

The Effect of Recognition and Appreciation on Employee Motivation and Performance

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Abstract

This study examines the dual effects of recognition and appreciation on employee motivation and performance. It aims to address how these elements influence workplace dynamics and explore practical strategies for implementing sustainable recognition and appreciation systems across various organizational contexts. Utilizing a qualitative systematic literature review approach, this research synthesizes findings from recent studies to analyze the roles of recognition and appreciation. The study integrates theoretical frameworks such as Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Self-Determination Theory to understand their impact on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation comprehensively. The study reveals that recognition significantly enhances extrinsic motivation by validating employees' contributions, fostering a sense of achievement, and encouraging task completion. Appreciation strengthens intrinsic motivation by fulfilling psychological needs for relatedness, competence, and autonomy, enhancing emotional engagement and long-term commitment. The synergistic integration of recognition and appreciation optimizes employee performance, increasing engagement, reducing turnover, and promoting organizational citizenship behaviors. The findings emphasize the importance of tailoring these strategies to align with organizational and employee needs while leveraging technology for real-time and accessible implementation. This study offers practical and managerial insights by recommending flexible, technology-based systems to integrate recognition and appreciation into organizational policies. The findings support the development of inclusive and innovative workplace cultures that enhance productivity and employee satisfaction. Furthermore, the research highlights opportunities for future empirical studies to validate these findings and adapt strategies to evolving workplace trends, such as remote and hybrid environments.

Keywords: *Recognition; Appreciation; Employee Motivation; Performance.*

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INTRODUCTION

Recognition and appreciation are fundamental components of organizational management, widely acknowledged as critical drivers of employee motivation and performance. Both in theory and practice, recognizing employee contributions plays a central role in fostering a positive work culture, enhancing engagement, and reinforcing loyalty to the organization. Recognition in various forms—whether verbal praise, formal awards, or opportunities for career development—fulfills

employees' emotional needs and motivates higher levels of effort and commitment (Amoatema & Kyeremeh, 2016). In the modern organizational landscape, where competition is intense and productivity expectations are high, recognition and appreciation have become indispensable strategic tools. However, despite their established importance, implementing these practices often faces significant challenges. Many organizations remain overly reliant on financial incentives, neglecting critical non-financial elements such as recognition and appreciation (Ndalechi, 2019). This imbalance creates a gap between employees' expectations and organizational strategies, leading to lower engagement, increased turnover, and reduced productivity. The challenge is particularly acute in remote and hybrid work environments, where limited direct interactions often make recognition less visible, leaving employees feeling undervalued and disconnected from their teams (Nozari & Seyedsalehi, 2024).

The theoretical framework for this study is grounded in Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Self-Determination Theory (SDT) to examine the relationship between recognition, appreciation, and employee performance. According to Herzberg's (1959) Two-Factor Theory, recognition and appreciation are motivators that directly enhance job satisfaction and drive improved performance. However, many organizations need to adopt effective non-financial recognition strategies that could optimize employee motivation. Complementing this, the Self-Determination Theory emphasizes fulfilling three core psychological needs—competence, autonomy, and relatedness—essential for fostering intrinsic motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2020). Recognition and appreciation satisfy the need for relatedness by creating a sense of being valued, which deepens employees' emotional connection to their work. When such acknowledgment is genuine and meaningful, it also supports autonomy and competence, leading to sustained improvements in productivity and engagement. This integration of theories provides a robust foundation for understanding the mechanisms through which recognition and appreciation influence motivation and performance, highlighting the importance of strategically designed recognition systems in achieving organizational success.

Recent studies have demonstrated the critical role of employee motivation and leadership in driving performance across diverse contexts. Recognition and appreciation, whether from leaders or clients, have positively influenced daily employee motivation (Seitl et al., 2024). Authentic leadership emerges as a mediating factor, with motivation as a key driver in enhancing employee performance (Kyambade et al., 2024). Similarly, participative leadership styles and motivation positively correlate with improved performance, mediated by job satisfaction (Mpuangnan et al., 2024). Among frontline employees, critical factors such as recognition, career opportunities, and professional identity significantly influence attitudes and behaviors that contribute to customer value creation (Amin et al., 2024). These studies collectively emphasize the importance of creating a supportive work environment that nurtures motivation through trust, empowerment, and acknowledgment (Kyambade et al., 2024; Mpuangnan et al., 2024). This research underscores the need for managers to adopt strategies to enhance employee motivation and engagement, ultimately driving better performance outcomes across sectors, including public services and higher education.

Further research reinforces the positive effects of recognition and appreciation on employee motivation and performance. Team-based recognition programs, for

instance, have been shown to increase employee engagement and effort within organizational settings (Presslee et al., 2023). Employee recognition enhances job engagement, knowledge sharing, and service orientation, particularly in environments with minimal harsh supervision (Ampofo et al., 2023). Additionally, digital HR management practices, including digital training and performance assessments, have positively affected performance (Al-kharabsheh et al., 2022). Peer recognition systems are especially effective in fostering helpful behaviors within teams by formalizing opportunities for social approval and reinforcing existing social expectations (Black, 2023). Recognition programs also improve work outcomes by reducing absenteeism, mitigating stress, and increasing resources (Bregenzer et al., 2022). They significantly enhance task performance and organizational citizenship behaviors, with authentic pride mediating these effects (Yang et al., 2022). Recognition of contributions to CSR activities positively impacts job performance through change-supportive behavior and innovative organizational culture (Jin & Kim, 2022). These findings collectively highlight the transformative potential of diverse recognition systems—team-based, digital, and peer-to-peer—in driving motivation and fostering superior organizational performance.

Despite extensive research, significant gaps persist in understanding how recognition and appreciation operate across diverse organizational contexts and employee demographics. While studies have primarily demonstrated the positive effects of recognition on motivation and performance, less attention has been given to the mechanisms underlying these outcomes. Seidl et al. (2024) and Kyambade et al. (2024) emphasize leadership and motivation as mediating factors. However, there is limited empirical evidence on how these dynamics function in remote or hybrid work environments. The shift to these work settings presents unique challenges for implementing recognition practices, such as reduced opportunities for face-to-face acknowledgment, which could affect employee engagement and performance. Similarly, the effectiveness of team-based and peer recognition systems, as highlighted by Presslee et al. (2023) and Black (2023), requires further investigation, particularly regarding their long-term influence on organizational culture and employee retention. Most existing studies focus on specific sectors, such as public services or education (Kyambade et al., 2024; Mpuangnan et al., 2024), leaving gaps in cross-sectoral applications of recognition strategies. These limitations restrict organizations' ability to generalize findings and design effective, adaptable recognition programs. Theoretical frameworks like job satisfaction and engagement, commonly used in previous research, must fully capture emerging workplace trends, such as the growing emphasis on psychological safety and work-life integration (Bregenzer et al., 2022; Yang et al., 2022). Addressing these gaps is critical for developing a more nuanced understanding of the interplay between recognition, motivation, and performance, enabling organizations to implement tailored strategies that align with evolving employee expectations and workplace dynamics.

This study introduces a novel exploration of the effects of recognition and appreciation on employee motivation and performance by profoundly examining the mechanisms that drive these relationships across various organizational contexts. The research focuses on the effectiveness of diverse recognition systems, such as team-based, digital, and peer-to-peer models, in enhancing intrinsic motivation and their subsequent impact on organizational performance. Unlike prior studies that primarily investigate direct effects, this research offers a fresh perspective by

synthesizing relevant findings to develop sustainable recognition strategies with long-term benefits. The primary objective of this study is to address two key research questions: (1) How do recognition and appreciation influence employee motivation and performance across different organizational contexts? Moreover, (2) What strategies can be implemented to adapt recognition and appreciation practices for sustainably enhancing motivation and performance across industries? The study aims to develop a theoretical and practical framework for designing effective recognition systems within organizations. By understanding the relationships between recognition, motivation, and performance, this research aspires to contribute meaningfully to human resource management's strategic development and support organizational success across diverse sectors.

The Influence of Recognition on Employee Motivation and Performance

Recognition plays a crucial role in organizational management by validating employee contributions through various forms of acknowledgment, including verbal praise, formal awards, and team-based recognition systems. These methods acknowledge individual achievements and foster a supportive work environment that enhances motivation and performance. According to Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, recognition is a critical motivator significantly contributing to job satisfaction and intrinsic motivation (Alrawahi et al., 2020). By fulfilling employees' psychological needs for competence, relatedness, and self-worth, recognition encourages higher levels of engagement and productivity (Bojović & Jovanović, 2020). Research has demonstrated that recognition directly influences intrinsic motivation by giving employees the acknowledgment they seek for their efforts. Daily recognition from leaders and clients has significantly enhanced employee motivation. Gill et al. (2018) emphasize that consistent recognition fosters a positive feedback loop, encouraging employees to maintain high levels of engagement and performance. Authentic leadership amplifies the effects of recognition. Kyambade et al. (2024) show that recognition delivered through authentic leadership styles mediates the relationship between motivation and performance, strengthening the bond between employees and organizational objectives. This evidence highlights how leadership authenticity and recognition sustain employee commitment and drive.

Recognition profoundly impacts employee performance through various dimensions, including increased engagement, enhanced organizational citizenship behavior, and improved task efficiency. One significant approach is team-based recognition programs, which foster collaboration and collective responsibility. Presslee et al. (2023) highlight that such programs significantly enhance teamwork and shared accountability, particularly in environments prioritizing group achievements. By emphasizing collective success, these programs create a sense of unity among employees, driving them to achieve organizational goals more effectively. The influence of recognition extends further to frontline employees, where its impact is even more pronounced. Rane et al. (2023) observe that recognition encourages behaviors that create customer value, such as responsiveness and service excellence, which are essential in customer-facing roles. Recognized employees tend to show a heightened commitment to their tasks, translating into better customer satisfaction and loyalty. Recognition fosters knowledge sharing and service orientation, especially in settings with minimal supervision. Curcuruto &

Griffin (2023) found that recognition empowers employees to take initiative in less supervised environments, contributing to a more dynamic and proactive workforce. These findings underscore the adaptability of recognition strategies across diverse organizational contexts, demonstrating their effectiveness in driving performance in varied roles and settings.

Different recognition systems provide unique benefits, and their design often depends on organizational needs and structures. Team-based recognition focuses on collective achievements, fostering a sense of shared purpose and synergy within teams (Jasińska, 2019). On the other hand, individual recognition rewards employees for specific contributions, enhancing their intrinsic motivation and sense of competence. In flexible work environments, particularly those with low levels of supervision, recognition strategies must adapt to meet the unique challenges of maintaining employee engagement. Dittes et al. (2019) emphasize that digital recognition tools and tailored reward programs are particularly effective in such settings, enabling organizations to maintain motivation and connectivity among their workforce. Strategically, recognition is critical for enhancing employee motivation, engagement, and performance. By providing sincere and contextually relevant acknowledgment, organizations create a work environment that supports individual growth while fostering collective success. Recognition also catalyzes achieving broader organizational goals, such as boosting productivity and cultivating a positive work culture. Reichheld (2001) argues that recognition builds long-term relationships between employees and their organizations, promoting loyalty and reducing turnover rates. This underscores the role of recognition as both a motivational tool and a strategic resource for organizational development.

The Role of Appreciation in Motivation and Performance

Appreciation in organizational management refers to the personal and emotional acknowledgment of employees' inherent value, distinct from the formal recognition of specific achievements. While recognition often highlights measurable accomplishments, appreciation serves as a broader and deeper acknowledgment of employees' roles and contributions to the organization. Self-Determination Theory (SDT) defines appreciation as fulfilling fundamental psychological needs, including relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2021). When employees feel appreciated, they develop stronger emotional connections to their work and the organization, enhancing intrinsic motivation and a supportive work environment. This foundation underscores appreciation as a critical factor in employee engagement and satisfaction Deci & Ryan (2013). Genuine appreciation significantly enhances intrinsic motivation, instilling in employees a sense of value and belonging. Research by Gagné & Deci (2005) shows that appreciation satisfies the psychological need for relatedness, fostering positive emotions and strengthening the bond between employees and their organizations. This emotional reinforcement motivates employees to perform at their best, as they perceive their contributions as meaningful and impactful. Additionally, Keller (2019) found that expressions of gratitude, as a form of appreciation, increase prosocial behavior, further solidifying employees' commitment to collaborative and organizational goals.

Beyond its emotional impact, appreciation also directly affects workplace engagement and well-being. Bregenzer et al. (2022) highlight that appreciation significantly reduces stress and absenteeism while promoting a sense of purpose

among employees. Their findings indicate that when employees feel valued, they are more likely to approach their tasks with a positive outlook, resulting in increased engagement and lower turnover rates. Furthermore, Davis et al. (2021) emphasize that appreciation creates a work environment where employees feel supported by colleagues and management. This collective acknowledgment fosters a sense of security and trust, encouraging employees to go beyond their formal job responsibilities. Appreciation is critical in promoting organizational citizenship behavior (OCB), which encompasses discretionary actions that benefit the organization, such as helping colleagues, mentoring, and volunteering for additional responsibilities. According to Jimenez (2018), authentic pride is a critical mediator between appreciation and OCB. Their study found that employees who experience genuine appreciation are more likely to exhibit behaviors that enhance team cohesion and organizational efficiency. Similarly, Podsakoff et al. (2012) demonstrated that consistent appreciation from peers and leaders strengthens employees' willingness to contribute beyond their core tasks, creating a culture of mutual respect and collaboration.

The effectiveness of appreciation is amplified when it is embedded in broader organizational strategies, such as corporate social responsibility (CSR) initiatives. Islam et al. (2020) found that when employees' contributions to CSR activities are appreciated, they are more likely to engage in change-supportive behaviors and foster an innovative culture within the organization. This demonstrates that appreciation benefits individual employees and aligns their efforts with the organization's broader goals, such as sustainability and inclusivity. Furthermore, Haque (2023) emphasizes that appreciation fosters organizational commitment, ensuring employees remain loyal and motivated to contribute to the company's long-term success. Strategically, consistent and collective appreciation is essential for building sustainable relationships between employees and organizations. Cameron & Pierce (2002) argue that appreciation creates a foundation for loyalty, reducing turnover and enhancing organizational stability. By consistently demonstrating gratitude, organizations can cultivate a positive and inclusive work culture that supports individual growth and collective achievement. Additionally, Singh (2023) highlights that appreciation strengthens employees' identification with their organization, making them more likely to align their goals with organizational objectives. This alignment boosts individual performance and contributes to the organization's overall success.

Integrating Recognition and Appreciation for Optimal Motivation and Performance

Recognition and appreciation are two critical elements in human resource management that, while often perceived as similar, have distinct differences in purpose and application. Recognition focuses on validating specific, measurable achievements, such as completing critical tasks or achieving designated targets, often manifested through formal awards or performance bonuses (Fisher, 2015). In contrast, appreciation is more personal and emotional, acknowledging an individual's inherent value and contributions within the organization, independent of specific achievements (Pfister et al., 2020). Appreciation emphasizes a deeper emotional connection where employees feel valued as individuals rather than as tools to achieve organizational goals. Recognition provides immediate reinforcement for positive behaviors that support performance outcomes, while appreciation fosters

emotional bonds that strengthen long-term relationships between employees and their organizations (Phillips et al., 2023). When applied together, these elements create optimal motivation—recognition addresses short-term needs, and appreciation nurtures long-term engagement.

The synergy between recognition and appreciation significantly impacts employee motivation. Recognition tends to boost extrinsic motivation through tangible and measurable rewards, such as performance bonuses or formal accolades, which provide immediate incentives for employees to work harder or achieve specific goals (Aalders, 2023). On the other hand, appreciation profoundly influences intrinsic motivation by enhancing employees' sense of connectedness and self-worth (Ryan, 2017). Combined, this synergy creates a comprehensive sense of value where employees feel appreciated for what they do and who they are. This holistic sense of appreciation increases employee engagement and loyalty to the organization and reduces turnover rates (Tukiran et al., 2024). Employees who feel valued both professionally and personally are more likely to demonstrate total commitment to their work and their organization (O'Malley, 2000).

Strategies for integrating recognition and appreciation have become increasingly crucial in evolving work environments. Organizations must recognize that employee needs vary based on roles, levels of responsibility, and workplace contexts (Park & Park, 2021). For example, team-based recognition is highly effective in fostering group collaboration toward collective goals. At the same time, individualized appreciation is more relevant for strengthening interpersonal relationships, such as expressing gratitude for overcoming complex challenges (Niemic, 2020). The integration of these elements must also align with industry-specific demands. In service sectors, appreciation for extraordinary efforts in delivering exceptional service can boost morale and customer satisfaction. Modern technology supports the integration of recognition and appreciation. Digital platforms, such as reward apps or point-based systems, enable organizations to deliver real-time recognition. These tools expand the reach of appreciation in large organizations and allow for more personalized engagement among employees working across different locations.

However, integrating recognition and appreciation effectively also presents challenges. One significant challenge is the diversity of employee needs, where individual preferences for forms of recognition and appreciation may vary significantly. Some employees might value public recognition through formal awards, while others might prefer private, personal expressions of gratitude (Yang et al., 2022). Another challenge is the cultural gap within organizations that often hinders implementing inclusive appreciation strategies. In some organizations, a results-oriented culture may overlook appreciating employees' efforts (Roudposhti, 2024). Organizations must tailor their recognition and appreciation strategies to address these challenges and align them with their existing values and culture. Despite these challenges, significant opportunities can be leveraged by integrating recognition and appreciation. This approach boosts productivity and innovation and creates a more inclusive and supportive workplace culture. Building an environment where employees feel valued enables organizations to foster higher levels of creativity, collaboration, and engagement (Chakraborty & Ganguly, 2019). To overcome these challenges, training for managers and leaders is crucial. Managers must be trained to understand how to deliver effective recognition and appreciation,

including when and how to offer these acknowledgments. Such training should also emphasize the differences between recognition and appreciation and the importance of using both elements synergistically. With this understanding, organizational leaders can create a more significant impact in motivating and supporting their employees.

METHODOLOGY

Study Design

This research employs a qualitative approach using the systematic literature review (SLR) method. The SLR is designed to systematically identify, evaluate, and synthesize relevant studies, ensuring a comprehensive and unbiased understanding of the topic. The methodology follows established SLR frameworks, including defining the research questions, identifying relevant studies, assessing their quality, and synthesizing findings to address the research objectives. This approach is particularly suited for exploring the integration of recognition and appreciation in optimizing employee motivation and performance, as it allows for a structured and rigorous examination of diverse literature sources.

Sample Population or Subject of the Research

The sample population for this study comprises peer-reviewed articles, books, and other scholarly publications related to recognition, appreciation, employee motivation, and performance. The inclusion criteria are studies published after 2014 in reputable journals or books that focus on the impact of recognition and appreciation. Studies are selected across various industries and organizational contexts to ensure comprehensive coverage. Articles written in English and available in full text through academic databases such as Scopus, Web of Science, and Google Scholar are included.

Data Collection Techniques and Instrument Development

Data collection involves a systematic search using predefined keywords such as "recognition," "appreciation," "employee motivation," and "performance." Boolean operators (AND, OR) are applied to refine search results. Articles are screened in two stages: title/abstract screening to ensure relevance and full-text review to confirm alignment with the study objectives. A data extraction sheet is developed to capture critical information, including author, publication year, research focus, methods, and findings. The PRISMA (Preferred Reporting Items for Systematic Reviews and Meta-Analyses) guidelines are followed to ensure transparency and reproducibility.

Data Analysis Techniques

Thematic analysis is employed to synthesize the data. Articles are coded based on emerging themes, such as the impact of recognition and appreciation on motivation and performance. Patterns, trends, and gaps in the literature are identified and interpreted to provide actionable insights. The synthesis includes qualitative descriptions and conceptual frameworks, ensuring a holistic understanding of the research problem. This rigorous analysis facilitates a nuanced exploration of how recognition and appreciation contribute to employee motivation and organizational outcomes.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Results

Recognition and appreciation are indispensable in building a productive and supportive work environment, serving as cornerstones for enhancing employee motivation and performance. This study provides a comprehensive examination of the multifaceted effects of these elements, offering actionable insights for organizations aiming to integrate them into sustainable human resource practices. While recognition validates employees' specific contributions, appreciation acknowledges their intrinsic value as individuals within an organization. When effectively combined, these elements create a synergistic impact that fosters short-term achievements and long-term engagement (Seitl et al., 2024; Kyambade et al., 2024).

Recognition directly enhances employees' extrinsic motivation by rewarding tangible accomplishments, such as achieving performance targets, completing tasks, or exceeding organizational goals. By providing this validation, organizations reinforce desired behaviors, cultivating a sense of achievement that motivates employees to maintain or elevate their performance. Research highlights that team-based recognition systems promote collaboration and accountability (Presslee et al., 2023). Recognition honors individual contributions and strengthens the collective spirit within team settings, encouraging team members to work synergistically toward shared objectives. This approach is crucial in environments that rely on cross-functional collaboration, where collective success depends on individual accountability. Digital recognition platforms and peer-to-peer acknowledgment have emerged as innovative solutions for modern organizations. These systems enable real-time recognition, providing immediate feedback and validation. In geographically dispersed or remote work environments, digital platforms ensure inclusivity by allowing employees in all locations to feel equally acknowledged (Ampofo et al., 2023). On the other hand, peer-to-peer recognition empowers employees to recognize and appreciate one another's contributions, fostering a culture of mutual respect and support (Al-kharabsheh et al., 2022). Recognition also plays a pivotal role in encouraging organizational citizenship behaviors, which are voluntary, discretionary actions beyond job descriptions. By valuing these behaviors, organizations create a culture that rewards initiative, innovation, and cooperation, contributing to overall workplace efficiency and innovation (Yang et al., 2022).

While recognition predominantly influences extrinsic motivation, appreciation significantly enhances intrinsic motivation and emotional well-being. As Self-Determination Theory outlines, appreciation addresses fundamental psychological needs, including relatedness, competence, and autonomy (Ryan & Deci, 2021). Unlike recognition, which often focuses on achievements, appreciation underscores the importance of valuing employees for who they are rather than solely for what they do. This personal acknowledgment creates deeper emotional bonds between employees and their organizations, cultivating a sense of belonging and commitment (Bregenzer et al., 2022). Employees who feel appreciated are likelier to demonstrate higher engagement and loyalty, contributing to long-term organizational success. Appreciation also fosters a supportive work environment where employees feel empowered by their managers and colleagues. This support reduces work-related stress, improves mental health, and encourages collaboration. In such environments, employees are more likely to share knowledge, support one another, and collectively

solve problems, leading to more harmonious and productive workplace relationships (Jin & Kim, 2022). Furthermore, appreciation is instrumental in maintaining employees' emotional balance, which, in turn, enhances creativity and innovation. Employees who feel valued for their contributions and presence are more inclined to contribute proactively and take ownership of their roles (Gagné & Deci, 2005).

The integration of recognition and appreciation creates a powerful synergy that optimizes employee motivation. Recognition immediately reinforces specific accomplishments, while appreciation fosters enduring emotional connections. They generate a comprehensive sense of value, addressing professional validation and personal acknowledgment. This synergy leads to numerous organizational benefits, including heightened employee engagement, reduced turnover rates, and improved overall productivity. Employees who experience recognition and appreciation are more likely to stay committed to their organizations, demonstrate resilience in the face of challenges, and continuously strive for excellence. This integrated approach is efficient in diverse organizational contexts. For instance, recognizing innovation and problem-solving skills in the technology sector drives creativity and breakthroughs, reinforcing a culture of innovation (Curcuruto & Griffin, 2023). Conversely, appreciating employees for fostering positive customer interactions in the service industry strengthens customer satisfaction and enhances the organization's reputation. These sector-specific applications underscore the recognition and appreciation of versatility and universal relevance (Rane et al., 2023).

The success of recognition and appreciation strategies depends significantly on tailoring them to the unique needs of employees and the industry context. In collaborative sectors such as services, team-based recognition approaches are highly effective in fostering synergy among team members (Jasińska, 2019). Recognizing group achievements validates individual efforts and highlights the importance of collective success. In contrast, the technology sector benefits from individualized recognition for innovation and unique contributions, which are critical for maintaining a competitive edge (Dittes et al., 2019). Additionally, digital platforms for rewards offer scalable solutions for large or geographically dispersed organizations. These technologies enable real-time recognition, allowing managers to acknowledge employees promptly and effectively. Digital systems provide flexibility in delivering personalized appreciation messages, ensuring every employee feels seen and valued regardless of location. Despite their evident benefits, implementing recognition and appreciation systems presents several challenges. One primary challenge is the diversity of employee preferences. While some employees may prefer public recognition through formal awards, others may value private acknowledgment for their efforts. Balancing these preferences requires managers to be attuned to individual employee needs and organizational cultural sensitivities (Yang et al., 2022). Another challenge is integrating these systems into organizations with deeply entrenched, results-oriented cultures that may undervalue non-financial incentives. To overcome these barriers, organizations must prioritize leadership training to equip managers with the skills to deliver effective recognition and appreciation. Such training should emphasize the importance of using these elements in tandem to maximize their impact (Haque, 2023).

This study recommends implementing flexible, technology-driven recognition and appreciation systems aligned with organizational culture for long-term effectiveness. These strategies should be designed to adapt to the evolving needs of

employees and the dynamic nature of workplaces. Training managers to understand the nuances of recognition and appreciation is essential to apply these systems effectively. For example, managers must learn when to provide immediate recognition for outstanding performance and when to offer personal appreciation to strengthen emotional connections. Organizations can create systems that resonate with employees and drive sustained motivation and performance by equipping leaders with these skills. The practical framework developed from this research offers valuable insights for designing recognition and appreciation systems that support individual and collective growth. By leveraging recognition to reinforce specific achievements and appreciation to build emotional bonds, organizations can create a holistic approach to employee engagement. This strategy addresses employees' professional and personal needs and enhances organizational effectiveness. Organizations prioritizing recognition and appreciation are better positioned to achieve their business objectives while fostering a culture of inclusivity, innovation, and productivity. Integrating these elements will remain critical to organizational success across various sectors as workplaces evolve, ensuring employees feel valued and motivated to contribute their best.

Discussion

The findings of this study underscore the significant influence that recognition and appreciation have on employee motivation and performance. Recognition, which primarily focuses on validating specific achievements, enhances extrinsic motivation. By acknowledging contributions such as completing essential tasks or achieving performance targets, recognition provides positive reinforcement and instills a sense of accomplishment among employees. This validation is a crucial driver for employees to maintain or elevate their performance levels, fostering a culture of excellence within the workplace.

The study highlights the effectiveness of various recognition systems, including team-based, digital, and peer-to-peer frameworks. Team-based recognition systems have proven to be particularly impactful in fostering collaboration and collective responsibility. By emphasizing group achievements, such systems acknowledge individual contributions and enhance teamwork and synergy among team members. This approach is precious in environments prioritizing cooperative efforts and aligning individual success with collective organizational goals. In addition to team-based recognition, digital platforms have emerged as a vital tool for modern organizations, enabling real-time acknowledgment of employee contributions. This is particularly relevant for geographically dispersed workforces, where traditional, in-person recognition may not be feasible. Digital platforms ensure inclusivity by allowing all employees to feel seen and appreciated regardless of location. Furthermore, peer-to-peer recognition encourages employees to acknowledge each other's contributions, fostering a supportive and collaborative workplace culture. This approach enhances interpersonal relationships and promotes mutual respect and shared accountability, creating a more cohesive organizational environment.

On the other hand, appreciation focuses on more intrinsic and emotional aspects of motivation. When delivered sincerely, appreciation fulfills employees' fundamental psychological needs, including relatedness, competence, and autonomy, as Self-Determination Theory outlines. Unlike recognition, which often

highlights measurable achievements, appreciation emphasizes the value of employees as individuals within the organization. This personal acknowledgment strengthens the emotional bonds between employees and their workplace, creating a sense of belonging and connection. Employees who feel genuinely appreciated are more likely to exhibit higher engagement and commitment to their organization. The findings indicate that appreciation fosters a supportive work environment where employees feel encouraged by their colleagues and managers. Such an environment reduces workplace stress, enhances mental well-being, and promotes collaboration among team members. Employees in such settings are likelier to share knowledge, work together to solve problems, and develop creative solutions to challenges. Therefore, appreciation contributes to emotional stability and directly impacts employees' productivity and innovation. In dynamic and competitive work environments, where creativity and adaptability are essential, appreciation is crucial in driving organizational success.

Perhaps most importantly, this study highlights the synergistic effect of recognition and appreciation when implemented together. While recognition immediately reinforces specific accomplishments, appreciation builds enduring emotional connections contributing to long-term employee engagement. This combination creates a holistic approach to motivating employees, addressing their extrinsic and intrinsic needs. The study finds that the integration of recognition and appreciation leads to heightened levels of engagement, improved productivity, and reduced turnover rates. Employees who experience both forms of acknowledgment are more likely to feel valued, motivated, and committed to their organizations, fostering a sense of purpose and loyalty. The synergy between recognition and appreciation is particularly evident across diverse organizational contexts. For instance, recognizing innovation and problem-solving abilities in technology drives creativity and groundbreaking advancements. Conversely, appreciation for positive customer interactions in the service industry enhances customer satisfaction and strengthens the organization's reputation. These sector-specific examples demonstrate the versatility of recognition and appreciation strategies and their potential to address the unique needs of various industries.

This study emphasizes the importance of designing recognition and appreciation strategies tailored to the specific requirements of employees and the organization. The success of these strategies depends heavily on their relevance and adaptability. For collaborative work environments, such as those in the service sector, team-based recognition approaches are highly effective in promoting collective success. In contrast, individualized recognition for unique contributions is essential for maintaining a competitive edge in innovation-driven sectors like technology. Digital platforms for recognition further enhance the accessibility and scalability of these strategies, ensuring that employees in large or geographically distributed organizations receive timely and meaningful acknowledgment. These platforms allow organizations to provide real-time recognition while maintaining flexibility in delivering personalized messages of appreciation. The findings also emphasize the critical need for organizations to recognize the long-term benefits of integrating recognition and appreciation into their human resource strategies. Organizations prioritizing these elements are better equipped to foster inclusive, productive, and supportive work environments. Addressing employees' professional and personal needs and recognition and appreciation contribute to organizational

resilience and adaptability in the face of evolving challenges. Ultimately, this study demonstrates that strategically combining recognition and appreciation creates a robust framework for enhancing employee motivation and performance, ensuring that organizations remain innovative, competitive, and thriving in a rapidly changing business landscape.

From a theoretical perspective, the findings of this study align closely with the principles outlined in Self-Determination Theory (SDT) and Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory. Recognition is categorized as a motivator in Herzberg's framework, directly contributing to increased job satisfaction by validating employees' achievements and reinforcing their contributions. By addressing extrinsic motivational needs, recognition fosters a sense of accomplishment, encouraging employees to sustain or enhance their performance. In parallel, appreciation fulfills the core psychological needs outlined in SDT: relatedness, competence, and autonomy. Appreciation, distinct from recognition, provides a more personal and emotional acknowledgment of employees as valued members of the organization. This enhances their intrinsic motivation and strengthens their emotional engagement and commitment to their roles. When employees feel genuinely appreciated, their sense of belonging and connection deepens, leading to sustained motivation and loyalty. The synergy between these theoretical foundations highlights the dual impact of recognition and appreciation on extrinsic and intrinsic motivation. This duality underscores their complementary roles in driving overall performance and well-being. These findings reinforce the argument that organizations that strategically integrate recognition and appreciation into their human resource practices can achieve higher employee motivation and performance. Organizations can create an environment conducive to productivity, innovation, and long-term success by aligning these elements with established motivational theories.

The findings of this study closely align with prior research emphasizing the importance of recognition and appreciation in boosting employee motivation and performance. Seidl et al. (2024) and Kyambade et al. (2024) underscore the role of recognition from leaders and authentic leadership styles in driving daily employee motivation and improving performance through enhanced collaboration and accountability. Similarly, Mpuangnan et al. (2024) demonstrate the positive influence of participative leadership and recognition on performance, mediated by job satisfaction. This study further corroborates these findings by illustrating the effectiveness of team-based recognition systems in fostering collaboration and peer-to-peer recognition in promoting mutual respect and knowledge sharing. Pressley et al. (2023) and Ampofo et al. (2023) also highlight how these systems enhance employee engagement and service orientation, aligning with the current study's focus on their transformative impact. The study aligns with research on appreciation's emotional and psychological benefits. Bregenzer et al. (2022) found that appreciation reduces absenteeism and stress while promoting a supportive work environment. Yang et al. (2022) highlighted its role in fostering organizational citizenship behaviors through authentic pride; findings mirrored in this study's emphasis on long-term loyalty and emotional engagement. The synergistic combination of recognition and appreciation aligns with Jin and Kim's (2022) work on fostering innovative cultures and change-supportive behaviors. By advancing these insights, this study extends existing knowledge on how integrated recognition

and appreciation strategies create inclusive, high-performing work environments across diverse sectors.

The practical implications of this study are extensive and relevant across various industry sectors. Organizations can integrate recognition and appreciation into their human resource policies to create inclusive and supportive work environments. For instance, technology-based recognition systems can be implemented to provide real-time acknowledgments to employees, enhancing the accessibility and relevance of rewards, particularly in large or geographically dispersed organizations. Additionally, training for managers and leaders on effectively delivering recognition and appreciation should be prioritized, as they play a pivotal role in fostering a culture of acknowledgment within the organization. This study emphasizes the importance of designing flexible reward strategies tailored to employees' needs and organizational contexts. Such strategies ensure that recognition and appreciation are practical management tools and key contributors to building sustainable long-term relationships between employees and their organizations. By adopting these strategies, organizations can address both individual and collective needs, fostering a sense of value and belonging among employees. Integrating recognition and appreciation into organizational practices ultimately leads to enhanced productivity, improved job satisfaction, and more tremendous organizational success. These findings underline the critical need for organizations to embrace comprehensive and adaptable reward systems that drive employee motivation, strengthen engagement, and support creating a positive and innovative workplace culture. This approach ensures alignment between employee well-being and organizational objectives, fostering mutual growth and sustained success.

CONCLUSION

This study explored the multifaceted effects of recognition and appreciation on employee motivation and performance, addressing key research questions about how these elements influence workplace dynamics and what strategies can be implemented for sustainable improvement. Recognition was identified as a driver of extrinsic motivation, while appreciation nurtured intrinsic motivation and emotional engagement. Together, they demonstrated a synergistic effect that enhances overall employee performance, fostering both short-term achievements and long-term commitment. The findings underline the importance of tailoring recognition and appreciation strategies to align with organizational needs and employee expectations across diverse sectors.

This research makes a valuable contribution to academic literature and practical management strategies. Theoretically, it bridges existing gaps by integrating insights from Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory and Self-Determination Theory, offering a dual framework for understanding motivation. Practically, the study highlights actionable strategies for organizations, such as implementing technology-based recognition systems, offering manager training, and designing flexible reward programs tailored to specific industry contexts. The originality of this research lies in its emphasis on the synergistic interplay between recognition and appreciation, presenting it as a comprehensive approach to fostering inclusive, innovative, and high-performing work environments. These findings provide a roadmap for

managers to enhance employee satisfaction, engagement, and productivity, contributing to organizational sustainability and success.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations that should inform future research. First, the findings are derived from a systematic literature review, which may limit the scope of empirical validation. Future research could build on these insights by conducting longitudinal studies or experimental designs to examine the causal relationships between recognition, appreciation, and performance. Additionally, the study did not focus on the impacts of remote or hybrid work environments, which could be a valuable area for further investigation given the evolving nature of workplaces. Researchers are encouraged to explore how recognition and appreciation strategies can be adapted to digital and distributed work settings. Such studies will enrich our understanding of sustaining employee motivation and performance in diverse and changing organizational landscapes.

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