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The Effect of Talent Management, Performance Incentives, and Recognition Programs on Employee Productivity in the Retail Industry in Central Java

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ABSTRACT

This study investigates the effects of Talent Management, Performance Incentives, and Recognition Programs on Employee Productivity within the retail industry in Central Java, Indonesia. Utilizing a quantitative research design, data were collected from 210 employees using a 5-point Likert scale and analyzed with Structural Equation Modeling (SEM-PLS 3). The results reveal that Recognition Programs had the most significant effect on Employee Productivity, followed by Performance Incentives, and Talent Management. These findings indicate that non-monetary rewards such as employee recognition programs play a pivotal role in motivating employees and enhancing their performance. The study highlights the importance of integrating recognition efforts with performance incentives and talent management strategies to achieve optimal productivity. Practical recommendations are provided for retail companies in Central Java to enhance employee motivation and organizational effectiveness.

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1. INTRODUCTION

The retail industry in Central Java drives economic growth and employment, fueled by rising consumer demand and modern retail formats, which have increased competition and necessitated operational optimization. Employee productivity is key to organizational success and is influenced by factors like GDP per capita, inflation, and unemployment, impacting trade turnover and employment in the sector [1]. Economic growth also promotes investment in R&D, vital for retail progress ([1]. Business transformation, including changes in structure, IT, and employee motivation, positively impacts financial performance and boosts employee confidence and productivity [2]. Retail businesses face increasing pressure to adopt sustainable practices, which improve reputation and efficiency, making sustainability a crucial element of retail strategies [3], [4]. HR strategies, such as training, recognition, and a positive workplace culture, enhance employee engagement and customer satisfaction, improving productivity [3]. Addressing job satisfaction factors like salary, job security, and rewards is also essential for boosting productivity in the retail sector [5].

Talent management is a key driver of employee productivity, aligning employee capabilities with organizational goals to foster engagement and job satisfaction. Effective talent management practices, including attracting, developing, and retaining skilled employees, enhance both productivity and organizational performance, as supported by various studies emphasizing the importance of strategic HR practices, continuous learning opportunities, and a positive work environment. Strategic HR practices, such as talent management, significantly improve employee productivity by aligning skills with business objectives, ensuring sustained effectiveness [6], [7]. In the IT sector, practices like autonomy, fair performance appraisals, and recognition are linked to improved job performance [6], [8]. Talent management also fosters a motivated and engaged workforce, crucial for long-term success, through continuous motivation and aligning employee efforts with company goals [9]. Creating a positive work environment, promoting work-life balance, and recognizing achievements are vital for keeping employees engaged and motivated [10]. Providing continuous learning and career development opportunities helps employees enhance their skills, maintaining a competitive edge and ensuring satisfaction, which is particularly critical in the pharmaceutical sector [9], [10].

Performance incentives, such as financial rewards and bonuses, are vital in motivating employees to exceed expectations and drive organizational success, particularly in high-pressure sectors like retail. These incentives align individual goals with organizational objectives, fostering accountability and excellence. Monetary incentives, including salaries, bonuses, and stock options, motivate employees by providing financial security and recognition, boosting morale and performance [11]. In Laurus Labs, monetary rewards significantly impacted employee motivation and productivity, emphasizing the need to align reward systems with employee expectations and organizational goals [12]. Non-monetary incentives, such as recognition, career development, and work-life balance, enhance job satisfaction and reduce turnover by addressing psychosocial needs [13]. Zenith Bank's recognition and supportive environment improved motivation and productivity, demonstrating the effectiveness of non-monetary rewards [14]. However, not all incentive systems are effective, as seen in the Finance Department of Bandung Adventist Hospital, where current practices were ineffective, highlighting the need for better alignment with employee needs [15]. A comprehensive Total Rewards Program (TRP), integrating both financial and non-financial rewards, can meet diverse employee needs and improve performance [13].

Recognition programs are crucial for enhancing employee morale and commitment, fulfilling the need for appreciation and acknowledgment. These programs, whether through formal awards or informal recognition, boost motivation and loyalty, leading to improved productivity and a positive workplace culture. The primary goal is to foster a collaborative environment where shared success is celebrated. Peer recognition systems significantly increase employee engagement and motivation, leading to lower turnover and higher satisfaction [16]. Recognition programs in the PACU setting also improved satisfaction scores, demonstrating the effectiveness of peer-to-peer recognition [17]. Effective reward programs enhance engagement, productivity, job performance, and loyalty [17]. Non-monetary recognition is often more effective than financial incentives, as it aligns with employees' values, enhancing motivation [16], [18]. A recognition culture contributes to a supportive environment, improving employee well-being and job satisfaction [19]. Furthermore, employee recognition fosters organizational growth by promoting efficiency [20]. Recognition programs, when communicated clearly and implemented fairly, contribute to organizational success [17]. This study aims to explore the combined effect of talent management, performance incentives, and recognition programs on employee

productivity in the retail industry in Central Java.

2. LITERATURE REVIEW

2.1 Talent Management and Employee Productivity

Talent management is a strategic priority for organizations aiming to enhance workforce performance and sustainable growth by attracting, developing, and retaining skilled employees aligned with organizational goals. It fosters engagement, satisfaction, and commitment, driving productivity. Studies highlight that practices such as leadership development, succession planning, and skills training significantly enhance productivity, especially in sectors like retail [21]. Talent management contributes to resilience, innovation, and competitive advantage, aligning employee efforts with business goals [9], [22]. Companies with robust frameworks report higher productivity levels, as engaged employees are more committed, productive, and likely to stay, improving organizational efficiency [21], [23]. Talent management also supports succession planning and leadership development, ensuring continuity and preparing future leaders for success [22], [24].

2.2 Performance Incentives and Employee Productivity

Performance incentives are crucial for motivating employees, particularly in industries like retail with high workloads and repetitive tasks. These incentives, both financial and non-financial, align with Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which states employees are motivated when their efforts lead to desirable outcomes. Empirical evidence supports their role in improving motivation, job satisfaction, and productivity, but the design and implementation are key. Monetary incentives, such as bonuses and profit-sharing, encourage hard work and enhance performance [11]. In Western countries, benefits like health insurance are powerful incentives, especially where government healthcare is unavailable [11]. Non-financial incentives, including flexible hours and professional development, help maintain engagement and satisfaction [13]. Total rewards programs (TRP) that integrate both financial and non-financial rewards focus on work-life balance and career development [13]. The success of these systems depends on organizational culture, leadership styles, and employee characteristics [25]. A holistic approach that includes communication and workplace environment is essential for sustaining productivity [26]. However, when incentive systems don't meet employee expectations, they may negatively impact performance, requiring adaptation to evolving work trends like remote work and the gig economy [15].

2.3 Recognition Programs and Employee Productivity

Recognition programs are essential for enhancing employee morale, motivation, and performance by acknowledging contributions to organizational success. Based on

Social Exchange Theory, these programs suggest that employees reciprocate positive treatment with greater effort and loyalty. Research shows that recognition fosters a positive work environment, reduces turnover, and boosts productivity. Peer recognition points (PRP) systems, by fulfilling the need for appreciation, lead to lower turnover and higher satisfaction [19]. In construction, recognition programs improve engagement, performance, and loyalty, with clear communication and fairness being key [17]. In healthcare, award programs for APRNs and PAs increase job satisfaction and retention, with employees aware of awards showing greater satisfaction [27]. In Nigeria's oil service firms, recognition positively correlates with organizational growth, highlighting the importance of frequent, equitable recognition [20]. Witnessing recognition also enhances organizational justice and work engagement, demonstrating the spillover effects of recognition programs [28].

2.4 Research Gap and Hypothesis Development

While previous studies have extensively explored the individual effects of talent management, performance incentives, and recognition programs on productivity, limited research exists on their combined impact, particularly in the context of the retail industry in Central Java. This study addresses this gap by examining the interplay of these factors and their influence on employee productivity. Based on the literature, the following hypotheses are proposed:

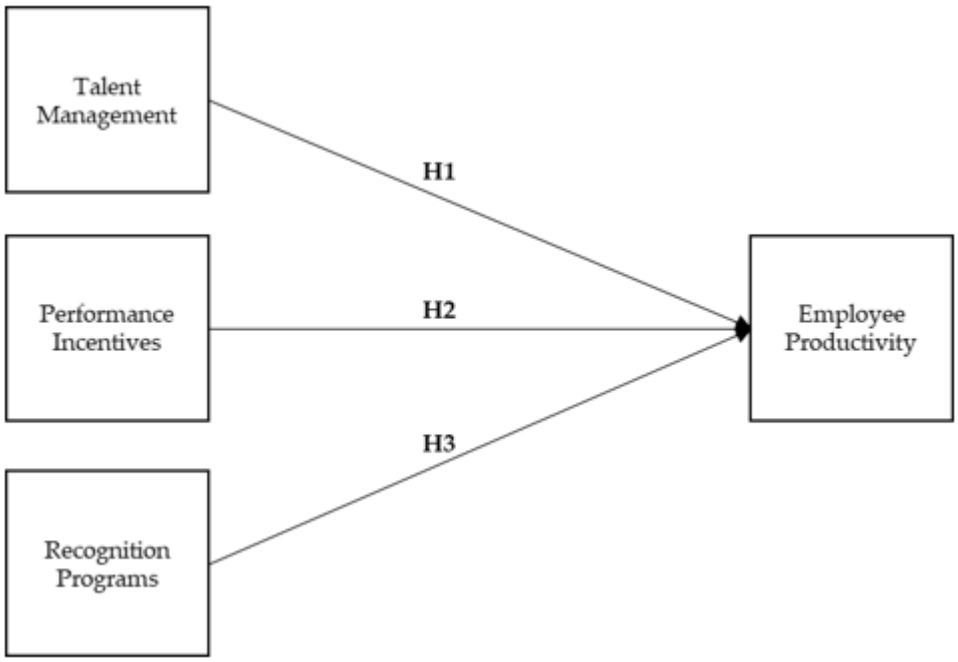

Figure 1. Conceptual Framework

3. METHODS

3.1 Research Design

This study employs a quantitative research design to investigate the effects of

talent management, performance incentives, and recognition programs on employee productivity in the retail industry in Central Java. The design focuses on testing hypotheses derived from existing literature through statistical analysis of collected data. This approach ensures objective measurement and analysis of the relationships among the variables under study.

3.2 Population and Sample

The target population for this study consists of employees working in various retail companies across Central Java. A sample size of 210 respondents was determined using purposive sampling, ensuring that participants were employed in retail organizations and directly involved in operational roles. This sample size is considered adequate for analysis using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), which requires a minimum of 10 respondents per indicator [29]

3.3 Data Collection

Data were collected using a structured questionnaire distributed to the selected respondents. The questionnaire utilized a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from 1 ("strongly disagree") to 5 ("strongly agree"), to capture the respondents' perceptions.

3.4 Data Analysis Techniques

Data analysis was conducted using Structural Equation Modeling-Partial Least Squares (SEM-PLS), a robust statistical technique suitable for analyzing complex relationships among latent variables. SEM-PLS was chosen for its ability to handle small-to-moderate sample sizes and assess both measurement and structural models simultaneously, with the analysis performed using SmartPLS 3 software. The analysis involved three key steps: first, the Measurement Model Assessment, which evaluated the reliability and validity of constructs using composite reliability, Cronbach's alpha, and average variance extracted (AVE); second, the Structural Model Assessment, which tested the hypothesized relationships among variables using path coefficients, t-statistics, and p-values, where hypotheses were considered significant if the t-statistic exceeded 1.96 at a 95% confidence level; and third, the Goodness-of-Fit Analysis, ensuring the overall model fit and explanatory power using R^2 values for endogenous variables.

4. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Demographic Profile of Respondents

The demographic characteristics of the 210 respondents participating in this study are as follows: Gender: 118 male respondents (56%) and 92 female respondents (44%); Age: 50 respondents (24%) were below 25 years, 130 respondents (62%) were between 25–35 years, and 30 respondents (14%) were above 35 years; Education Level: 42 respondents (20%) had a high school diploma, 147 respondents (70%) held a bachelor's degree, and 21 respondents (10%) had a postgraduate degree; Job Tenure: 63 respondents (30%) had been with their current job for less than 2 years, 105 respondents (50%) had been with their current job for 2–5 years, and 42 respondents (20%) had more than 5 years of tenure. The demographic data indicate that the majority of respondents were male (56%), aged between 25 and 35 years (62%), and held a bachelor's degree (70%). Most respondents (50%) had a job tenure of 2–5 years. These demographics reflect a typical composition of employees in the retail industry in Central Java, where young and educated workers predominantly handle operational roles.

4.2 Measurement Model Assessment

The measurement model was assessed to ensure the reliability and validity of the constructs. This section evaluates the results for loading factors, Cronbach's alpha, composite reliability (CR), and average variance extracted (AVE) for the variables: talent management, performance incentives, recognition programs, and employee productivity.

Table 1. Measurement Model Assessment

Variable	Code	Loading Factor	Cronbach's Alpha	Composite Reliability	Average Variant Extracted
Talent Management	TM.1	0.879	0.908	0.932	0.732
	TM.2	0.867			
	TM.3	0.829			
	TM.4	0.867			
	TM.5	0.835			
Performance Incentives	PI.1	0.707	0.813	0.875	0.639
	PI.2	0.865			
	PI.3	0.861			
	PI.4	0.752			
Recognition Programs	RP.1	0.761	0.835	0.884	0.604
	RP.2	0.811			
	RP.3	0.754			
	RP.4	0.818			
	RP.5	0.736			
Employee Productivity	EP.1	0.730	0.880	0.906	0.581
	EP.2	0.776			
	EP.3	0.815			
	EP.4	0.734			
	EP.5	0.759			
	EP.6	0.773			
	EP.7	0.745			

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

The measurement model assessment results show that all constructs in this study are reliable and valid. Talent Management had loading factors between 0.829 and 0.879, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.908, Composite Reliability of 0.932, and AVE of 0.732, indicating high reliability and convergent validity. Performance Incentives showed loading factors between 0.707 and 0.865, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.813, Composite Reliability of 0.875, and AVE of 0.639, confirming good reliability. Recognition Programs exhibited loading factors between 0.736 and 0.818, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.835, Composite Reliability of 0.884, and AVE of 0.604, demonstrating strong internal consistency. Employee Productivity had loading factors ranging from 0.730 to 0.815, with Cronbach's Alpha of 0.880, Composite Reliability of 0.906, and AVE of 0.581, confirming its reliability and validity.

4.3 Discriminant Validity Assessment

Discriminant validity ensures that constructs in the model are distinct from one another, meaning each construct measures a unique concept. The Fornell-Larcker criterion is used for this assessment, which states that the square root of the AVE for each construct should be greater than its correlation with other constructs. The diagonal values in the table represent the square root of the AVE, while the off-diagonal values represent correlations between constructs.

Table 2. Discriminant Validity

	Employee Productivity	Performance Incentives	Recognition Programs	Talent Management
Employee Productivity	0.762			
Performance Incentives	0.623	0.799		
Recognition Programs	0.829	0.697	0.777	

Talent Management	0.443	0.732	0.538	0.855

Source: Data Processing Results (2025)

The discriminant validity results for the constructs show that Employee Productivity (EP) has a square root of AVE of 0.762, with correlations of 0.623 with Performance Incentives, 0.829 with Recognition Programs, and 0.443 with Talent Management. The correlation with Recognition Programs is higher than the square root of AVE, suggesting potential overlap between these two constructs. Performance Incentives (PI) has a square root of AVE of 0.799 and correlations of 0.623 with Employee Productivity, 0.697 with Recognition Programs, and 0.732 with Talent Management, showing good discriminant validity. Recognition Programs (RP) has a square root of AVE of 0.777 and correlations of 0.829 with Employee Productivity, 0.697 with Performance Incentives, and 0.538 with Talent Management, indicating some overlap with Employee Productivity. Talent Management (TM) has a square root of AVE of 0.855 and correlations of 0.443 with Employee Productivity, 0.732 with Performance Incentives, and 0.538 with Recognition Programs, confirming strong discriminant validity as the square root of AVE is greater than all its correlations with other constructs.

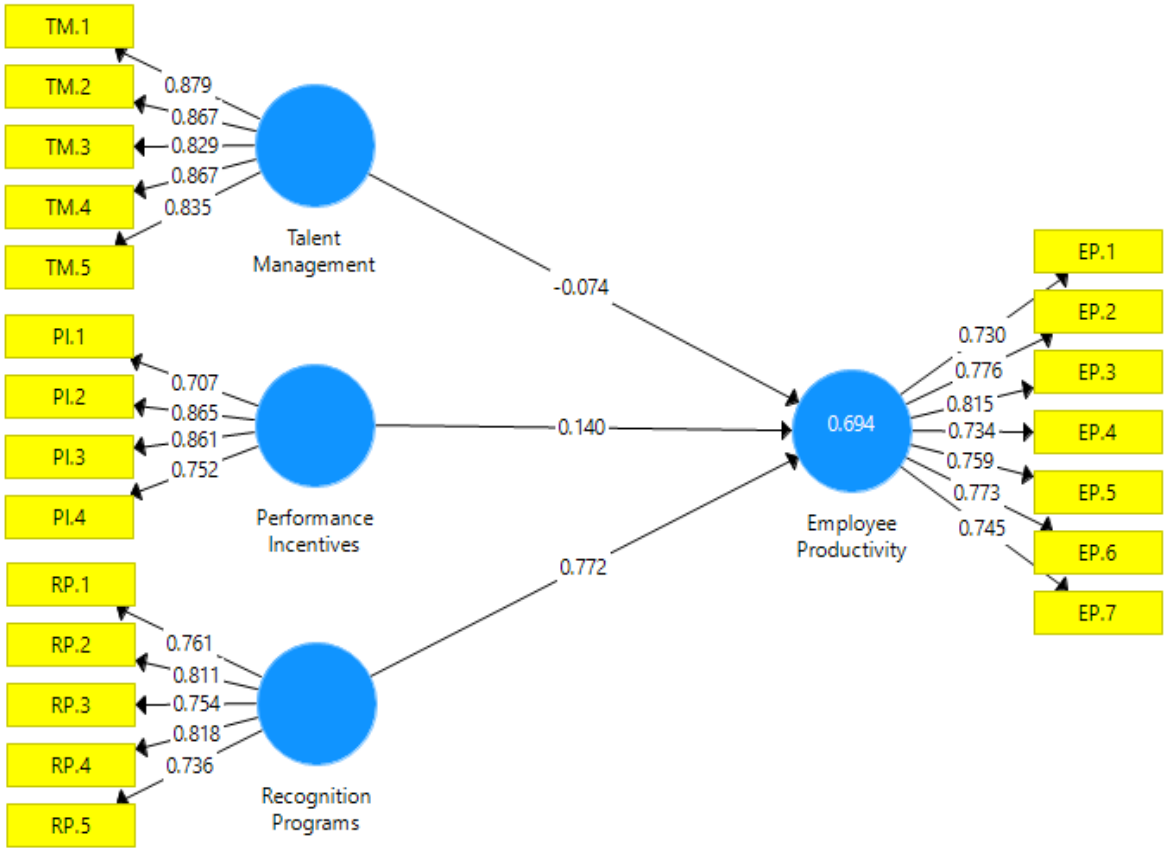

Figure 2. Model Results

Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2025

4.4 Model Fit Assessment

Model fit indicators evaluate how well the hypothesized model aligns with the observed data. For Partial Least Squares Structural Equation Modeling (PLS-SEM), commonly used fit measures include the Standardized Root Mean Square Residual (SRMR), d_ULS, d_G, Chi-Square, and the Normed Fit Index (NFI). The results for the saturated model and estimated model are

identical, which suggests the model is properly specified.

Table 3. Model Fit Results Test

	Saturated Model	Estimated Model
SRMR	0.105	0.105
d_ULS	2.541	2.541
d_G	1.431	1.431
Chi-Square	814.349	814.349
NFI	0.618	0.618

Source: Process Data Analysis (2025)

The model fit indicators provide insights into how well the hypothesized model aligns with the data. The SRMR value is 0.105, which is above the threshold of 0.08 for a good fit but still acceptable for exploratory models with values below 0.10, suggesting moderate model fit and room for improvement. The d_ULS value is 2.541, reflecting discrepancies between the implied and observed matrices, which are not excessively large, indicating a reasonable fit for an exploratory study. The d_G value of 1.431 indicates moderate geodesic discrepancy, showing a decent model fit. The Chi-Square value of 814.349 suggests some model misfit, though this value is sensitive to sample size (n = 210), and therefore should be interpreted cautiously. Lastly, the Normed Fit Index (NFI) value of 0.618, which is below the acceptable threshold of 0.90, indicates that the model does not fit the data well and may require refinement or additional variables for better alignment.

Table 4. Coefficient Model

	R Square	Q2
Employee Productivity	0.694	0.686

Source: Data Processed by Researchers, 2025

R^2 and Q^2 are crucial metrics for evaluating the model's predictive accuracy and the strength of the relationships between constructs. The R^2 value for Employee Productivity (EP) is 0.694, indicating that approximately 69.4% of the variance in Employee Productivity is explained by the predictors (Talent Management, Performance Incentives, and Recognition Programs). This is a relatively strong R^2 value, demonstrating significant explanatory power and aligning with the threshold of 0.50 commonly considered strong in social science research. The Q^2 value for Employee Productivity is 0.686, which reflects the model's predictive relevance. A Q^2 value greater than 0 suggests that the model can predict the values of the endogenous variable, and 0.686 indicates strong predictive relevance, meaning the model can explain 68.6% of the variance in Employee Productivity. Both values highlight the model's strong fit and predictive accuracy, making it a valuable tool for understanding the factors influencing Employee Productivity.

4.5 Hypothesis Testing

Hypothesis testing in Structural Equation Modeling (SEM) is typically done by analyzing the path coefficients between constructs, their statistical significance, and the strength of their relationships. The key components for hypothesis testing are the original sample (O), sample mean (M), standard deviation (STDEV), T-statistics, and p-values. In this case, we are examining the relationships between Performance Incentives, Recognition Programs, Talent Management, and Employee Productivity.

Table 5. Hypothesis Testing

	Original Sample (O)	Sample Mean (M)	Standard Deviation (STDEV)	T Statistics	P Values
Performance Incentives -> Employee Productivity	0.440	0.452	0.108	6.290	0.000
Recognition Programs -> Employee Productivity	0.772	0.765	0.073	10.560	0.000
Talent Management -> Employee Productivity	0.374	0.374	0.060	3.244	0.002

Source: Process Data Analysis (2025)

The relationships between the constructs were analyzed through path coefficients. Performance Incentives → Employee Productivity showed a path coefficient of 0.440, indicating a moderate positive effect on employee productivity. The T-statistic of 6.290 and the p-value of 0.000 confirm the statistical significance of this relationship, supporting Hypothesis 1. Recognition Programs → Employee Productivity had a stronger path coefficient of 0.772, suggesting a significant and strong positive impact on employee productivity. The T-statistic of 10.560 and p-value of 0.000 further support Hypothesis 2, indicating a robust effect. Finally, Talent Management → Employee Productivity had a path coefficient of 0.374, reflecting a moderate positive effect on productivity. With a T-statistic of 3.244 and a p-value of 0.002, this relationship is also statistically significant, thus supporting Hypothesis 3, though the effect is less pronounced compared to recognition programs. All hypotheses are supported, demonstrating the importance of performance incentives, recognition programs, and talent management in enhancing employee productivity.

Discussion

The purpose of this study was to investigate the effects of Talent Management, Performance Incentives, and Recognition Programs on Employee Productivity in the retail industry in Central Java, Indonesia. Through structural equation modeling (SEM) using Partial Least Squares (PLS), the study provided valuable insights into how these organizational factors influence employee performance in a retail setting.

The relationship between Performance Incentives and Employee Productivity (Hypothesis 1) was found to be statistically significant, with a moderate path coefficient of 0.440 (T-statistic = 6.290, p-value = 0.000). This aligns with previous research that highlights the positive impact of performance incentives on productivity [25], [26], [30]. The moderate strength of this relationship suggests that while performance incentives are important, they may need to be supplemented by other factors, such as recognition programs and effective talent management, to maximize productivity. For retail companies in Central Java, implementing performance incentives like bonuses, commissions, and rewards is recommended, but these should be balanced with other strategies to enhance employee satisfaction and engagement.

The relationship between Recognition Programs and Employee Productivity (Hypothesis 2) showed a very strong and statistically significant effect, with a path coefficient of 0.772 (T-statistic = 10.560, p-value = 0.000). This suggests that recognition programs, which acknowledge and reward employees for their contributions, have the most substantial impact on productivity in this study. Retail companies should focus on creating a culture of appreciation, utilizing non-monetary rewards like employee of the month awards, public recognition, and personalized feedback. This finding is consistent with existing literature suggesting that recognition increases morale and drives

higher engagement and performance [19], [31], [32].

The relationship between Talent Management and Employee Productivity (Hypothesis 3) was also statistically significant, with a path coefficient of 0.374 (T-statistic = 3.244, p-value = 0.002). This indicates that effective talent management practices, such as recruitment, development, and retention of skilled employees, have a moderate but important impact on productivity. While the effect is less pronounced than that of recognition programs and performance incentives, it remains critical for long-term productivity and employee retention. Retail organizations in Central Java should focus on developing robust talent management strategies, including hiring the right people, offering ongoing training, and providing career development opportunities. These practices help create a strong workforce capable of adapting to industry changes, ultimately leading to better organizational performance [6], [33], [34].

This research contributes to the growing body of literature that explores the role of human resource practices in shaping employee productivity, particularly in the retail sector. The results show that employee motivation and performance are strongly influenced by a combination of Recognition Programs, Performance Incentives, and Talent Management. Specifically, the high impact of recognition programs suggests that employees in the retail industry are highly responsive to positive reinforcement and acknowledgment of their contributions. This emphasizes the importance of fostering a positive workplace culture that goes beyond monetary rewards.

Additionally, the moderate effects of Performance Incentives and Talent Management suggest that while these factors are crucial for driving productivity, they are likely more effective when integrated with a broader strategy that includes employee engagement, satisfaction, and a focus on workplace well-being.

Practical Implications

For retail managers and organizations in Central Java, the study highlights several practical implications. First, there should be an emphasis on Recognition programs, given their strong impact on employee productivity. Organizations should prioritize regular acknowledgment of employees' efforts through awards, team celebrations, or personalized thank-you notes, as this significantly enhances motivation and engagement. Second, Integrating Incentives with Recognition is key; while performance incentives have a moderate impact, combining them with recognition efforts creates a more motivating work environment. Performance-based rewards should align with clear metrics and be complemented by personal recognition to amplify their effectiveness. Finally, Investing in Talent Management should be central to organizational growth. By focusing on employee development, training programs, and career progression opportunities, retail companies can retain and nurture skilled employees, ultimately contributing to the long-term success of the organization.

Limitations and Directions for Future Research

While the findings of this study are valuable, several limitations should be considered. The study was conducted with a sample size of 210 respondents from retail companies in Central Java, and future research could expand the sample size to include employees from different regions and sectors to enhance the generalizability of the findings. Additionally, the cross-sectional design used in this study limits the ability to infer causal relationships over time, so future research could adopt a longitudinal approach to examine how changes in talent management, recognition programs, and performance incentives influence employee productivity over an extended period. Lastly, while this study focused on three key factors—Talent Management, Performance Incentives, and Recognition Programs—future research could explore additional

variables, such as work-life balance, organizational culture, and leadership styles, that may also influence employee productivity.

5. CONCLUSION

This research provides compelling evidence that Recognition Programs, Performance Incentives, and Talent Management significantly contribute to Employee Productivity in the retail sector in Central Java, Indonesia. Among these, recognition programs had the strongest influence, emphasizing the importance of acknowledging employees' contributions as a key driver of performance. Performance incentives also played a crucial role, while talent management demonstrated a moderate but significant effect. These findings suggest that a holistic approach combining financial rewards, recognition practices, and robust talent management strategies is essential for fostering a productive and motivated workforce.

Retail organizations should prioritize creating a supportive work environment that not only rewards performance but also recognizes employees for their contributions, ensuring their engagement and long-term productivity. Future research could extend these findings by exploring additional factors influencing productivity and adopting a longitudinal approach to better understand the long-term effects of these practices.

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