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Incentivizing Excellence: Evaluating the Impact of Financial and Moral Incentives on Employee Performance in Libyan Governmental Universities

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Abstract
Since the main objective of any organization is to provide the best services and achieve the goals for which it was established, and due to the significant role of financial and moral incentives in influencing the performance of employees to carry out the work assigned to them to reach the objectives of the institution, this study aims to identify the importance of the financial and moral incentives offered to employees of the Libyan governmental universities, the extent of their impact on employee performance, and whether there are clear differences in the opinions of the respondents about the questions of the study according to their personal and functional variables. In order to achieve these objectives, the descriptive approach, based on the study of the relationship as it is in fact, will be used as a detailed description and expression, as it is based on the random sampling of five Libyan government universities by designing a questionnaire and distributing it to a random sample in the universities equally.

Keywords: Financial Incentives, Moral, Incentives, Employee Performance, Libya, Governmental Universities

1. Introduction

Both public and private institutions utilize their human workforce to achieve the short-term and long-term goals of the institution. The performance of these businesses relies on their ability to attract and retain skilled individuals who can effectively carry out their objectives, and the success of these firms is contingent upon the loyalty and commitment of their employees (Ahmed et al., 2013).

Incentives are key to motivating individuals to work. These incentives have attracted considerable attention from scholars studying organizational behavior (Miller & Whitford, 2007). There are two primary classifications of incentives. One category pertains to finances, encompassing wage increases, bonuses, and other monetary rewards for exceptional performance. Moral incentives, on the other hand, are non-financial and can be implemented through written acknowledgments of gratitude and appreciation towards the workers. (Hussain et al., 2012). Insufficient financial or moral incentives for hardworking employees may undermine their performance, reducing the likelihood of achieving the organization's goals. Moreover, pursuing research to determine effective strategies for various workforce groups is crucial, as incentives differ among organizations depending on their specific operations and job categories (Alnsour & Kanaan, 2021).

An extensive study exists on the impact of financial and moral incentives on the academic staff's performance. However, there is a scarcity of research on this topic, specifically in Libyan public universities. Thus, this study aims to investigate the effect of financial and moral incentives on the performance of academic staff in Libyan public universities and the moderating role of age on the relationship.

2. Literature Review

2.1 Financial Incentives

Public universities rely heavily on financial incentives to retain and motivate their personnel. These establishments strive to strike a harmonious equilibrium between scholarly excellence, investigation, and the fiscal challenges that are customary for the public sector. This research will conduct a comprehensive analysis of the financial incentives provided to personnel at public universities, evaluating their effectiveness, repercussions, and broader framework (Batory & Lindstrom, 2011).

Financial incentives such as salaries, bonuses, and performance-based compensation are potential benefits that public university employees can anticipate. Developing a culture of excellence, motivating academics and staff to excel in their roles, and attracting and retaining exceptional individuals are the objectives of these incentives. However, due to the distinctive nature of public universities, the utilization of financial incentives at these institutions is subject to scrutiny (Andersen & Pallesen, 2008).

The degree to which staff at public colleges are motivated by financial incentives may vary depending on a number of criteria. To commence, research has demonstrated that financial incentives exhibit greater efficacy when they are linked to particular performance indicators of teams or individuals, such as research output, student outcomes, or administrative efficiency. To ensure that public institutions accomplish their objectives and maintain their values, incentive systems must be meticulously designed (Boland, 2020).

Additionally, the entire compensation package provided by the institution may have an impact on the efficacy of monetary incentives. Funding constraints can occasionally impede the ability of public universities to contend with private institutions in terms of fundamental compensation. It is not always necessary to offer monetary incentives to attract and retain top talent when this occurs. Creating a welcoming work environment or providing opportunities for professional development could be equally as effective (Alnsour & Kanaan, 2021).

While financial incentives may potentially enhance employee morale and productivity, they are not devoid of disadvantages. Academic and educational goals, for instance, may become eclipsed by an excessive preoccupation with quantitative metrics when financial incentives are prevalent. With faculty and staff placing a greater emphasis on short-term gains, the university's long-term objective may suffer as a result (Chaix-Couturier et al., 2000).

Financial incentive distribution also carries the risk of being unjust. When some faculty members have greater opportunities to earn money or meet performance objectives than others, pay disparities may result. Prior to implementing incentive programs, public colleges and universities ought to carefully consider the implications for fairness and establish strategies to mitigate disparities (Langdown & Peckham, 2014).

Numerous external factors, including institutional culture, regulatory constraints, and government funding, influence the effectiveness of financial incentives at public colleges. Whether provided by the federal government or individual states, funding for public colleges and universities is susceptible to fluctuations in the economy and political agendas. The institution's ability to maintain competitive incentive programs may be compromised as a result of this instability (Lee, 2018).

Additionally, a commitment to the public good, academic autonomy, and shared governance are elements of public university heritage and culture. It is critical that financial incentives operate in conjunction with these principles and do not contradict them. Colleges must acknowledge that there are circumstances in which a one-size-fits-all approach is ineffective and consider ways to tailor incentive systems to different academic disciplines and positions (Denning & Turley, 2017).

Financial incentives may be an effective retention and motivational tool for public university personnel when they are meticulously planned and implemented. Their effectiveness is determined, among other things, by their conformity with institutional goals, their regard for equality, and the broader context in which they operate (Oliver & Brown, 2012). To ensure the sustained success of their institutions and personnel, public universities must strike a delicate balance between providing monetary incentives and upholding their core values and curricula. Enhancing the design and optimizing incentive programs for personnel at public universities necessitates further investigation and ongoing evaluation (Link & Siegel, 2005).

2.2. Moral Incentives

Moral incentives, which are alternatively referred to as ethical or intrinsic incentives, have gained traction in recent years as organizations such as businesses and governments seek to motivate and retain employees in ways other than monetary compensation. Fundamental to moral incentives is the synchronization of one's occupation with one's values, beliefs, and sense of direction. The significance of these incentives in fostering a sense of affiliation among faculty and staff with the university, commitment to its pedagogical objectives, and social accountability are critical in the context of public institutions (Elumah Lucas et al., 2016).

Public colleges are exceptional institutions due to their non-commercial nature and distinct philosophy and objectives. These establishments frequently serve as catalysts for societal change, information distribution, and community development. Given the imperative to cultivate the intrinsic motivations of individuals drawn to academia for purposes beyond monetary compensation, moral incentives assume heightened importance within these particular contexts (Al-Nsour, 2012).

Public colleges inherently promote academic independence and intellectual curiosity as fundamental incentives. The faculty members' engagement and enthusiasm for their work stem from the exploration of novel concepts, the interrogation of established beliefs, and the contribution to the corpus of knowledge. Public institutions uphold these ideals, fostering an environment in which faculty members are liberated to pursue their academic pursuits without apprehension of reprisal (Obeidat & AL-Dwairi, 2015).

Public colleges are founded on the principle of delivering services that are advantageous to the broader populace. Employees are motivated by the opportunity to effect positive change in the world through their engagement in research, education, and community service. This ethical motivation enhances the sense of affiliation among public university personnel with the organization's mission and the broader society (Hussain et al., 2012).

Public college employees are frequently motivated by a profound sense of social responsibility. They consider healthcare, sustainability, and inequality to be among the most pressing social issues that demand their specialized knowledge and skills as administrators, researchers, and educators. Employees are driven to seek solutions and effect positive change in society due to the moral incentive at play (Williams, 1998).

For many faculty members, mentoring students and observing their academic and personal growth provides them with moral satisfaction. Teachers possess a profound dedication to their profession due to the ethical obligation they bear to shape the future generations (Dechenaux et al., 2011).

Public colleges make it difficult to implement moral incentives, despite the numerous benefits that such an approach offers. Public colleges and universities have an obligation to foster and cultivate an environment that acknowledges the significance of such incentives (Bursztyn et al., 2019). This includes fostering an inclusive and welcoming academic environment that embraces all students, recognizing and appreciating endeavors that adhere to ethical standards, and providing opportunities for faculty and staff to effect positive change on a global scale (Collier & Venables, 2014).

In addition to financial considerations, moral incentives are significant factors in stimulating and involving personnel at public colleges. Public university faculty and staff may cultivate a profound sense of affiliation, commitment, and societal accountability when their personal convictions, ethical standards, and incentives align with the mission and goals of the institution (Bursztyn et al., 2019). In order to preserve the unique contributions of these institutions to education and society amidst constant change, it will be necessary to foster and enforce moral incentives. To better comprehend how moral incentives function and their effects in public university environments, additional research is required in this area (Bowles, 2016).

2.3. Employee Performance

As organizations and businesses seek to motivate and engage their employees in ways other than monetary compensation, the concept of moral incentives—also known as ethical or intrinsic incentives—has gained traction in recent years. The essence of moral incentives is when an individual's occupation corresponds with his or her values, principles, and sense of direction. Public institutions rely heavily on the applicability of these incentives to foster a sense of affiliation among faculty and staff, commitment to the institution's pedagogical objectives, and social accountability (Elumah Lucas et al., 2016).

Since they are not for profit and have a distinct philosophy and objective, public colleges are unique environments. Frequently, these establishments facilitate community development, impart knowledge, and advance societal transformation. In such contexts, moral incentives assume greater significance due to the imperative of nurturing the intrinsic motivations of individuals drawn to academia for purposes beyond monetary compensation (Al-Nsour, 2012).

Public colleges inherently promote and encourage academic independence and intellectual curiosity. Faculty members remain enthusiastic and engaged in their work through the exploration of novel concepts, the interrogation of established beliefs, and the contribution to the collection of knowledge. Public institutions foster an environment wherein faculty members are indemnified from apprehension regarding reprisal, thereby upholding these ideals (Obeidat & AL-Dwairi, 2015).

Delivering services that benefit the general populace is the fundamental purpose of public colleges. The opportunity to effect global change through research, education, or community service is what motivates personnel. This moral motivation fosters a stronger sense of affiliation among public university personnel with the institution's mission and the broader welfare (Hussain et al., 2012).

Employees of public colleges are frequently motivated by a profound sense of social responsibility. As administrators, researchers, and educators, they consider inequality, healthcare, and sustainability to be among the most significant social issues that demand their specialized knowledge. The presence of this moral motivation inspires employees to seek solutions and effect positive change in society (Williams, 1998).

A number of faculty members derive moral satisfaction from mentoring students and observing their academic and personal growth. Due to the moral obligation to shape the lives of forthcoming generations, educators exhibit profound dedication to their profession (Dechenaux et al., 2011).

While moral incentives offer numerous benefits, their implementation is hindered by the infrastructure of public colleges. Promoting and cultivating a culture that acknowledges the significance of these incentives falls within the purview of public colleges and universities (Bursztyn et al., 2019). This consists of providing opportunities for faculty and staff to make a positive impact on the world, fostering an inclusive and welcoming learning environment for every student, and recognizing efforts that adhere to ethical standards (Collier & Venables, 2014).

In the realm of public college staff motivation and engagement, moral incentives hold significant sway over financial considerations. When the beliefs, ethics, and motivations of faculty and staff at public universities align with the purpose and objectives of the institution, they may cultivate a profound sense of affiliation, commitment, and social accountability (Bursztyn et al., 2019). Moral incentives will need to be fostered and enforced in order to preserve the unique contributions of these institutions to education and society amidst constant change. Additional research is required to elucidate the mechanisms and consequences of moral incentives within public university environments (Bowles, 2016).

3. Study Methodology

The purpose of this research is to determine whether or not financial and moral incentives have a positive impact on staff performance at publicly funded institutions in Libya. As a result of the extensive review of the literature, the research model of the study was developed (Figure 1).

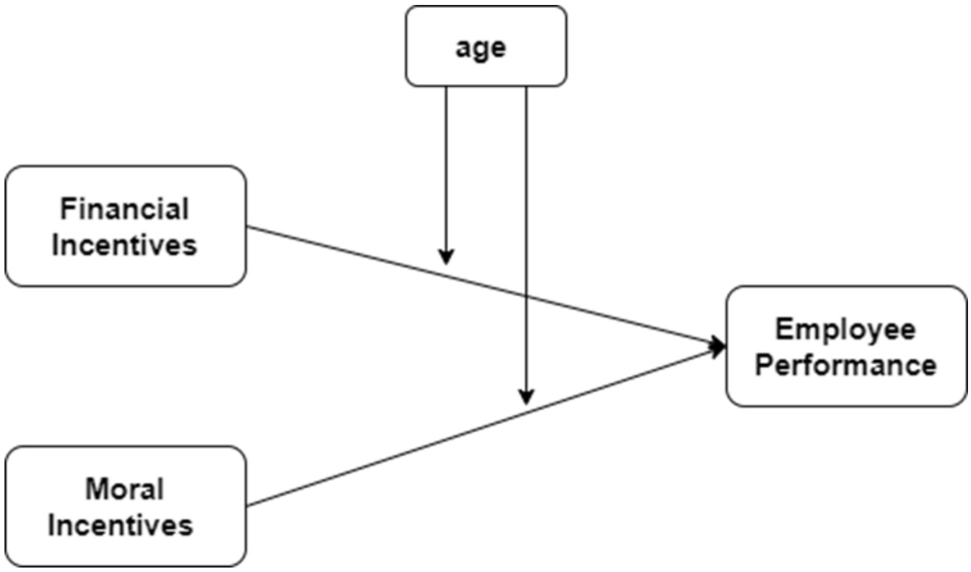

Figure 1: Research Model

The hypotheses of the study are as follows:

1. There is a positive and statistically significant effect of financial incentives on employee performance
2. There is a positive and statistically significant effect of moral incentives on employee performance
3. Age has a moderating role in the relationship between financial incentives and employee performance
4. Age has a moderating role in the relationship between moral incentives and employee performance

The total population consists of faculty members, department chairs, general administration staff, and directors of Libyan institutions. Data was collected from 5 universities: Tripoli, Benghazi, Sebha, Omar Al-Mukhtar, and Al-Zawiya in Libya. The sample size was determined as 400 and convenience sampling was used as the sampling technique.

After building a first-level CFA model, the AMOS 23.0 tool was used to assess the factors. Latent variables were obtained by using confirmatory factor analysis "CFA" to align the model with the data, which was based on a few metrics. The moderator variable's influence on the relationship between the dependent variables and the independent variable was determined using Structural Equations Modelling "SEM," and the direct link between the latent variables was also determined.

4. Result and Discussion

4.1. Reliability and Convergent Validity

The consistent and reliable nature of the sample's findings was demonstrated by the high reliability scores. The effectiveness of the questionnaire, its internal consistency, and the correspondence between expected and actual values were all evident, as all examined reliability criteria exceeded 70%. (Table 1).

Table 1: Reliability test

	FI	MI	EP
Cronbach Alpha	0.7498228	0.715138	0.7213521
Ave	0.5402369	0.5751959	0.5468516

4.2. Confirmatory Factor Analysis (CFA)

Even after conducting a conformity factor analysis (CFA) on the equations using the program, the outcomes remained unchanged. The subsequent model (Table 2, Figure 2) was obtained by excluding the variables that had the most significant influence on the overall variance of the model.

Table 2: Conformity factor analysis (CFA)

Fit indices	Recommended out of value	Research Model Value
X^2 /df	1 – 5	3.473
P.value	< 0.05	0.000
GFI	>0.8	0.925
CFI	>0.9	0.997
RMSEA	< 0.08	0.079
SRMR	<0.06	0.046

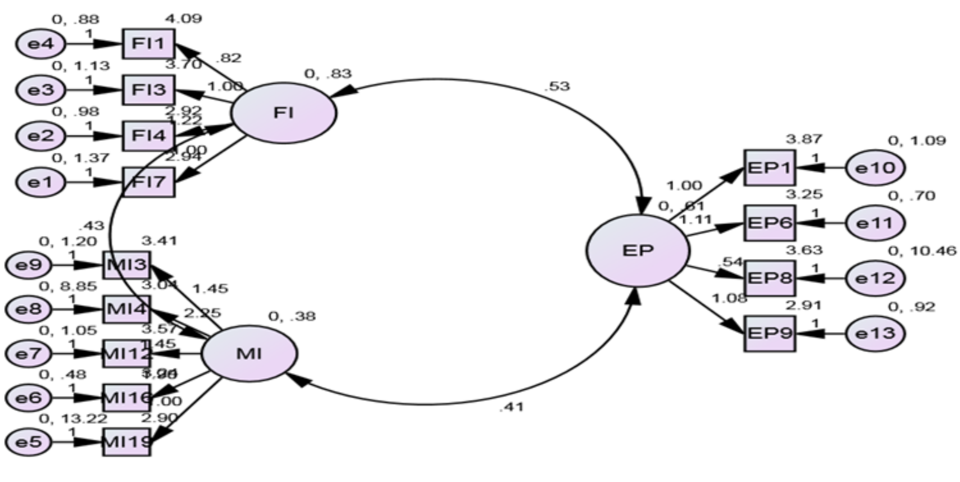

Figure 2: Conformity factor analysis model

4.3. Structural Equation Model (SEM)

Following the validation of the factor structures, the validity of the investigated scale was also ascertained. From this vantage point, SEM analysis will be initiated in order to examine the hypotheses.

As shown in Table 3, each of the measurements was identical. In cases where alternative criteria indicated that the model was interpretable and a satisfactory fit was achieved, but only one of the SEM estimation fit criteria yielded an acceptable outcome, the model was deemed adequate.

Table 3: Measurement (Fit Statistics)

Measurement (Fit Statistics)	Good Fit	Research Model Value	Compliance Status
General Model Fit			
X^2 /df	1 – 5	3.94	Good fit
Comparative Fit Statistics			
NFI	>0.95	0.96	Good fit
TLI(NNFI)	>0.95	0.953	Good fit
IFI	>0.95	0.989	Good fit
CFI	>0.95	0979	Acceptable
RMSEA	<0.08	0.03	Good fit
Absolute Fit Indices			
GFI	>0.95	0.951	Good fit
AGFI	>0.95	0.961	Good fit
Residual Compliance Index			
RMR	<0.05	0.0425	Good fit

Table 4 presents the findings that financial incentives influence employee performance positively by 33 percent, whereas moral incentives exert a more substantial positive influence of 87.1 percent. H1 and H2, which comprise the model's principal hypotheses, were validated.

Table 4: Results of the Relationship Between the Financial and Moral Incentives and Employee Performance

Structural Relationship	Direction	Estimated coefficient	Std. Error	t statistic	p	Result
EP~FI	+	0.329	0.057	5.77	0.000	Significant
EP~MI	+	0.871	0.303	2.876	0.004	Significant

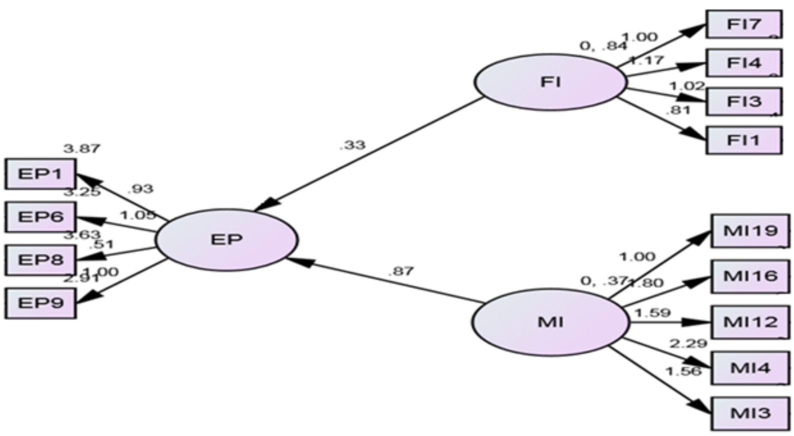

Figure 3: SEM model of the H1 and H2 hypothesis

4.4. The moderating variables

The findings suggest that age functions as a "pure moderator" in relation to the beneficial impact of FI and MI on EP. Thus, the third and fourth hypotheses were validated.

Table 5: Results of the Relationship Between the Financial and Moral Incentives and Employee Performance in terms of Age

Moderating Variable	Structural Relationship	Estimated coefficient	Std. Error	t statistic	p	Result
Age	FI ~ EP	-0.366	0.115	-3.175	0.001	H3: Accepted
Age	MI ~ EP	-0.245	0.101	-2.432	0.015	H4: Accepted

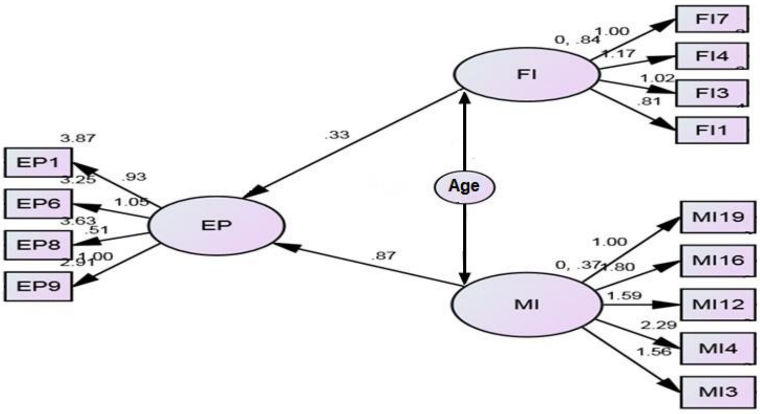

Figure 4: SEM model of the H3 and H4 hypothesis

4.5. Discussion

The results of the study show that both financial and moral incentives have a significant effect on employee performance.

Moral incentives motivate individuals to behave in an ethical manner and with a sense of purpose through the appeal to their intrinsic motivations and ideals. Employees whose values and job purpose are congruent are more likely to be invested in their work, leading to increased productivity and motivation.

In contrast, financial incentives represent a form of extrinsic motivation wherein tangible rewards are provided in exchange for specific performance objectives. Incentives such as monetary prizes, pay increases, and bonuses induce employees to perform admirably on the job in an immediate and conspicuous manner. Due to the fact that competitive compensation packages are a significant draw for prospective employees, monetary incentives are crucial for retaining and recruiting talent.

The effectiveness of various types of incentives may differ based on personal preference, the particulars of the position, and the corporate culture. Others may be more committed to the ethical aspects of their work, whereas some employees may prioritize the monetary perks. Thus, organizations can effectively foster and retain a diverse workforce through the integration of financial and ethical motivations.

Businesses should ultimately seek a balance between the two incentives, since they are not mutually exclusive. Organizations can foster a conducive work environment that promotes exceptional employee performance and commitment by aligning their values with those of the organization and providing opportunities for financial growth and stability. On the other hand, Tripathi (2014) examined the effects of monetary incentives on the productivity of university personnel.

Age has a moderating role in the relationships between both moral incentives and financial incentives and employee performance.

Within the framework of governmental universities in Libya, age significantly affects the effect of financial and moral incentives on employee performance. The aforementioned effect is subject to the distinct attributes of the academic milieu in Libya as well as the more extensive socioeconomic circumstances that prevail within the nation.

Younger members of the faculty and staff, frequently in the early stages of their professional journeys, might be especially susceptible to financial incentives as a result of pressing financial responsibilities and needs. These individuals may be confronted with the obligation of repaying student loans or providing for their families. Competitive remuneration and performance-driven incentives may serve as compelling incentives that have a positive impact on their overall performance.

With increased stability and experience, faculty and staff in the middle of their careers may find it possible to reconcile financial and moral incentives. Although individuals continue to prioritize financial stability and may pursue tenure or long-term contracts, their emphasis is shifting towards greater job satisfaction and alignment with the mission of the university. At this stage in their careers, prospects for professional development and a sense of making a meaningful contribution to the educational objectives of the university emerge as critical motivators.

Faculty members nearing retirement from their late careers may possess a wealth of institutional expertise and experience. Moral incentives, including mentoring junior colleagues, participating in curriculum development, and making an enduring contribution to the university, may serve as drivers of their motivation. Nevertheless, monetary incentives associated with retirement packages and prospects after retirement can also exert a significant impact.

Government universities in Libya frequently encounter financial and budgetary restrictions that may impede their access to financial incentives. As a response, it is advisable for these establishments to contemplate a well-rounded strategy that accommodates the requirements and incentives of personnel at various phases of their professional timelines. This may encompass competitive remuneration packages for professionals in their early stages of professional careers, opportunities for mid-career staff to advance their careers and receive recognition, and recognition for the mentorship and contributions of faculty members in their later years.

The significance attributed to education and community in the wider Libyan culture may influence the manner in which employees react to moral incentives. Employees might be highly motivated to contribute to the improvement of society and the education system, as this is consistent with the societal values prevalent in Libya. Moreover, the manner in which incentives are perceived in Libyan universities significantly influences employee morale and performance in terms of fairness and equity.

In conclusion, it is critical to acknowledge the moderating influence of age in governmental universities in Libya in order to develop incentive programs that successfully inspire personnel at different points in their careers. It is imperative that these programs demonstrate adaptability towards the distinct socio-economic circumstances, cultural norms, and financial limitations of the nation. By doing so, they will ultimately support improved employee productivity and the universities' educational objectives.

5. Conclusion

Since 1981, in accordance with Law No. 15, all sectors of the state have been paid equally. Minimum fundamental wage (3180 Libyan dinars annually). Legislation No. 15 sanctioned the payment of monetary incentives and benefits. Incentives were restricted to the following: family incentives, delegation incentives, overtime incentives, teaching incentives, scholarship and study course incentives. Furthermore, the legislation approved the provision of incentives in addition to the base salary to differentiate certain positions. In response to economic fluctuations and changes in global prices, certain sectors increased the distribution of these incentives in an effort to motivate employees to improve their performance. Following the events of February 17, 2011, Law (27) for the year 2011 was promulgated, which amended salaries to establish the minimum basic wage for all state sector employees (5400 Libyan dinars annually).

This amendment failed to consider the inter-sectoral administration of justice and economic conditions. Certain sectors that adhere to legislative authority have garnered attention for their significantly higher wages compared to workers in other sectors. For instance:

The rudimentary minimum wage for personnel within the Audit Bureau industry (9840 Libyan dinars annually). The bare minimum wage for personnel employed at the Cabinet Office (9000 Libyan dinars annually). The discrepancy in wages across sectors, despite the similarity of the jobs, has generated an urgent need for incentive spending to promote fairness and motivation among workers in different industries, as well as a reevaluation of the policy regarding salary recognition by establishing unified standards for state sector employees.

The productivity of public college employees in Libya is found to be correlated significantly with moral incentives. Once more, the sole motivating factor is the differentiation. As a result, public universities must reevaluate their human resources policies and the determinants of employee performance, as this directly affects the organization's financial health and overall viability.

The research proposes several modifications that would enhance public universities. These include the implementation of sufficient gratuity programs and additional ancillary benefits, the development of appealing compensation and benefits packages, the provision of group performance-based incentives, and the clarification of retirement schemes.

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