al. [22] underline the main drivers of employee performance, with motivation serving as a middleman. This emphasizes the need to create encouraging work environments and provide opportunities for development to inspire staff members and, hence, enhance performance.

5. Conclusion

The thorough reading of current research in this systematic literature review has underlined the intricacy and multifarious character of incentive systems in affecting worker productivity. The integration of these results has significant consequences for management strategies since it implies that companies have to take into account a wide spectrum of incentive systems to properly increase employee performance and happiness in various organizational environments. It underlines the importance of a comprehensive approach to human resource management, including strategic incentive planning, the development of a good organizational culture, and an emphasis on employee empowerment and motivation. In their decision-making, managers and organizational leaders should consider these elements to improve organizational performance and staff output. All the research examined supports the complex link among incentive systems, organizational culture, employee motivation, and performance. They underline the importance of strategic and sophisticated human resource management methods that take into account not only incentives but also the larger organizational setting and personal needs. Furthermore, underlined by the emphasis on matching incentive systems with organizational objectives and fostering a culture of appreciation and reward via leadership is the need for organizational culture in optimizing the effect of incentive systems.

More thorough investigation is needed going forward to create strong and customized incentive systems capable of maximizing employee performance and happiness in various corporate environments. Future research would benefit significantly from an awareness of the mediating and moderating roles of organizational culture and employee motivation in improving organizational performance. The changing opinions on incentive systems, worker productivity, and the functions of organizational culture and employee motivation are clarified by this study. It calls for a better understanding of incentive structures and their influence on various labor demographics in order to guide the design of sensible incentive systems. Furthermore, additional study is required to sort through the complexity of the interaction among antecedent elements, incentives, and worker performance in different organizational settings.

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