

More than a paycheck: How non-financial incentives shape employee motivation in public administration

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Article History

Received : 2024-12-22

Revised : 2025-02-01

Accepted : 2025-02-04

Published : 2025-02-25

Keywords:

Non-financial incentives; perceived organizational support; employee motivation; leadership style; public sector.

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DOI:

[10.20885/AMBR.vol5.iss1.art12](https://doi.org/10.20885/AMBR.vol5.iss1.art12)

Abstract

This study examines how non-monetary rewards affect worker motivation in Indonesia's public sector, highlighting the moderating influence of leadership style and the mediating function of perceived organizational support (POS). Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modelling (PLS-SEM) and survey data from 357 public sector workers were used to confirm that work-life balance, career advancement, job enrichment, and recognition significantly increase motivation, with career development having the most impact. POS mediates these ties, and their influence is increased by transformational leadership. These observations, which emphasize the value of organized career development, successful recognition programs, and leadership training, add to the body of knowledge in human resource management and provide valuable suggestions for legislators. Public service performance can be improved, and staff motivation can be raised by bolstering organizational support and encouraging leadership involvement.

Introduction

In recent years, the focus on employee motivation has shifted from traditional financial incentives to non-financial incentives across both private and public sectors worldwide (Chiang & Birtch, 2012). Governments and organizations are recognizing that non-financial rewards, such as job enrichment, recognition, career development, and work-life balance, are essential for enhancing employee engagement, reducing turnover, and improving overall job satisfaction (Chiang & Birtch, 2011). This shift is evident in countries like Sweden and Germany, where public sector organizations have successfully implemented non-financial incentives to increase productivity and reduce absenteeism (Qi et al., 2019). Similarly, studies in Southeast Asia have demonstrated that career development programs and leadership support significantly influence employee retention in government institutions (Kim et al., 2017). These global trends underscore the importance of integrating non-financial incentives into human resource strategies, particularly in emerging economies where budgetary constraints limit the use of financial rewards (Rahman et al., 2023).

Indonesia, as one of the largest economies in Southeast Asia, has been actively implementing public sector reforms to improve employee motivation and service delivery (Pratama & Nurhidayah, 2019). The Indonesian Bureaucratic Reform Roadmap 2020-2024 emphasizes the need to enhance employee engagement, career advancement opportunities, and workplace satisfaction to improve public service quality (Ding & Wang, 2023; Yustia & Arifin, 2023). However, despite these initiatives, government reports indicate that motivation levels among public sector employees remain low, leading to reduced efficiency, increased absenteeism, and declining service performance. According to a 2020 report by Indonesia's Ministry of Administrative and Bureaucratic Reform, over 35% of civil servants feel disengaged due to limited career progression, lack of recognition, and ineffective leadership (Diprose et al., 2020). These findings highlight the urgent need for alternative motivation strategies, particularly non-financial incentives, in Indonesia's highly bureaucratic public sector.

Despite government efforts, Indonesia's public sector workforce faces systemic challenges. Studies have identified bureaucratic inertia, limited career mobility, and lack of personalized recognition as key factors hindering employee motivation (Rahman et al., 2023). In contrast to the private sector, where organizations have more flexibility in designing employee rewards, Indonesia's civil service operates within rigid hierarchical structures, making it challenging to implement dynamic HRM policies (Alam, 2025). Additionally, while government budgets constrain financial rewards, the effectiveness of non-financial incentives in Indonesia's public sector remains underexplored.

Studies have demonstrated that perceived organizational support (POS) is a critical determinant of motivation in public sector employees, as workers who feel valued by their organizations tend to exhibit higher engagement and performance (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Moreover, leadership style (LS) has been found to influence the impact of non-financial incentives on motivation significantly (Ilyana & Sholihin, 2021). However, existing research primarily focuses on private-sector organizations or developed economies, with limited empirical evidence on how these mechanisms function in Indonesia's public administration system (Susanto et al., 2022).

Although prior studies have explored non-financial incentives in various organizational settings, most research has been conducted in private-sector firms or developed countries. For example, research in Western economies suggests that career development and work-life balance programs significantly enhance employee retention (Murphy et al., 2011), while studies in corporate environments emphasize the moderating role of leadership style in HR policies (Kim et al., 2017). However, in emerging economies like Indonesia, there remains a lack of empirical research on how non-financial incentives, leadership style, and perceived organizational support interact in the public sector (Winarno et al., 2022).

Additionally, while studies have established the importance of leadership in motivation (García Del Castillo-López & Pérez Domínguez, 2024), their applicability to Indonesia's unique bureaucratic structure remains unclear. Unlike private organizations, where leaders have greater autonomy in implementing HR policies, public sector leaders in Indonesia operate within strict government regulations, limiting their ability to provide personalized employee incentives. This creates a critical gap in understanding how leadership moderates the impact of non-financial incentives on employee motivation in Indonesia's civil service.

This study aims to bridge these gaps by investigating the impact of non-financial incentives on employee motivation within Indonesia's public sector, focusing on the mediating role of POS and the moderating effect of leadership style. The findings will contribute to human resource management literature by providing contextual insights into public sector organizations' non-financial incentive structures. Additionally, this research will offer practical recommendations for policymakers and HR managers to design effective employee motivation strategies, particularly in government institutions facing budget constraints and bureaucratic challenges.

Literature Review and Hypotheses Development

Non-Financial Incentives

As an alternative to conventional monetary rewards, non-financial incentives have become essential to contemporary human resource management. According to Ryan and Deci (2017), these rewards meet intrinsic motivational requirements, which help workers feel more independent, capable, and connected. Non-financial incentives include four key dimensions: job enrichment, recognition programs, career development opportunities, and work-life balance initiatives (Chiang & Birtch, 2012; Gkorezis & Petridou, 2017). Empirical evidence suggests that these incentives are particularly effective in public sector organizations, where financial constraints often limit the use of monetary rewards (Hackman & Oldham, 1976). Implementing non-financial incentives addresses employees' psychological and social needs, enhancing their overall job satisfaction and motivation. Moreover, these incentives have been shown to reduce turnover and absenteeism, particularly in roles requiring high levels of commitment and public service motivation (Budhwar & Debrah, 2013).

Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Employees' sense of how much the company values their contributions and is concerned about their well-being is known as perceived organizational support, or POS (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). POS is pivotal in fostering employee commitment, motivation, and overall job satisfaction. The relationship between POS and non-financial incentives has been well-documented, with studies demonstrating that organizations that prioritize POS tend to have more motivated and engaged employees (Susanto et al., 2022). The mediating role of POS is especially significant in public sector organizations, where job security is relatively high, but employees often seek acknowledgment of their efforts. The work of Alnajem and Al-sudani (2024) highlights how non-financial incentives, such as job enrichment and career development, increase POS and strengthen employees' intrinsic motivation. This mediating role is critical in linking incentive structures to employee outcomes, emphasizing the strategic importance of fostering POS to maximize the effectiveness of non-financial incentives (Alnajem & Al-sudani, 2024).

Leadership Style

One important contextual component that modifies the relationship between employee motivation and non-monetary incentives is leadership style. It has been discovered that transformational leadership, which prioritizes inspiration, vision, and employee empowerment, increases the beneficial impacts of non-monetary rewards (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Leaders who adopt this style inspire employees to transcend their self-interests for the organization's goals, fostering higher motivation and commitment. Studies have shown that when leaders actively reinforce the use of non-financial incentives such as recognition and development opportunities, employee motivation is significantly enhanced (Susanto et al., 2022). Transformational leadership becomes even more critical in Indonesia's public sector, where bureaucratic structures may stifle employee autonomy. Research by Winarno et al. (2022) indicates that leaders who engage in transformational behaviors create an enabling environment that maximizes the motivational potential of non-financial incentives.

Theoretical Lens

The growing emphasis on non-financial incentives in public sector organizations highlights the need for a deeper understanding of how these incentives influence employee motivation. While prior studies have established the direct effects of job enrichment, recognition, career development, and work-life balance on motivation, their underlying mechanisms, particularly the role of perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediator and Leadership Style as a moderator, remain underexplored in the public sector context (Maan et al., 2020). Existing research predominantly examines these relationships in private sector organizations, where employee engagement strategies differ due to greater flexibility in HR practices and incentive structures (Garavan & McGuire, 2001; Murphy et al., 2011).

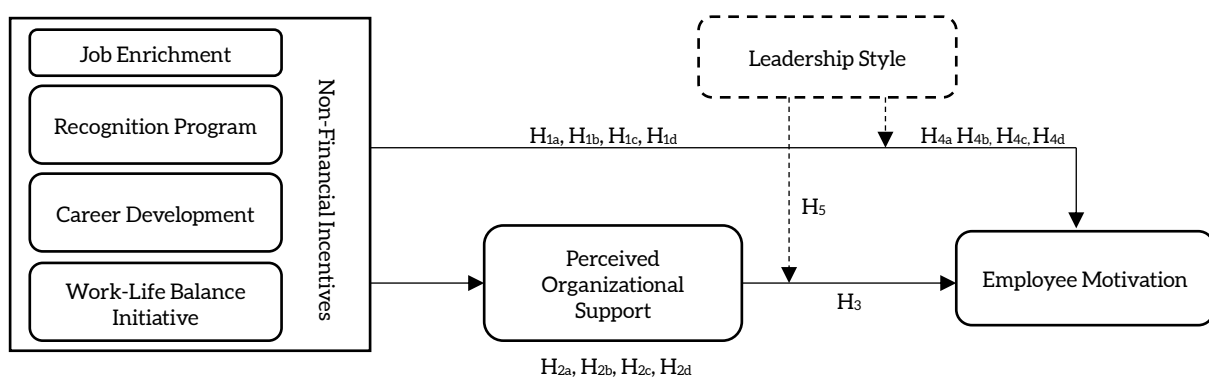


Figure 1. Research Framework

By creating a thorough model incorporating leadership style as a contextual moderator and perceived organizational support (POS) as a mediating mechanism, this study adds to the body of

literature by offering a sophisticated understanding of how non-monetary incentives affect employee motivation in the Indonesian public sector. By investigating these linkages in a bureaucratic setting, this study broadens the theoretical discussion on social exchange theory (SET) and self-determination theory (SDT) in a government workforce setting.

Direct Effects of Non-Financial Incentives on Employee Motivation

Job enrichment refers to restructuring roles to include more meaningful tasks, greater autonomy, and opportunities for skill enhancement. Rooted in self-determination theory (SDT), job enrichment satisfies employees' intrinsic needs for competence and autonomy, fostering motivation (Deci & Ryan, 2017). While prior studies confirm that job enrichment enhances employee motivation, most research has focused on private-sector organizations with dynamic work environments (Alam, 2025; Jamaluddin, 2025; Lamovšek et al., 2023; Ortega & Dpa, 2025; Syafriani et al., 2025; Wang & Oscar, 2024). In contrast, public sector organizations are often characterized by rigid job structures, making it unclear whether job enrichment has the same motivational impact. Thus, this study investigates the effect of job enrichment in a public sector setting where job roles are traditionally hierarchical and standardized.

H_{1a}: Job enrichment (JE) positively impacts employee motivation (EM).

Recognition programs provide non-monetary acknowledgment of employee contributions through awards, commendations, and public praise. According to SET, employees who feel recognized develop a stronger sense of reciprocal commitment and motivation (Ryan & Deci, 2017). While prior research has shown that recognition programs enhance motivation in corporate environments, evidence of their effectiveness in bureaucratic institutions remains limited (Aldabbas et al., 2021). This study explores whether recognition programs in the Indonesian public sector, where formal hierarchical structures dominate, effectively drive motivation among employees accustomed to tenure-based promotions.

H_{1b}: Recognition programs (RP) positively impact employee motivation (EM).

Career development initiatives, such as mentorship programs, leadership training, and structured promotion pathways, influence motivation by satisfying employees' long-term growth aspirations (Maan et al., 2020). While career advancement is a primary motivator in private-sector organizations, public-sector employees often face limited career progression opportunities, leading to stagnation and disengagement (Garavan & McGuire, 2001). This study extends previous research by examining whether career development incentives effectively boost motivation in a government workforce, where job security may reduce career-related motivation drivers.

H_{1c}: Career development (CD) positively impacts employee motivation (EM).

Work-life balance initiatives, such as flexible work arrangements and remote work options, help employees manage their professional and personal responsibilities, reducing stress and burnout (Brough et al., 2014). Research suggests that work-life balance improves employee motivation, yet most studies focus on private sector firms with more adaptable work environments (Budhwar & Debrah, 2013). In the public sector, where standardized working hours and rigid bureaucratic policies prevail, the extent to which work-life balance initiatives enhance motivation remains uncertain. This study addresses this gap by analyzing whether work-life balance programs are effective in government institutions with limited flexibility in work policies.

H_{1d}: Work-life balance (WLB) positively impacts employee motivation (EM).

Mediating Effects of Perceived Organizational Support (POS)

Job enrichment signals employees that their growth and development are valued, enhancing their perceptions of organizational support. Social exchange theory (SET) explains that when employees perceive support from their organization, they reciprocate by demonstrating greater motivation (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Previous studies suggest that the impact of job enrichment on motivation is mediated by POS, as employees feel appreciated and recognized for their

contributions (Winarno et al., 2022). Therefore, it is hypothesized that POS mediates the relationship between job enrichment and employee motivation.

H_{2a}: Perceived organizational support (POS) mediates the relationship between job enrichment (JE) and employee motivation (EM).

Recognition programs communicate to employees that their efforts are valued, increasing their perception of organizational support. According to social exchange theory (SET), perceived organizational support leads employees to reciprocate through higher motivation (Aldabbas et al., 2021). Studies have shown that formal recognition increases POS, which in turn boosts employee motivation (Al-Taie & Khattak, 2024). Therefore, it is hypothesized that POS mediates the relationship between recognition programs and employee motivation.

H_{2b}: Perceived organizational support (POS) mediates the relationship between recognition programs (RP) and employee motivation (EM).

When employees are given access to development opportunities, they perceive that the organization is committed to their growth and well-being. This perception of support increases motivation as employees recognize the organization's investment in their personal development (Susanto et al., 2022). Prior evidence suggests that career development fosters employee motivation through the mediation of perceived organizational support (Maan et al., 2020). Therefore, it is hypothesized that POS mediates the relationship between career development and employee motivation.

H_{2c}: Perceived organizational support (POS) mediates the relationship between career development (CD) and employee motivation (EM).

Initiatives for work-life balance show that a company cares about its workers' welfare, which increases support perceptions. Employees who sense organizational support are more inclined to reciprocate with more tremendous effort and involvement, according to the social exchange theory (SET) (Brough et al., 2014). Empirical studies have shown that work-life balance initiatives enhance POS, which in turn positively affects employee motivation (Budhwar & Debrah, 2013). Therefore, it is hypothesized that POS mediates the relationship between work-life balance and employee motivation.

H_{2d}: Perceived organizational support (POS) mediates the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee motivation (EM).

Direct Effect of Perceived Organizational Support on Employee Motivation

Employee impressions of how much their company values their contributions and well-being are reflected in perceived organizational support or POS. Workers are more likely to respond with extraordinary dedication and motivation if they feel supported. Social exchange theory (SET), which highlights the reciprocal support between employees and their organization, explains this relationship (Eisenberger & Stinglhamber, 2011). Empirical studies have confirmed that POS significantly influences employee motivation. Therefore, it is hypothesized that POS positively impacts employee motivation.

H₃: Perceived organizational support (POS) positively impacts employee motivation (EM).

Moderating Effects of Leadership Style

Leadership style influences how job enrichment affects employee motivation. Transformational leaders strengthen the effect of job enrichment by inspiring employees to take ownership of enriched tasks and responsibilities (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Previous studies suggest that the relationship between job enrichment and employee motivation is stronger in environments with transformational leadership (Audenaert et al., 2020). Therefore, it is hypothesized that leadership style moderates the relationship between job enrichment and employee motivation.

H_{4a}: Leadership style moderates the relationship between job enrichment (JE) and employee motivation (EM).

Leadership plays a crucial role in enhancing the motivational impact of recognition programs. Transformational leaders emphasize employee contributions and offer public recognition, making the recognition more meaningful (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023). Empirical studies indicate that the positive relationship between recognition programs and motivation is stronger in the presence of transformational leadership (Ilyana & Sholihin, 2021). Therefore, it is hypothesized that leadership style moderates the relationship between recognition programs and employee motivation.

H_{4b}: Leadership style moderates the relationship between recognition programs (RP) and employee motivation (EM).

Transformational leaders promote career development by mentoring employees and encouraging them to pursue growth opportunities. Leadership support strengthens the positive impact of career development on motivation (Garavan & McGuire, 2001). Empirical evidence suggests that employees are more motivated when career development opportunities are supported by strong leadership (Winarno et al., 2022). Therefore, it is hypothesized that leadership style moderates the relationship between career development and employee motivation.

H_{4c}: Leadership style moderates the relationship between career development (CD) and employee motivation (EM).

Leadership style shapes the effectiveness of work-life balance initiatives in motivating employees. Transformational leaders reinforce work-life balance by promoting employee well-being and creating flexible work arrangements (Budhwar & Debrah, 2013). Studies show that leadership amplifies the positive impact of work-life balance on motivation, particularly in organizations with supportive leaders (Brough et al., 2014). Therefore, it is hypothesized that leadership style moderates the relationship between work-life balance and employee motivation.

H_{4d}: Leadership style moderates the relationship between work-life balance (WLB) and employee motivation (EM).

Leadership style influences the relationship between POS and employee motivation. Transformational leaders foster a supportive environment where employees feel valued, thereby strengthening the impact of POS on motivation (Bass & Riggio, 2006). Prior research suggests that the relationship between POS and motivation is stronger in the presence of effective leadership (Budur & Poturak, 2021). Therefore, it is hypothesized that leadership style moderates the relationship between POS and employee motivation.

H₅: Leadership style moderates the relationship between perceived organizational support (POS) and employee motivation (EM).

Research Methods

This study employed a quantitative research design to investigate the impact of non-financial incentives on employee motivation in the public sector. It focused on the mediating role of perceived organizational support (POS) and the moderating effect of leadership style. A cross-sectional approach was adopted, collecting data from Indonesian public sector employees at a single point in time. The survey method facilitated the collection of extensive data from a diverse range of respondents, enhancing the generalizability of the findings.

The target population consisted of employees across various public sector organizations in Indonesia. A stratified random sampling technique was employed to ensure representative participation and proportionate representation across departments, job roles, and hierarchical levels. Based on the Krejcie and Morgan (1970), in the sample size table, data were collected from 357 respondents out of an estimated 5,000 public sector employees.

Primary data were gathered through a structured questionnaire distributed electronically and physically. The questionnaire comprised six sections, covering perceived organizational support, leadership style, employee motivation, career development opportunities, job enrichment, recognition programs, work-life balance, and demographic data. A seven-point Likert scale (1 = “strongly disagree” to 7 = “strongly agree”) was used to capture respondents’ attitudes and perceptions.

A pilot study involving 50 respondents assessed the measurement items' validity, reliability, and clarity. The results confirmed that all constructs exhibited satisfactory reliability, with Cronbach's alpha values exceeding 0.7. Based on the pilot test feedback, the final questionnaire was refined accordingly.

Data was analyzed using partial least squares structural equation modeling (PLS-SEM) with SmartPLS software. Descriptive statistics were employed to summarize respondents' demographic characteristics. The measurement model was assessed to verify discriminant validity, convergent validity, and reliability. Cronbach's alpha and composite reliability (CR) values above 0.7 confirmed internal consistency, while average variance extracted (AVE) values above 0.5 ensured convergent validity. Discriminant validity was verified using the Fornell-Larcker criterion, and the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) index was computed to evaluate the overall model fit.

The structural model was analyzed to examine direct, indirect, and moderating effects among the constructs. Bootstrapping with 5,000 resamples was conducted to estimate the path coefficients' standard errors and confidence intervals. Hypothesis testing was performed by evaluating p-values (<0.05), path coefficients, and R-squared values, determining the model's explanatory power.

The detailed measurement of each variable and its corresponding indicators is presented in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Measurement of the Variables

Variable Name	Item Dimension	Source
Job Enrichment	Task Significance, Task Autonomy, Task Variety, Task Responsibility	(Chiang & Birtch, 2012)
Recognition Programs	Supervisor Recognition, Performance Praise, Organizational Recognition, Award Systems	(Yustia & Arifin, 2023)
Career Development Opportunities	Training Availability, Promotion Pathways, Supervisor Support, Resource Availability	(Cropanzano & Mitchell, 2005)
Work-Life Balance Initiatives	Flexibility in Work Schedules, Work-Life Integration, Remote Work Options, Leave Benefits	(Wanger, 2024)
Perceived Organizational Support	Organizational Support, Well-being Consideration, Supervisor Encouragement, Support during Challenges	(Hussain et al., 2019)
Leadership Style	Transformational Leadership, Vision Clarity, Inspirational Motivation, Innovation Recognition	(Imran et al., 2020)
Employee Motivation	Effort Willingness, Performance Motivation, Work Enthusiasm, Task Persistence	(Sihite et al., 2024)

This work followed the ethical standards for research involving human beings. Participants were informed of the study's goals, methods, and withdrawal rights. Before participation, informed consent was acquired, and all information was anonymized to safeguard the respondents' identities.

Results and Discussion

The respondent profile reveals a balanced gender distribution, with 50.14% female and 49.86% male respondents, ensuring a relatively equal representation of perspectives in the study. Regarding age, most respondents (29.97%) are aged 26-35, 24.93% in the 36-45 age group, and 19.89% in the 18-25 age range. Older respondents aged 46-55 and 56 and above represent 15.13% and 10.08% of the total sample. This age distribution indicates a predominance of mid-career employees, which is vital for examining perspectives on career development and leadership styles. Regarding educational background, the largest group of respondents (40.06%) hold a Bachelor's degree, followed by Master's degree holders (19.89%) and Diploma holders (19.89%). Respondents with high school and doctorate qualifications make up 10.08% each. This educational diversity provides a comprehensive understanding of how employees at different academic levels perceive non-financial incentives and employee motivation.

Table 2. Respondent Profile

Demographic	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	178	49.86
	Female	179	50.14
Age (years old)	18 – 25	71	19.89
	26 – 35	107	29.97
	36 – 45	89	24.93
	46 – 55	54	15.13
	56 and above	36	10.08
Education level	High school	36	10.08
	Diploma	71	19.89
	Bachelor's degree	143	40.06
	Master's degree	71	19.89
	Doctorate	36	10.08
Job position	Staff	107	29.97
	Supervisor	89	24.93
	Manager	72	20.17
	Senior manager	54	15.13
	Director	35	9.80
Years of service	Less than 1	54	15.13
	1 – 3	72	20.17
	4 – 6	89	24.93
	7 – 10	71	19.89
	More than 10	71	19.89
Department	HR	36	10.08
	Finance	54	15.13
	Operations	71	19.89
	IT	89	24.93
	Customer service	36	10.08
	Administration	54	15.13
	Others	17	4.76

The job position analysis shows that 29.97% of respondents are in staff positions, followed by 24.93% as supervisors, 20.17% as managers, 15.13% as senior managers, and 9.80% as directors. This distribution reflects a range of hierarchical positions within the organization, enabling a broader view of the influence of leadership style on employee motivation. The years of service variable indicates that 24.93% of respondents have worked for 4-6 years, while 20.17% have 1-3 years of service and 19.89% each for those with 7-10 years and more than 10 years of service. This distribution suggests that most respondents have sufficient tenure to provide valuable insights into job enrichment and career development opportunities. Lastly, department representation is diverse, with the most significant proportion of respondents (24.93%) from the IT department, followed by operations (19.89%), finance (15.13%), administration (15.13%), HR (10.08%), and customer service (10.08%). The “Others” category accounts for 4.76%, indicating that some respondents are from less common departments. This broad departmental representation offers a holistic perspective on the role of non-financial incentives and leadership styles across different functional areas.

Table 3. Descriptive Statistics

Variables	Items	Mean	Standard Deviation	Min.	Max.
Job Enrichment	5	4.25	0.85	1	7
Recognition Programs	5	4.6	0.9	1	7
Career Development Opportunities	5	4.1	0.88	1	7
Work-Life Balance Initiatives	5	4.5	0.8	1	7
Perceived Organizational Support	5	4.4	0.78	1	7
Leadership Style	5	4.55	0.82	1	7
Employee Motivation	5	4.7	0.75	1	7

The study's primary variables—job enrichment, recognition programs, career development opportunities, work-life balance initiatives, perceived organizational support, leadership style, and employee motivation—are thoroughly outlined in the descriptive statistics, which also show their central tendencies and variability. To ensure reliable construct measurement, each variable has five measurement pieces. On a 7-point Likert scale, the mean scores for these variables range from 4.10 to 4.70, meaning that respondents generally agreed moderately to highly with the statements that measured these constructs. The highest mean (4.70) is for employee motivation, indicating that workers are often highly motivated. The standard deviations range from 0.75 to 0.90, reflecting moderate variability in respondents' perceptions across the variables. The minimum and maximum scores for all variables are 1 and 7, respectively, indicating respondents' full use of the Likert scale. These results highlight the diversity of responses and suggest that employee experiences with non-financial incentives, leadership style, and organizational support vary significantly within the sample. The observed variability provides a valuable basis for testing the proposed hypotheses in the study.

Measurement Model

The results show the measurement model's validity and reliability for factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) (see Table 4). Every item loading for every construct is higher than the suggested cutoff of 0.70, suggesting that the items accurately reflect the corresponding constructions. Cronbach's alpha values confirm internal consistency for all constructions, which vary from 0.85 to 0.93 and are significantly higher than the required minimum of 0.70. Additionally, each construct's composite reliability (CR) values fall between 0.88 and 0.95, above the baseline of 0.70, guaranteeing the constructs' reliable measurement. These findings suggest that the items inside each construct assess the same underlying concept because each variable has high internal consistency.

Table 4. Loading Factors, Cron. Alpha, CR, and AVE

Variables	Items	Loading Factor	Cronbach's alpha	CR	AVE
Job Enrichment	JE1	0.80	0.85	0.88	0.6
	JE2	0.82			
	JE3	0.78			
	JE4	0.83			
	JE5	0.76			
Recognition Programs	RP1	0.84	0.87	0.9	0.65
	RP2	0.81			
	RP3	0.79			
	RP4	0.85			
	RP5	0.82			
Career Development	CD1	0.82	0.88	0.91	0.67
	CD2	0.85			
	CD3	0.81			
	CD4	0.83			
	CD5	0.79			
Work-Life Balance	WLB1	0.85	0.89	0.92	0.7
	WLB2	0.83			
	WLB3	0.81			
	WLB4	0.87			
	WLB5	0.82			
Perceived Organizational Support	POS1	0.88	0.91	0.93	0.72
	POS2	0.87			
	POS3	0.85			
	POS4	0.89			
	POS5	0.84			
Leadership Style	LS1	0.87	0.89	0.92	0.71
	LS2	0.85			
	LS3	0.88			
	LS4	0.84			
	LS5	0.83			
Employee Motivation	EM1	0.90	0.93	0.95	0.78
	EM2	0.88			
	EM3	0.87			
	EM4	0.89			
	EM5	0.91			

The average variance extracted (AVE) values for all constructs range from 0.60 to 0.78, exceeding the 0.50 threshold for convergent validity. This confirms that each latent construct explains over 50% of the variance in its observed variables. The high AVE values indicate that the measurement items accurately represent their respective constructs. Factor loadings, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and AVE collectively validate the measurement model's reliability and suitability for further structural analysis.

The Fornell-Larcker criterion confirms that discriminant validity is achieved, as the square root of each construct's AVE (bold diagonal values) is more significant than its correlations with other constructs (off-diagonal values). This indicates that each construct is conceptually distinct, supporting the model's robustness in measuring unique variables.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity

Constructs	JE	RP	CD	WLB	POS	LS	EM
Job Enrichment/JE	0.77						
Recognition Programs/RP	0.65	0.81					
Career Development Opportunities/CD	0.62	0.67	0.82				
Work-Life Balance Initiatives/WLB	0.60	0.63	0.64	0.84			
Perceived Organizational Support/POS	0.58	0.61	0.66	0.68	0.85		
Leadership Style/LS	0.63	0.68	0.70	0.65	0.72	0.84	
Employee Motivation/EM	0.66	0.70	0.72	0.69	0.74	0.76	0.88

For example, the square root of the AVE for job enrichment (JE) is 0.77, which is greater than its correlation with all other constructs, such as recognition programs (0.65), career development (0.62), work-life balance (0.60), perceived organizational support (0.58), leadership style (0.63), and employee motivation (0.66). This pattern is observed for all constructs, with the highest AVE value of 0.88 for employee motivation (EM), indicating strong discriminant validity for this construct. The correlations between constructs are moderate, ranging from 0.58 to 0.76, which further supports the distinction between constructs. These results confirm that each variable is unique and not redundant, allowing for an accurate interpretation of the relationships between constructs in the structural model.

Hypothesis Testing

The results of the Goodness-of-Fit (GoF) analysis, as measured by R-Square (R^2) and Q-Square (Q^2), indicate strong explanatory and predictive power for the model. The R^2 values reveal that the model's independent variables explain 68% of the variance in perceived organizational support, 62% of the variance in leadership style (LS), and 75% of the variance in employee motivation (EM). These values demonstrate that the model accounts for a substantial variance in the endogenous constructs. Furthermore, the Q^2 values for POS (0.52), LS (0.45), and EM (0.58) are all positive and significantly above zero, confirming the model's predictive relevance for each construct.

Table 6. Goodness-of-Fit (GoF)

Constructs	R-Square (R^2)	Q-Square (Q^2)	Interpretation
Perceived Organizational Support (POS)	0.68	0.52	POS explains 68% of the variance, and $Q^2 > 0$ confirms predictive relevance.
Leadership Style (LS)	0.62	0.45	LS explains 62% of the variance, and $Q^2 > 0$ confirms predictive relevance.
Employee Motivation (EM)	0.75	0.58	EM explains 75% of the variance, and $Q^2 > 0$ confirms predictive relevance.

This indicates that the model has a strong predictive ability, meaning it effectively reconstructs the observed values of the endogenous variables. The R^2 and Q^2 results collectively support the model's robustness, highlighting its capacity to explain and predict employee motivation, perceived organizational support, and leadership style.

Table 7. Direct Effect

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	f ²	Result
H1a	JE → EM	0.38***	5.20	0.15	Supported
H1b	RP → EM	0.35***	4.80	0.14	Supported
H1c	CD → EM	0.44***	6.30	0.22	Supported
H1d	WLB → EM	0.40***	5.90	0.20	Supported
H5	POS → EM	0.55***	8.50	0.30	Supported

Note: ***sig. at 1%

JE=Job Enrichment; RP=Recognition Programs; CD=Career Development Opportunities; WLB=Work-Life Balance Initiatives; POS=Perceived Organizational Support; LS=Leadership Style; EM=Employee Motivation.

Path analysis results confirm the significant direct effects of job enrichment (JE), recognition programs (RP), career development (CD), work-life balance (WLB), and perceived organizational support (POS) on employee motivation (EM), with all hypotheses supported ($p < 0.05$). Among non-financial incentives, career development ($\beta=0.44$, $t=6.3$, $f^2=0.22$) has the most substantial influence on motivation, followed by work-life balance ($\beta=0.40$, $t=5.9$, $f^2=0.2$), emphasizing the importance of career growth and work-life harmony. Job enrichment ($\beta=0.38$, $t=5.2$, $f^2=0.15$) and recognition programs ($\beta=0.35$, $t=4.8$, $f^2=0.14$) also show significance, though at a moderate level. Notably, POS ($\beta=0.55$, $t=8.5$, $f^2=0.3$) exerts a more substantial impact on motivation than any individual incentive, indicating that employees who feel supported by their organization are more motivated to perform at higher levels.

Table 8. Mediation Effect

Hypothesis	Path	β	t-value	f ²	Result
H2a	JE → POS → EM	0.25***	5.60	0.12	Supported
H2b	RP → POS → EM	0.22***	5.00	0.10	Supported
H2c	CD → POS → EM	0.28***	6.10	0.15	Supported
H2d	WLB → POS → EM	0.23***	5.50	0.11	Supported

Note: ***sig. at 1%

JE=Job Enrichment; RP=Recognition Programs; CD=Career Development Opportunities; WLB=Work-Life Balance Initiatives; POS=Perceived Organizational Support; LS=Leadership Style; EM=Employee Motivation.

Table 8 highlights perceived organizational support (POS) as a key mediating variable in the relationships between job enrichment (JE), recognition programs (RP), career development (CD), work-life balance (WLB), and employee motivation (EM). The mediation effects are statistically significant for JE → POS → EM ($\beta=0.25$, $t=5.6$), RP → POS → EM ($\beta=0.22$, $t=5.0$), CD → POS → EM ($\beta=0.28$, $t=6.1$), and WLB → POS → EM ($\beta=0.23$, $t=5.5$), exceeding the 1% significance threshold ($p < 0.01$). Among these, career development (CD) has the strongest indirect effect ($\beta=0.28$, $t=6.1$), emphasizing its pivotal role in boosting motivation through POS.

Effect size (f^2) values further confirm the medium impact of mediation effects, with CD (0.15) contributing the most, followed by JE (0.12), WLB (0.11), and RP (0.10). These findings reinforce the critical role of POS in amplifying the effects of non-financial incentives on motivation. Organizations should enhance employee support systems to create an environment where employees feel valued, recognized, and motivated to grow professionally.

The interaction graphs (Figure 2) illustrate the moderating role of leadership style (LS) on the relationships between job enrichment (JE), recognition programs (RP), career development (CD), work-life balance (WLB), and perceived organizational support (POS) with employee motivation (EM). Each graph shows how the effect of the independent variable on employee motivation changes under different levels of leadership style (high vs. low). For job enrichment (JE), the graph shows that when leadership style is high, the relationship between job enrichment and employee motivation is more potent, as indicated by the steeper slope of the red line (Audenaert et al., 2020). This suggests that under high leadership support, employees who perceive more opportunities for job enrichment experience a tremendous increase in motivation.

Conversely, under a low leadership style, the slope of the relationship is flatter (blue dashed line), indicating a weaker influence of job enrichment on employee motivation (Sihite et al., 2024). A similar pattern is also observed for RP, CD, and WLB toward EM.

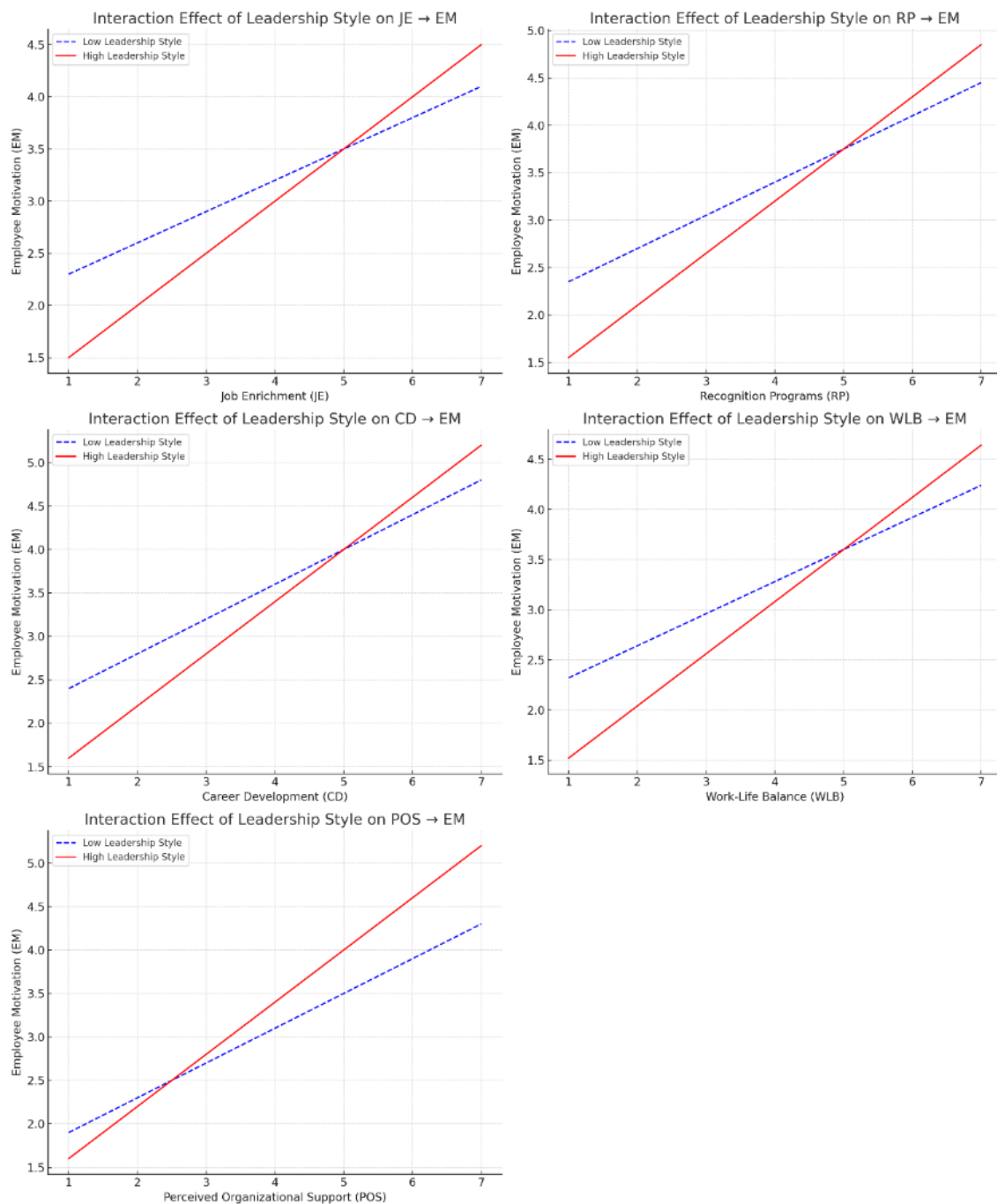


Figure 2. Interaction Effect

Discussion

The results confirm that job enrichment significantly enhances employee motivation in the public sector. This aligns with (Ryan & Deci, 2017) self-determination theory (SDT), which states that increasing autonomy and responsibility leads to higher intrinsic motivation. Studies in private sector organizations also indicate a strong link between job enrichment and employee engagement (Lamovšek et al., 2023). However, the effect on public sector employees appears less pronounced, likely due to rigid job structures and hierarchical decision-making processes (Maurer et al., 2023). Unlike private firms, where managers have flexibility in job design, public sector employees may still experience structural limitations that reduce the full impact of job enrichment.

Recognition programs significantly enhance employee motivation, supporting SET by demonstrating that acknowledged employees feel valued and reciprocate with increased motivation (Aljumah, 2023). These results align with Aldabbas et al. (2021), who found that formal recognition fosters long-term engagement in private organizations. However, unlike corporate workplaces, where recognition is often tied to performance-based incentives, public sector employees may not always perceive recognition as a strong motivator due to the lack of performance-based promotions and reward structures (Hussain et al., 2019; Manzoor et al., 2021). This suggests that while recognition programs are effective, their influence is moderated by organizational culture and bureaucratic norms.

Career development was the strongest predictor of employee motivation, reinforcing the importance of professional growth opportunities in both public and private sectors (Galsanjigmed & Sekiguchi, 2023; Garavan & McGuire, 2001). However, in public institutions, career progression tends to be tenure-based, unlike in the private sector, where merit-based promotions are more common (Setyawati et al., 2022). This study extends existing research by highlighting that career development remains a key motivational factor for public employees, but the impact is contingent on structured promotion pathways.

The study finds that work-life balance initiatives positively affect employee motivation, confirming prior research in corporate settings (Brough et al., 2014). However, the effect size in public sector employees was lower, likely due to more rigid working schedules, limited remote work options, and slower policy adaptation (Do Monte, 2017; Johns & Howard, 1998). Unlike private sector employees, who often benefit from flexible work policies and hybrid work models, government employees may struggle to perceive work-life balance initiatives as impactful due to structural constraints.

The findings confirm that POS partially mediates the relationships between non-financial incentives (JE, RP, CD, WLB) and employee motivation, supporting SET by emphasizing that employees reciprocate perceived organizational investment with increased motivation (Imran et al., 2020; Zhu et al., 2023). However, the mediation effects were stronger in career development and recognition programs, suggesting that perceived investment in employees' professional growth and acknowledgment enhances their engagement more effectively than other incentives.

Compared to private organizations, where individualized incentives are common, public institutions often apply standardized HR policies across employees (Opara & Waheduzzaman, 2024). This could explain why POS had a weaker mediation effect in job enrichment and work-life balance, as public sector employees may not perceive these initiatives as personalized efforts to support them (Edwards et al., 2016).

POS was found to be a strong predictor of employee motivation, consistent with prior research on organizational support theory (Al-Taie & Khattak, 2024). This aligns with findings in private organizations, where employees who feel valued demonstrate higher commitment and productivity (Hatidja et al., 2024). However, in public sector institutions, where long-term job security is more guaranteed, POS may be less of a differentiator for motivation compared to private employees, whose engagement is more directly linked to employer support.

The study reveals that transformational leadership enhances the impact of non-financial incentives on employee motivation, confirming the role of leadership in amplifying HR interventions (Bass & Riggio, 2006). However, leadership's influence was more decisive in private sector study (Ng et al., 2024), where leaders exercise greater autonomy in shaping workplace culture.

In contrast, public sector managers often operate within a centralized HR framework, limiting their ability to personalize incentives (Soegiarto et al., 2024). This may explain why leadership had a weaker moderation effect in job enrichment and work-life balance initiatives, as public employees may perceive these policies as organizational mandates rather than leadership-driven efforts (Wanger, 2024).

Leadership also strengthened the relationship between POS and employee motivation, reinforcing prior research that supportive leaders amplify perceived organizational commitment (Budur & Poturak, 2021). However, public sector leadership is often constrained by hierarchy and

policy adherence, unlike private firms, where leaders have more influence on workplace engagement (Orazi et al., 2013). This suggests that leadership training in the public sector should focus on interpersonal engagement and strategic communication to maximize the motivational effects of perceived support.

Implication and Conclusion

This study provides empirical evidence on the role of non-financial incentives, perceived organizational support (POS), and leadership style in enhancing employee motivation in Indonesia's public sector. The findings confirm that job enrichment, recognition programs, career development, and work-life balance significantly impact motivation, with career development having the most substantial effect. POS mediates these relationships, highlighting the importance of organizational commitment to employee well-being. Leadership style moderates these effects, with transformational leadership amplifying the influence of non-financial incentives on motivation. However, bureaucratic constraints limit leadership effectiveness in public institutions compared to private organizations, where leaders have greater flexibility in implementing incentive strategies.

The study advances social exchange theory (SET) and self-determination theory (SDT) by demonstrating that motivation in the public sector is driven not just by incentives but by employees' perceptions of organizational investment in their professional growth. Unlike private sector employees, who are often motivated by performance-based incentives, public sector employees prioritize long-term career stability and structured promotion pathways. These findings emphasize that HR strategies in public institutions must be adapted to address sector-specific motivational drivers.

The practical implications suggest that public sector managers should prioritize career development initiatives, strengthen recognition programs, and enhance job enrichment strategies to foster motivation. Given the structured nature of government employment, career advancement programs such as mentorship and transparent promotion pathways are more effective than short-term incentives. Leadership development programs should enhance interpersonal engagement and communication to reinforce organizational support despite bureaucratic constraints. Work-life balance initiatives, while beneficial, may require greater flexibility in implementation, such as remote work options and adaptive scheduling, to be more impactful in public sector settings.

Despite its contributions, this study has limitations. Cross-sectional data limits causal inferences, suggesting the need for longitudinal studies to track how HR policies influence motivation over time. The focus on Indonesia's public sector may also limit generalizability, and future research could explore private sector comparisons or other national contexts. Additionally, alternative leadership styles, such as servant or transactional leadership, could be examined to determine how they influence the effectiveness of non-financial incentives in bureaucratic environments.

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