

UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND



Investigating the role of Performance Incentives in driving Performance in a Faculty from  
a Comprehensive University in KwaZulu-Natal

By

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## ABSTRACT

Rewarding employees for meeting the organisation targets is crucial in order to motivate staff members to improve their performance. This is supported by Landry, Schweyer, Whillans (2017) that rewards such as monetary and non - monetary rewards are omnipresent and essential in today's workforce. The aim of the study was to investigate if the incentive plans and recognition plans given to the employees at the University drive performance. This study intends to recommend practical incentive and recognition plans that can be used to drive performance. The study followed a qualitative approach where data was collected through interviews. An investigation was conducted with Academics in the Faculty of Commerce, Law and Administration on the role of Performance Incentives in driving Performance at a Faculty from a Comprehensive University in KwaZulu-Natal. The collected data was analysed using NVIVO. The overall findings of the study showed a strong link between performance incentives and employees' performance. It was found that financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses influenced the employees to work harder to meet the performance targets. Moreover, the study revealed that the possibility of promotion has made staff in the University to work harder because it leads to an increase in salary.

## DECLARATION

I Vincent Lindisipho Mbukwana, hereby confirm that I have taken the time to read the University's policy and procedures governing postgraduate research, and I declare that I have complied with the requirements of the policy to the best of my ability and understanding. I certify that this dissertation is the result of my own work and effort, which was overseen by my supervisor. To the best of my knowledge and belief, I have acknowledged all sources used in the dissertation.

I also confirm that the dissertation is original and that the documents that will be submitted for examination have not been submitted in any University before for same or similar degree.

I also ran this paper through the university's text-matching and similarity-checking methods, and I believe it is free of plagiarism.

Signature

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'VL Mbukwana', enclosed within a hand-drawn oval shape.

---

VL Mbukwana

Date 01 March 2022

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## DEDICATION

This dissertation is dedicated to my mother, Nondumiso Mbukwana. A special dedication to my late uncle Thanduxolo Mbukwana, my late grandmother Thozama Mbukwana and lastly my late daughter, Yamihle Nzaliseko Mbukwana who passed away just a month after she was born. Both my late grandmother and uncle always supported me and wanted me to achieve more.

## ACRONYMS AND ABBREVIATIONS

HRM: Human Resources Management

HEIs: Higher Education Institutions

HR: Human Resources

SPSS: Statistical Package for Social Sciences

UNIZULU: University of Zululand

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## CHAPTER ONE: OVERVIEW OF THE STUDY

### 1.1 Introduction

The business climate in both the service and manufacturing industries has become variable and stylish to meet the needs of customers. Therefore, life to a wider extent relies on employees' motivation and dedication, considering employees' strategic position in the interaction among organizations and consumers (Vem, Pearce and Goyit, 2017).

Today's companies are functioning in a very diverse and highly competitive environment. Therefore, to remain competitive, they need to adapt to the ever-changing consumer demands. Compensation management is one of the human resources management (HRM) practices companies employ to recruit and maintain exceptional workers and to improve their performance (Njanja, Maina, Kibet and Njagi, 2013).

This chapter provides a summary of the study by explaining its reasoning, the gap it seeks to address, its aim, purpose and objectives. It concludes with a summary of issues discussed that form the basis of the investigation.

### 1.2 Background of the study

Rewarding employees in order to meet the targets of organisations is crucial. As alluded by Njanja, Kibet and Njagi (2013), reward management is one of the techniques employed by human resource executives or practitioners to attract and retain highly skilled workers, as well as to enhance their success through encouragement and compliance with work laws and regulations. Given this perspective, it is imperative to investigate the perception of employees on the role of remuneration in driving performance.

It is argued by Landry, Schweyer and Whillans (2017) that monetary and non-monetary rewards are omnipresent and essential in today's workforce. The authors go on to say that if incentives are chosen and delivered in a meaningful way and are structured to express respect and gratitude, incentives are not adequate to inspire workers who are

constantly seeking flexibility, mastery and connection at work. Therefore, knowing how to better inspire workers in today's competitive business environment requires initiatives that go beyond cash and cash-like incentives. Organizations would benefit from shifting towards a well-designed approach (Landry, et al., 2017).

Pay has been described as a key predictor of employee performance. Employees who are rewarded well are aware that the company they work for respect and acknowledge their efforts. They are thus often inspired to work harder and more since they understand that their employer takes their job, their well-being and their self-development seriously (Sajuyigbe, Olaoye and Adeyemi, 2013)

Njanja et al. (2013) argue that when employees are paid and rewarded, they get the work done. Most employers want more of the actions that they reward, not what they think the workers would necessarily want. But when workers meet their goal or reach their norm, they are supposed to be compensated as a way of encouraging them. In doing so, workers associate the incentive directly with actions and higher results.

In a study conducted by Salah (2016), findings showed a statistically significant association existed between compensation styles and employee's performance. The findings further showed that if performance levels are to be improved, management should have a strong sense of commitment to the problem of rewarding employees (Salah, 2016).

### 1.3 Problem statement

Extra efforts for good performance need to be rewarded monetarily. (Seyama and Smith, 2015). Thus, companies frequently utilise financial and non-financial rewards to have the best out of its staff. Inability to properly recognize the efficiency of these rewards, on the other hand, frequently leads to negative consequences for organisations, namely the loss of good personnel or a fall behind rivals. Every incentive plan offered by the University should seek to improve performance and the size of performance incentive is crucial in differentiating the top performer to the non-performer.

Performance-based incentives have not had the expected impact in higher education institutions (HEIs).—However, studies on how payment of performance bonus at the University of Zululand (UNIZULU) are scarce. This study investigates if the current performance bonus system at the UNIZULU drives performance and if the size of the performance bonus matters to employees.

#### 1.4 Aim of the study

The aim of this study is to investigate if incentive plans and recognition plans given to employees at the UNIZULU drive performance.

#### 1.5 Research questions

1. What is the impact of performance incentives offered at the University on employee performance?
2. What is the effect of recognition plans offered at the University on employee performance?
3. What can be recommended in order to ensure that the incentive system is best attuned to motivate employees?
4. What can be recommended in order to ensure that the recognition plans are best attuned in order to motivate employees?

#### 1.6 Research objectives

1. To examine the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance at the University.
2. To analyse the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance at the University.
3. To identify appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at the University.
4. To identify appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at the University.

## 1.7 Significance of the study

There is one similar study that was conducted by Lim and Chong (2014) however, it was conducted in a different location and the study participants were both support and academic staff. . It is envisaged that this study will provide a clear indication of the role played by performance incentives in driving performance. Further, the findings of this study will contribute to the broader understanding of the drivers of performance improvement. It will assist human resource executives at the UNIZULU to develop incentive plans that seek to drive performance.

## 1.8 Scope and limitations of the study

This study focused on staff at the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law at the University of Zululand, which is situated in the KwaZulu-Natal Province. Sampled participants were deputy deans, head of departments and academics. These categories of staff represent the population of the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law at the University.

This study made use of a purposive sampling technique and, in this case, some key informants were not willing to participate in the study. The research was conducted only in one out of the 26 HEIs in South Africa. The major limitation in this study is that Professors and Associate Professors within the Faculty also serve as the deputy deans and heads of departments, which resulted to a limit in terms of the number of participants at those two levels.

## 1.9 Structure of the dissertation

1.9.1 Chapter 1: Provides an introduction, brief background and significance of the proposed research topic. It will further draw attention to the aim of the study, objectives and the questions which need to be researched for the successful completion of this research.

1.9.2 Chapter 2: Give detailed literature review of the study that contains the performance reward, performance management, job satisfaction and motivation.

1.9.3 Chapter 3: Will focus on mainly the description of the research methodology namely: the research design, the population of the study, the type of research methods, the data collection and data analysis.

1.9.4 Chapter 4: Describes the research findings from the population acquired, which will be presented as well as to interpret the research data with reference to the research questions.

1.9.5 Chapter 5: The last chapter provided conclusion and recommendations to the study. The findings will be interpreted and compared to that of the literature in the literature review in order for a conclusion to be drawn.

## 1.10 Conclusion

This chapter provided a summary of the study's contents as well as a brief explanation of how the study proceeded during this research. The chapter further provided an outline of the research by presenting the research topic, aims, objectives, planned contribution, and ethical consideration. The next chapter discusses literature in relation to the research Objectives and the research questions.

## CHAPTER TWO: LITERATURE REVIEW

### 2.1 Introduction

Literature review is principally studying the existing scholarly work that may assist the researcher to see how far other scholars have explored the research problem. This section provides the scientific literature relevant to the objectives of the study. It anticipates identifying gaps, critique and align existing literature to the aim, objectives, and research question of the study. Each objective of this study will be addressed through interpreting and presenting the literature.

The previous chapter dealt with this study's background information. This chapter reviews the empirical literature relevant to the objectives of the study. It anticipates identifying gaps, critique and align existing literature to the aim, objectives, and research question of the study. This chapter examines the literature on the role of performance incentives in driving performance. Each objective of this study will be addressed through interpreting and presenting the literature. The focus will be on literature that relates to research problem will be done under headings and sub-headings which include performance-based pay, impact of rewards and recognition, job satisfaction, motivation and employee engagement.

Companies employ different types of incentives to inspire their employees to accomplish targeted performance in order to meet corporate goals. Internal and external incentives, monetary and non-monetary incentives, performance-based rewards, and member-based recognitions are examples of these sorts of rewards (Okeke, Ugwu, Nebeife and Nginge, 2020).

Methods for rewarding and recognizing employees are critical elements of human resource strategy. The monetary and psychological rewards offered to a worker for doing well at work are referred to as rewards (Madhani, 2020).

## 2.2 Performance-based pay

Today's companies work in an extremely competitive as well as diverse environment. To remain competitive in the market, it is imperative that they are positioned to respond quickly to the ever-changing demands of customers. Compensation management is among the methods used by companies to attract and to retain competent staff, and thus to facilitate their improvement in performance.

A study conducted by Seng and Arumugam (2017) revealed that monetary incentive and job motivation are essential qualities for improving employee performance. Financial rewards and job satisfaction are also seen to be crucial not only for improving employees' performance, but also for companies to improve efficiency and get more inspired to work.

Seyama and Smith (2015) found that monetary incentives are an indication of a company's gratitude for the contributions of its employees. Furthermore, given the opinion that academics are usually underpaid, they feel that monetary incentives might encourage employees..

The findings of the research conducted by Al-Belushi and Khan (2017), suggest that monetary incentives have a direct influence on employee motivation. An appealing financial incentive would increase the motivation of the majority of workers to work hard. As a result, it may be assumed that employees prefer and anticipate financial rewards.

According to Aguinis (2013) performance-based pay means that individuals, teams or organisations are rewarded based on how well they perform on the job. Therefore, employees receive rises in pay based exclusively or partly on job functioning. These increases can either be added to an employee's base salary or be once off bonuses. Initially, in many organisations within South Africa, contingent pay plans were used only for top management (Armstrong 2012).

Personal skill will not allow individuals to function at a high level of efficiency until there is a reward system set up that encourages internal rewards and thus pushes individuals to work extremely hard (Chandrawaty and Widodo, 2020).

Aguinis (2013) further points out that when a “performance management system has a direct relationship with a reward system, performance measurement and performance improvement are taken more seriously”.

Seyama and Smith (2015) state that Workers are sceptical of the Performance Management System because they see it as a company approach that is incompatible only with nature and aims of HEIs. The authors believe that the incentive method not only has a limited impact on driving excellent performance behaviour, but it is also a source of dissatisfaction owing to implementation errors, vague award criteria, a lack of openness regarding ratings, and the reward's small monetary worth.

According to Khan and Baloch (2017), employees operate inside a company who deserve something for every effort in exchange from the company. To meet the expectations of employee’s organisation, a pre-defined pay structure is developed, which workers know before receiving their reward.

Most companies compete to thrive in this unpredictable and ferocious business climate. Motivation and efficiency of workers are important resources for the survival of any company in the long term. On the one hand, success evaluation is important to the administration of the company, as it demonstrates the evolution and accomplishment of the enterprise. On the other hand, there is a favourable association between employee morale and operational performance (Dobre, 2013).

A bonus is a compensation that is made in the past and is typically voluntary or not anticipated from the worker (s). It is agreed to pay it to one, a team, or all staff, based on criteria determined by leadership to incentivise previous accomplishments, including achieving the target profit or some key tasks for the institution, or in a completely voluntary

fashion, but outlined a rewards as a forward-looking plan. The incentive scheme is not voluntary: the payment or reward is provided if the prior, agreed-upon requirements are achieved (Bardot, 2014).

Njanja et al. (2013) mention that staff should be informed of the link between their performance and the incentives they earn. Organisations should adopt a performance management system that aid in employee performance planning and monitoring via the use of appropriate measurement instruments.

The table below provides an insight in terms of the advantages and disadvantages of cash rewards: Table 2.1. Cash rewards: Major advantages and disadvantages

**TABLE 2** Cash Rewards: Major Advantages and Disadvantages

	<u>Advantages</u>	<u>Disadvantages</u>
1	Cash rewards are relatively easy to design and implement.	Cash rewards are momentary and generally do not make an emotional connection. Therefore, they do not automatically translate to improved work performance.
2	Cash rewards are perfectly fungible (i.e., flexible) and easily spent on necessities.	Cash rewards enhance the risk of suppression of intrinsic motivation (also referred to as motivation crowding effect).
3	Cash rewards are used for utilitarian purposes and usually better suited for work that is measured quantitatively.	Cash rewards can cause “reward inflation” as employees become habituated to frequent cash rewards, meaning they can lose some of their motivational power.
4	Cash rewards meet a variety of basic as well as higher-level needs of employees.	Cash rewards are “slippery.” That is, they slip out of the recipient’s mind, as discussing one’s cash reward remains awkward.
5	Cash rewards are most preferred by low-income employees and those facing financial hardship.	Cash rewards are unmemorable and unemotional transactions as they are perceived as part of one’s salary.
6	Cash rewards are often viewed by employees as “more salary” (mental accounting theory).	Cash rewards become an expected entitlement and are difficult to change or terminate.
7	Cash rewards are universally motivating as they include any financial reward with cash or cash equivalents.	Cash rewards have diminishing marginal utility. Even high amounts of cash incentives sometimes fail to motivate as employees can suffer declined performance because of fear of failure.
8	Cash rewards can lead to quality of jobs when linked with training and development (T&D) activities.	Cash rewards in isolation do not always lead to desirable outcomes (i.e., job enrichment).

Source: Madhani (2020)

### 2.2.1. Performance-related pay drivers

As explained by Armstrong (2012), a performance-related pay driver refers to a payment decision to adjust remuneration that is based on individual, group, corporate performance or the combination thereof. Lazear (2001) notes that performance-related pay is a method of compensation in which employees are being paid according to their performance (see also; Chamberlin, Wragg, Haynes and Wragg 2002; Marsden and Belfield, 2006; Ingvarson, Kleinhenz and Wilkinson 2007). Performance-related pay drivers are a part of a recompense system that is based on bonuses and incentive compensation for high-class performance.

Performance-related pay is defined to be schemes use as performance and/or competence criteria for deciding the size of increments and therefore, also the rate of progress through a salary band (Irs and Türk, 2012).

#### 2.2.1.1. Merit payments

Merit pay is described as “the fixed payment to individuals or an increase in the employee remuneration based on the outcome of an annual evaluation of employee performance, competency or contribution” (Perkins and White, 2008: 164; Armstrong, 2012: 262; and Martocchio, 2013: 57). The development of a merit pay is established on motivational theories that incorporate the anticipation theory as well, including goal setting theory, agency and equity theories.

The above-mentioned definitions are in support of the fact that the accomplishment or successes of an organisational target outcomes should automatically lead to the payment agreed upon and meaningful rewards. Martocchio (2013) is of the view that employees earn permanent merit increases based on their performance, that is merit pay increases, therefore, are intended to reward excellent effort by employees and/or may motivate future performance and assure employers of retaining talented employees.

### 2.2.1.2. The Competency-related payment

The concept of competency-related payment rewards individuals exclusively or partly in line with the level of competency which they display in carrying out their individual assigned roles. It is seen to be a method of compensating people for their ability to perform certain duty (Armstrong, 2012). Competency in this regard is refers to a fundamental characteristic of a person that results in effective or superior performance (Armstrong, 2012).

Competencies may therefore comprise behavioural competencies which embraces personal characteristics which individuals naturally bring to their work duties whereas technical competencies are associated to the knowledge and skills of people to carry out their roles efficiently.

### 2.2.1.3. Seniority and longevity pay

The term 'seniority and longevity' is observed to be a "pay systems reward employees with periodic additions to base pay according to employee's length of services in performing their jobs" (Martocchio, 2013: 53). Adding to the description by Martocchio, the seniority and longevity pay plans are established on the theory that employees develop and become even more valuable to the organizations over a period of time and the valued employees will exit the organization if they do not have a strong awareness that their salaries will increase over time.

The assumption is that over time, employees presumably refine existing skills or acquire new ones that enable them to work more productively (Martocchio, 2013). Furthermore, the term 'seniority pay' actually rewards employees for developing and refining their abilities or skills as indexed by superiority. Armstrong (2012) points out that service-related pay is supported by both the public and private sector because they are perceived as being fair in nature. Armstrong further maintains that connecting salary to the time spent in the job rather than on the performance or competency avoids the "partial and ill-

informed judgements” on people that managers are disposed to make. In essence, the linking of pay and time do not by any means encourage noble performance.

### 2.2.2. Non-performance-related drivers

Pay drivers is referred to the remuneration resolutions to modify remuneration based on factors that have nothing to do with performance (Kanime, 2011). These comprises of external influences and they are outside the control of the organization and include factors such premium ‘premium rates for certain scarce skills’ considering their shortage or unattainability in the labour market.

#### 2.2.2.1. Market-base pay

Perkins and White (2008: 189), assert that “market-base pay link salary levels to what other organisations pay for similar jobs, and the constant changes in remuneration policies and practices likewise the continuous monitoring inform the organisation to review market base pay”. Wilkinson and Marchington (2008: 462) suggest that salary increases as a result of the need to align it with what is obtainable in the labour market in terms of the best practice.

#### 2.2.2.2. Market-competitive pay

Martocchio (2013) states that a market-competitive pay system represents an organisation’s compensation policy that fits the imperatives of competitive advantage. A market-competitive pay system plays a significant role in attracting and retaining the most talented employees (Martocchio, 2013). In adding to the above, it could be argued that a well-designed pay system can encourage or help an organization to fulfill its competitive strategies.

#### 2.1.2.3. Qualifications-based pay

The definition offered by Perkins and White (2008:182), for qualifications-based pay refers to payment being “payment system in terms of which employees receive increases

in pay for acquiring additional qualifications or being professionally registered with recognized institutions”. Furthermore, the acquisition of further qualifications or professional registration is often rewarded through an extra rise or pay increase.

Longo (2014) states that employers usually offer individuals working for their organizations additional fixed payments in relation to the education and vocational qualifications they have gained. The influence of education and qualifications in relation to pay is not just distinctive of high professional jobs or, more in general, of what is known as white collar professions. According to Kanime (2011), the system is flawed in that it is expensive to introduce and maintain since employees will be getting non-job-related qualifications.

#### 2.2.2.4. Time-based pay

The time-based payment as noted by Perkins and White (2008), it normally rewards an employee for his or her attendance at the workplace. Employees are paid for the actual time they spend at work, usually based on an hourly rate, but paid out weekly, fortnightly or monthly.

#### 2.2.2.5. Temporary incentive scheme

In a study by Aguinis (2013: 11), it is highlighted that a “short-term incentive schemes are designed to drive an organisation’s short to medium term business strategies by rewarding the attainment of budgeted or targeted financial and strategic performance”. In addition to what has been asserted by Arguinis (2013) that short-term incentives are similarly apportioned based on previous performance of the employee, incentives are however a one-time compensation or pay and they are occasionally denoted to be a variable pay. A report from the P-E Corporate Services (2009) argues that a short-term incentive is firm or organization specific but usually paid out in a time frame of one year so as to prevent the performance of short-term from employees. This incentive is paid in the form of bonuses for performance that is the most shared characteristic in most organizations within South Africa. Furthermore, a short-term incentive is predominantly

developed to quantify a fair level of reward for the success accomplished of a specified organization performance target. Bratton and Gold (2007: 18), highlight that “a short-term incentive schemes vary as each organisation can design its scheme based on its own requirements which includes profit sharing bonuses which effectively profit pool-sharing arrangements”.

### 2.2.3. Long-term incentives structure

Long-term incentive systems are intended to drive an organization’s long-term business plans and further encourage entrepreneurial skills. At the same time, a short-term incentives system usually comprises of the attempt to motivate functioning in the short term (quarter or year) by offering financial bonuses or certain prizes, while long-term incentives are arranged to influence future performance over a longer period of time (P-E Corporate Services, 2009). In addition, a leading objective of initiating a long-term incentive arrangement is to support the interest of participant with shareholders concern, incentivize and stimulate participants, thereby attracting and retaining infrequent talents and reward excellent and unceasing long-term functioning of the organisation. Anguinis (2013) states that long-term incentive schemes involve stock ownership or options to buy stocks at a pre-established and profitable price. The justification for having a long-term incentive is to ensure that employees will be directly invested in the success of the organization and the investment is anticipated to transform into a persistent high-performance level.

### 2.3 Impact of rewards and recognition

Employee recognition is the act of expressing gratitude to an employee for their efforts and informing them that their efforts are valued. It is the recognition of an individual or group of individuals or a team's behaviour, effort, and achievement in support of an organization's aims and values. It (employee recognition) acknowledges that incentive is more than just monetary gain and gives the good feedback that employees want. Recognition is an appreciation by management and colleagues; it is the warmth that an employee feels knowing that an accomplishment has been noticed, appreciated, and

celebrated; and it is an accomplishment that is the consequence of additional work. (Shonhiwa, 2017).

As asserted by Sethi (2020), employees should be recognized for their effective performance, substantial accomplishments, and major contributions to the organization. It might be any gesture from the employer that comes at the perfect time. Employees would be motivated to maintain or improve their performance if they received a word of thanks from their bosses. Praise is a positive type of acknowledgment. Praise, on the other hand, should be offered sparingly and in relation to meaningful accomplishments.

Andriotis (2018) states that employee recognition is a process of recognizing key employees for exceptional achievement. Rewarding employees within company fundamentally seeks to encourage certain behaviour, attitudes, or actions that result in improved performance and favourable company outcomes.

Jeni, Mutsuddi, Das and Momotaj (2020) recommend that companies should recognise the unique efforts of employees as well as successes in order to raise their morale and further inspire them to offer their all. If you are liberal with your compliments, you will find that your employees will become more innovative and enthusiastic to work.

Chiekezie, Emejulu and Nwanneka, (2017) argue that workers are the core component of an enterprise and the success or loss of an enterprise rely on the capacity of organizations to recruit, maintain and compensate sufficiently skilled and qualified workers. Companies employ appreciation as one of the most efficacious reward techniques to encourage employees (Orajaka, 2021).

Another essential element of an effective strategic incentive programme is recognition and gratitude. To recognize someone in front of their colleagues for particular behaviour and even achievements, activities taken, or maintaining a positive attitude. In contrast, appreciation focuses on expressing gratitude to a worker for his or her actions. Workers

can use such incentives to assess their performance and evaluate if they are doing well or poorly (Sarvadi, 2010).

Dobre, Davidescu and Issa (2017) state that workers place a high value on non-monetary rewards, implying that monetary rewards alone will not improve motivation, and therefore managers must focus on non-monetary rewards in addition to monetary incentives.

Employees that are intrinsically incentivised operate at a high level of proficiency and seek to advance professionally, and a well-managed non - monetary incentive motivates employees to achieve top performance in the organization. Organizations should properly manage their compensation plan for the purpose of minimising turnover of employees in the company (Okeke et al, 2020).

Rewards and appreciation systems are intended to recognize workers who have excelled in their jobs and to express genuine "thank you" for a particular job well performed. Organizations compensate workers for their good work, which serves to improve morale and inspire staff. Organizations are budgeting a remuneration scheme on the basis of the prior year 's sales and spending. But many of the organisations have been following the same strategy for a certain amount of time as described in their HR policy (Kumari, 2019).

The incentives and appreciation will turn out to be wonderfully beneficial to keep your workers encouraged to work tremendously and meet the goals and to stick to the organization. The importance of employee appreciation cannot be reduced, specifically if they have tons of enticing open doors in front of them (Kumari, 2019).

The incentive scheme is critical for the success of employees. As employee efficiency, a higher incentive scheme would be more efficient. Job success too is function of human resource management. System is crucial for succession and achievement of the objectives of the company (Ibrar and Khan, 2015).

Mecepy (2016) argued that rewards are a vital part of the commitment puzzle. Proper and careful planning, opportunity and award systems can be very successful in delivering

optimum incentives for driving participation. That is, with the right variety and variation of incentives and an efficient mechanism for providing such incentives, workers not only become committed, but also attract and become important evangelists for the organization. Rewards have a great deal of effect on workers, increasing the level of work success and workplace satisfaction.

The compensation and appreciation scheme is one of the essential determinants of the employee's loyalty to the organisation and extent of interest he/she will have in his / her work. The compensation scheme must be well structured to satisfy the needs of workers. It must be implemented in such a manner that workers have clarification as to which field of work should be much more focused on gaining praise and/or compensation (Mecepy, 2016).

Amoatema and Kyeremeh (2016) articulated that most companies are constantly using an acknowledgement of workers to inspire employees to achieve high performance and profitability. Organizations' ability to accomplish their corporate plan and have a sustainable competitive advantage primarily depends on employee results. In encouraging workers to achieve high results, companies often concentrated on financial incentives at the detriment of non-financial rewards such as recognition.

Recognition is an imperative source of employee motivation however, the question of whether all employees should be awarded or only the top performers should be awarded has not yet been addressed adequately. It is also critical to take note that special recognition may possible elevate the performance of top performers even more as they feel recognised and encouraged by the employer. However, this might come at an expense of discouraging and frustrating those who will not be entitled to the incentive. Contrary, those who did not qualify for the performance award may respond positively as they will be motivated to catch up with the top performers while the latter might rest on their successes (Bradler, Dur, Neckermann and Non, 2016).

A study conducted Lim and Chong (2014) reveals that non-monetary incentives have a consistent and long-term influence on the performance of employees. In contrast, Mason and Watts (2009) argue that increased financial incentives increase the quantity, but not the quality, of work performed by participants, where the difference appears to be due to an “anchoring” effect: workers who were paid more also perceived the value of their work to be greater, and thus were no more motivated than workers paid less.

Sajuyigbe, Olaoye and Adeyemi (2013) argue that pay, monetary incentives, recognition, and appreciation are methods that leadership may use to inspire staff to operate successfully and efficiently. Top level management should use both intrinsic and extrinsic incentive to encourage people in order to accomplish both individual and organizational goals. Workers' interactions with one another differ depending on their physical and mental capabilities. As a result, management must identify and meet their various sorts of demands.

Employees require appreciation as well since it is a powerful non-monetary motivation. Many workers are just affected by the knowledge that their employer will always praise their efforts and motivate them when they confront difficulties. Employees also want to be able to share their accomplishments with others and have them recognized and appreciated. When this need is met, it is a terrific motivator. If companies rely solely on monetary incentives to acknowledge effort and accomplishment, it is quite likely that the worker's goal will be to get the salary and nothing else, resulting in a deteriorated organizational culture (Abubakar, Esther and Odudu, 2020).

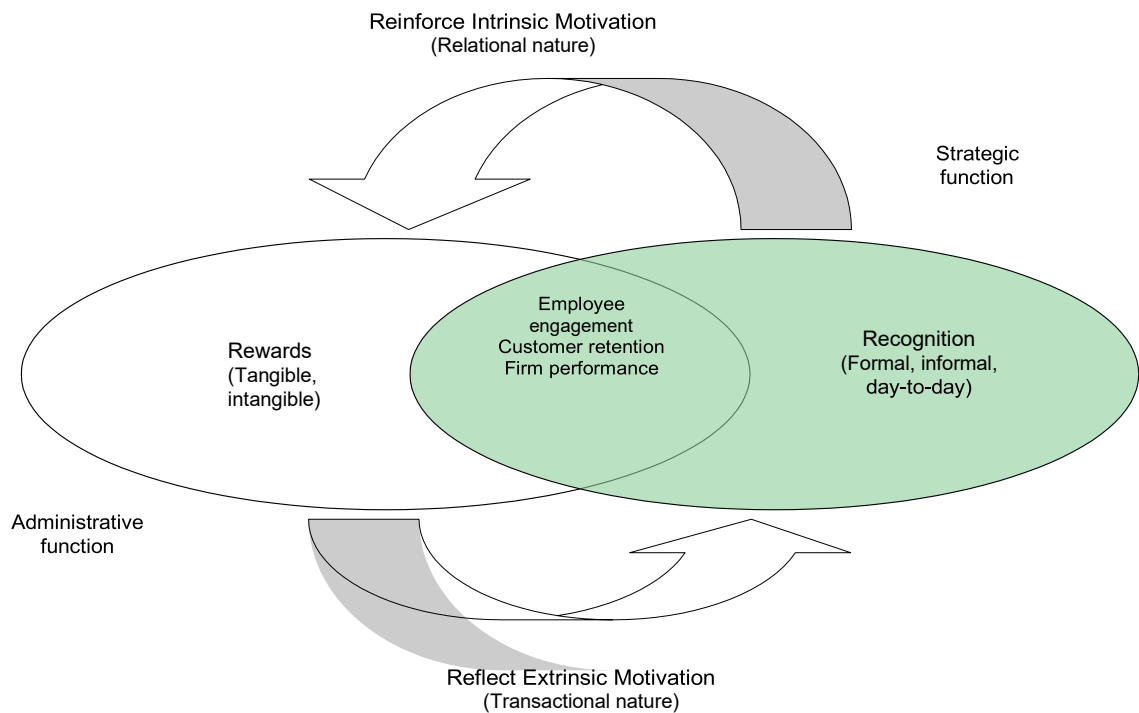
Workers would like to be appreciated by their companies in addition to being rewarded. Staff morale might improve, and employees would be much more motivated if their employers recognized their efforts (Pancasila et al. 2020). A study conducted by Ali and Anwar (2021) reveals that worker success is improved by non- financial rewards because they inspire workers to be more environmentally sensitive. As a result, it is advised that non-reward efforts be utilized in conjunction with incentive actions to improve internal corporate operations in order to assure protection of the environment. A study conducted

by Abdi (2021) reveals that employee appreciation initiatives are essential for keeping talented employees.

Edirisooriya (2014) states that recognition is a potent motivator since it informs employees about how successfully they have met their goals or if their efforts have been recognised. It is a non-monetary award provided to an individual in the workplace. Numerous non-monetary incentives include corporate cars, recognition, training, and career advancement. A worker may indeed be compensated, for example, by being given a better office or a larger budget to manage, or by being given the option of where to accept a job in a firm. Non-monetary incentives may be highly cost efficient for businesses since, unlike pay increases, they need little or no income tax or national insurance contributions.

The figure below illustrates the relationship between Rewards and Recognition and further outlines the intrinsic and extrinsic motivation

Figure 2.1: Complementary Rewards and Recognition Relationship



Source: Madhani (2020)

Employee acknowledgement may include items like their names being written in the company newsletter, letters of commendation, additional time off, and verbal gratitude. Non-monetary prizes are more motivating than monetary ones. Employees would assume that they are respected in this manner. Organizations recognize their workers in order to maintain their self-esteem and motivation (Anwar and Qadir, 2017).

Buwembo, Sebyala and Bwengye (2019) argue that success for any organization is implied in achieving its strategic objective and goal, which is mostly achieved while relying and focusing on motivation level of its employees, and it is non-financial rewards that increase intrinsic motivation within employees yet most organizations have been emphasizing extrinsic rewards such as money, which for one reason or the other don't energize or drives employees for better performance.

Orajaka (2021) argue that rewarding personnel and work fulfilment all point in the same way. Thus is, the more individuals are recognized for high quality performance, the happier they will be with their jobs and, by extension, the business.

Job-related and social benefits are examples of intangible rewards. Any pleasant consequence inherent in the work, such as emotions of pleasure, gains in self-esteem, and comparable results, is considered a job-related incentive. Social rewards are forms of acknowledgment inside a company that include formal recognition at the organizational level, informal acknowledgment at the divisional level, and daily spontaneous recognition (Madhani, 2020).

Non-cash tangible incentives exist in a number of forms and provide a wide range of options including, presents, paid time off, travel rewards, experience incentives, award points, gift vouchers, or economic benefits such as discounts (Madhani, 2020).

Madhani (2020) points out effective recognition methods should include all three forms of recognition: organizational-wide formal acknowledgment, department-specific casual

recognition, and daily unexpected acknowledgement. For the vast majority of workers, daily acknowledgment confirms their caring and appreciative mind-set.

Employee appreciation is becoming increasingly important in developed-country organizations. Workers who are well acknowledged for their accomplishments feel pleased and are eager to put in additional effort. Several large commercial companies in emerging nations are also discovering the value of recognition, and companies are awarding honours such as 'employee of the month' or 'employee of the year' to excellent staff. There are a variety of non-monetary methods for appreciating and rewarding employees for their efforts (Waqas and Saleem, 2014). Table 2.2 shows major advantages and disadvantages of non-cash rewards.

#### 2.4 Job satisfaction

HRM is becoming increasingly essential for modern-day organisations since employees and their expertise are by far the most significant factors influencing an institution's production. Employee happiness is among the most important components of (HRM). Organisations need to ensure that employee happiness is high among their workforce, since this is a prerequisite for enhancing productivity, responsiveness, efficiency and service recognition (Ali and Anwar, 2021).

Pushpakumari (2008) states that attaining high levels of performance across efficiency and productivity has long been a top concern for organizations. In order to accomplish this, highly-pleased personnel is a vital requirement for an organisation's performance progression. When a person is pleased with his or her employment, the staff member will be more motivated to work harder and smarter. As a result, every company strives to develop pleased personnel in order to operate the company's well-being.

Workers are significant players in every business since they decide the growth of the sector. It is critical that organizations must aim to foster work fulfilment for their workers since contented people perform better (Nayoan, Caleen Hartanto, and Pratminingsih, 2021).

Job satisfaction is a complicated phenomenon since it is affected by a variety of elements, including psychological, social, cultural, environmental and financial considerations. The type of work satisfaction is an essential element in determining employee job satisfaction. The set of sentiments and attitudes that personnel have about their occupations is referred to as job satisfaction. In reality, an employee's overall mentality towards his or her employment may be considered job satisfaction (Stankovska, Angelkoska, Osmani & Grncarovska, 2017).

The planet is experiencing rapid global development. Organisations are required to engage in any growth. Organizations must be backed by high performance of employees in order to realize the institution's vision and mission. Performance may be influenced by two factors: rewards and job satisfaction. Internal and external rewards are both possible (Pramono, 2021).

De Simone, Planta and Cicotto (2018) state that job satisfaction is the most important aspect that organisations should be working on to reduce the turn over intentions among employees within the organisation. The results of the study suggest the development of self-efficiency, work engagement and agency capacities to increase job satisfaction for workers. The results further recognized the value of implementing actions which entail feedforward approach and aim setting methodology to develop self-efficacy, skills in self-regulation, participation in work and satisfaction at work to reduce the purpose of nurses to produce a turnover.

Job satisfaction, job engagement and employee loyalty are common HR principles that contribute significantly to the success of individuals and organisations. Though studied widely, their interplay has been rarely explored. Findings suggest that job satisfaction is an essential predictor of employee commitment, while employee loyalty is highly predicted by work engagement. A mediation study further indicated that the relationship between job satisfaction and employee loyalty is influenced by work commitment (Vokic and Hernaus 2015).

A study conducted by González-Gancedo, Fernandez-Martinez and Rodríguez-Borrego (2019) states that career-related characteristics affect employee satisfaction, overall

health and work participation. To improve employee satisfaction and work engagement levels, the company will make interventions on these features.

Ludviga and Kalvina (2016) state that job satisfaction and employee engagement are important human resource management metrics, which must be evaluated in the sense of other variables and also sector which engagement level.

A study conducted by Park and Johnson (2019) reveals positive associations among job satisfaction and dedication to work. Moreover, job satisfaction as well as work engagement were inversely related with the likelihood of turnover. The results also suggested that the relationship among job satisfaction and turnover intention was not moderated by the work engagement.

Job satisfaction evaluates intrinsic and external motivation, which results in productivity. Commitment to employment internalizes the mission of an organization. Job participation focuses the efforts of a person to produce positive results. In philosophical terms, job engagement should develop the connection among job engagement as well as organisational performance as well as offer considerably more than jobs currently provided by job satisfaction (Daley, 2017).

Darma and Supriyanto (2017) argue that job satisfaction moderates the impact of pay on employees' performance. When an employee is happy with the remuneration offered by an organization, the individual's performance improves. Remuneration and work happiness are important factors in increasing performance of employees. To promote organisational effectiveness, managers must sustain job satisfaction.

Incentives have strong positive relationship with job satisfaction, thereafter the results also indicated both financial including salary, share options, allowances and fringe benefits and indirect payments other than salary (bonuses and overtime) and non-financial incentives including working conditions, recognition, promotions and training facilities also have a strong positive relationship with job satisfaction (Kumarapeli, 2019).

Personnel at upper ranks feel satisfied with intrinsic rewards, whilst workers at lower ranks are likely to be more satisfied with extrinsic rewards (Pushpakumari, 2008).

Chepkemoi (2018) argues that non-financial rewards are associated with higher levels of work satisfaction. As a result, the higher a staff's degree of non-financial rewards, the higher their attitude toward job satisfaction.

As Ali, Afridi, Shafi, Munawar and Alvi, (2016) argue, an organization's performance is dependent on employee dedication, inventiveness, and motivation Incentives, whether physical or intangible, are key factors that can help to the growth of productivity, dedication, and motivation for their work, all of which are connected with a high degree of job satisfaction. As a result, companies pay attention to the use of incentives in a balanced manner, both physical and intangible, as it contributes to work satisfaction or organizational performance.

Stankovska, Angelkoska, Osmani and Grncarovska (2017) suggest that job happiness is one of the most important elements influencing employee performance and increasing their level of activity and attendance at work. Academic staff satisfaction results in long employment at the same institution and higher productivity at work.

The human aspect is more significant in establishing job happiness, while the efficiency influences performance. Different incentives have varying effects on various things. As a result, as various incentives have varying effects on performance and job satisfaction. However, it is vital to note that these elements effectively complement each other (Huttu, 2017).

## 2.5 Employee motivation

Rewards and recognition are critical corporate tools that drive individuals to achieve company objectives (Aktar and Pangil 2018).

In a study conducted by Delaney and Royal (2017), it was found that the degree to which employees themselves feel inspired to do much more than is appropriate is the highest indicator of overall commitment, preceded by the degree with which employees are encouraged to do more than is expected of them. This suggests that motivational investments optimize utility by generating the maximum return on overall commitment.

Rewards are incentives obtained as a result of doing a job, delivering a service, or executing a task. One of the most essential strategies for motivating members of staff is rewards. The incentive system's purpose is to produce successful outcomes (Jeni, Mutsuddi, Das and Momotaj, 2020).

Okoli, Okoli and Okoli (2020) argue that employee recognition and work fulfilment all point in the same way. That is, the more individuals are recognized for superior performance, the happier they will always be with respective work and, by default, the company.

In today's workplace, there are several methods for employee motivation. Organizations around the world have used various techniques and approaches to boost staff motivation. Nonetheless, it appears that the strongest motivation for workers is something which is truly meaningful to them. Furthermore, various people may have different beliefs and approaches; hence, understanding employees' requirements and adopting suitable motivating tactics may assist boost the level of motivation (Gleeson, 2016).

In a study conducted by Saraih, Mariadassb, Abashahc and Mutalibd (2021) results reveal that motivation exhibited a substantial and unfavourable association with employee performance. According to the study findings, motivation did not have a significant influence on employee performance

Stachowska (2016) states that the successful encouragement that contributes to a high level of employee commitment should have a positive impact on the quality of the activity of the company and the enhancement of the productivity of work. However, it is not an easy job to form the successful motivational solutions. Employees, like everyone else, require incentive to execute their jobs. Staff needs inspiration in the job in order to maintain excellent performance.

Every successful firm is supported by a dedicated workforce, and dedication is the result of motivation and job satisfaction. It is the energy that drives people to work towards the

company success. Without dedication, the company would be unable to achieve performance. To get a competitive edge, organizations must have competitive personnel policies and procedures. Motivation is a powerful stimulant that influences human behavior. Because no two people have the same attitude or conduct, organizations must develop methods that will please the group as a whole rather than simply an individual. (Varma, 2017).

Delaney and Royal (2017) believe that motivation gap constitutes a genuine opportunity for workers to be involved in a way that aligns effectively and increases shareholder returns.

Ferinia, Yuniarsi and Disman (2016) state that workers who are driven to work will contribute to the success of the company and perform well. It is imperative that each supervisor ensures that all employees are extremely motivated. Highly motivated employees will have a strong sense of belonging to the company, improved quality of work, improved efficiency and increased output of employees.

Each company is trying to get its workers engaged in order to attain organizational objectives. Sustaining the motivational level of employees is one of the problems facing the HR Specialist. They need to figure out ongoing new ways to inspire the workers. Motivation, is often associated with employee satisfaction (Jaiswal, Pathak and Kumari 2017).

A need to inspire employees in these conditions, as well as the realization that if the economy gets better, best talent may quit for other possibilities, has resulted in a renewed focus as well as a white-hot spotlight on employee engagement (Scott, McMullen and Royal, 2010).

Darma and Supriyanto (2017) mention that motivation is an essential stimulus that influences people's behavior. Because no two people have the same mentality or conduct, organizations must develop procedures that will please the group as a whole rather than simply a person. Companies are able to detect and assess intrinsic motivation

that an employee receives through job satisfaction, and supplement it with external incentive as needed, for which companies should consider motivational factors.

According to Dicko (2020), personal development and tough assignments are the most powerful motivators for personnel. Nonetheless, Dicko's (2020) study found that the characteristics that inspire employees and those that keep them at work are not the same. While there may be other ways to improve employee motivation, the approach of integrating monetary and non-monetary has been shown to be the much more successful.

The primary goal of cash rewards for successful execution is to stimulate and encourage individuals to thrive in their job performances. As a result, cash rewards play a vital part in any business environment, either public or private (Al-Belushi and Khan, 2017).

Mohamud, Ibrahim and Hussein (2017) indicate that monetary rewards and job enrichment have significant and positive effects on employee performance, while there is positive and insignificant effect of training on employee performance also results indicate the good relationship between motivation and employee performance and the research results showed that employee motivation influences employee performance

Sitopu, Sitingjak and Marpaung (2021) aver that employee performance can produce either positive or negative outcomes. Worker motivation is related to the employee's motive for working, the employee's satisfaction, and the worker's attitude in the workplace. Motivation of employees will influence work discipline in absenteeism and tardiness.

Some authors (Aktar, Sachu and Ali, 2012; Hamukwaya and Yazdanifard, 2014) articulate that rewards are often used to enhance motivation or performance attraction and retention of human capital. As noted rewards increase work engagement (Bussin and Toerien, 2015), while heightening job satisfaction (Ram and Prabhaker, 2011).

According to Thomas's (2009), model of intrinsic rewards, represents the sense of seriousness of the roles, duties or the task that an employee performs, that formulate part of a greater drive and portrays job worth. It has been disclosed by researchers (Rafiq,

Javed, Khan & Ahmed, 2012; Ram & Prabhaker, 2011; Jacobs et al., 2014; Aktar et al., 2012) that intrinsic rewards have a noteworthy impact on organisation's job satisfaction, motivation, work engagement and work performance. Furthermore, a total reward system is rewarding workers exclusively through pay and financial benefits.

A study conducted by Asaari, Desa and Subramaniam (2019) reveals that employees believe that other benefits such as income and recognition are significant in increasing employee motivation and happiness. Such incentives motivate employees to perform better. As a result, organisations need to devise plausible reward systems to inspire employees otherwise the consequences will be dire, including absenteeism.

## 2.6 Employee engagement

According to Madhani (2020), employee engagement entails far more than pleasure and satisfaction. Employees that are engaged know and adhere to their organisation's vision and objectives, and they go far beyond call of duty to achieve the company's goals, resulting in great achievement. One of the strategies for increasing company commitment is an appropriate incentives and recognition plan.

There is a strong link between employee engagement rewards. As a result, the study proposes that businesses regard employee motivation to be a critical duty. The study indicates that provided people are appropriately motivated, businesses and their management will constantly suffer from a negative attitude toward work (Olusadum and Anulika, 2018).

Employee engagement is a critical component of human resource planning, but we can only truly comprehend it if we examine its constituent elements in depth. Motivational factors, in particular, are dynamic elements that contribute considerably to total engagement levels but have yet to be addressed in a systematic and strategic manner. (Delaney and Royal, 2017).

As noted by Stoyanova and Iliev (2017), in today's complex and increasingly changing climate managers need to produce high-value business outcomes. It is crucial to find a

productive business model combining efficient corporate strategy with workers who are dedicated to the strategic goals. The workers should feel appreciated and respected for achieving this goal. Globally, employee engagement is enhanced by adding them with career advancement opportunities in recognition of the company receiving from their job, as well as the credibility of the organization.

Delaney and Royal (2017) state that employee engagement has become an important component of human resource initiatives for a long time and continues to influence the debate of how high-performing companies recruit and retain their top talent.

Engaged workers allow efficiency to increase. Highly engaged workers have 1.3 times higher performance than non-engaged workers, and are five times more likely to stay in the company (Ferinia, Yuniarsi and Disman 2016).

Reissova, Simsova and Hasova (2017) state that employee engagement is a significant consideration for all employers looking to create a healthy, creative business that can increase and grow in market share. Employees that demonstrate a high degree of dedication are one of the essential prerequisites for such success. A number of previous studies have discussed the issue of commitment.

Employee appreciation has had a key influence in improving employee engagement levels. Employee engagement has an influence on organizational performance (Goswami, 2021).

A study conducted by Shah and Asad (2018) reveals that employee retention is influenced by both intrinsic and extrinsic drive, and perceived company support modulates the link between extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. Motivated personnel have a much more favorable attitude toward the business and remain with it for a longer period of time. When workers are happy at work, they are more loyal and committed to the business.

Employee engagement not only does it increase retention, but it also improves client happiness, trust, reputation of the business, and total shareholder value. Favorable organizational outputs like decreased employee absence, reduced turnover intention,

lowers costs, and greater growth have been demonstrated to correspond with employee engagement (Madhani, 2020).

Tsede and Kutin (2013) believe that financial and non-financial awards have a greater and longer-term influence on workers' performance and dedication to long-term organizational success. Non-monetary awards tend to bond workers more tightly to the organization because they provide positive psychological contracts that suit those unique individual demands.

An engaged employee is willing to go above and beyond for the organization's growth. He/she has a favourable view of the company, which he/she communicates with co-workers, customers, and relatives. He/she not only demonstrates a desire to contribute, and also knows exactly how to perform successfully since he fully understands his company's aims and approach. He is also conscious that his initiatives towards quality and efficiency have an impact on his company's outcomes. The engaged workforce views organisational performance as his own. Furthermore, since he wants to be a part of the firm, it is simpler to keep him on board (Stoyanova and Iliev, 2017).

Scott, McMullen, Royal and Stark (2010) point out that organisational change professionals recommend increasing employee participation and involvement in initiatives that touch them, thus managers frequently utilise this technique to increase employee engagement.

Employee engagement is influenced by total compensation systems, programs, and policies. Furthermore, it is clear that the vast majority of pay experts do not understand how total incentive programs influence employee engagement when designing incentive structures, policies, and programs. (Scott, McMullen, Royal and Stark, 2010).

A study conducted by Waqas and Saleem (2014) reveals that employee engagement may be increased by financial and non-financial rewards, and a high degree of employee engagement is a key driver of excellent company performance. Similarly, Dwiyanti and Dudija (2019) concur that employee performance is influenced by both types of incentives and employee engagement, both concurrently and partly. Employee engagement has an

effect on moderating the link between money incentives and employee performance, and the link between non-monetary rewards and employee performance.

External incentive has a substantial beneficial effect on employee engagement, according to the findings. Furthermore, the data revealed that intrinsic reward has a favorable and substantial link with employee engagement. The research further emphasized the significance of employing both extrinsic and intrinsic rewards to increase employee engagement (Adoko, 2015).

George, Omuudu, and Francis, 2020 point out that financial incentives and employee engagement have a favorable and significant relationship. The research also revealed a favorable and statistically significant relationship among career advancement support and employee engagement. The study conducted by Baqir, Hussain, Waseem and Islam (2020) show that workers might be motivated to work better if they are rewarded and recognized. As a result, work engagement may be improved through reward system, as well as manager assistance.

## 2.7 Employee promotion and performance

Rinaldi, Sani and Martono (2018) argue that promotion is one of numerous types of professional advancement; earning a promotion is an employee's ambition or objective since it represents a reward from the agency or organization for his strong performance or achievements.

Leaders must keep in mind that different incentive systems may impact employees in different ways, at different points in time, due to the constant changes in conditions, demands, and individual goals. To achieve effective outcomes from a motivational strategy, human capital management must understand the variances in workers' values, needs, tasks, and degrees of satisfaction in terms of improving job performance and productivity (Ghaffari, Shah, Burgoyne, Nazr, and Salleh, 2017).

Work motivation will grow as a result of job advancement and training, and employee job performance will improve (Rinny, Purba and Handiman, 2020).

## 2.7. Theoretical framework

The section covers the theoretical framework and its application on the role of performance incentive in driving performance in a Faculty from a comprehensive University.

### 2.7.1 Herzberg Two-Factor Theory

In the quest to consider what an applicable and efficient strategy to adopt to keep employee in an organization, the management must not only rely on intrinsic elements to encourage employee retention in the organisation, it should rather combine both intrinsic and extrinsic factors. The magnitudes of organisation human resource practices according to Herzberg (1959), are candidly or implicitly linked with satisfy/motivator and dissatisfy/hygiene advocated. The theory positions that there are certain dynamic elements that are linked to the substance of the job and offers rewarding experiences for the employees. According to Herzberg's theory, these elements or factors are known as motivators or satisfiers and it include accomplishment, recognition, the work itself, responsibility, advancement, and growth (Herzberg, 1959).

The second feature of the theory further positions that, there are non-job-related dynamic elements that are able to cause employee's dissatisfying experiences in an organisation. The elements are identified as hygiene factors or dissatisfiers, which also include policies of the company, employees' take-home salary, co-worker interactions, and the administrative style of the management (Steers and Porter, 1991). However, eliminating the causes of employee's discontent (through hygiene factors), may not necessarily result in a state of gratification, but it will rather result in a neutral state (Herzberg, 1959). For the sake of this study, HR practices of reward, career growth and balance of work-life are substantiated on either intrinsic or extrinsic or the combination of both.

### 2.7.2 Incentives theory of motivation

The incentive theory of motivation is a behavioral theory that proposes that workers are motivated by a need for rewards and reinforcement. According to the motivation principle,

individuals will behave in ways that they think will result in a reward while avoiding acts that could result in penalties.

Employees' behavior in comparable circumstances can vary based on the incentives available. For example, an employee will work harder on a project in order to achieve a positive review or escape a negative review than if they do not obtain a review at all. Their inspiration is the ability to earn a reward or escape retribution at the conclusion of the project with a performance assessment (Filimonov, 2017).

The worth of the same reward will vary based on the time and circumstances. People can place different values on similar rewards. Psychological and social factors can play a role in deciding which people are motivated by various rewards. Incentives will only be used to motivate people if they put a priority on the reward they will earn for their efforts (Filimonov, 2017).

Incentives in the workplace, as in other facets of life, can also be positive or negative (Filimonov, 2017).

- Positive incentives: Assure a worker that they will get everything that they want in return for doing their job well. Positive rewards include things like appreciation, promotions, increases.
- Negative incentives: Correct mistakes or discourage certain behaviors. Negative incentives include reprimands, demotions, pay decreases and other kinds of penalties.

### 2.7.3 Merit payment

Merit pay is described as “the fixed payment to individuals or an increase in the employee remuneration based on the outcome of an annual evaluation of employee performance, competency or contribution (Perkins and White, 2008: 164; Armstrong, 2012: 262; Martocchio, 2013: 57). The development of a merit pay is established on motivational

theories that incorporate the anticipation theory as well, including goal setting theory, agency and equity theories. The above-mentioned theories are in support of the fact that the accomplishment or successes of an organisational target outcomes should automatically lead to the payment agreed upon and meaningful rewards.

Many researchers projected that having talent shortages are likely to intensified well into the next decade, this predicted shortage will invariably limit the “ability of organisations to expand and will jeopardize their chances of survival as global competition becomes more intense” (Krell, 2011: 8).

As noted by Mabaso and Dlamini (2018), over the years, there has been a gradual shift in the nature of rewards towards encompassing more than just employee’s basic pay. As a result, ‘rewards may be intrinsic (internal to an individual), extrinsic (external to an individual), monetary (financial), non-monetary (non-financial) and direct (compensation for work conducted) or indirect (additional benefits) and may be used for a multitude of reasons and purposes’ (Mabaso and Dlamini, 2018).

Armstrong and Stephens (2005) as well as Nujjoo and Meyer (2012) argue that as a legal obligation and inherent to a job, extrinsic rewards are those salient incentives useful for attracting and retaining members of the workforce. While Porter and Lawler (1968) define rewards from a traditional perspective as the tangible benefits that employees receive for conducting their work, in a growing contemporary viewpoint, extrinsic rewards are increasingly being recognised and distinguished as either monetary or non-monetary in nature (Kshirsagar and Waghale, 2014; Kimutai and Sakataka, 2015).

As enunciated by Osa (2014), financial rewards to employees are the tangible rewards that usually come in form of financial and money-driven incentives, used to ‘reward employee performance.’ These types of rewards may include payment, promotion (which incorporates an increase in pay) and bonuses (Mabaso and Dlamini, 2018). While non-monetary rewards on the other hand are regarded as ‘intangible and non-financial incentives such as fringe benefits and contingent rewards which comprise praise and

personal recognition' (Sajuyigbe, Olaoye and Adeyemi, 2013). In addition, Nujoo and Meyer (2012) point to other forms of extrinsic non-monetary rewards to be social rewards, this constitute the interpersonal relationships between the employee and his or her supervisors and co-workers.

In supporting the above claim that extrinsic rewards often have an influence on employee motivation. From an administrative standpoint, work incentive is concerned with those facets and services that drive positive behaviours (Takawira, Coetzee and Schreuder, 2014; Omollo and Oloko, 2015).

The issue of monetary and financial rewards is confirmed by Wei and Yazdanifard (2014) by stating that such rewards lead to 'satisfaction over the short term'. Nevertheless, the necessity to look into 'extrinsic rewards in the workplace over the past decade has been highlighted by different scholars (e.g., Armstrong and Stephens, 2005; Van Aswegen et al., 2009; Mabaso and Dlamini, 2018). Van Aswegen et al. (2009) maintain that leaders who place their sole emphasis on attracting employees by means of extrinsic rewards often meet the problems of not being able to sustain the motivated workforce. While Armstrong and Stephens (2005), verbalised the fact that extrinsic rewards (pay) may aid an organisation to attract and to retain employees, Mabaso and Dlamini (2018), argue that in terms of short-term benefits, 'tangible extrinsic rewards' may be advantageous to heighten employee's level effort and reduce discontent.

## 2.8 Conclusion

In this chapter, various relevant literatures were reviewed with focus on role of incentives and recognition plans in driving performance. Chapter Two has examined how the employee incentives and recognition of employees affect motivation, job satisfaction, employee engagement which directly impacts on employee performance. Given the information presented in the current chapter, a connection between employee incentives, recognition and employee performance is clearly evident. Thus, the conclusion reached

in this regard points to the fact that incentives and recognition plans have a positive effect on employee performance.

## CHAPTER THREE: RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

### 3.1 Introduction

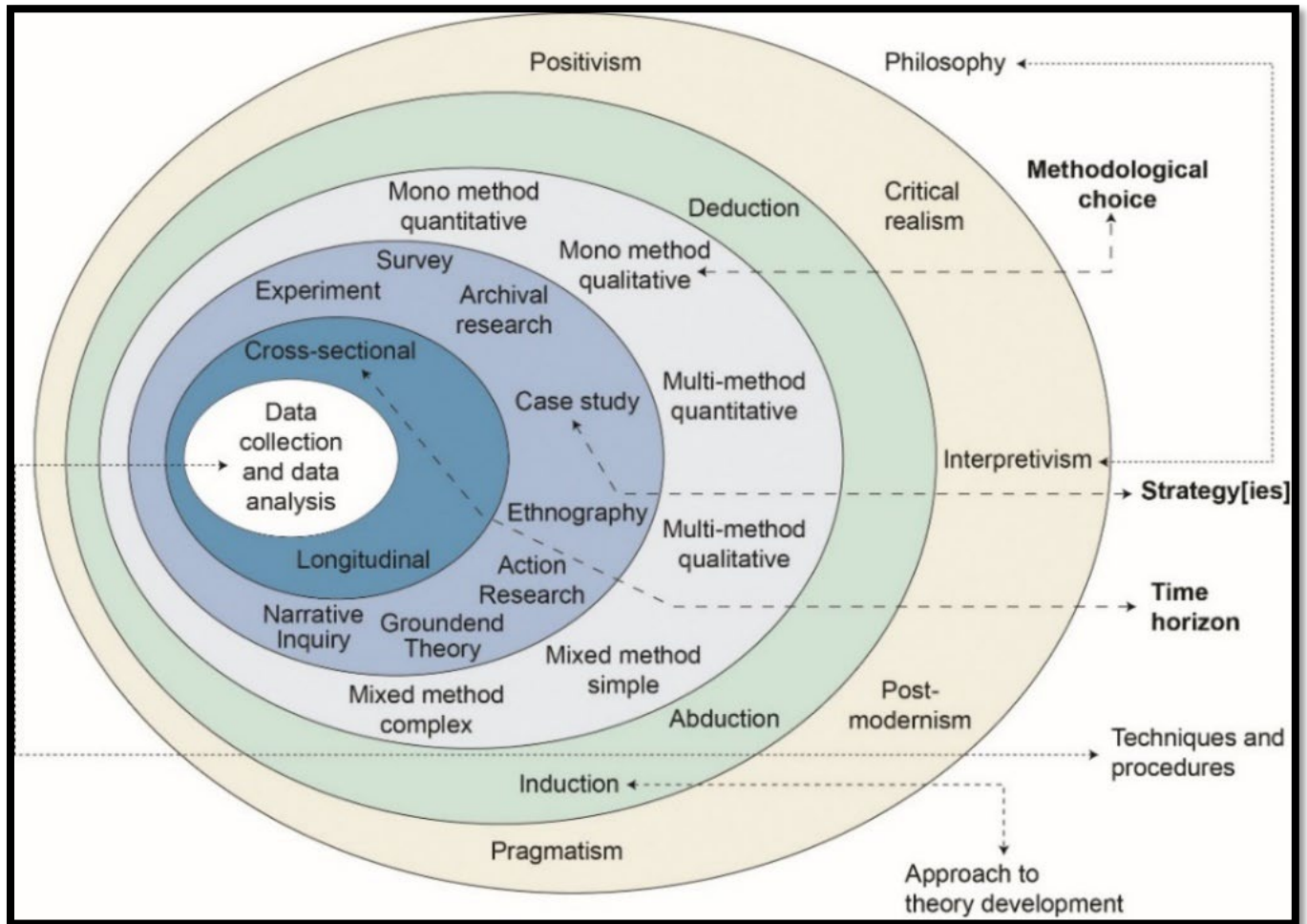
The previous chapter dealt with the review of relevant literatures for this study. The reviewed literature presented subjects on performance-based pay, job satisfaction, motivation, recognition and employee engagement. This chapter outlines and discusses in detail the methodology adopted for this study.

### 3.2 Research steps

Research encompasses the processes of inquiry, investigation, examination and sometimes experimentation (Bougie and Selkaran, 2020). The process is systematic (Leedy and Ormrod, 2021) and scientific using a standard sequence of steps (Delpont and Fouché, 2018) that have to be carried out diligently, critically, objectively and logically (Bougie and Selkaran, 2020). These steps are not necessarily linear or unidirectional; they involve a cyclical, exactly, helical (Leedy and Ormrod, 2021), recursive and interactional process (Delpont and Fouché, 2018).

This study acknowledges that a research design is an important plan but it is not a fixed plan that proceeds in a very structured and linear way (Bertram and Christiansen, 2021). Bartley and Hashemi (2021: 250) expand on this idea, stating that "while the research process consists of a series of discrete steps conducted in a linear order, this is not how research is actually done". While qualitative research steps have been suggested by different authors (e.g. Durrheim, 2021; Fouche and Delpont, 2018; Gaudet and Robert, 2018; McNabb, 2018; Johnson and Christensen, 2020; Polit and Beck, 2020), this study's research design process was guided by the research onion by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019). The researcher has organised this under several headings and sub-headings such as research philosophies, approaches, strategies, choices and time horizons. These headings are informed by the research onions in Figure 3.1 below as suggested by Saunders, Lewis and Thornhill (2019).

Figure 3.1: Research Onion



Source: Saunders et al. (2019)

### 3.2.1 Research philosophy

While philosophy is the study of the nature of knowledge and knowing (Bakkabulindi, 2015), philosophical assumptions are part of any research design (Creswell, 2017) and are therefore closely linked to research designs (Collis and Hussey, 2014), which refer to the choices the researcher in this study made in terms of the methodology and methods that have been used to address this study's research questions. Creswell and Plano Clark (2018) emphasise that the philosophical assumptions need to be identified and acknowledged in the study and then related to specific procedures in the research

According to Saunders et al. (2019), the term research philosophy refers to a system of beliefs and assumptions about the development of knowledge that concerns a particular phenomenon. There are various kinds of philosophies upon which various researchers base their respective scientific investigations. These include positivism, realism, interpretivism, objectivism, subjectivism, pragmatism, functionalism, radical humanist and radical structuralist (Saunders, et al., 2019).

#### 3.2.1.1 Realism

Realism is a philosophical viewpoint related to scientific inquiry. Realism asserts that reality exists independently of the mind and that what a researcher's senses reveal is the truth, notwithstanding the researcher's impact from world beliefs and personal encounters. Philosophers divide realism into two types: direct realism and critical realism. A scholar who takes a direct realism stance contends that this is what we perceived is an accurate depiction. A critical realist researcher, on the other hand, contends that what is originally encountered through the senses is then subjectively processed by the mind (Saunders, 2013).

#### 3.2.1.2 Positivism

Positivism is a philosophical approach associated with natural scientists that requires working with observable social reality to develop law-like generalizations. Researchers use a positivist scientific approach to suggest and test ideas with data that is highly organized and typically quantitative (Bougie & Sekaran, 2020; Park, Konge & Artion, 2020; Wolhuter, 2022) and the study is not impacted by the researcher's value (Cohen et al., 2018; Bertram & Christiansen, 2021; van Aardt & Hirschohn, 2021). Rather it constitutes abstracts, beliefs and principles that are responsible for shaping this study's researcher's worldview (Khatri, 2020). Through positivism, objective and evidence-based truth will be observed (Bless, et al., 2020; Bonache, 2021; Corry, et al., 2019; Davies & Fisher, 2018; Gemma, 2018; Leedy & Ormrod, 2021; Park, et al., 2020) and human action

will be studied through mathematical, logical reasoning (Saunders, et al., 2019) and scientific methods (Govender, 2021; Li, et al., 2018; Sefotho, 2021).

### 3.2.1.2 Pragmatism

For pragmatist scholars, the relevance of study lies in the practical implications of the results. They believe that no individual point of view can ever provide the complete view and that numerous realities may exist. This is not to say that a pragmatic scholar will always utilize a range of data gathering methodologies and analytic procedures; rather, the study design should allow for the acquisition of credible, trustworthy, and relevant facts to support future action (Saunders, 2013).

Whenever a researcher combines both qualitative and quantitative research methods in a single study, pragmatism is used as a foundation to guide the study (Bazeley, 2018; Creswell and Plano Clark, 2018; Ferreira, 2018). As noted by Goldkuhl (2012), pragmatism involves action and change, as well as the interaction between knowledge and action. As a result, it is useful as a foundation for study designs that intervene in the world rather than simply watching it. A pragmatic strategy is usually used to enable researchers to collect information from a variety of sources and critically analyse it (Kaushik and Walsh, 2019). The intention is to maintain balance in some aspects of quantification (positivism) as well as to incorporate interpretivist concerns around subjectivity and meaning (Bougie and Selkaran, 2020; Palmer Kelly, Hyer, Payne, and Pawlik. 2020).

This study was guided by an interpretivist research philosophy whose details are explained below.

### 3.2.1.3 Interpretivism

The methodologies and processes for collecting and analysing data vary from being qualitative, quantitative or mixed methods (Linake, Maphosa and Mthethwa-Kunene,

2022; Masha and Eze, 2022; Walker, Hoppe and Silliker, 2022). Where a researcher is more interested with gaining deeper understanding into subjective meanings than offering law-like generalizations, the researcher is more likely to represent the philosophy of interpretivism. This philosophy is concerned with the investigation of social phenomena in its natural setting (Bless, Higson-Smith and Sithole, 2020; Bougie and Sekaran, 2020; Busetto and Gumbinger, 2020; Majumdar, 2022). It focuses on doing study between individuals instead of things, taking a sympathetic position in order to comprehend their social reality and the meaning they assign to it from their perspective (Saunders et al., 2019; Nieuwenhuis, 2021; Hennink, Hutter and Bailey, 2020).

Table 3.1: Interpretive frameworks and associated philosophical beliefs.

Interpretive Frameworks	Ontological Beliefs (the nature of reality)	Epistemological Beliefs (how reality is known)	Axiological Beliefs (role of values)	Methodological Beliefs (approach to inquiry)
Post positivism	A single reality exists beyond ourselves, "out there." Researcher may not be able to understand it or get to it because of lack of absolutes.	Reality can only be approximated. But it is constructed through research and statistics. Interaction with research subjects is kept to a minimum. Validity comes from peers, not participants.	Researcher's biases need to be controlled and not expressed in a study.	Use of scientific method and writing. Object of research is to create new knowledge. Method is important. Deductive methods are important, such as testing of theories, specifying important variables, making comparisons among groups.
Social constructivism	Multiple realities are constructed through our lived experiences and interactions with others.	Reality is co-constructed between the researcher and the researched and shaped by individual experiences.	Individual values are honoured, and are negotiated among individuals.	More of a literary style of writing used. Use of an inductive method of emergent ideas (through consensus) obtained through methods such as interviewing,

				observing, and analysis of texts.
Transformative/ Postmodern	Participation between researcher and communities/ individuals being studied. Often a subjective-objective reality emerges.	Co-created findings with multiple ways of knowing.	Respect for indigenous values; values need to be problematized and interrogated.	Use of collaborative processes of research; political participation encouraged; questioning of methods; highlighting issues and concerns.

Pragmatism	Reality is what is useful, is practical, and "works."	Reality is known through using many tools of research that reflect both deductive (objective) evidence and inductive (subjective) evidence.	Values are discussed because of the way that knowledge reflects both the researchers' and the participants' views.	The research process involves both quantitative and qualitative approaches to data collection and analysis.
Critical, Race, Feminist, Queer, Disabilities	Reality is based on power and identity struggles. Privilege or oppression based on race or ethnicity, class, gender, mental abilities, sexual preference.	Reality is known through the study of social structures, freedom and oppression, power, and control. Reality can be changed through research.	Diversity of values is emphasized within the standpoint of various communities.	Start with assumptions of power and identity struggles, document them, and call for action and change.

Source: Lincoln, Lynham and Guba (2018)

### 3.2.2 Approach to theory development

According to Saunders et al. (2019), the two main approaches that exist in analysing data are the deductive and inductive approaches. The deductive approaches are concerned with testing of existing theories, while the inductive approaches are most commonly used to generate theories (Saunders et al., 2019). This study used an inductive approach. An inductive approach is used when a researcher starts by collecting data to explore a phenomenon and to generate a theory often in the form of a conceptual framework (Saunders et al., 2019). The researcher therefore seeks to understand the phenomenon under study from the sample (Bless et al., 20120). Some characteristics of a deductive and inductive approaches are tabulated below.

Table 3.3: Characteristics of inductive and deductive approaches

Deductive approach	Inductive approach
Quantitative in nature	Uses qualitative approaches
Uses a top-down approach	Uses a bottom-up approach
Based on post-positivism	Based on interpretive and critical systems
Tests theory against data	Generates theory from data
Moves from general to specific	Moves from specific to general
Allows generalization	Analyse meanings that participants encounter through experience
Works with variables	Research context is investigated
Works on hypotheses to test data	Less concerned with need to generalise

Source: Hasse-Biber and Leavy (2011)

### 3.2.3 Methodological choice

This layer of the research onion highlights a basic but important choice all researchers face when designing their research: whether to use a quantitative method or methods, a qualitative method or methods, or a mixture of both. Researchers can choose to use a single data collection technique and corresponding analysis procedure, either a mono method quantitative design for example, data collected using a questionnaire, analysed

statistically or a mono method qualitative design for example, data collected through in depth interviews, analysed as narratives (Saunders et al., 2019).

Johnson and Christensen (2020) highlight the reality that pure qualitative research relies on the collection of qualitative data. According to Wild and Diggins (2015), qualitative research is the collection, analysis and interpretation of data that cannot be meaningfully quantified. Creswell (2017) upholds the view that qualitative research is an approach for exploring and understanding the meaning that individuals or groups ascribe to a social or human problem. The process of research involves emerging questions and procedures, data typically collected in the participant's setting, data analysis inductively building from particulars to general themes and the researcher making interpretations of the meaning of the data. The final written report has a flexible structure and those who engage in this form of inquiry support a way of looking at research that respects an inducting style, a focus on individual meaning and the importance of rendering the complexity of a situation.

Fox and Bayat (2013) suggest that researchers need to justify the suitability of the research design and methodology used in their research projects, indicating why the research design and methodology are more acceptable than existing ones. This is because the choice of and justification of for a research method are a vital part of the research process (Wolhuter, 2015). Notably, while it is important for researchers to decide the type of research design they are going to use from the outset (Van Wyk & Taole, 2015), some researchers rarely mention the approach used in their study (Neuman, 2014). Emerging from the above, a qualitative research approach was used in this study to collect primary data. The relevant information for this study's participants was obtained through semi-structured interviews.

Coming to the justification for using a qualitative research approach as a methodological choice, Leedy and Ormrod (2021) explain that qualitative research methods centre on the 'real world' or the natural settings in which events occur, and approach the study of the events in these settings with the understanding that there may be different dimensions to the events being studied. As this research is qualitative in nature, the researcher dealt

with participants in a secure context at the UNIZULU. The researcher adhered to Creswell (2017) and Terre Blanche and Kelly's (2021) suggestion not to disrupt the circumstance and flow of events.

Leedy and Ormrod (2021) notify us that qualitative research studies typically serve one or more of the following purposes:

- Description: They can reveal the nature of certain situations, settings, processes, relationships, systems or people.
- Interpretation: They enable a researcher to gain new insights about a particular phenomenon, develop new concepts or theoretical perspectives about the phenomenon; and/ or discover the problems that exist within the phenomenon.
- Verification: They allow a researcher to test the validity of certain assumptions, claims, theories or generalisations within real-world contexts.
- Evaluation: They provide a means through which a researcher can judge the effectiveness of particular practices, policies or innovations.

The next section looks at the issue of time horizon under the research onion.

### 3.2.4 Research strategy

A strategy is an overall approach to answering the research question (Oates, 2008). According to Creswell (2017), the strategies of inquiry chosen in a qualitative research have a dramatic influence on the procedures, which, even within strategies, are anything but uniform, relying on text and image data, in unique steps in data analysis, drawing from diverse strategy approaches. While a myriad of research methods are available (Wolhuter, 2015), the many variants of qualitative research include a mix of designs, data analysis techniques and disciplinary orientations (Feza, 2015).

This layer's label in the research onion emphasises that scholars may utilise one or more methods in their study design when they decide how to respond or tackle a research study. A researcher can apply an action research method by collaborating with

professionals to effect organizational change, while also employing a survey approach to collect structured data from a large number of personnel (Saunders et al., 2019). Accordingly, several qualitative research designs that can be used depending on the type of study being undertaken (Leedy & Ormrod, 2021). Alphabetically, these are action research, case study, content analysis, critical approaches, discourse analysis, ethnographic study, ethnomethodological studies or ethnomethodology, grounded theory study, historical research, narrative inquiry/analysis, phenomenological study or phenomenology and qualitative evaluations.

According to Saunders et al. (2019), qualitative research is associated with a variety of strategies and each strategy has a specific emphasis and scope as well as a set of procedures. Out of the qualitative research strategies listed above and from the research onion above, a case study, seen as one of the principal strategies, was used in this study. was used in this study.

Although the origins of case studies are unclear (Babbie and Mouton, 2018), there are various types of cases studies. This point is taken further by Rule and John (2020: 175) who state that *“the word unit suggests that the case is singular and distinct from other units”*. This study used a case study of organisations (Eller, Gerber and Robinson, Polit and Beck, 2020; Bertram and Christiansen, 2021), with the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law being the organisation being studied.

With definitions of ‘case study’ abound (Flyvberg, 2018), *many different definitions for case studies have been proposed”* (McNabb, 2018:282), meaning that multiple definitions and understandings of case study research are found in the literature (Nieuwenhuis, 2021). This study goes with case study definitions by Yin (2020) and by Strydom and Bezuidnhout (2019) which go thus:

1. *A thick and detailed description of a social phenomenon that exists within a real-world context. The case study recounts a real-life situation by rigorously describing the scenario in which the phenomenon occurs. It is an attempt to understand a*

*phenomenon within specific circumstances. The case study method allows a deep exploration within a natural context and hence provides a full and thorough understanding of the particular and lived experience of a participant (Strydom and Bezuidnhout, 2019).*

Johnson and Christensen (2020) quote Stake's (1995) assertion that there are three kinds of case studies, namely (1) Intrinsic case studies (2) Instrumental case studies and (3) Collective case studies. This study used an intrinsic case study whereby the researcher's primary interest was an understanding a specific case. In this case, the researcher used a classic, single-case design whereby the researcher described, in depth, the particulars of the case to shed light on it. Out of the three most widely used case study methods, namely, (1) Illustrative case study (2) Exploratory case study and (3) Explanatory case study, an exploratory case study was used in this study. This involves rigorous description of the case within its broader context in an attempt to understand the nature of the case (Strydom & Bezuidenhout, 2019).

Serving as a descriptive or exploratory foundation that helps with the development of theory, it is in this analytic respect that the findings from case studies can be generalised (Denscombe, 2017). The advantages of the case study approach are that case studies are suitable for small-scale research; they (case studies) take a holistic view, facilitate the use of either a qualitative or a quantitative research method, make use of natural settings and are flexible in approach (Denscombe, 2017).

Denscombe (2017) believes that the starting point and indeed the defining characteristic of the case study approach is its focus on just one instance of the thing that is to be investigated. In this context, the aim, therefore, was to investigate if the incentive plans and recognition plans given to the employees at the University of Zululand drive performance. The researcher involved the use of semi-structured interviews and purposely chose academics as participants of this study.

### 3.2.5 Time horizon

Before reaching the core, the final layer of the research onion emphasizes the time horizon in which the researcher conducts the investigation. When study is conducted to respond to questions or solve an issue at a certain period, the resulting "snapshot" is cross-sectional and is likely to include methodologies such as a survey or case study (Saunders et al., 2019).

A cross-sectional study was undertaken in this study. Cross-sectional studies use a shorter timeframe to examine a particular phenomenon and involve a research design where all data is collected at a single point in time (Saunders et al., 2019; Zikmund, Babin, Carr and Griffin, 2019; Babbie, 2021). They are mostly undertaken by academic researchers, are suitable for exploratory or descriptive studies (Babbie, 2021) and are aimed at exploring situations, problems, attitudes and issues (Creswell, 2017).

### 3.2.6 Data collection

The researcher was more interested in establishing the views of the participants on the role played by performance incentives in driving performance. It was of interest to understand the feelings, opinions, and viewpoints of academics from different levels in the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law. The basis for this is that it is not possible to quantify such data hence the researcher chose to make use of the qualitative approach.

#### 3.2.6.1 Interviews

In order to investigate if the incentive plans and recognition plans given to the employees at the University of Zululand drive performance amid the COVID-19 pandemic, this study followed an inquiry approach in which the researcher interacted with the participants to understand their views and relied primarily on interviews (Denzin and Lincoln, 2018; Nardi, 2018; Li et al., 2018) as a method and as a measurement tool (Salkind, 2019).

Under Lockdown Level 3 conditions, telephonic interviews were conducted. The researcher made use of telephone interviews and Microsoft Teams to conduct interviews with 18 academic staff members in the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law. This was informed by the fact that starting from the 10<sup>th</sup> participant, the responses were consistent as a result a law of saturation was used where after the 18<sup>th</sup> candidate, the data collection process was stopped. The sample was broken down into two different categories of academics namely, 2 Deputy Deans, 2 Heads of Departments, 4 Senior Lecturers and 10 Lecturers. For the purpose of one-on-one interviews, the questions were modified in order to enhance the open-ended discussion.

The richness of the material generated by qualitative interviews was, without doubt, the main reason why we used them (Gaudet and Robert, 2018). For the complex situation presented in this study, interviews were deemed appropriate for collecting in-depth information, for having a wider application (Kumar, 2020) and for understanding the different views of participants (Hennik et al., 2020). Interviews not only provided the advantage of the ability to ask questions and to listen (Torre et al., 2018), they allowed room for probes (Bougie and Sekaran, 2020; Leedy and Ormrod, 2021; Nieuwenhuis, 2021) and for questions to be explained (Kumar, 2020). Probes were detail-oriented probes, elaboration probes and clarification probes (Nieuwenhuis, 2021).

#### 3.2.6.2 Interview guide

The Interview Protocol (also known as an interview schedule or interview guide) used in this study comprised a questionnaire written to guide interviews (Fouché & Schurink, 2018). The guide was used during telephonic interviews containing open-ended items (Du Plooy, 2017) to ensure a high response rate (Du Plooy-Cilliers and Cronje, 2018). According to Johnson and Christensen (2021), an Interview Protocol is a data-collection instrument that includes items, response categories, instructions and so forth. It is a script prepared by the researcher and the interviewer reads it and also interprets it if necessary to the interviewees. It (the Interview Protocol) provided the researcher with a set of predetermined questions were used as an appropriate instrument to engage the

participant and designate the narrative terrain (Monette, Sullivan & De Long, 2014). This led to what was covered being transferred into a transcript. Bertram and Christiansen (2021) define a transcript as a written document which reflects what was said during an interview and it sometimes includes comments on gestures. Eventually, rich descriptive data from the interviews helped the researcher to understand the respondent's construction of knowledge and reality (Nieuwenhuis, 2021).

The researcher prepared list of topics ensured that the interviews had some degree of substantive homogeneity (Gaudet and Robert, 2018). This study's interview guide used an eight-stage process advanced by Pallant (2016).

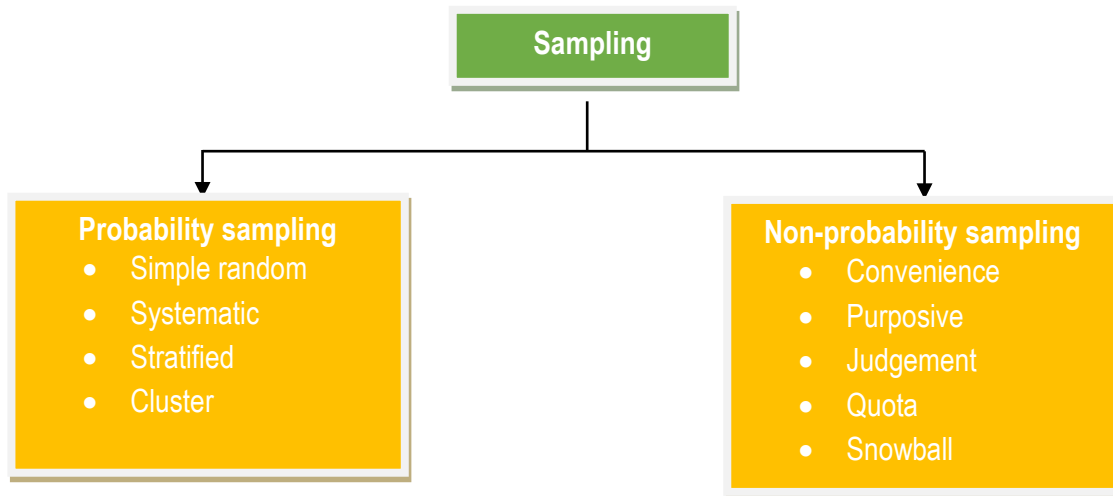
#### 3.2.6.3 Population

A population is a group of elements or cases, whether individuals, objects, or events, that possess the characteristics the researcher aims to investigate and who conform to specific criteria (Casteel & Bridier, 2021; Rudansky-Kloppers, 2021; Nwaigwe, 2022). This study's population was 56 academic staff In the Faculty of Commerce and Law.

#### 3.2.6.4 Sampling

Sampling is divided into probability and non-probability methods, as seen in Figure 3.1 below. Some types of non-probability sampling usually rely on available subjects (Brink et al., 2017). Purposive sampling, as a non-probability sampling technique, was used in this study.

Figure 3.2: Sampling methods



Source: Cant, Gerber-Nel and Kotzé (2020)

Sampling encompasses selection of people and the research site (Conlon, Timomen, Elliot-O'Dare, O'Keeffe & Foley, 2020; Durrheim & Painter, 2021; Hirschsohn, 2021). This study's sample was employees at the various level of academics in the Faculty of Commerce and Law who were selected because they conformed to specific criteria (Johnson and Christensen, 2020) and possessed characteristics that the researcher aimed to investigate (Morgan & Sklar, 2018; Nardi, 2018). Participants were selected on the basis that they were 'information rich' (Rudansky-Kloppers, 2021; Cash, Isaksson, Maier and Summers, 2022; Isaksson, Maier and Summers, 2022) and illuminative; that is, they were able to offer useful manifestations of the phenomenon of evaluation (Cohen, Manion and Morrison, 2018). This way, they were able to answer this study's research questions).

### 3.2.6.5 Trustworthiness

The criteria for trustworthiness proposed by Guba and Lincoln (1994) was used in this study. Guba and Lincol (1994) originally introduced four dimensions for assessing rigour as criteria for quality of qualitative research, namely: (i) credibility; (ii) dependability; (iii) confirmability; and (iv) transferability.

#### 3.2.6.5.1 Credibility

Credibility alludes to confidence in the truth of the data and the interpretation thereof (Brink et al., 2017; Koonin, 2019; Bertram and Christiansen, 2021). In this study, the investigation was done in such a way that the findings demonstrate credibility; in other words, that the reader will believe them. Confidence in the truth in this study was established through an audit trail. An audit trail was systematically maintained through documentation of the researcher's continuous critical analysis of all decisions and actions taken during the research process, as well as the researcher's thinking and feelings about this study's conceptual framework, research questions, methods, values and biases. The overall purpose was to evaluate accuracy and to determine whether the findings, interpretations and conclusions are supported by the data (Schurink, Schurink and Fouche, 2021). The audit trail displayed the interaction between the researcher and the participants in such a way that the research can be understood not only in terms of what was discovered but also how it was discovered. As such, the researcher used fieldnotes, a field diary and a reflexive journal from the outset of the study.

#### 3.2.6.5.2 Dependability

'Dependability' refers to the provision of evidence such that if it were to be repeated with the same or similar participants in the same or similar context, its findings would be similar (Bertram and Christensen, 2017; Brink et al., 2017; Saunders et al., 2019).

Interviews were found to be appropriate for the aim of this study given the sensitivity of the research. The data collection was documented and all changes to the study plan were documented from time to time.

#### 3.2.6.5.3 Confirmability

'Confirmability' refers to the degree to which the analysis of the researcher can be confirmed by someone else, either a different researcher or the reader (Brink et al., 2017; Bertram and Christiansen, 2021; Bless et al., 2020). The sample for this study was drawn

from a pool of staff members at the UNIZULU. This implies that the research might be repeated in other HEIs as well.

#### 3.2.6.5.4 Transferability

Transferability refers to the degree to which the results of qualitative research can be generalised or transferred to other contexts or settings (Brink et al., 2017; Saunders et al., 2019). This would allow for generalisation within a method that does not lend itself to generalization. As a consequence, the researcher's viewpoint will not have an impact on the study's conclusion. Having stated that, a comparable study may be conducted at any South African university making use of the research methodology

#### 3.2.6.5 Ethical considerations

Since this project involved working with humans, the researcher obtain ethical approval before the research began.

##### 3.2.6.5.1 Informed consent

The researcher secured informed consent from participants by persuading them to sign an informed consent form before data collection commences (Naaman & Levy, 2020).

The researcher informed all the study participants of their right to make an informed decision about whether they wanted to participate in the study (Okeke, Omodan & Dube, 2022) as well as of the right to terminate their participation in the study at any time without a penalty (Bouchrika, 2021).

##### 3.2.6.5.2 Non-maleficence (Potential harm)

The researcher identified all risks and, through the principle of non-maleficence, did not harm the participants physically or otherwise. This ensured the practice of non-maleficence (Hammersley, 2021).

#### 3.2.6.5.3 Participant' right to confidentiality and anonymity

The researcher assured all participants of their confidentiality and anonymity in the research study by promising not sharing their details to anyone (Hoft, 2021). The researcher also observed the Protection of Personal Information (POPI Act no 4 of 2013) that requires contact details (e.g email, telephone, address) and demographic information (e.g. age, sex, race, birth date, ethnicity) to be treated with respect and ethically.

### 3.3 Conclusion

This chapter described the study methodology used during data collecting and also the ethical problems that were followed. The chapter extensively discusses the researcher's approach when doing the study. More information is also provided pertaining to the research ethics that the study was required to follow in order to make sure that respondents were safeguarded throughout their involvement in the research. The results of the data obtained are discussed in the following chapter.

## CHAPTER 4: DATA PRESENTATION, ANALYSIS AND DISCUSSION

### 4.1 Introduction

The previous chapter dealt with this study's research design and methodology. This chapter deals with the presentation, analysis and discussion of the results as per the stated research objectives, namely: to examine the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance at the University of Zululand; to analyse the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance at the University of Zululand; to identify appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance at the University of Zululand; to identify appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance at the University of Zululand.

This study examined the role of performance incentives in driving performance at a faculty from a comprehensive University in South Africa. This study intends to recommend practical incentive and recognition plans that can be used to drive performance in HEIs. To achieve objective of this study, interviews were conducted with 18 participants in the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law. The selected participants were academics ranging from the Dean, Deputy Deans, Professors, Associate Professors, Senior Lecturers and Lecturers. The interview with each participant lasted for approximately 15 minutes. The interviews were transcribed and analysed using the Statistical Package for Social Sciences (SPSS), version 27.0 and NVivo, version 13.0, respectively. While the SPSS was used to analyse the data on the demographic variables of the participants, the NVivo, on the other hand, was used to analyse the data that pertains to the views expressed by the participants.

## 4.2 Description of the participant information

Table 4.1 shows the information on the participants demographics, including gender, race, age, education and tenure.

Table 4.1: Description of the Participant Information

Biographical Variables	Category of Biographical Variable	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	10	55.6
	Female	8	44.4
Racial group	African	15	83.3
	White	1	5.6
	Indian	2	11.1
Age	30-39 years	6	33.3
	40-49 years	6	33.3
	50-59 years	6	33.3
Level of education	Masters	7	38.9
	PhD/Doctorate	11	61.1
Tenure	0 - 2 years	5	27.8
	3-6 years	3	16.7
	7-9 years	4	22.2
	10 years and above	6	33.3

Information from Table 4.1 suggests that in terms of gender, 55.6% of the participants were males, whereas 44.4% were females. The findings showed that 83.3% were Africans, 11.1% were Indians, while 5.6% constituted Whites. Concerning age, 33.3% of the participants fall within 30-39 years, 40-49 years, and 50-59 years, respectively. Furthermore, the findings indicated that 61.1% of the participants hold a doctorate, whereas 38.9% hold masters. Besides, the results suggested that 33.3% of the participants have worked for more than 10 years in the institution, 27.8% have worked between 0-2 years, 22.2% have worked between 7-9 years and 16.7% have worked between 3-6 years.

## 4.2 Objective 1: Impact of performance incentives on employees' performance

Objective 1 investigated the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance in the University. The overall findings showed a strong link between performance incentives and employees' performance. The participants expressed that financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses made them work harder to meet the performance targets set by the University. Moreover, the participants indicated that the possibility of promotion has made them work harder because it leads to an increase in salary. Therefore, based on the findings, it can be argued that three performance incentives influenced employee performance in the University, namely: financial incentives, performance bonuses and the possibility of promotion. Moreover, the findings indicated that financial incentives led to increased employee job satisfaction and employee motivation in the University. The themes that support the research findings are shown in Figure 4.1.

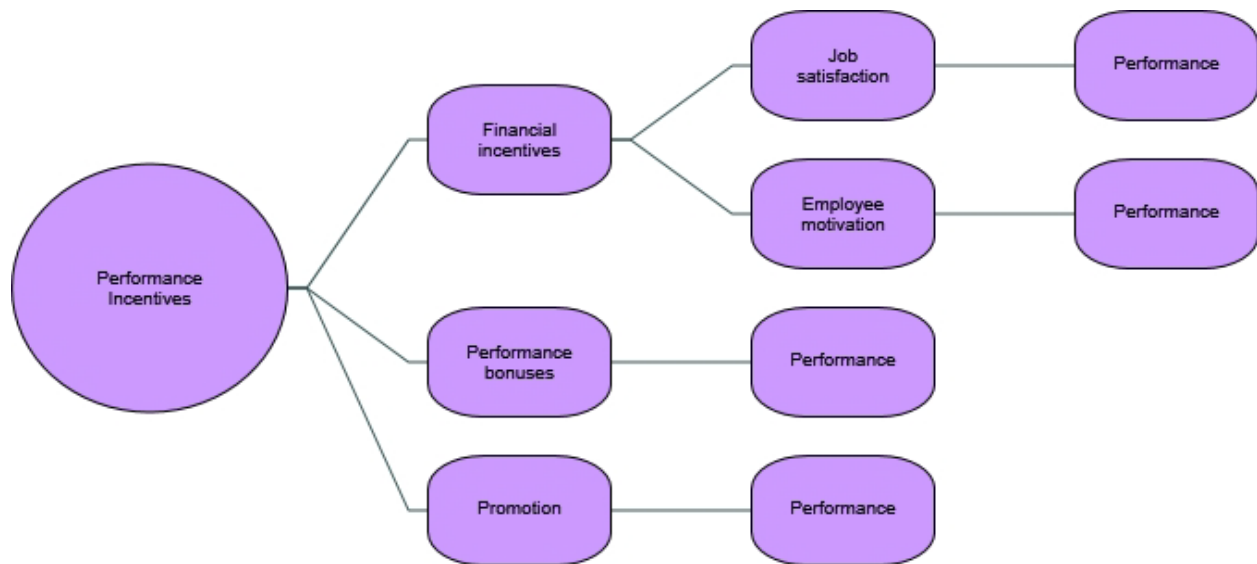


Figure 4.1: Impact of performance incentives on employees' performance

As shown in Figure 4.1, there was a significant relationship between performance incentives and employees' performance within the University. The findings showed that

incentives such as financial rewards, bonuses and promotion were the key predictors of employee performance in the University. These findings underscore the importance of the incentive theory, which states that workers are motivated by a need for rewards and reinforcement. According to the motivation principle, individuals will behave in ways that they think will result in a reward while avoiding acts that could result in penalties.

The following discusses the findings on the various incentives that impacted employee performance within the University.

#### 4.2.1 Theme 1: Financial incentives

The findings revealed that financial incentives increased employee performance in the University. All the participants (N = 18) have agreed that financial incentives are the primary predictors of employee performance in the University. For instance, most of the participants have expressed that the financial incentives offered by the University had motivated them to work harder to their target. Others have also expressed similar opinions that financial incentives, when applied consistently and transparently, will increase employee performance. Below are some of the iterative voices of the participants that support the research findings.

Participant 1 said that:

*“Financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses have made other staff and I work much harder.”*

Participant 2 also indicated that:

*“Financial incentives definitely increase employee performance and productivity.”*

Participant 4 expressed that:

*“Money is not the only motivating factor, but it impacts performance if you apply it well and adequately for the intended purposes. Most employees are more*

*concerned about what they receive in exchange for their effort. Therefore, financial incentives, to a large extent, influence employee performance”.*

Participant 6 said that:

*“Not directly, but one gets motivated. Finance is what we need. Improve the standard of living”.*

From the study, it is evident that financial rewards or incentives served as the predictors of employee performance in the University. These findings also reaffirmed the results of previous empirical research which established a strong positive association between financial rewards and employee performance. Osa (2014) points out that that financial rewards to employees are the tangible rewards that usually come in form of financial and money-driven incentives, used to “reward employee performance”. In a similar study, Seng and Arumugam (2017) concurs that monetary incentive and job motivation are the essential qualities for improving employee performance. Financial rewards and job satisfaction are also seen to be crucial not only for improving employees' performance, but also for companies to improve efficiency and get more inspired to work.

Okeke et al. (2020) argue that several organizations establish financial incentives to inspire their employees to accomplish targeted performance to meet corporate goals. The findings underscore the importance of the incentive theory of motivation that proposes that workers are motivated by a need for rewards and reinforcement. Mabaso and Dlamini (2018) reveal that financial incentives include payment, promotion, and bonuses positively impacted employee performance.

Furthermore, the study probed the participants on whether financial incentives influence job satisfaction and motivation. Most of the participants have confirmed that financial incentives played an essential role in employee job satisfaction and motivation in the University. The participants argued that financial assistance might contribute towards feeling valued as an employee. Others have also expressed that financial incentives significantly impact job satisfaction. When high salaries or bonuses are given to

employees, they become satisfied with their jobs, positively affecting job performance. The following are some of the quotes that support the findings concerning the impact of financial incentives on job satisfaction in the University.

Participant 2 said that:

*“All financial incentives do is that it compels one to tolerate one's job and to deliver on one's commitments because the stakes are high. I think that financial incentives are merely one dimension of job satisfaction. Other important dimensions have nothing to do with financial incentives, e.g., working flexible hours, pleasant work environment, supportive colleagues, being in a senior position, contribution to the development of the economy and society at large”.*

Participant 5 indicated that:

*“The more you get money, the more you are satisfied. We are more satisfied when we get it”.*

Besides, the participants indicated that financial incentives have a strong motivation because the losses will be enormous if one does not deliver, given that line managers monitor staff performance. Here are some few quotes from the interviews that support the impact of the financial incentives on employee motivation.

Participant 3 expressed that:

*“It has a strong motivation because the losses will be enormous if one does not deliver, given that line managers are monitoring staff performance”.*

Participant 7 mentioned that:

*“Financial incentives motivate employees to excel in the workplace. After implementing the financial incentives, employees are more motivated to achieve the key performance areas and are more inclined to document their evidence as they achieve their goals”.*

The findings obtained from this study are also consistent with previous research (Al-Belushi and Khan, 2017), which states that monetary incentives have a direct influence on employee motivation. Besides, Wei and Yazdanifard (2014) confirmed that 'monetary and financial rewards lead to satisfaction over the short term'. Mabaso and Dlamini, (2018) believed that in terms of short-term benefits, "tangible extrinsic rewards" may be advantageous to heighten employee's level effort and reduce discontent.

Moreover, it has been found that the scale of the monetary incentives of these schemes tends to be a strong motivating factor amongst other features of the financial compensation structures. In turn, this effect is influenced by the rise in the allocation and substantive fairness experienced by staff when their employer has a successful pay scheme that allows workers to earn significant cash incentives in addition to their regular salary (Uiesi, 2016). Thus, an appealing financial incentive would increase the motivation of the majority of workers to work hard.

In their study, Seng and Arumugam (2017) discovered that monetary incentive and job motivation are the essential qualities for improving employee performance. Financial rewards and job satisfaction are also seen to be crucial not only for improving employees' performance, but also for companies to improve efficiency and get more inspired to work.

#### 4.2.2 Theme 2: Performance bonuses

Apart from the financial incentives, the study discovered that performance bonuses also influenced employee performance in the University. The majority (N = 12) of the participants argue that performance management acted as an incentive towards improving their performance. Moreover, they opined that performance bonuses were strong motivational tools because the losses will be significant if one does not deliver, given that line managers are monitoring staff performance. The following are some quotes from the interviews that give credence to the findings.

Participant 3 said that:

*“It has a strong motivation because the losses will be significant if one does not deliver, given that line managers are monitoring staff performance”.*

Participant 6 indicated that:

*“Financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses have made my staff and I work much harder”.*

The results of this study agreed with previous empirical research. A bonus is a compensation that is made in the past and is typically voluntary or not anticipated from the worker (s). A performance-based compensation, which is likewise known as the variable wage or exigency compensation is the most prevalent value pay scheme that have been introduced by many organisations. Unfortunately, badly managed and high expectations of its impact on performance and its ability to change behaviour was not fulfilled (Armstrong 2012: 264). In line with the P-E Corporate Service (2009: 11), performance-based compensation or payment constitutes an essential component of a remuneration package. According to Aguinis (2013), performance-based pay means that individuals, teams or organisation are rewarded based on how well they perform on the job.

#### 4.2.3 Theme 3: Promotion

The study further found promotion to be one of the financial incentives that influenced employee performance within the University. A substantial number of participants (N = 10) have indicated they were motivated by the promotion opportunities available within the University. Below are some of the interviews' quotes that support the above findings.

Participant 1 expressed that:

*“The possibility of promotions has also made many of us work hard because being promoted is on a higher salary bracket.”*

Participant 4 said that:

*“Some of us are more concerned about future promotion in the University. One of the ways a person can excel in his/her work is when being promoted to a higher position. Of course, staff promotion is a very vital issue in academic institutions. This incentive may have positive or negative implications on staff performance”.*

Participant 11 noted that:

*“For me, the most important concern will be the possibility of promotion. Promotion comes with an increase in salary and other benefits. I know that most of our colleagues are more concerned about the opportunity for promotion to positions such as senior lecturer, associate professor, or full professor. There is this belief that when people are promoted, they are inspired to work harder to meet the organization's expectations. This can translate into increased employee and organizational performance”.*

In addition to the above findings, the study discovered that the size of the incentive reward matters in the University. The participants expressed that higher performance management scores lead to increased performance bonuses. The participants further argued that the expectations of an increase in performance bonuses would translate to an increase in employee performance. Below are some of the interview quotes that give credence to the research findings.

Participant 6 expressed that:

*“If one scores highly on the Performance Management submission, the performance incentive paid out is high, which in turn motivates one to work harder for future incentive bonuses”.*

Participant 9 indicated that:

*“I think it does, but there should be uniformity; the larger, the more”.*

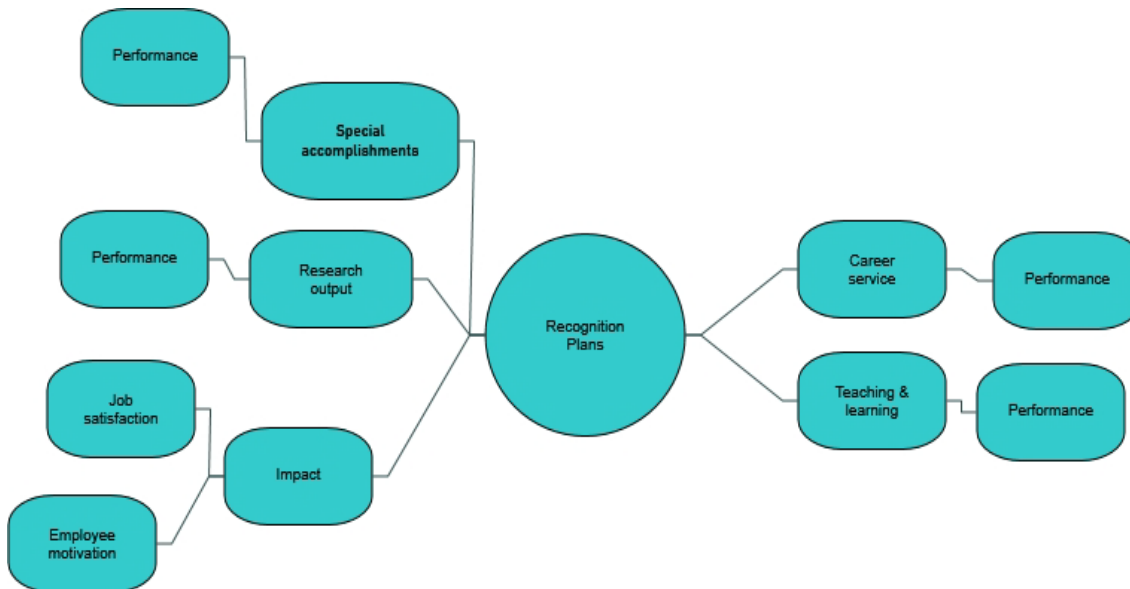
Contrary to the above views, one of the participants argued that the size of the incentive does not matter at all. The following are the view expressed by the participant in support of the findings.

Participant 2 said that:

*“It doesn’t matter at all, and I am saying so because the more incentive employees get, the more they want. In essence, employees would never be enough of what they are getting; hence, size doesn’t matter”.*

#### 4.3 Objective 2: Effect of recognition plans on employees’ performance

Objective 2 analysed the effect of recognition plans on employees’ performance within the University. Based on the findings, it was found that recognition plans play a pivotal role in employee motivation. The participants pointed out that staff recognition for special accomplishments, career service, research output, teaching and learning, and so on were very important. Moreover, the participants indicated that these recognition plans help create a conducive working environment. In addition, the findings suggested that Recognition motivates, provides a sense of accomplishment and makes employees feel valued for their work. It has further been discovered that Recognition not only boosts individual employee engagement but it also has been found to increase productivity, performance, and loyalty to the company, leading to higher retention. Figure 4.2 below shows the research findings in terms of the themes.



#### Figure 4.2: Impact of effect of recognition plans on employees' performance

From Figure 4.2, there are various recognition plans implemented by the University. These recognition plans impacted employee performance. Employee recognition acknowledges that incentive is more than just monetary gain and gives the good feedback that employees want. Recognition is an appreciation by management and colleagues; it is the warmth that an employee feels knowing that an accomplishment has been noticed, appreciated, and celebrated; and it is an accomplishment that is the consequence of additional work. Shonhiwa (2017), Andriotis (2018) states that employee recognition is a process of recognizing key employees for exceptional achievement. Rewarding employees within company fundamentally seeks to encourage certain behaviour, attitudes, or actions that result in improved performance and favourable company outcomes.

Dobre et al. (2017) point out that workers place a high value on non-monetary rewards, implying that monetary rewards alone will not improve motivation, and therefore managers must focus on non-monetary rewards in addition to monetary incentives. Employees that are intrinsically incentivised operate at a high level of proficiency and seek to advance professionally, and a well-managed non-monetary incentive motivates employees to achieve top performance in the organization.

The section below discusses the various recognition plans implemented by the University and how they impact employee performance.

##### 4.3.1 Theme 1: Special accomplishments

The findings showed that exceptional accomplishments formed part of the recognition plans that impacted employee performance in the University. From the interviews, most participants believed that special accomplishments played a pivotal role in motivating them to work harder towards achieving the organizational goals. Below are some of the quotes that reaffirm the findings.

Participant 3 said that:

*“Recognition of staff for special accomplishments and so on are significant because it helps create a benign working environment.”*

Participant 8 indicated that:

*“Of course, special accomplishments one of the recognition plans that influence employee performance. For instance, in this University, staff who excelled in their work are identified and rewarded for their hard work. This special recognition tools play an important role in motivating employees in the University”.*

Participant 9 expressed that:

*“The recognition in the form of special accomplishment plays a vital role in the employee’s life and livelihood within the workplace, and chances are one performance better”.*

#### 4.3.2 Theme 2: Research output

The findings further revealed that recognition plans such as research contributed significantly to increased employee performance within the University. It was found that staff recognition for special research output helped create a benign working environment. Below are some of the quotes from the interviews that support the research findings.

Participant 3 said that:

*“Recognition of staff for research output is very important because it creates a benign working environment”.*

Participant 5 indicated that:

*“I will say that the recognition plan in the form of research productivity or output also impacts staff performance. One of the important criteria for promotion in academia is one's research output. Thus, the number of articles published and theses supervised. Therefore, when staff members are appreciated for their contribution towards research, it will impact the university's overall performance”.*

Participant 14 expressed that:

*“Research productivity forms essential criteria for university ranking worldwide. Hence, many universities have placed a premium on staff research output. Special recognition is given to staff who published more quality papers in accredited journals. For instance, when it comes to staff promotion, research output carries the highest weight. Staff who published more papers are often recognised for promotion compared to those who published less”.*

#### 4.3.3 Theme 3: Career service

Besides the above findings, it was discovered that career service was one of the recognition plans that impacted employee performance in the University. A few of the participants said they valued career service offered by the University because it inspired them to accomplish their performance targets. Here are a few quotes from the interviews that support the research findings.

Participant 3 suggested that:

*“Recognition of staff for career service is very important because it creates a benign working environment”.*

Participant 6 indicated that:

*“For me, I am more concerned about the career service offered by the University. I want to see myself growing academically. I wish to attain the position of professor in the next five years. Hence, I prefer career service to other recognition plans. This will not only inspire me to work towards achieving the organisational objective but will contribute to my career growth”.*

The research also revealed a favorable and statistically significant relationship among career advancement support and employee engagement.

#### 4.3.4 Theme 4: Teaching and learning

The findings showed that the recognition plan for teaching and learning also impacts staff performance in the University. The participants indicated that they preferred being recognised for their distinguished contribution towards teaching and learning. They argue that this form of recognition plan inspired them to work harder in achieving the desired performance targets. Some of the quotes that support the research findings are presented as follows.

Participant 3 indicated that:

*“Recognition of staff for teaching and learning is essential since it creates a benign working environment”.*

Participant 17 also indicated that:

*“I think the recognition for one’s distinguished contribution towards teaching and learning will help to motivate him/her to work harder in achieving the organizational objectives. Apart from research output, teaching and learning constitutes the core function of academic institutions. For this reason, many institutions, including have placed much emphasis on teaching and learning. Universities are focusing of quality teaching and learning. Therefore, recognition is given to staff who made significant contribution to teaching and learning. This can translate into the overall performance of the University”.*

Besides, the study probed the participants on whether the recognition plans instituted by the University impact employee job satisfaction and motivation. The participants have confirmed that the recognition plans played critical role in employee jobs satisfaction and performance.

These findings are presented as follows.

#### 4.3.4.1 Sub-theme 1: Job satisfaction

The results indicated that the recognition plans offered by the University impacted employee job satisfaction, thereby influencing their performance. The participants argued that they felt satisfied with the recognition plans available at the University. They believe that recognition plans provide a sense of belonging to the University, which increases one's commitment to the University. Here are some few quotes from the interviews that support the research findings.

Participant 1 said that:

*“Knowing that one’s colleagues recognise one as being exceptional one’s performance or contribution to the University provides one with a sense of belonging to the University, increasing one’s commitment to the University”.*

Participant 4 expressed that:

*“When an employee is recognised, the feeling of contribution and recognition appeals, and therefore one is satisfied when performing duties”.*

Participant 6 opined that:

*“Recognition will definitely increase job satisfaction because employees will note that their hard work will not go unnoticed”.*

Participant 8 believed that:

*“Recognition plays a significant role in job satisfaction. Paying employees well and giving them benefits significantly impact their job satisfaction. Both financial and non-financial rewards have a role in influencing job satisfaction, which ultimately impacts employee performance”.*

These findings are consistent with existing research. Wei and Yazdanifard (2014) have confirmed that 'monetary and financial rewards lead to satisfaction over the short term'. Mabaso and Dlamini, (2018) advocated that in terms of short-term benefits, "tangible extrinsic rewards" may be advantageous to heighten employee's level effort and reduce discontent. It has been argued that the compensation scheme must be well structured to satisfy the needs of workers. It must be implemented in such a manner that workers have clarification as to which field of work should be much more focused on gaining praise and/or compensation (Mecepy, 2016).

Performance may be influenced by two factors: rewards and job satisfaction (Pramono, 2021). De et al. (2018) stated that job satisfaction is the most important aspect that organisations should be working on to reduce the turnover intentions among employees within the organisation. Job satisfaction, job engagement and employee loyalty are common human resource principles that contribute significantly to the success of individuals and organisations. A mediation study further indicated that the relationship between job satisfaction and employee loyalty is influenced by work commitment (Vokic & Hernaus 2015).

Ludviga and Kalvina (2016) state that job satisfaction and employee engagement are important human resource management metrics, which must be evaluated in the sense of other variables and also sector which engagement level. Park and Johnson (2019), in their study, identified a positive association between job satisfaction and dedication to work. Job satisfaction evaluates intrinsic and external motivation, which results in productivity. Commitment to employment internalizes the mission of an organization. Job participation focuses the efforts of a person to produce positive results.

Darma and Supriyanto (2017) argue that job satisfaction moderates the impact of pay on employees' performance. When an employee is happy with the remuneration offered by the organization, the individual's performance improves. Remuneration and work happiness are important factors in increasing performance of employees. To promote organisational effectiveness, managers must sustain job satisfaction.

Incentives have strong positive relationship with job satisfaction, thereafter the results also indicated both financial including salary, share options, allowances and fringe benefits and indirect payments other than salary (bonuses and overtime) and non-financial incentives including working conditions, recognition, promotions and training facilities also have a strong positive relationship with job satisfaction (Kumarapeli, 2019).

Ali et al. (2016) argue that the organization's performance is dependent on employee dedication, inventiveness, and motivation. Incentives, whether physical or intangible, are key factors that can help to the growth of productivity, dedication, and motivation for their work, all of which are connected with a high degree of job satisfaction. Stankovska et al. (2017) suggested that job happiness is one of the most important elements influencing employee performance and increasing their level of activity and attendance at work.

#### 4.3.4.2 Sub-theme 2: Employee motivation

In addition to the job satisfaction, the study discovered that recognition plans positively impacted employee motivation in the organization, thereby contributing to an increase in employee performance. One participant argued that he/she felt so more committed because one has a sense of belonging to the University. Here are a few quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 7 said that:

*“Employees who are recognised stay motivated, knowing that their efforts are appreciated by their employer”.*

Participant 10 believed that:

*“As explained above, one becomes more committed because one has a sense of belonging to the University”.*

Participant 12 indicated that:

*“Yes of course, recognition will increase employee motivation”.*

One of the most essential strategies for motivating members of staff is rewards. In today's workplace, there are several methods for employee motivation. Organizations around the world have used various techniques and approaches to boost staff motivation. Every successful firm is supported by a dedicated workforce, and dedication is the result of motivation and job satisfaction. It is the energy that drives people to work towards the company success. Without dedication, the company would be unable to achieve performance. To get a competitive edge, organizations must have competitive personnel policies and procedures. Motivation is a powerful stimulant that influences human behaviour (Varma, 2017). Moreover, Delaney and Royal (2017) believe that motivation gap constitutes a genuine opportunity for workers to be involved in a way that aligns effectively and increases shareholder returns. Ferinia et al. (2016) stated that workers who are driven to work will contribute to the success of the company and perform well. It is imperative that each supervisor ensures that all employees are extremely motivated. Highly motivated employees will have a strong sense of belonging to the company, improved quality of work, improved efficiency and increased output of employees.

It is suggested that worker motivation is related to the employee's motive for working, the employee's satisfaction, and the worker's attitude in the workplace. Motivation of employees will influence work discipline in absenteeism and tardiness. By contrast, a study conducted by Saraih et al. (2021) revealed that motivation exhibited a substantial and unfavourable association with employee performance. According to the study findings, motivation did not have a significant influence on employee performance.

Furthermore, the study sort to find out if the participants will still strive to reach their performance targets without any recognition being offered. The findings received mixed reactions from the participants. While some participants indicated that they will still strive to reach their performance targets without recognition, others, on the other hand, have suggested that they will not strive to reach their target without recognition. The following are some few quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 2 indicated that:

*“Yes. When I first joined the University in 2003, no incentives were offered for many years, but I still performed optimally due to my strong work ethic.”*

Participant 4 argued that:

*“The answer is yes because whether I am recognised or not, I feel good when I achieve something. However, recognition increases rapport and a sense of belongingness in the workplace”.*

Participant 5 said that:

*“Only if there is a financial incentive”.*

Participant 7 expressed that:

*“That is where passion comes in; if the benefit was there and removed, then it's disappointing some people will not be motivated. They will do what they are appointed for but with recognition”.*

The findings obtained from the study disagreed with existing research. Armstrong and Stephens 2005) and Nujjoo and Meyer (2012) argued that “as a legal obligation and inherent to a job, extrinsic rewards are those salient incentives useful for attracting and retaining members of the workforce.

Objective 3(a): Appropriate incentives acceptable to staff to drive performance

Objective three examined the appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance in the University. To achieve this objective, the study probed the participants on what method to use to ensure that the assessment criteria are aligned with the university's overall goals. The participants argued that line managers must discuss with each staff under his/her charge the job description and what is required to be performing exceptionally well that will warrant awards like performance bonuses. Other participants have indicated that the key performance indicators must be recognised. Moreover, the participants expressed that employee engagement was one

of the appropriate incentives acceptable to staff to drive performance. Figure 4.3 shows the themes that form part of the findings.

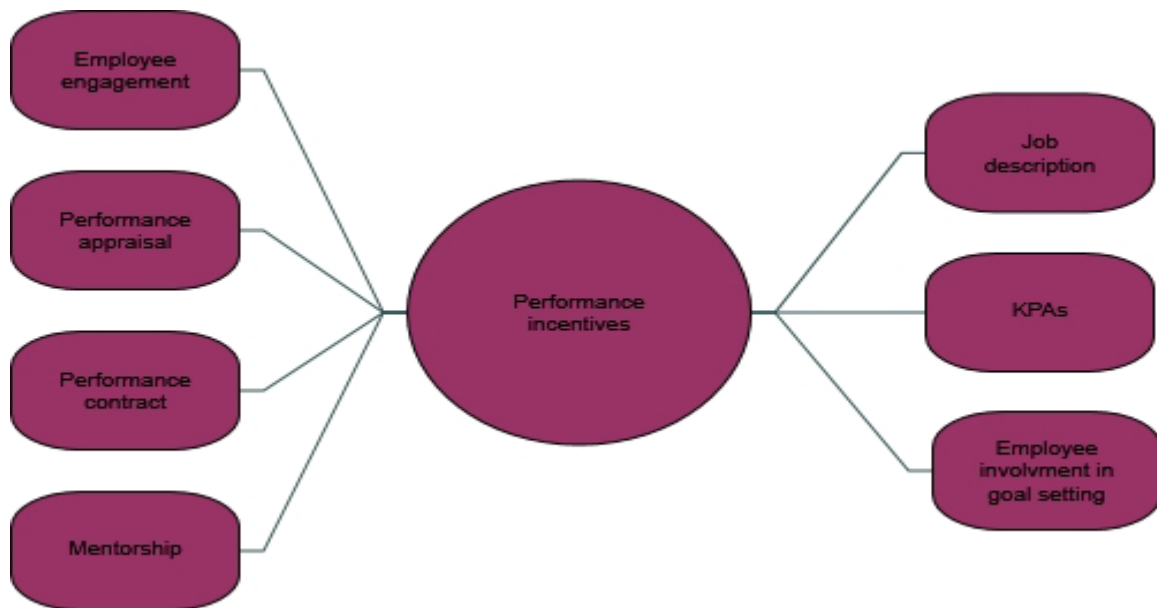


Figure 4.3 Appropriate incentives acceptable to staff to drive performance

#### 4.4.1 Theme 1: Employee engagement/participation

The study found that employee engagement or participation constituted an appropriate incentive acceptable to staff to help drive employees' performance in the university. Most participants argued that they preferred to be involved in employees as part of the goal-setting process. Moreover, it was suggested that employees be engaged in designing the instrument so that various opinions can be gauged and then work from the response of a collective. Here are a few quotes from the interviews that support the research findings.

Participant 3 said that:

*“Employees can be engaged in designing the instrument so that various opinions can be gauged and then work from the response of a collective”.*

Participant 5 expressed that:

*“I will suggest that employees be involved in designing performance targets and indicators. Employee engagement or participation in setting the performance targets will serve as an incentive for increased performance”.*

Generally speaking, an engaged employee is willing to go above and beyond for the organization's growth. He/she has a favourable view of the company, which he/she communicates with co-workers, customers, and relatives. The engaged workforce views organisational performance as his own. Furthermore, since he wants to be a part of the firm, it is simpler to keep him on board (Stoyanova and Iliev, 2017). A study conducted by Waqas and Saleem (2014) revealed that employee engagement may be increased by financial and non-financial rewards, and a high degree of employee engagement is a key driver of excellent company performance. Similarly, Dwiyanti and Dudija (2019) concur that employee performance is influenced by both types of incentives and employee engagement, both concurrently and partly. Employee engagement has an effect on moderating the link between money incentives and employee performance, and the link between non-monetary rewards and employee performance.

Scott et al. (2010), in their study, point out that organisational change professionals recommend increasing employee participation and involvement in initiatives that touch them. Thus, managers frequently utilise this technique to increase employee engagement. Employee engagement not only does it increase retention, but it also improves client happiness, trust, reputation of the business, and total shareholder value. Favorable organizational outputs like decreased employee absence, reduced turnover intention, lowers costs, and greater growth have been demonstrated to correspond with employee engagement (Madhani, 2020). Research shows that highly engaged workers have 1.3 times higher performance than non-engaged workers and are five times more likely to stay in the company (Ferinia et al., 2016).

#### 4.4.2 Theme 2: Performance appraisal

The study found that performance appraisal was an important incentive acceptable to staff to help drive employees' performance in the University. The participants were of the view that performance appraisal will serve as a tool for driving employee performance. They argued that employees should be educated and involved in the performance appraisal exercise. The following are some few quotes that reaffirm the research findings.

Participant 16 said that:

*“The current incentive structure is not well explained; hence employees may feel disgruntled. Suggest workshop on performance appraisal explaining how the percentage/s of remuneration is calculated”.*

Participant 17 expressed that:

*“I think regular performance appraisal exercises should be conducted to determine how well the employees are doing on the job. This tool, when properly used, will enable the organization to distinguish higher performers from low or poor performers”.*

#### 4.4.3 Theme 3: Performance contract

The study further found that the performance contract or agreement signed between the employers and employees constituted one of the appropriate incentives that acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance in the University. The participants argued that the performance contract should describe what goals are to be achieved. Here are a few quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 3 indicated that:

*“It starts with the performance agreement that one signs at the beginning of the year. I must be given an option to tell what are the things they want to achieve”.*

Participant 5 said that:

*“The performance contract also serves as a tool appropriate method that can be used to ensure that the assessment criteria are aligned with the University's overall goals. Therefore, much emphasis must be placed on it to help describe the expectations of both parties”.*

#### 4.4.4 Theme 4: Mentoring of employee

In addition to the above findings, the study further discovered mentoring is an appropriate method that can be used to ensure that the assessment criteria is aligned with the University overall goals. The following are some of the few quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 8 believed that:

*“Ensure that staff members are allocated mentors so that they can learn from seniors”.*

Participant 10 expressed that:

*“I think a mentorship programme will serve as a critical assessment that will help to align performance with the overall goals. Each employee must be assigned a mentor to acquire the skills, knowledge, experience and competencies required to deliver better”.*

Participant 13 argued that:

*“The criteria are prepopulated in the assessment, so one must focus on key activities. There is no discussion in terms of who to mentor, yet we are supposed to mentor. There must be support for one to meet the targets. The department must provide support for staff to meet”.*

#### 4.4.5 Theme 5: Job description

The findings revealed that job description constituted an important tool that can be used to ensure that the assessment criteria is aligned with the University's overall goals. The study found that job description helped to provide accurate information about the job requirements and behaviours needed to perform the job. Below are a few quotes from the interviews that confirm the research findings.

Participant 2 expressed that:

*“More attention should be paid to the job description to help define the skills, knowledge, and experiences that the jobholder needs to perform the job. From the HRM perspective, a job description is an aspect of job analysis that contains information about the requirements of a particular position. This function of HRM could be used as a tool to ensure that the performance is aligned with the University’s overall goals”.*

Participant 9 believed that:

*“I think job description is an appropriate assessment criterion that links performance with strategic goals. This method of assessing employees is more appropriate because it helps them be aware of what is expected of them in achieving the organisational goals”.*

#### 4.4.6 Theme 6: Key performance indicators

Also, the study found that KPAs was one of the performance assessment methods that linked performance to the University’s overall goals. The participants proposed that staff must be aware of their KPAs because it helps track one’s performance. The following are a few quotes from the interview that support the research findings.

Participant 4 indicated that:

*“The KPAs are a good measure for performance”.*

Participant 6 suggested that:

*“I think KPAs will serve as a valuable tool to ensure that all staff meets performance targets. The KPAs define one’s target and what is expected to achieve the target”.*

#### 4.4.7 Theme 7: Employee involvement in goal setting

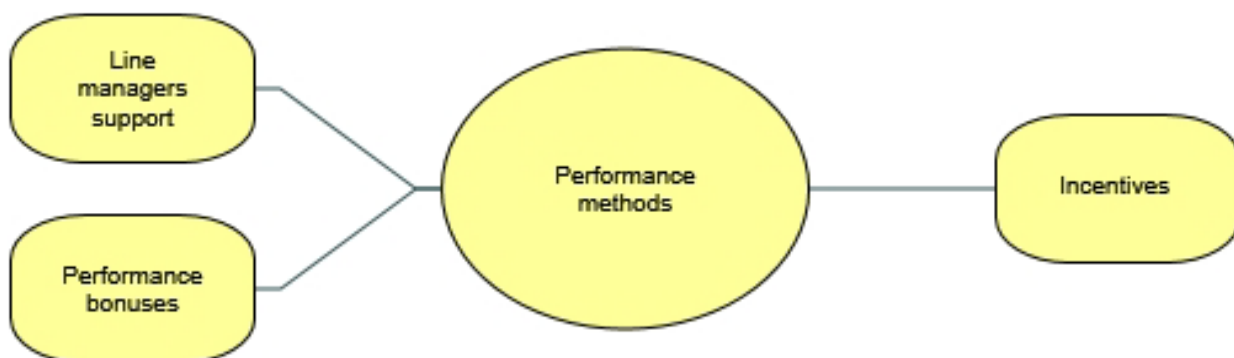
The study discovered that employee involvement in goal setting process constituted an essential strategy for aligning the University’s overall goals with employee performance. The employees argued that they must be part of the decision-making process regarding goal setting. They believed that their involvement in the process would help set realistic targets.

Participant 1 said that:

*“When employees are part of the goal-setting process, and if they are aware of the institution’s goals, then it is not difficult to set and understand the criteria. Within the realm of the overall institutional goals, individual goals and criteria should be easy to understand and measure”.*

#### 4.5 Objective 3(b): Methods of measuring employee’s performance and giving incentives

Moreover, the study sought to identify whether there is a better method of measuring employee’s performance and giving incentives than is currently implemented. Based on the interviews, the study identified a few methods of measuring employee performance in the University. The findings are presented in Figure 4.4.



## Figure 4.4: Method of measuring employee's performance and giving incentives

### 4.5.1: Theme 1: Line managers support

The study found that line managers support was one of the best methods for measuring employees' performance. Below are some few quotes that reaffirm the research findings.

Participant 1 said that:

*"The rating is in order. All that is required is support from the line management so people can publish. Now workshops on how to write journal articles. Support is critical".*

Participant 4 mentioned that:

*"Other methods can be used. The other things that are not prescribed in the agreement must still be considered and measured, and it will play a significant role. Something that is supposed to be done by a senior".*

Participant 7 expressed that:

*"Line managers must consider discussing with each staff under his/her charge the job description and what is required to be performing exceptionally well (i.e., the value that is added to the University) that will warrant awards like performance bonuses".*

### 4.5.2 Theme 2: Performance bonuses

The study further showed that performance bonuses served as one of the most appropriate methods for measuring employees' performance. A few quotes from the interviews that affirm the research findings are presented as follows.

Participant 9 said that:

*"I think there is, a performance bonus and agreement".*

Participant 12 indicated that:

*“I will propose performance bonus because it helps to reward hardworking employees”.*

#### 4.5.3 Theme 3: Incentives

In addition to the above, the study identified incentives as the most appropriate tool for measuring employees' performance in the University. Below are a few quotes that give effect to the research findings.

Participant 5 believed that:

*“I think the university is trying its best to motivate employees through incentives”.*

Participant 14 said that:

*“If one is doing a Ph.D., one is expected to do articles, and it's not easy to publish while teaching. The incentives should be based on teaching”.*

Participant 18 expressed that:

*“Currently, all incentives are determined unilaterally by the university; hence, I have not much to say because I do not have information on the yardstick used to set the level of incentives”.*

#### 4.6 Objective 3(c): Proposed incentive plans that drive performance

As part of objective three, the study further sought to investigate the incentive plans that drive employee performance within the University. Using the thematic analysis, the study identified the proposed incentives that drove employee performance in the University, including performance bonuses, professional recognition, staff monitoring, and employee participation. The findings are presented in Figure 4.5.

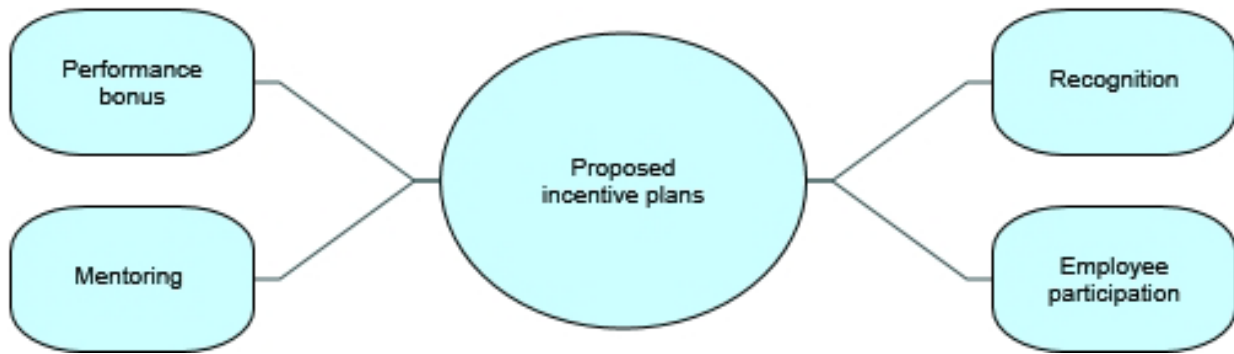


Figure 4.5: Proposed incentive plans that drive performance

#### 4.6.1 Theme 1: Performance bonus

From the interviews, it was discovered that most employees preferred a performance bonus as the most appropriate incentive plan that drives performance in the University. The following are a few quotes from the interviews that affirm the research findings.

Participant 4 mentioned that:

*“The employer should align the performance bonus with what I value as an individual”.*

Participant 7 argued that:

*“I think the most suitable incentive plan is a performance bonus. Staff who met or exceeded their performance targets should be rewarded adequately”.*

#### 4.6.2 Theme 2: Employee monitoring

The study further proposed that employee monitoring was the best incentive plan that drove the University's performance. It was recommended that the University should regularly monitor employee performance to ensure that targets are met.

Participant 5 said that:

*“There should be regular monitoring of staff performance quarterly”.*

Participant 6 believed that:

*“For me, I would recommend that employees' performance be monitored regularly to determine whether they are meeting the performance targets”.*

#### 4.6.3 Theme 3: Employee recognition

The study proposed that employee recognition played an essential role in driving performance in the organization. It was found that most university staff members preferred professional recognition compared to other incentive plans. Here are a few quotes from the interview that support the research findings.

Participant 1 suggested that:

*“Research should be done on what academia needs and focus on professional recognition that is monetary”.*

Participant 4 said that:

*“Suppose a staff member is exceptional in only teaching and learning or only in research and has not contributed in other categories, e.g., service to University. In that case, I think a formula ought to be developed for remuneration in a particular area. In the current system, staff must perform in all areas, which is extremely difficult to achieve”.*

Participant 8 indicated that:

*“I can only think of making incentives visible, which will make employees know what they are working for”.*

Participant 10 believed that:

*“Recognition from line managers management from the lower level I must appreciate them that will assist them in doing more”.*

#### 4.6.4 Theme 4: Employee participation

The study identified employee participation as one of the incentive plans that drove the University's performance. The participants argued that they should be involved in the decision-making process that pertains to goal setting process. The following are some of the iterative voices of the participants that support the research findings.

Participant 4 argued that:

*“Employee participation in setting goals, incentive criteria, and incentives”.*

Participants 14 believed that:

*“I would recommend that employees be involved in goal setting process. This is because it will enable them to be aware of the organization's expectations. Moreover, employee participation will serve as a valuable means of motivating employees to achieve the overall performance targets”.*

4.7 Objective 3(d): Method to ensure that the financial incentives is aligned to performance

Moreover, part of the objective three aimed to identify the method that can be used to ensure that the financial incentives is aligned to performance achieved. Based on the thematic analysis, the study identified equal distribution of work and outstanding performance bonus. These findings are presented in Figure 4.6 below.



Figure 4.6: Method to ensure that the financial incentives is aligned to performance

#### 4.7.1 Theme 1: Equal distribution of work

The participants proposed that to ensure that financial incentives are aligned to performance achieved, work must be distributed evenly or equally among all employees. The following quotes give effect to the research findings.

Participant 4 believed that:

*“The work should be distributed equally”.*

Participant 7 noted that:

*“Whatever work is distributed, it must be done fairly. No employee should be allowed to perform a job more than other colleagues. If this happens, extra remuneration in overtime pay or performance bonus should be offered to the employee”.*

#### 4.7.2 Theme 2: Performance bonus

Moreover, the study discovered that employees should receive performance bonuses for outstanding performance. The participants believed that when people are rewarded for high performance, this motivates them to commit to their job. Therefore, this can translate into an increase in employee and organisational performance. Below are some of the quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 13 said that:

*“The more one performs, the more one should get the incentive”.*

Participant 15 indicated that:

*“Whatever incentive is provided, it should enable the goals of the institution to be achieved. It also should result in employee motivation and employee welfare”.*

Participant 17 expressed that:

*“It must be done correctly, and they must award what they deserve and must correspond with what they did”.*

Lazear (2001) suggests that performance-related pay is a method of compensation in which employees are being paid according to their performance. Performance-related pay drivers are a part of a recompense system that is based on bonuses and incentive compensation for high-class performance.

#### 4.8 Objective 4: Appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff to drive employees’ performance

The last objectives explored the appropriate recognition plans acceptable to staff to drive employees’ performance. To achieve this objective, several objectives were further formulated and investigated. An aspect of objective four examined the proposed recognition plans adopted by the University. Based on the interviews, the participants have proposed several recognition plans to be adopted by the University, including departmental lunch, promotion, regular training and follow-up, certificates of appreciation, and awards. These findings are presented in Figure 4.7 below. The findings are presented in the subsequent sections.

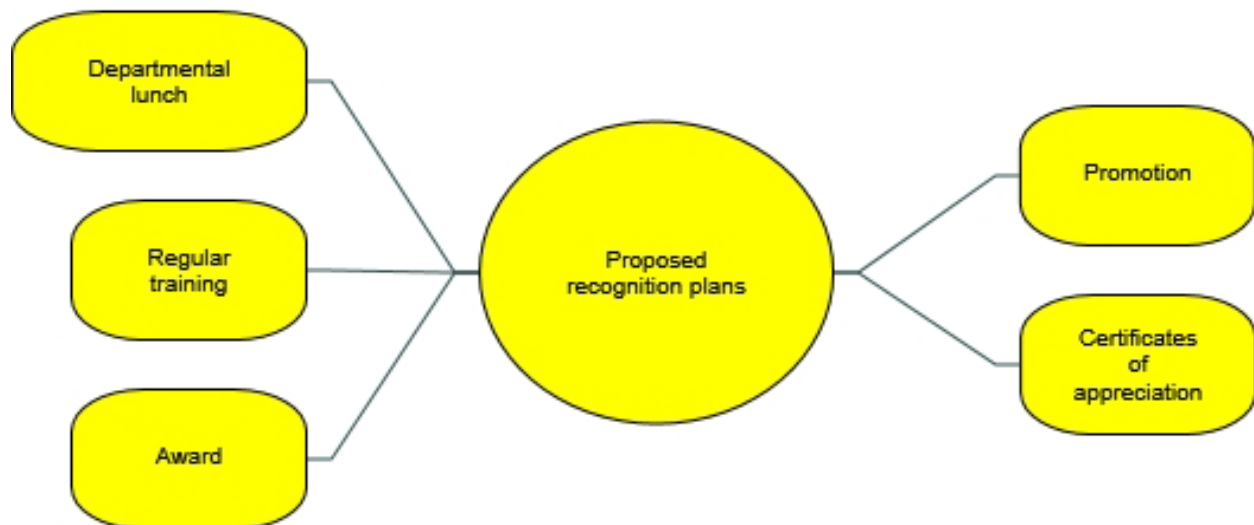


Figure 4.7: Proposed recognition plans to be adopted by the University

#### 4.8.1 Theme 1: Provision of lunch

The participants proposed that their departments should provide lunch as a form of recognition plan to increase performance. The following are some of the quotes that support the findings.

Participant 3 said that:

*“Lunch at the departmental level and buy gifts. Do the same done at research awards, in teaching and learning.”*

Participant 12 indicated that:

*“The institution should provide a canteen or cafeteria for all employees to serve as a motivational tool”.*

#### 4.8.2 Theme 2: Regular training and follow-up

The participants have proposed the University should organise training regularly and do a follow-up. They argued that training would help equip them with the skills and experience required to perform the job. The following are a few quotes from the interviews that reaffirm the research findings.

Participant 1 indicated that:

*“I would recommend regular training and follow-ups”*

Participant 3 mentioned that:

*I think most of us prefer opportunities for training and development. This will help us acquire the knowledge, skills, and experiences needed for the job.*

#### 4.8.3 Theme 3: Recognition awards

From the interviews, the majority of the participants proposed that the University should institute recognition awards to encourage employees to meet their performance targets.

They further added that recognition awards for teaching and research would help position the University at the cutting edge.

Participant 5 said that:

*“Acknowledgment by way of awards”.*

Participant 10 indicated that:

*“Ones are good teaching and learning awards, research awards, Long service awards; however, each award should be associated with a remunerative value. In some instances, there are vouchers of R500 for a research award, for example. Every identifiable award or achievement ought to have an equivalent monetary value”.*

Participant 12 expressed that:

*“I think the university is currently using the recognition plans I know, and those are; Bonuses and work anniversaries”.*

The findings from this study are supported by previous research. For instance, Sethi (2020) proposes that employees should be recognized for their effective performance, substantial accomplishments, and major contributions to the organization. It might be any gesture from the employer that comes at the perfect time. Employees would be motivated to maintain or improve their performance if they received a word of thanks from their bosses. Moreover, Jeni et al. (2020) recommend that companies should recognise the unique efforts of employees as well as successes in order to raise their morale and further inspire them to offer their all.

#### 4.8.4 Theme 4: Promotion

The participants have proposed that opportunities for promotion should be made available to all staff. They further expressed that promotion would help inspire confidence in the employees, which will, in turn, contribute to an increase in employee performance. Below are a few quotes from the interviews that affirm the research findings.

Participant 1 indicated that:

*“Look at promotions in terms of teaching and learning”.*

Participant 3 said that:

*“Academic promotion is a critical enhancement to the current approach regarding the requirements. Give an equal opportunity, not only focus on publications but also consider experience”.*

Participant 4 believed that:

*“I think more opportunities for academic promotion should be made available for staff. This will help attract and retain qualified staff”.*

#### 4.8.5 Theme 5: Certificate of appreciation

The found proposed that a certificate of appreciation be given to staff who have performed beyond the performance targets. The following are some of the quotes that support the research findings.

Participant 6 indicated that:

*“Recognition should not be a once-of-year activity. It can range from saying “Thank you” to providing recognition certificates awards to financial and other incentives (holiday). But the incentive should increase the motivation of the employee”.*

Employee appreciation has had a key influence in improving employee engagement levels. It has been argued that companies employ appreciation as one of the most efficacious reward techniques to encourage employees (Orajaka, 2021). Therefore, Orajaka (2021) recommends that for companies to improve their performance, employee must be appreciated for their efforts or contribution towards the organisation.

#### 4.9 Conclusion

The chapter presented the findings that were obtained from the empirical research. Objective one investigated the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance in the University. The overall findings showed a strong link between performance incentives and employees' performance. It was found that financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses influenced the employees to work harder

to meet the performance targets. Moreover, the study revealed that the possibility of promotion has made staff in the University to work harder because it leads to an increase in salary. Objective two analysed the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance within the University. Based on the findings, it was found that recognition plans play a pivotal role in employee motivation. The findings revealed that staff recognition for special accomplishments, career service, research output and teaching and learning influenced employee performance. Moreover, it was found that these recognition plans helped create a conducive working environment. In addition, the findings suggested that recognition motivates, provided a sense of accomplishment and made employees feel valued for their work. Besides, the study probed the participants on whether the recognition plans instituted by the University impact employee job satisfaction and motivation and it was discovered that the recognition plans played critical role in employee jobs satisfaction and motivation.

Objective three examined the appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance in the University. To achieve this objective, the study probed the participants on what method to use to ensure that the assessment criteria are aligned with the university's overall goals. It was suggested that line managers should discuss with each staff under his/her charge the job description and what is required to be performing exceptionally well that will warrant awards like performance bonuses. Also, the study proposed that the key performance indicators must be recognised. Moreover, the participants expressed that employee engagement was one of the appropriate incentives acceptable to staff to drive performance. Besides, the study discovered that employee involvement in goal setting process constituted an essential strategy for aligning the University's overall goals with employee performance.

Moreover, the study sought to identify whether there is a better method of measuring employee's performance and giving incentives than is currently implemented. The study found that line managers support was one of the best methods for measuring employees performance. The study further showed that performance bonuses served as one of the most appropriate methods for measuring employees' performance. As part of objective

three, the study further sought to investigate the incentive plans that drive employee performance within the University. Using the thematic analysis, the study identified the proposed incentives that drove employee performance in the University, including performance bonuses, professional recognition, staff monitoring, and employee participation. Furthermore, part of objective three aimed to identify the method that can be used to ensure that the financial incentives is aligned to performance achieved. Based on the thematic analysis, the study identified equal distribution of work and outstanding performance bonus as the methods that can be used to ensure that financial incentives are aligned with employees' actual performance.

The last objectives explored the appropriate recognition plans acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance. To achieve this objective, several objectives were further formulated and investigated. An aspect of objective four examined the proposed recognition plans adopted by the University. Based on the interviews, the participants have proposed several recognition plans to be adopted by the University, including departmental lunch, promotion, regular training and follow-up, certificates of appreciation, and awards.

## CHAPTER FIVE: SUMMARY, CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

### 5.1 Introduction

The previous chapter was on data presentation, interpretation and analysis. This chapter deals with the summary of findings outlined in chapter 4. The chapter further concludes the study and provides recommendations to be considered and the gap for further research. The main objectives of the study were:

1. To examine the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance at the University.
2. To analyse the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance at the University .
3. To identify appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at the University.
4. To identify appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at the University

The study followed the Herzberg theoretical framework. The research adopted the interview method in order to gather the views of the participants. The sample was drawn from form different academic levels in the Faculty of Commerce, Administration and Law.

### 5.2 Summary of Findings

This section provides a brief summary of the findings based on the objectives of the study. Subsequently the findings are used to do conclusion and to further provide appropriate recognitions.

#### 5.2.1 Objective 1: Impact of performance incentives on employees' performance

Objective 1 investigated the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance in the University. The overall findings showed a strong link between performance incentives and employees' performance. The participants expressed that

financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses made them work harder to meet the performance targets set by the University. Moreover, the participants indicated that the possibility of promotion has made them work harder because it leads to an increase in salary.

#### 5.2.2 Objective 2: Effect of recognition plans on employees' performance

Objective 2 analysed the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance within the University. Based on the findings, it was found that recognition plans play a pivotal role in employee motivation. The participants pointed out that staff recognition for special accomplishments, career service, research output, teaching and learning, and so on were very important. Moreover, the participants indicated that these recognition plans help create a conducive working environment. In addition, the findings suggested that Recognition motivates, provides a sense of accomplishment and makes employees feel valued for their work. It has further been discovered that Recognition not only boosts individual employee engagement but it also has been found to increase productivity, performance, and loyalty to the company, leading to higher retention.

#### 5.2.3 Objective 3: Appropriate incentives acceptable to staff to drive performance

Objective three examined the appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance in the University. The participants argued that line managers must discuss with each staff under his/her charge the job description and what is required to be performing exceptionally well that will warrant awards like performance bonuses. Other participants have indicated that the key performance indicators must be recognised. Moreover, the participants expressed that employee engagement was one of the appropriate approaches acceptable to staff to drive performance

#### 5.2.4 Objective 4: Appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance

The last objectives explored the appropriate recognition plans acceptable to staff to drive employees' performance. Based on the interviews, the participants have proposed several recognition plans to be adopted by the University, including departmental lunch, promotion, regular training and follow-up, certificates of appreciation, and awards.

### 5.3 Recommendations

This study makes the following recommendations:

Based on the findings that performance incentives and recognition have a positive impact on performance improvement, the researcher submits the following recommendations for consideration

- The University should consider both financial and non-financial rewards in order to improve performance. From the results, it is evident that not everyone is motivated by money.
- The University should look at its Promotion policy and include other aspects as requirements for promotion.
- The University should consider other forms of recognition starting at a departmental level up until the University level.
- The Management team of the university needs to also look into the size of the performance bonus to differentiate top performers to non-performers.

### 5.4 Limitation of the study

The presented study is solely focused on one Faculty out of four Faculties within the institution. Even though the current study has useful results, it cannot be ignored that there are limitations as well in that the results cannot be generalised.

### 5.5. Suggestion for further studies

- This study focused on one Faculty at the University in Kwazulu – Natal. A further study can be conducted to include other faculties or also include Professional Services staff.
- A Similar study can be conducted at other Universities in a different province in order to compare between institutions, provinces and for valid conclusions to be made nation-wide.
- A study can be conducted to review HR policies around the issues of performance incentives and recognition plans.

### 5.6 Conclusion

From the foregoing it is evident that the Management need to also pay attention to recognition plan and the manner in which the incentives are paid to differentiate the best performer to the non-performer. The aim of the study was to investigate if the incentive plans and recognition plans given to the employees at the Faculty drive performance. The results showed a strong link between performance incentives and employees' performance. It was found that financial incentives in the form of performance bonuses influenced the employees to work harder to meet the performance targets.

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## Appendix I

### INTERVIEW QUESTIONNAIRE

#### Section A: Demographic factors

This section asks you some basic background information. The information you provide will be used to determine any significant differences in opinions between groups, and will not identify you as an individual.

Tick in the box most applicable to you:

What is your gender?	Male	Female			
What is your racial group?	African	Coloured	White	Indian	
What is your age?	19-29	30-39	40-49	50-59	60+
Which of the following best describes your highest level of education?	Degree	Masters	PhD/Doctorate	Other	

If you indicated other, please elaborate:

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How long have you been working for your current employer?	0 - 2 years	3-6 years	7-9 years	10 years +
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#### Section B, Objective 1: To examine the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance at University of Zululand.

*Understanding impact of performance incentives on employees' performance at University of Zululand*

- Could you please explain what impact does financial incentives have on improving performance?
- May you explain what role is played by financial incentives on increasing job satisfaction?
- What impact does financial incentives have on employee motivation?
- May you please explain if the size of the incentive reward matters?

#### Section C, Objective 2: To analyse the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance at University of Zululand.

*Understanding the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance at University of Zululand.*

- May you please explain what role do recognition plans play in improving your performance?

- May you explain what role is played by recognition on increasing job satisfaction?
- What impact does recognition plans have on employee motivation?
- Would you strive to reach your targets without any recognition being offered?

**Section D, Objective 3: To identify appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at University of Zululand.**

*Understanding appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at University of Zululand.*

- What method can be used in ensuring that the assessment criteria is aligned with the University overall goals?
- Do you feel that there is a better method of measuring your performance and giving Incentives than is currently implemented?
- What can you propose to the University of Zululand in ensuring that the incentive plans drive performance?
- What method can be used to ensure that the recognition plans are aligned to performance achieved?

**Section D, Objective 4: To identify appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at University of Zululand.**

*Understanding appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at University of Zululand.*

- What recognition plans can you suggest the University should employ?
- What can you propose to the University of Zululand in ensuring that the recognition plans drive performance?
- How frequent would you suggest the recognition should be given to employees?
- What method can be used to ensure that the financial incentives is aligned to performance achieved?

**Thank you very much for your time**

## Appendix II

### LETTER TO PARTICIPANTS

Dear Participant,

I am currently enrolled for Masters in Business Management at the University of Zululand, and am in the process of writing my Master's dissertation.

I hereby invite you to participate in a research study entitled ***Investigating the role of Performance Incentives in driving Performance at a Faculty from a Comprehensive University in KwaZulu-Natal***

The purpose of the study is to examine if the incentive plans and recognition plans given to the employees at the University of Zululand drive performance. This study intends to recommend practical incentive and recognition plans that can be used to drive performance.

The following are the key objectives that this study seeks to achieve:

- ✓ To examine the impact of performance incentives on employees' performance at the University
- ✓ To analyse the effect of recognition plans on employees' performance at the University
- ✓ To identify appropriate incentives that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at the University
- ✓ To identify appropriate recognition plans that will be acceptable to staff in order to drive employees' performance at the University

During the interview process, the interview will be recorded to ensure that all responses are captured and you have a right to indicate if you are not comfortable with being recorded. Please further note that your participation in this research is completely voluntary. You may decline altogether, or indicate if you don't wish to answer certain questions.

Your responses will remain confidential and your identity will remain anonymous. The data from this research will be kept under lock and key and reported only as a collective combined total. No one other than the researcher will know your individual answers to these interview questions. It should take approximately 15 minutes to complete the interview.

Thank you for your assistance in this important endeavour.

Yours sincerely,



---

**Vincent Lindisipho Mbukwana**

**CONSENT FOR THE STUDY PARTICIPANT**

I acknowledge that the research study described above has been explained to me. I have read the statements in this letter of information and confirm that the study information and procedures have been explained to me during the consent discussion. I have had the opportunity to ask questions about the study and any questions that I have asked have been answered to my satisfaction. I have been informed of the alternatives to participation in this study, including the right not to consent to participate and the right to withdraw.

I know that I may ask now, or in the future, any questions I have about the study or the research procedures. I have been assured that records relating to my participation will be kept confidential and that no information will be released or printed that would disclose my identity. I have been given sufficient time to read and understand the above information.

I hereby consent to participate and I will be given a copy of this consent.

---

Signature of Participant

---

Name of Participant (Please print)

---

Date

## TURNIT IN REPORT

Investigating the role of Performance Incentives in driving Performance at a Faculty from a Comprehensive University in KwaZulu Natal

## ORIGINALITY REPORT

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## ETHICAL CLEARANCE

**UNIVERSITY OF ZULULAND  
RESEARCH ETHICS COMMITTEE**  
(Reg No: UZREC 171110-030)

**RESEARCH & INNOVATION**

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**ETHICAL CLEARANCE CERTIFICATE**

Certificate Number	UZREC 171110-030 PGM 2021/140			
Project Title	Investigating the role of Performance Incentives in driving Performance at a Faculty from a Comprehensive University in KwaZulu-Natal			
Principal Researcher/ Investigator	V.L Mbukwana			
Supervisor and Co- supervisor	Dr A.O Ayandibu			
Department	Business Management			
Faculty	Commerce, Administration and Law			
Type of Risk	Medium Risk- Data collection from people			
Nature of Project	Honours/4 <sup>th</sup> Year	Master's	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	Doctoral
				Departmental

The University of Zululand's Research Ethics Committee (UZREC) hereby gives ethical approval in respect of the undertakings contained in the above-mentioned project. The Researcher may therefore commence with data collection as from the date of this Certificate, using the certificate number indicated above.

**SPECIAL CONDITIONS:** (1) This certificate is valid for 1 year from the date of issue.  
(2) Principal researcher must provide an annual report to the UZREC in the prescribed format [due date- 29 April 2023]  
(3) The UZREC must be informed immediately of any material change in the conditions or undertakings mentioned in the documents that were presented to the meeting.  
(4) Under the Protection of Personal Information Act, 04 of 2013 ("POPIA"), researchers have a general legal duty to protect information they process. They must ensure the security and protection of any personal information processed through the research and provide a compliant and consistent approach to data protection. The information collected via interviews must be for research purposes only. No personal information such as opinions, views and academic background may be linked to the respondents' identity or shared with anyone for marketing purposes or otherwise.

The UZREC wishes the researcher well in conducting research.

  
Prof. Nokuthula Kunene  
Chairperson: University Research Ethics Committee  
Deputy Vice-Chancellor: Research & Innovation  
29 April 2022



LANGUAGE EDITING CERTIFICATE

**EDITING CERTIFICATE**

**5 Swiftcourt, Edge Road, Beacon Bay, East London, 5200**

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**TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN**

This certifies that the dissertation whose title appears below has been edited for proper English language, grammar, punctuation, spelling and overall style by Cynthia Formson. Cynthia has an editing certificate from the University of Cape Town.

**Title:** Investigating the role of Performance Incentives in driving Performance at a Faculty from a Comprehensive University in KwaZulu-Natal

**Author:** Vincent Lindisipho Mbukwana

**Date:** April 2022

**Signed**



Cynthia Formson (B.A. Soc Sc; Hon. English; MA TOEFL; MA Linguistics, Cert. Copy Editing)