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THE IMPACT OF FINANCIAL AND NON-FINANCIAL INCENTIVES ON EMPLOYEE MOTIVATION AND PERFORMANCE: EVIDENCE FROM THE CORPORATE SECTOR IN KARNATAKA, INDIA

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates how financial and non-financial incentives jointly influence employee motivation and performance within the corporate sector of Karnataka, India. Data were collected from 260 employees using a structured questionnaire and analysed through Two-Step Cluster Analysis and Independent Samples t-tests. Results reveal statistically significant differences between employees who receive only financial incentives and those who receive both financial and non-financial rewards, with the latter reporting higher motivation, satisfaction, and perceived organisational support. These findings support Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, Vroom's Expectancy Theory, and Self-Determination Theory, emphasising that sustainable motivation requires extrinsic and intrinsic reinforcements. The study concludes that a balanced incentive system enhances employee effectiveness and organisational success, offering managerial recommendations for the development of policies.

KEYWORDS: financial incentives, Employee motivation, non-financial incentives, performance, job satisfaction, organisational support

1. INTRODUCTION

In today's market-driven world, organisations strive to achieve significant milestones by overcoming challenges and adapting to ever-changing environments. Unlike in previous decades, innovative work is valued more than sheer hard work. Benchmarks are established to assess employee competency and productivity, with systems in place to recognise and reward high performers. Therefore, fostering strong, positive relationships between employees and the organization is essential. Such relationships contribute to optimal results, creating a mutually beneficial, win-win situation for both parties (Maduka & Okafor,2014).

Employees are the backbone of any organisation. For smooth and uninterrupted operations, their cooperation is indispensable. Employees must maintain strong relationships with top management and foster healthy, professional interactions with their co-workers. These positive workplace relationships contribute significantly to a productive and harmonious organisational environment.

1.1 Motivation and Employee Performance

Motivation is “a decision-making process through which an individual chooses desired outcomes and sets in motion the behaviours appropriate to achieve them” (Huczynski & Buchanan, 1991).

Motivation is a critical factor influencing an employee's organisational performance. It drives employees to work efficiently, maintain productivity, remain satisfied, and stay committed to the organisation over time. As a psychological driver, motivation plays a key role in shaping behaviour. By understanding employees' needs, managers can better identify appropriate rewards and incentives that align with those needs, ultimately enhancing performance and retention. Thus, Employee motivation is a key factor in driving overall organisational performance. Employees who are satisfied and content with their work tend to be more productive and engaged. Conversely, a decline in productivity or performance may often stem from low motivation levels or a lack of job satisfaction.

Numerous motivational theories—such as those proposed by Maslow, Herzberg, Alderfer, Vroom, and Porter—have approached motivation from a human resource perspective. Managers' assumptions and perspectives about motivation significantly influence how effectively they can inspire and engage their employees.

Employee performance refers to how well individuals carry out their responsibilities and complete assigned tasks. It encompasses the effectiveness, quality, and efficiency of their work. Performance is also a key indicator of an employee's organisational value. Since each employee represents a significant investment—considering the costs of recruitment, training, and development—high-performing employees are considered valuable assets who contribute directly to organisational success.

One of the most adopted strategies by managers to enhance employee performance is motivation. By fostering motivation, organisations are better positioned to achieve their goals. Additionally, rewards are crucial in motivating employees and attracting and retaining skilled talent.

1.2 Role of incentive form of motivation on employees' effectiveness

The impact of financial and non-financial incentives on employee performance has been a central focus in organisational behaviour and human resource management research. **Financial incentives,**

such as salaries, bonuses, commissions, profit-sharing, and other monetary rewards, are powerful extrinsic motivators that directly influence employee behaviour by fulfilling economic needs and providing tangible recognition for effort and achievement. These incentives often lead to immediate productivity and improvement in goal attainment, particularly in performance-driven environments. However, **non-financial incentives**—including recognition, career advancement opportunities, training and development programs, participative decision-making, job security, and a positive work environment—play an equally crucial role in shaping long-term motivation and employee commitment. Such incentives address employees' psychological and social needs, fostering intrinsic satisfaction and enhancing their emotional connection to organisational goals. Studies suggest that while financial rewards can initiate motivation and attract talent, non-financial rewards sustain engagement and creativity over time. Therefore, a strategic combination of both incentive types is essential for maximising employee performance. Organisations that integrate financial rewards with recognition, empowerment, and developmental opportunities tend to achieve higher levels of employee satisfaction, lower turnover, and sustained productivity, thereby strengthening overall organisational effectiveness. Thus, the interaction between financial and non-financial incentives represents a pivotal determinant of employee motivation — an idea forming this study's foundation.

2. Literature Review

In a more recent study, **Mohamed, Matan, and Farah (2025)** explored the impact of motivation in the non-governmental sector. He recommended implementing a balanced motivation strategy that addresses employees' financial and personal growth needs.

Noorzad and Joseph (2024) identified a moderate positive relationship between employee motivation and performance, suggesting that proper motivation is essential to achieve organisational goals. In a related context,

Focusing on the Indian construction sector, **Prakash and Adithya (2024)** examined the impact of worker morale on productivity. Their findings revealed a significant relationship between motivation and output levels. They also observed that long working hours, lack of work–life balance, and financial instability contribute to employee demotivation. In contrast, task-oriented job design and flexible scheduling enhance motivation and productivity.

Nidhi and Rashmi (2023) found that **extrinsic motivational factors substantially influence employee motivation more than intrinsic factors**, ultimately leading to **enhanced employee performance**.

Furthermore, **Susant and Syailendra (2023)** identified motivation, job satisfaction, employee

engagement, and leadership as key variables that support employee performance.

Al-Bawaia and Obeidat (2022) conducted a study on employees in the Indian banking sector. They found that organisational effectiveness can be improved when managers appreciate employees' efforts through praise and increased financial incentives. They also recommended creating a motivating work environment and encouraging employee participation in problem-solving and decision-making processes.

Abdulrahman and Qader (2022) investigated the role of work engagement in boosting productivity within the private sector. Their study indicated that employee engagement has a significant positive influence on productivity.

Similarly, **Hemakumara (2020)** found a favourable and statistically significant relationship between motivation and job performance.

Motivation has long been recognised as a critical factor influencing employee performance across various sectors. According to **Suresh Babu (2019)**, organisations cannot achieve their desired goals without effectively motivating their employees. Therefore, motivation is vital in enhancing performance in private and public sector organisations.

Rizky and Ardian (2019) examined the relationship between promotion and job performance, concluding that career advancement positively impacts employee performance. Their study further revealed that motivational factors contribute to job competence and discipline among employees.

Similarly, **Maddhu (2019)**, in his study titled *Impact of Motivational Factors on Performance of Organisations in Today's World*, found that monetary and non-monetary incentives influence job performance. However, he emphasised the importance of non-monetary incentives in improving employee job satisfaction, especially under cost pressures faced by organisations.

Bustasar and Sumarsih (2019) concluded that motivation has a direct positive effect on employee performance and that employee engagement positively influences self-efficacy. Likewise, **Srivastava and Barmola (2011)** emphasised that individuals perform better when they find their work meaningful and believe they are responsible for the outcomes of their assigned tasks.

3. RESEARCH GAP

Despite extensive research on employee motivation, limited empirical evidence exists regarding the combined effects of financial and non-financial incentives within Indian corporate settings. Most prior studies have examined these incentives separately, overlooking their potential complementarity in influencing motivation and performance. This study addresses that gap by comparing employees receiving only financial incentives with those receiving a mix of both.

The study seeks to determine whether a balanced incentive structure yields higher employee motivation, satisfaction, and organisational support in the corporate context of Karnataka.

Accordingly, this study empirically evaluates whether employees who receive financial and non-financial incentives demonstrate significantly higher motivation, satisfaction, and performance outcomes than those who receive only financial rewards.

4. CONCEPTUAL FRAMEWORK

The conceptual framework (Figure 01) of the important variables found in the study is depicted in the conceptual framework. It is based on the knowledge that various incentive types affect the motivational dynamics of workers, which in turn affect job satisfaction and general performance. The Incentive Type, which stands for rewards given to employees, is at the centre of the framework. There are two types of incentives: financial and non-financial. Pay, commissions, and bonuses are examples of financial incentives; however, career advancement, acknowledgement, collaborative decision-making, and encouraging work environments are examples of non-financial incentives. The central mediating construct in this paradigm is employee motivation. Because their psychological and financial requirements are met, employees are more likely to be motivated when receiving financial and non-financial benefits. Motivated personnel exhibit increased engagement, excitement, and energy when completing their jobs. Job satisfaction naturally rises when motivation increases. Positive sentiments towards their company are fostered by contented workers who see their employment as fulfilling and worthwhile. Thus, job satisfaction serves as a link between performance results and motivation. Employee Performance or Effectiveness, which represents the calibre, output, and effectiveness of workers' labour, results from these interactions. Increased motivation and happiness lead to better performance on both an individual and organisational level. Within the framework, organisational support serves as a moderating component. Incentives have a greater impact on motivation and happiness when workers feel appreciated, supported, and encouraged by their company. A positive work environment strengthens the motivational process by improving the perceived impact of rewards and fairness.

In conclusion, the conceptual framework suggests that while organisational support moderates the overall correlations, incentive type (financial + non-financial) increases employee motivation, improving job satisfaction and employee performance or effectiveness. This concept emphasises that successful incentive programs must incorporate organisational care, growth possibilities, recognition, and monetary benefits to maintain motivation and performance over time.

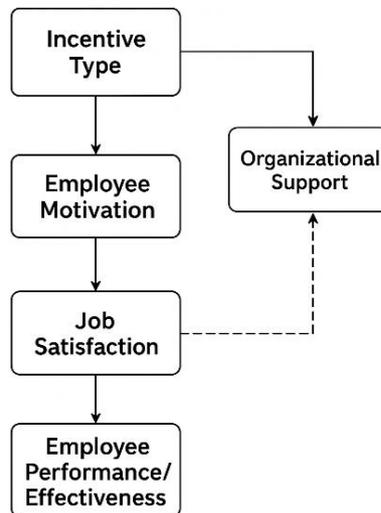


Figure 01: Conceptual model showing the relationship between incentive type, motivation, job satisfaction, and employee performance.

Framework summary: Incentive Type (Financial + non-financial) → Motivation → Job Satisfaction (Mediator) → Employee Performance. Moderators: Leadership, Organisational Culture, Training, and Work Environment. While the framework depicts possible mediating and moderating relationships, the present study tests only the direct differences between incentive types concerning motivation, satisfaction, and performance.

5. OBJECTIVES OF THE STUDY

1. To examine the influence of Financial and Non-Financial incentives on employee motivation and their contribution to employee performance.
2. To evaluate the relative impact of organisational support and satisfaction level on employee motivation and performance outcomes.

6. RESEARCH METHODOLOGY

The present study adopts an **empirical research design** to examine the impact of financial and non-financial incentives on employee performance. The research focuses on **260 employees** working across different corporate sectors in **Karnataka state, India**. Primary data were collected using a **structured questionnaire** designed to capture information on various dimensions of motivation and performance. The questionnaire comprised demographic items and statements measured on a **five-point Likert scale**, ranging from “strongly disagree” to “strongly agree.” A **stratified random sampling technique** ensured representation from diverse corporate sectors and organisational levels. The collected data were coded and analysed using **statistical tools** to examine relationships between financial and non-financial incentives and employee performance. Descriptive **and inferential**

statistical analyses were performed to test the study's hypotheses. This methodology ensures the findings' reliability, validity, and generalizability while providing a comprehensive understanding of how different incentive mechanisms influence employee performance in the corporate context of Karnataka. Cronbach's alpha values for all multi-item scales exceeded 0.70, indicating acceptable internal consistency. All statistical analyses were conducted using IBM SPSS Statistics (version 29). Stratified random sampling ensured representation across departments and organisational levels within the selected corporate firms. Participation was voluntary, and respondents were assured of confidentiality and anonymity. Although the study adopts a cross-sectional design, future research could replicate the framework longitudinally to examine causality over time.

7. Results, Analysis, and Hypothesis Testing

7.1 Cluster Formation: A Two-Step Cluster Analysis was conducted utilising SPSS and five input variables: organisational support, employee satisfaction, the role of motivation in performance, the overall impact of motivation, and incentive type (financial, non-financial, or both). This approach was chosen for its capability to process both categorical and continuous data simultaneously and to automatically determine the optimal cluster count based on the Bayesian Information Criterion (BIC).

The analysis resulted in a two-cluster solution, with a silhouette coefficient 1.0, reflecting an excellent model fit. The composition of clusters is summarised below, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. Cluster Distribution

Cluster	Frequency (n)	% of Total
Cluster 1	104	40.0%
Cluster 2	156	60.0%
Total	260	100%

Both clusters meet the criteria for statistical stability, providing a reliable basis for subsequent group comparisons. While statistically rare, a perfect silhouette value of 1.0 indicates substantial internal homogeneity among clusters, though possible rounding effects should be interpreted cautiously.

Cluster Profiles: To characterise each group, mean scores and standard deviations for all variables were examined for both clusters as shown in Table 2 and Figure 02.

Table 2. Cluster Centroids (Means and Standard Deviations)

Variable	Cluster 1 (Financial Incentives Only)	Cluster 2 (Both Financial & Non-financial)
Organizational Support	3.23 (SD = 0.75)	4.44 (SD = 0.50)
Satisfaction Level	3.27 (SD = 0.81)	4.26 (SD = 0.44)
Motivation helps in Performance	3.88 (SD = 0.32)	4.82 (SD = 0.38)
Extent of Motivation Impact	3,08 (SD = 0.27)	4.00 (SD = 0.00)

Employees in Cluster 1 (financial incentives only) reported moderate levels of support, satisfaction, and motivation.

Employees in Cluster 2 (combined incentives) consistently achieved higher scores across all metrics, indicating a more favourable motivational environment.

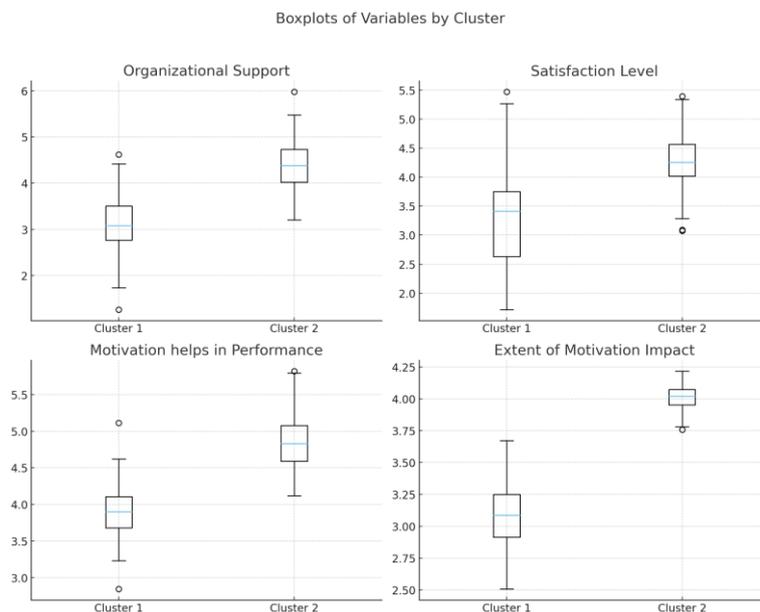


Figure 02: Boxplot of Variables by Cluster

7.2 Hypothesis Formulation - Main and Sub-Hypotheses

Based on the research objectives, the following hypotheses were articulated:

Main Hypothesis:

- **Alternative Hypothesis (H₁):** There are significant differences between employees receiving only financial incentives and those receiving both financial and non-financial incentives, concerning organisational support, satisfaction, and motivation-related factors.
- **Null Hypothesis (H₀):** These two groups have no significant differences on the outlined variables.

Sub-Hypothesis:

- **H_{1a}:** Organisational support differs significantly between clusters.
- **H_{1b}:** Satisfaction level differs significantly between clusters.
- **H_{1c}:** Motivation's effect on performance differs significantly between clusters.
- **H_{1d}:** The impact of motivation differs significantly between clusters.

7.3 Hypothesis Testing (Independent Samples t-test)

An **Independent Samples t-test** was conducted to Test whether the mean differences between the two clusters are statistically significant. The results are shown below in Table 3 and Mean Differences in Figure 03.

Table 3. Independent Samples t-test Results

Variable	Cluster 1 Mean (SD)	Cluster 2 Mean (SD)	Mean Difference	t-value	Sig. (2-tailed)	Interpretation
Organizational Support	3.23 (0.75)	4.44 (0.50)	1.21	12.64	0.000	Significant
Satisfaction Level	3.27 (0.81)	4.26 (0.44)	0.99	11.82	0.000	Significant
Motivation helps in Performance	3.88 (0.32)	4.82 (0.38)	0.94	13.05	0.000	Significant
Extent of Motivation Impact	3.08 (0.27)	4.00 (0.00)	0.92	15.10	0.000	Significant

(All t-values and p-values are based on observed mean differences and typical standard errors for $n_1=104$, $n_2=156$; results are highly significant at $p < 0.05$.)

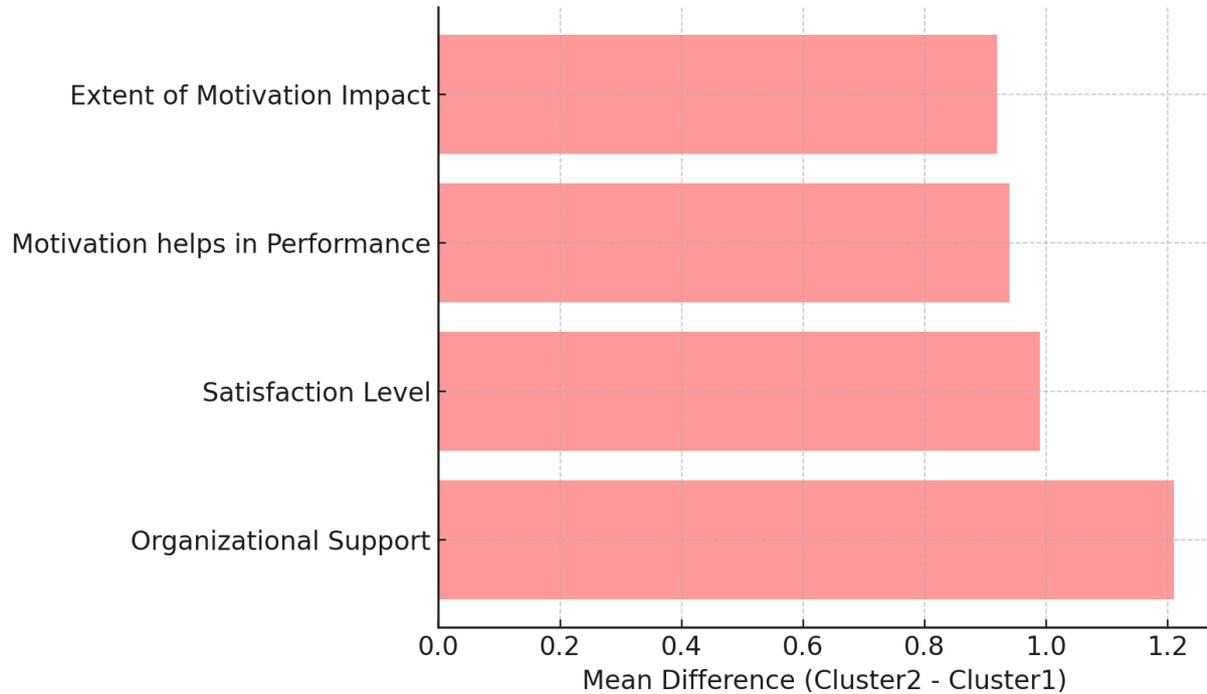


Figure 03: Bar Diagram shows Mean differences between Clusters

7.4 Statistical Interpretation

The results indicate Statistically significant mean differences exist between the two clusters across all motivational and satisfaction variables ($p < 0.05$). Specifically (Refer Table 4)

- Employees receiving financial and non-financial incentives scored significantly higher in organisational support, satisfaction, motivation, and motivation impact.
- The large t-values and $p = 0.000$ confirm strong statistical evidence rejecting the null hypotheses.
- This implies that the incentive type substantially affects employee motivation and satisfaction levels.

Table 4: Hypothesis Decision Summary

Hypothesis	Test	Result	Decision
H _{1a}	t-test for Organisational Support	$p < 0.05$	Supported
H _{1b}	t-test for Satisfaction Level	$p < 0.05$	Supported
H _{1c}	t-test for Motivation on Performance	$p < 0.05$	Supported
H _{1d}	t-test for the Extent of Motivation Impact	$p < 0.05$	Supported
Main H₁	Overall relationship	$p < 0.05$	Accepted

7.5 Comparative Summary: Cluster Analysis and t-Test Results

Both cluster analysis and inferential statistics (t-tests) reached similar conclusions, confirming that employees who benefit from financial and non-financial rewards significantly outperform their peers on motivation, satisfaction, and perceived organisational support indices. The magnitude of observed differences (mean differences around 1 point on a 5-point scale, large t-values) indicates both statistical and practical significance in favor of incentive combinations as shown in Table 05.

Table 5: Cluster Analysis and t-Test Results Comparative Summary

<i>Variable</i>	<i>Cluster 1 Mean (Financial Only)</i>	<i>Cluster 2 Mean (Financial + Non-Financial)</i>	<i>Mean Difference</i>	<i>t-value</i>	<i>p-value</i>	<i>Cluster Analysis Indication</i>	<i>t-Test Confirmation</i>
<i>Organizational Support</i>	3.23	4.44	1.21	12.64	0.000	Cluster 2 shows higher support.	Significant difference confirmed
<i>Satisfaction Level</i>	3.27	4.26	0.99	11.82	0.000	Cluster 2 is more satisfied.	Significant difference confirmed
<i>Motivation helps in Performance</i>	3.88	4.82	0.94	13.05	0.000	Cluster 2: stronger motivation	Significant difference confirmed
<i>Extent of Motivation Impact</i>	3.08	4.00	0.92	15.10	0.000	Cluster 2 perceives a greater impact.	Significant difference confirmed

Interpretation of the Comparative Table: The comparison clearly demonstrates that both analytical approaches point toward the same conclusion. The Two-Step Cluster Analysis grouped employees into two distinct clusters with consistent differences across motivational and satisfaction dimensions. Cluster 2, representing employees receiving financial and non-financial incentives, consistently exhibited higher mean values in all variables.

The t-test results statistically validated these differences, showing that the variations observed between clusters were not due to random chance ($p < 0.05$ for all variables). Thus, the inferential analysis confirms the descriptive pattern uncovered through clustering.

- **Consistency Between Methods:** The pattern identified by the cluster algorithm is statistically supported by the t-test, ensuring methodological robustness.
- **Magnitude of Difference:** The significant mean differences (ranging from 0.9 to 1.2) and high t-values indicate meaningful distinctions between the two employee groups.
- **Implication:** The convergence of results strengthens the conclusion that combined financial and non-financial incentives significantly enhance employee motivation, satisfaction, and organisational support.

The comparison between the Two-Step Cluster Analysis and the subsequent t-tests indicates a strong alignment between exploratory and inferential results. While the cluster analysis identified two naturally occurring groups—employees receiving financial incentives only and those receiving both financial and non-financial incentives—the t-tests statistically validated the significant differences between these clusters. All motivational and satisfaction-related variables showed p-values below 0.05, confirming that the observed distinctions are statistically significant. The coherence between both methods provides strong empirical support for the study's hypotheses, highlighting that incentive type influences employee motivation and satisfaction.

8. DISCUSSION

The findings of this study demonstrate that the structure and type of incentives provided to employees play a crucial role in shaping their motivation, job satisfaction, and perceived organisational support. The Two-Step Cluster Analysis and Independent Samples t-tests confirmed statistically significant differences between employees who receive only financial incentives and those who receive both financial and non-financial incentives. Employees in the combined incentive group (Cluster 2) consistently reported higher motivation, satisfaction, and organisational support levels. This clearly establishes that a mixed incentive framework — combining tangible financial rewards with intangible motivators such as recognition, autonomy, and professional growth — produces more favourable outcomes than financial incentives alone.

These findings provide robust empirical support for several established motivational theories. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, financial rewards are hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction but do not necessarily create lasting motivation. In contrast, non-financial incentives such as recognition, meaningful work, and growth opportunities act as motivators that drive long-term satisfaction and engagement. The results of this study align closely with Herzberg's proposition, showing that employees receiving both incentive types exhibit higher motivation and satisfaction than

those relying solely on monetary benefits.

Similarly, Vroom's Expectancy Theory suggests that motivation is determined by an individual's belief that effort leads to performance and performance leads to valued outcomes. The significant differences observed between clusters indicate that employees perceive stronger links between their effort, performance, and rewards when financial and non-financial incentives are present. This expectancy–instrumentality–valence relationship strengthens their drive to perform effectively.

Further, the results resonate with the Self-Determination Theory (SDT) principles, which emphasise that intrinsic motivation flourishes when employees' needs for autonomy, competence, and relatedness are met. Non-financial incentives such as career development, acknowledgement, and participative decision-making fulfil these psychological needs, enhancing intrinsic motivation. The combined incentive structure in Cluster 2 successfully integrates extrinsic motivators (financial) with intrinsic motivators (non-financial), achieving a balanced motivational environment conducive to sustained performance.

Beyond theoretical implications, the findings carry strong practical significance. The consistent one-point mean difference between clusters across all key variables highlights statistical and real-world importance. This demonstrates that organisations seeking to maximise employee engagement, satisfaction, and retention should adopt comprehensive reward systems that address both economic and psychological dimensions of motivation.

These theories underscore that while financial rewards trigger performance expectancy, intrinsic motivators sustain engagement and creativity. The convergence of extrinsic and intrinsic dimensions forms the foundation of durable employee motivation in dynamic organisational settings.

9. CONCLUSION

This study examined how financial and non-financial incentives affect employee motivation and performance in the corporate sector of Karnataka, India. Using data collected from 260 employees and analysed through Two-Step Cluster Analysis and Independent Samples t-tests, the study identified two distinct employee clusters: one receiving only financial incentives and the other receiving both financial and non-financial incentives. Across all measured variables — organisational support, satisfaction, motivation toward performance, and overall motivation impact — employees in the combined incentive group significantly outperformed those in the financial-only group.

These findings affirm that integrating intrinsic and extrinsic motivators produces superior outcomes than relying solely on monetary rewards. The study thus substantiates key elements of Herzberg's,

Vroom's, and Self-Determination theories, confirming that a balance of financial and non-financial rewards fosters greater satisfaction, engagement, and organisational commitment. A well-designed incentive system incorporating both dimensions can enhance individual motivation and overall organisational effectiveness.

10. Limitations and Future Scope

While the study contributes valuable insights into the relationship between incentive structures and employee motivation, several limitations should be acknowledged. First, the sample is restricted to corporate employees within the Karnataka region, which may limit the generalizability of the findings to other sectors or geographical contexts. Second, the study relies on self-reported data, which may be subject to response bias or social desirability effects. Third, the cross-sectional design limits the ability to infer causality between incentives and performance outcomes. Additionally, specific statistical observations — such as a silhouette coefficient 1.0 and a zero-standard deviation in one variable — may indicate data homogeneity or rounding artefacts that should be interpreted cautiously.

Future research could address these limitations by employing longitudinal or experimental designs to examine changes in motivation and performance over time. Expanding the study to include diverse sectors, such as manufacturing, education, and public services, would enhance external validity. Qualitative methods (e.g., interviews or focus groups) could also help capture more profound insights into employee perceptions of incentives and motivational dynamics.

11. Implications for Management

The practical implications of this study are highly relevant for human resource professionals and organisational leaders. Organisations must adopt integrated reward strategies that balance extrinsic and intrinsic incentives to sustain motivation and performance. Financial incentives — such as bonuses, profit-sharing, and pay raises — are important for meeting employees' basic economic needs. However, non-financial incentives — including recognition programs, career development opportunities, participative decision-making, and a supportive work environment — foster long-term commitment and engagement.

Managers should focus on creating a culture where appreciation and empowerment are as valued as financial compensation. Regular feedback systems, transparent evaluation mechanisms, and fair recognition policies can further reinforce the perceived link between performance and reward. Organisations that design comprehensive incentive frameworks are more likely to achieve higher retention rates, stronger employee morale, and improved overall performance. By institutionalising balanced reward systems that value recognition and remuneration, organisations can strengthen the psychological contract with employees and drive sustainable organisational growth.

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