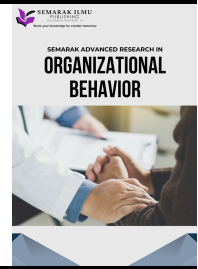




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Impact of Salary, Promotion, and Recognition on Work Motivation among Manufacturing Employees in Penang

Hemaloshinee Vasudevan^{1,*}, Juanita Alphanso Nathan²

¹ Tun Razak Graduate School, Universiti Tun Abdul Razak, 50400, Kuala Lumpur, Malaysia

² Faculty of Business and Communication, INTI International University, 71800 Nilai, Negeri Sembilan, Malaysia

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ABSTRACT

Businesses must prioritize employee wellbeing over letting them go, as it is more important to maintain employees than to let them go. Employee motivation is a crucial factor that can significantly boost productivity and enable an organization to achieve higher production levels. A motivated workforce is crucial for businesses to avoid facing dangerous situations. To maintain competitiveness, organizations must keep a motivated and competent workforce. Occasionally, a decrease in employee motivation can result in a lack of interest and failure to achieve specific objectives. New employees often experience dissatisfaction, disengagement, and disloyalty when they perceive mistreatment and unfair treatment in their workplace. This study aims to identify the factors (salary, rewards, and promotion) influencing employee motivation in a manufacturing company in Penang. The study employs convenience sampling with nonprobability sampling, utilizing the PLS-SEM sample size table to determine the sample size. The population is 2,274,146 employees in Penang's manufacturing sector. This study uses a 124 sample size with an 80% statistical power, distributed to 136 employees in a Penang manufacturing company. The study employs a quantitative method based on descriptive analysis to accurately define and explain employee motivation within a manufacturing company in Penang. The hypothesis testing results confirm H1 and H3, while rejecting H2 due to its impact on promotion and motivation at work. Employees should stay updated on the latest technologies and industry news to promote development and growth in their jobs, thereby qualifying for a better remuneration package. To gain a competitive edge, organizations should implement competitive employee policies and procedures and ensure their rewards system aligns with employee skills to retain and motivate them.

1. Introduction

The manufacturing industry is Malaysia's most significant sector, contributing approximately 23% to its GDP. Malaysia's economy has transitioned from a reliance on agriculture to a dependence on manufacturing and service industries, as noted by Awad *et al.*, [4]. The manufacturing industry is crucial in reducing unemployment and poverty, making it a vital component of the Malaysian

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: 23mt12001@postgrad.uis.edu.my

economy. Malaysia's manufacturing sector significantly contributes to the country's economy, exporting manufactured goods and transforming raw materials into finished goods, thereby elevating the country to global prominence [29]. Firms face challenges in rewards systems, employee motivation, and job satisfaction, with inadequate pay being a major factor contributing to dissatisfaction and desire to leave [30]. Employees are the key to a company's long-term survival. Inadequate pay is the primary factor contributing to employees' dissatisfaction and desire to leave their current job [11,30]. Organizations are continuously developing innovative and efficient methods to engage their workforce [8]. Motivated personnel enhance a company's performance and achieve objectives. Implementing an incentive system, such as salary and rewards, can improve employee motivation and loyalty. These tools guide employees towards achieving company objectives, benefiting all levels of employees within a company. Dissatisfied employees may seek new employment, while those with a satisfactory pay perception are likelier to seek new opportunities.

Effective communication with a manager can boost employee motivation, as it is often assumed that a manager with weak communication skills is less motivated [7]. Rewarding and recognizing productive staff boosts their output and helps them accept changes within the company. Global businesses require employees, but maintaining motivation is challenging. Motivation involves providing direction, advice, tactics, assets, and compensation to inspire and motivate employees to work in the desired manner. It enhances understanding of job motivation and its connection to job satisfaction through rewards, recognition, and promotion, enabling employers to maintain employee motivation and value. The study enhances understanding of motivation and satisfaction theories in the manufacturing industry, linking learning behaviors with motivation in work design and providing valuable insights for employers and policymakers [22]. Organizations in health, education, military, and law enforcement face the challenge of continuously improving their efficacy. In the organizational context, the relationship between multiple rewards and recognition and employee motivation filled the gaps [24]. This research aims to bridge academic gaps and enhance management's understanding of strategies for motivating manufacturing employees in Penang through salary, rewards, and promotion.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Employee Motivation among Employees in the Manufacturing Company

Motivation is crucial for fostering and enhancing the performance of all stakeholders in their respective roles. Baljoon *et al.*, [5] suggest that organizational stimulants, such as work behavior stimulators, can effectively channel worker effort toward achieving organizational goals. In today's business environment, enhancing motivation, commitment, and engagement are crucial organizational factors. Employee performance is heavily influenced by motivation, which drives them to consistently show up, work hard, be adaptable, and be eager to complete important tasks. The motivation and drive of human resources influence the effectiveness and quality of manufacturing systems. Low motivation and job satisfaction have a negative impact on job performance and product quality in the manufacturing industry. Hur *et al.*, [15] emphasizes the importance of continuous employee motivation for achieving high organizational growth. Salary is a crucial factor in employee motivation, job performance, and productivity, as it reflects their contribution to the company, their families, and society [33]. Continual feedback, including acknowledgment, constructive criticism, and positive feedback, significantly enhances employee motivation and development, leading to improved performance and increased engagement [21].

2.2 Global Perspectives on Employees Motivation

The global economy's knowledge-based growth has led to the importance of recruiting and retaining high-quality employees, with motivation and work satisfaction being key factors determining retention [10]. Germany's manufacturing sector thrives due to worker cooperation, expertise sharing, adaptability, and order-follower behavior, as well as high pay and numerous perks. UAE employees, despite financial incentives, prefer stimulating work environments over stressful ones, resulting in low job satisfaction [32]. Construction workers in China are dissatisfied with their jobs due to low pay, hazardous conditions, long hours, and poor safety records, resulting in subpar performance and low organizational efficiency [17,31].

2.3 Malaysian Perspective on Employee Motivation

Malaysian organizations face job satisfaction and performance reduction due to work pressure, lack of motivation, low pay, and inadequate leadership [17]. Motivation in the workforce leads to increased job satisfaction, passion, and efficiency, as per [6]. Motivation drives workforce efficiency and aligns with organizational standards, values, commitments, and goals, significantly impacting business performance [26]. Younger workers are more productive when offered more opportunities for growth and advancement, as they are constantly seeking such opportunities at work [14]. Motivation is a crucial factor that significantly influences human behavior and performance, as highlighted by Pinto *et al.*, [28]. Malaysia's high employee turnover rate is attributed to job dissatisfaction, family distractions, work pressure, stress, underappreciated effort, lack of direction, and inadequate pay [18].

2.4 Relationship between Motivation, Salary, Promotion and Recognition

Salary plays a crucial role in enhancing employee performance and boosting organizational productivity. Businesses use compensation, promotions, bonuses, and other rewards to boost employee performance, with praise, realistic goals, engagement, empowerment, responsibility, feedback, work equipment, positive supervisory traits, and relevant information being key motivation factors [19]. The primary reward method used is an increase in earnings and wages, which is a financial aspect of incentive [24]. Employees require a competitive wage package, along with additional perks like bonuses, allowances, and medical expense coverage. Rewarding a work environment fosters employee retention and motivates them to put in more effort [16]. Job promotion is a strategy to motivate staff through rewards and prizes, involving internal and external organizational relations such as emotions, thoughts, and memories [13]. To ensure employee satisfaction and motivation, companies should develop effective incentive plans that include elements such as compliments, opportunities, empowerment, and recognition [16].

2.5 Discussion of Gaps

Numerous studies have been conducted on employee motivation, its retention, and the factors that influence their work incentive. The focus has been on various countries and industries, including manufacturing, medical, and government sectors. Pham *et al.*, [27] notes that there is a lack of research specifically focusing on highly motivated employees. No theoretical justifications exist to support the link between personal integrity and employee engagement. The study lacks both

theoretical arguments and empirical tests to explore the impact of personal character on employee engagement.

2.6 Analytical Framework

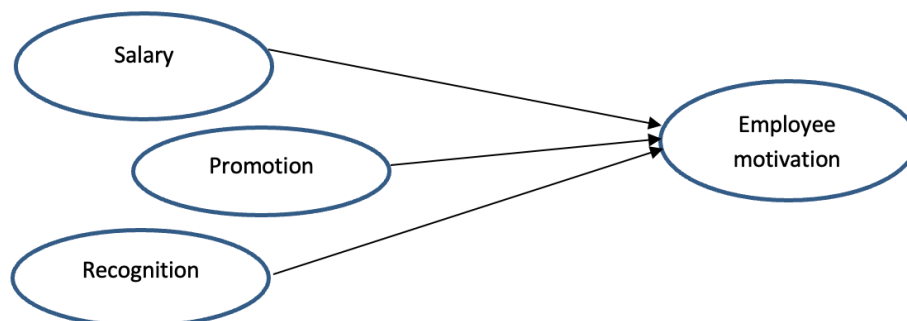


Fig. 1. Conceptualize of influencing factors of employee motivation in Penang manufacturing company

The conceptual framework for this study highlights the significant impact of salary, promotion, and recognition on employee work motivation. Job satisfaction is a crucial factor affecting quality, productivity, and customer satisfaction, as happy employees are highly motivated, have positive attitudes, and operate effectively. Leaders must understand individual needs to motivate them effectively, focusing on higher-level motivators like self-fulfilment and addressing lower-order wants like safety and physiological demands according to Maslow's hierarchy. McClelland [23] conducted a study on three needs: power, affiliation, and achievement. The expectancy theory, first proposed by Victor H. Vroom, proposes that an individual's strongest proclivity to act is influenced by their strong expectation of the desired outcome. According to Frederick Herzberg's two-factor theory, management quality, pay, corporate policies, physical working conditions, and job security all have an impact on job dissatisfaction. Internal motivation, including promotion, personal development, recognition, responsibility, and success, can be beneficial or harmful, with goal-setting theory suggesting that defined, challenging goals can enhance performance. The reinforcement theory of motivation suggests individuals care about the functionality of their behaviour, expect effective consequences, and react to workplace inequality. The Herzberg hypothesis suggests that a neutral work environment can be achieved by eliminating dissatisfying aspects, boosting motivation, and improving hygiene. Maslow's 1943 hierarchical needs theory, which included five levels of requirements, was challenged by Alderfer's ERG theory in 1972 [2]. Motivation theories, studied for decades, help understand motivators and can be integrated into company human resource practices to maximize staff performance [1].

3. Methodology

The research primarily concentrates on a descriptive correlation study. The study employs a quantitative method based on descriptive analysis to accurately define and explain employee motivation within a manufacturing company in Penang. The study was conducted in a non-contrived study setting and cross-sectional time horizon, a natural environment with minimal researcher involvement. The study, using a correlation design, utilizes quantitative research to analyze employee motivation in a Malaysian manufacturing company, providing valuable insights into key factors influencing motivation. This study examines employee motivation among manufacturing employees in Penang, focusing on employees as the study's unit of analysis. The PLS-SEM software was chosen

due to its ability to measure constructs indirectly through indicators, analyze indicator variables and latent variables simultaneously, and account for measurement errors. The study targets Penang's manufacturing sector employees, with 2,274,146 employed in January 2022, a 2.2% increase from the previous year. This study utilized non-probability convenience sampling, a cost-effective and quick method commonly used in descriptive studies for collecting large amounts of data quickly. [9] suggests that R2 values for latent variables are strong in behavioral sciences. This investigation uses a minimal R2 value of 0.10, distributing 136 questionnaires to industry workers while the minimum sample size is 124, resulting in a 91.2% response rate. The study utilized a self-administered questionnaire utilizing the 5 point-Likert scale. The questionnaire, divided into four sections, includes demographic profiles of respondents based on age, gender, working experience, and job position level. This study uses a reflective measurement approach to gauge employee motivation, using questionnaire statements like "I feel motivated coming to work every day." and "I feel inspired to do my best at work every day" are examples of statements that are used to gauge employee motivation.

3.1 Data Analysis and Interpretation

In Table 1, the study analyzed 124 valid data, with the respondents comprised of 75 or 60.5% females and 49 or 39.5% males. Most of the respondents are aged between 31-40 years old, around 61 of them, followed by 36 respondents in the age group between 21-30 years old. 15 respondents are between the age groups of 41-50, 9 respondents are 51 and above and the remaining 3 respondents are 20 years and below. For working experience, the highest respondents have worked for more than 10 years 49 respondents, followed by 5-10 years with 34 respondents, 2 years and below 22 respondents and 3-5 years is 19 respondents. There are 84 executives and 39 non-executives that has responded to this questionnaire as well.

Table 1
Profile respondents

	Total items (n)	Percentage (%)
Gender		
Male	75	60.5
Female	49	39.5
Age		
20 and below	3	2.4
21-30 years old	36	29.0
31-40 years old	61	49.2
41-50 years old	15	12.1
51 and above	9	7.3
Working Experience		
2 years and below	22	17.7
3- 5 years	19	15.3
5- 10 years	34	27.4
More than 10 years	49	39.5
Job Position Level		
Executive	84	67.7
Non-Executive	39	31.5

3.2 Reliability Test

Table 2 shows internal consistency reliability is a measure of the closeness of indicators indicating the same construct to one another. Hair *et al.*, [12] found that reliability ratings between 0.60 and 0.70 are acceptable for exploratory research, while values between 0.70 and 0.90 range from satisfactory to good. The study's statistical data indicates Cronbach's alpha values between 0.864 and 0.930 and composite reliability values between 0.901 and 0.946. The constructs' reliability was confirmed as the results exceeded the threshold value of 0.70. The acceptable AVE is 0.50, indicating that the construct explains 50% or more of the variance in the indicators. The current study's constructs all exceed the minimum requirement of 0.50 for AVE value.

Table 2
Construct reliability analysis

Construct	Measurement Item	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variance Extracted
Employee motivation	EM1: I feel motivated coming to work every day. EM2: My level of motivation affects my performance EM3: My immediate line managers are adequately motivating me to perform EM4: I feel inspired to do my best at work everyday EM5: My job is challenging and exciting	0.864	0.901	0.648
Promotion	P1: My company offer's adequate opportunities for promotions and career development P2: I enjoy working in my company's culture P3: I feel encouraged by my supervisor P4: I am satisfied with my chances for promotion P5: The management of this organization is supportive of me	0.927	0.945	0.776
Recognition	R1: I feel adequately evaluated and praised for my work R2: A superior has shown sincere interest in my career goals R3: The recognition I receive from my direct manager motivates me to do my best R4: My direct manager entrusts me with a high level of responsibility R5: I feel that my work is seen and appreciated within my organization	0.930	0.946	0.780
Salary	S1: I am satisfied with my remuneration package S2: My organization provides rewards according to employee's performance S3: I am fairly compensated by my company S4: My organization gives importance for employee's welfare and social security S5: I am satisfied with the present benefits that my organization offer above my salary	0.927	0.946	0.777

3.3 Outer Loading Analysis

Table 3 display the reflective measurement models use outer loadings, estimated relationships, to determine an item's absolute contribution to the construct to which it is assigned. Outer loadings of 0.7 or higher are highly satisfactory, with a loading greater than 0.5 acceptable, and factors with less than 0.5 should be dropped. Table 3 shows all outer loadings are above the 0.70 threshold, indicating adequate indicator dependability, with EM2 having an acceptable loading of 0.592. The indicator P4 has the highest loading of 0.922, while EM2 has the lowest loading of 0.592.

Table 3
Outer loading of the construct

	Employee Motivation (DV)	Promotion (IV)	Recognition (IV)	Salary (IV)
EM1	0.857			
EM2	0.592			
EM3	0.880			
EM4	0.859			
EM5	0.803			
P1		0.882		
P2		0.805		
P3		0.884		
P4		0.922		
P5		0.907		
R1			0.890	
R2			0.900	
R3			0.916	
R4			0.796	
R5			0.908	
S1				0.889
S2				0.852
S3				0.898
S4				0.869
S5				0.899

3.4 Structural Model Path Coefficients

The structural model indicates that promotion positively affects employee motivation but has an insignificant impact ($\beta = 0.195$, $t = 1.418$, $p = 0.156$) in Table 4. Therefore, H1 is not supported. The study found that employee motivation positively and significantly impacts recognition ($\beta = 0.195$, $t = 4.584$, $p = 0.000$), supporting the hypothesis (H2). The study indicates that salary positively impacts employee motivation ($\beta = 0.205$, $t = 2.237$, $p = 0.025$), supporting the hypothesis (H3). The PLS regression model, with an R2 value of 0.665, can explain 66.5% of employee motivation variance across various research domains, with R2 values of 0.75, 0.50, and 0.25 respectively. F-Square refers

to the alteration in R-Square that occurs due to the removal of an exogenous variable from the model. The effect size is represented by f-square (≥ 0.02 is small, ≥ 0.15 is medium, and ≥ 0.35 is large). The PLS algorithm results indicate that the R Square value remains unchanged when either salary or promotion variable is removed from the model. The recognition variable significantly influenced the R Square value, resulting in a value of 0.193.

Table 4
Path coefficients

	Hypothesis	R square	f Square	Path Coefficients	Standard Deviation	T Statistics	p value
H1	Promotion -> Employee Motivation		0.018 (small)	0.195	0.135	1.418	0.156
H2	Recognition -> Employee Motivation	0.665	0.193 (medium)	0.479	0.105	4.584	0.000
H3	Salary -> Employee Motivation		0.039 (small)	0.205	0.092	2.237	0.025

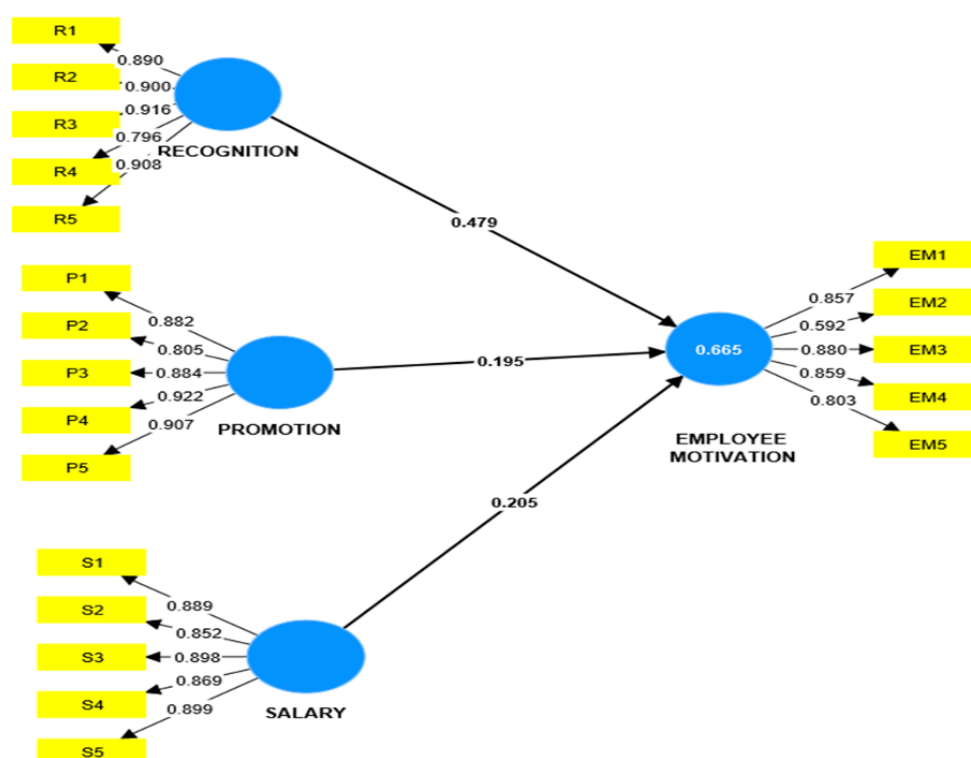


Fig. 2. The structural model – path coefficients

4. Results

3.1 Findings of the Hypotheses Tested

The results were derived from tests conducted using the statistical program SMART PLS. The study investigates the impact of salary, promotion, and recognition on employee motivation as

independent or exogenous variables. The study, conducted among employees in Penang's manufacturing industry, revealed the following statistical output, which was thoroughly analyzed in accordance with the hypothesis. The summary of findings in Table 5 is provided per the text.

Table 5
Summary of the hypotheses tested

Path	Hypothesis	T Statistics	P value	Decision
H1	A positive correlation between salary and motivation among manufacturing employees in Penang.	2.237	0.025	Accepted
H2	A positive correlation between promotion and motivation among manufacturing employees in Penang.	1.418	0.156	Rejected
H3	A positive correlation between recognition and motivation manufacturing employees in Penang.	4.584	0.000	Accepted

Hypothesis 1 display a positive correlation between salary and motivation among manufacturing employees in Penang. The study focuses on salary, with a positive value of $\beta = 0.205$ and a p-value of <0.01 . The T statistics value is 2.237, exceeding the 1.96 threshold, and the p value is 0.025, below the 0.05 threshold. Hypothesis 1 is accepted, indicating a positive correlation between salary and motivation among manufacturing employees in Penang. The study revealed that Penang's manufacturing employees found the organization's rewards and salaries to be highly enjoyable, thereby boosting their work motivation. Maslow's hierarchy of needs outlines the essential conditions for a typical working environment, with satisfaction of basic needs leading to increased needs for personal objectives and career advancement. Effective incentive schemes in businesses boost employee motivation, encouraging them to work more and fulfil the organization's vision and mission. Asaari *et al.*, [3] and Noor *et al.*, [25] found that salary and compensation significantly impact employee satisfaction and motivation.

H1: A positive relationship between salary and motivation among manufacturing employees

The structural model path analysis rejected hypothesis 2, as the p value was over the 0.05 threshold, indicating insignificant relationship between promotion and employee motivation. The study found that H2 is statistically insignificant, with a T statistics value of 1.418, which is below the critical value of 1.96 for a two-tailed test. The rejected hypothesis 1 suggests a positive relationship between promotion and employee motivation, but the path coefficient of 0.195 suggests otherwise. The study shows that a promotion with a 1 unit increase in promotion leads to a 0.195 increase in employee motivation. The results indicate a weak correlation between promotion and employee motivation ($r = 0.195$; $p = 0.156$), as shown in Table 5 and Figure 2. The study's results align with previous research [3], indicating no correlation between promotion and employee motivation. Job promotion is primarily based on employee qualifications and seniority, aiming to increase the workforce with better jobs, increased duties, facilities, accomplishments, competency requirements, higher salaries, and other advantages.

H2: An insignificant relationship between promotion and motivation among manufacturing employees

The study accepts the recognition hypothesis with a high positive correlation of $\beta = 0.479$ and $p < 0.01$. The p value is less than 0.05, but the T statistics value is significantly higher than the threshold of 1.96. The study confirms Hypothesis 3, indicating a positive correlation between employee

motivation and recognition among Penang's manufacturing workers. Employee recognition significantly influences their performance and the success and positioning of the firm. Employee recognition is a crucial management strategy that enhances individual performance, increases responsibility readiness, and fosters moral behaviour, fostering a healthy work environment. These practices may also influence employee behaviour and performance. Staff are commended for attending meetings and putting in their best efforts to complete work, even during challenging times [27]. Mishra *et al.*, [24] suggest that simple awards like employee of the month, week, or year can be used to recognize employees.

H3: A positive relationship between recognition and motivation manufacturing employees

4. Limitation and Recommendation

This study has certain limitations to be recommended in the future study. Firstly, the 124 responses gathered meet Cohen's minimal sample size recommendations for PLS-SEM, despite the limited maximum number. The study suggests that future research should involve a more diverse sample from various industries and regions to improve the generalizability of the findings. To ensure the impact of localized sample data is balanced, it may be beneficial to increase the sample size. Secondly, this study focuses on salary, promotion, recognition and employee motivation in the Penang manufacturing industry, but could expand to other Malaysian states and explore hygiene factors (workplace culture, job security, and work-life balance) and superior relationships. Future research could explore alternative data collection methods, such as focus groups or in-person interviews (qualitative method or mixed method approach), to better understand employee motivation. This hybrid approach, combining questionnaires, interviews, and social media monitoring, provides a comprehensive understanding of the analysis's components and may even create a visually appealing presentation. In terms of statistical analysis, the study utilized SMART PLS3 for analysis, but future research should utilize SPSS, SMART PLS4, SAS, NVIVO, and AMOS for more advanced econometric techniques and software for improved results.

5. Conclusions

The proposed theoretical framework and research hypotheses should be tested due to the literature review's reliance on previous research. The research objective 1 and 3 are confirmed because organizations must enhance worker performance by implementing systematic rules and processes, enhancing employee motivation and satisfaction through an effective incentive system. Employers can enhance employee performance by providing competitive compensation, incentives, promotions, and job security. These elements are essential for enhancing employee job performance and motivation. The work environment significantly influences the talent levels, job satisfaction, and performance of employees. A positive work environment fosters job satisfaction by providing feedback, learning opportunities, and a supportive environment for rewards and recognition. Employee appreciation can involve recognition in the corporate newsletter, letters of recommendation, increased time off, and vocal thanks. Organizations reward employees with prizes without monetary value, demonstrating concern and value, and assuming respect among workers to maintain high motivation and self-esteem. Therefore, research objective 2 is not confirmed due to less promotion and motivation toward employees. The rejected hypothesis 2 and research objective 2 suggests that manufacturing companies can explore not only seniority-based promotions but also recognizing and promoting new talents. Promotion significantly impacts an employee's motivation,

as it influences their life and career, encouraging them to work harder and successfully to develop their skills. In this case, effective treatment, proper remuneration, and recognition of employees lead to improved work motivation and performance. Employees should stay updated on latest technologies and industry news to promote development and growth in their jobs, thereby qualifying for a better remuneration package.

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