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The Role of the Incentive System in Improving the Job Performance of faculty members in Syrian Universities

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Abstract: The study presents the role of the incentive system in improving the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities by applying material and moral incentives. The descriptive analytical approach was applied based on primary data and questionnaires, using the SPSS 25 statistical analysis program to characterize and analyze the study variables. The primary data was collected through conducting interviews with a number of faculty members, and the questionnaires were organized after reviewing the previous literature. The study reveals that there was a significant direct relationship between the incentive systems and the level of the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities.

Keywords: incentive system, material incentives, moral incentives, job performance.

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1 INTRODUCTION

Since 2011, with the beginning of the war in the Syrian Arab Republic, Syrian universities have been suffering from the dropout of faculty members at a rate of more than 20% at the university level. [according to the statements of the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research]. Moreover, the majority of teaching assistants who are dispatched abroad are refraining from returning to Syria after their obtaining a scientific qualification for socio-economic and psychological reasons as a result of the conditions and repercussions of the war that is passing through the country. Therefore, it negatively affects the progress of the educational process, paying attention to the teaching staff members, satisfying their human needs, and achieving their requirements and aspirations in line with their abilities through competencies and prestigious social status. These motivate to develop an effective system and organize scientific research productivity incentives to encourage and support the members of the educational staff, which contributes to raising their potential to improve their job performance, meeting their desires to ensure their commitment to their universities, including the success and improvement of higher education institutions performance, and raising their ranking and classification in the future.

As the human resource has been dramatically increasing as considered an essential pillar for succeeding the administrative process in several business organizations, public or private, and moving from concepts of Scientific Management to the School of Human Relations. Therefore, incentive systems have attracted researchers' interests in psychology and human resource management to understand the different motivations and needs of individuals to figure out the optimal combination of competitive incentives. The competitive incentives are as an external

influencer to attract the individual at various organizational levels and accomplish their tasks in the proper manner which concurs with the targets of the organizations which lead to achieving their personal goals. Incentives are designed to prove that the partnership to which the organization and its members are committed brings benefit to both parties through mutual benefits for each of them. Tshukudu (2020) indicated that the reward system helps enhance job satisfaction and makes workers loyal to the organization and keen to move up the career ladder.

In the study of Al-Ghamdi (2020) concluded that the degree of the totality of the estimation of the study sample members for the application of the indicator of the economic incentives system and institutional systems was a medium degree, with significant differences Statistics of the degree of application of the indicator of the economic incentives system and institutional systems according to the variable of the university, and the scientific rank.

Eawda (2020) concluded the need to adjust the rules for motivating individuals, in order to ensure satisfactory and positive results and to avoid the adverse effects of motivation and linking the process of motivating individuals to continuous improvement and quality of performance with the level of their contribution, and creating innovative incentive systems that are flexible and entertaining to meet the needs of individuals.

Karami et al.(2013) concluded that reward systems directly affect employee satisfaction, and that appropriate and timely reward enhances performance, raises employees' morale, and increases their productivity.

Al-Sarayrah (2011) in his study recommended universities to enhance the job performance of faculty members, identify their needs and desires to achieve the possible and satisfy them, and

provide a system of incentives, material and moral, because of their positive impact in maintaining the high level of job performance.

Abu Hamid (2020) recommended that organizations should adopt an effective incentive system that rewards efficient workers and motivates workers to improve their job performance.

2 Research question

As aforementioned above, the researchers identified the research problem through the following main question:

What is the role of the incentive system in improving the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities?

3 Research objectives

The main objective of the research is to determine the role of the incentive system in improving the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities.

So sub-objectives are determined as follows:

- Determination of the role of material incentives in improving the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities.
- Determination of the role of moral incentives in improving the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities.

4 Research Importance

The theoretical importance of the research arises from the importance of the variable (incentive system) in providing an encouraging work environment for outstanding performance, as it is related to the motives, needs, and desires of the human

resource. On the other hand, the practical importance of the research can be summarised as follows:

- The importance of the research environment (Syrian universities), as the role of the higher education sector in bringing about comprehensive development in the Syrian Arab Republic.
- The importance of the research community (faculty members), as an essential human resource, on the success of the university. Wherein, it depends on their scientific productions, and their ability to perform the role assigned to them with the highest level of efficiency.
- The feasibility of benefit from the results and recommendations of the research in order to increase the effectiveness of the Syrian universities incentives system, and hence reducing the percentage of leaving faculty members.

5 Hypothesis

The main hypothesis of the research is presented as there is no significant relationship between the incentive system and the level of job performance for faculty members in Syrian universities. The following two sub-hypotheses emerge from it:

- There is no significant relationship between material incentives and the level of job performance for faculty members in Syrian universities.
- There is no significant relationship between moral incentives and the level of job performance for faculty members in Syrian universities.

6 Limitation of Research

- Spatial limits: Syrian public universities (Tishreen, Damascus, Aleppo, Tartous, AlBaath, Euphrates, Hama).

- Temporal limits: 2022.
- Objective limits: The role of the incentive system in improving the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities

7 Theoretical framework

The concept of incentives:

Incentives are a flexible tool in the hands of leaders and administrative supervisors in any organization. Incentives are an important organizational tool that human resources management can use them to attract and retain competencies and support the development of workers' skills and knowledge. In addition, incentives are considered as a means of achieving the coincidence between individual employee interests and the strategy organizational goals. This is because the incentives are directing the behavior and efforts of employees towards accomplish those goals, the development of an effective system of incentives directed to stimulate individuals' motives and creating their desire to work, and to keep workers in a positive relationship with their organizations. Motivation works to satisfy internal customers through the organization with an emphasis on serving such customer to achieve his satisfaction, and thus it is reflected on the service quality provided. Consequently, the turnover rate decreases, and the stability and success at work are achieved (Saad Eddin et al., 2021; Ataya, 2016; Došenović, 2016; Tănăsescu and Leon, 2019).

To clarify the concept of incentives, the difference between motives and incentives needs to be clarified. Motives represent the internal force that pushes the individual to search for a specific thing (Ghawanmeh and Abu Maal, 2021). Whereas the incentives represent the external stimulator that awaken or create the motive

(the internal stimulus), directing the individual to satisfy his needs and desires through a specific behavior which is consistent with the performance required by the administration (Awad Allah, 2012).

The motivation process can be defined as follow: it is a leadership organizational process that aims to invest the positive external influence, to push the organization's members towards high performance and better behavior; or it is the investment of the negative external influence to reduce and correct the occurrence of negative behavior (Amal, 2014). Or, as pointed out (Shneeq, 2008) as: it is process that pushes an individual to take a certain behavior, stop it, or change its course.

Through the researcher's review of a number of previous studies, incentives can be defined as: they are external influences that attract highly qualified human resources, and awaken their motives for outstanding achievement and exceptional performance through a combination of material and moral means which are designed to adapt to the unsaturated desires and needs of individuals.

Successful Incentive System Conditions

1. Understanding the system of motives that controls the behavior of each individual with attention to the differences between individuals (Ataya, 2016) as indicated by (Axelsson and Bokedal, 2009) that individuals have different needs and expectations according to their ideas, experiences, status, and ages; Who said we want the same things? Some people want to get praise, compliment, and additional responsibility that is given. While the others want additional vacation days. In addition, individuals' motives and preferences vary over time, what was the motivation of the young worker when he started his career is not necessary

to be the same after 25 years, being concerned about his job security. Therefore, the first step in achieving an effective incentive system is the success of the human resources department in studying and analyzing the different human needs and understanding how these needs affect the motives of individuals. Thus, incentives will not perform their role unless the workers reward for their work.

2. Bearing in the mind of the worker the relationship between good performance and gaining the incentive, the incentives awarded need the effort which has been done for completing the task (Al Akash, 2007).
3. creating the balance between the expectation of the employee and what the organization provides.

Incentive types

The researchers categorized the granted incentives into negative and positive incentives. Both of them contain material and moral incentives. They clarified as follows:

1. Positive incentives

Compensation: it is financial returns that the worker receives directly from employers as part of the contractual relationship between them. It is classified into fixed returns (fixed wage or salary) or variable:

- Fixed returns (fixed wages or salaries): it is monetary compensation that the employer pays for the work performed by the worker. In some organizations, transportation and meal compensation are included. The main objective of fixed returns is to attract and retain talented individuals, and to enhance their long-term commitment toward the organization.

Therefore, the fixed returns have to suit the employee and his job value (his skills and knowledge).

- Variable pay (wage at risk): it is monetary compensation related to an objective assessment of the individual, team, or organizational performance. The main objective of variable pay is to motivate workers to work harder, and to share some of the organization's risks with workers (Santos and Mejia, 2015).

Advantages or Benefits: it is services received by the worker towards his work with the organization, which involve providing the individual with a level of security that is related to his health, well-being, retirement, and leaves. Although these advantages differ from one country to another, one organization to another, some of them are mandatory by law, such as social security services.

The most important examples of these advantages, that are aimed at creating a healthy environment enhancing the physical, mental, and social health of individuals, thus supporting the mental state of the worker and enhancing his performance, are health insurance, remote work, part-time, sick leave, maternity leave as well as paternity leave in some countries, study leave, special leave, meals in the canteen, subsidized membership in the gym, child care department for workers, summer camps.

Work environment: comfortable and safe work environment need to be provided for employees such as office space, temperature, advanced machines, and materials. It is also that the employers need to specify and analyze the job risk in the work environment for providing more safe and comfortable in order to satisfy the employees in the organization (Santos and Mejia, 2015).

Honor boards, decorations, and certificates of appreciation:

They are considered positive incentives that motivate workers to demonstrate their capabilities and entitlement to appreciation and respect.

Promotion: Promotion is a moral incentive in addition to being a material incentive, as it brings with it an increase in responsibility, self-affirmation, and often an increase in wages (Aladdin, 2017).

2. Negative incentives:

Material incentives: it is represented in a deduction of the worker's salary, job grade reduction, suspension of the bonus, partial dismissal from his work, and then dismissal completely and permanently, with the imposition of a fine in some cases.

Moral incentives: it is to prevent a person from publishing his name on the honor board, or to send a warning for lack a sense of duty, and to publish it on the bulletin board (Ataya, 2016).

Although sanctions are classified by most researchers as being part of the incentives system under the name of negative incentives, the researcher does not consider them as such. This is because the threat method does not achieve the main objectives of the incentive system for attracting talent, developing the performance of workers, and pushing them to work with all their energies. Fear of punishment frustrates the morale of the individual and discourages him. In addition, it develops negative attitudes towards his organization, which pushes him to leave out.

Job Performance:

(Bumjan et al., 2018) referred to job performance as a record of the results achieved for an individual's efforts. Job performance

as defined by (Al-Sarayrah, 2011) is that a faculty member at the university performs the academic and administrative duties assigned to him, according to the university's regulations and instructions efficiently and effectively.

Job performance criteria for faculty members:

Mousa (2021) referred to job performance standards as follows:

Quality performance: making a qualitative step in the educational process and raising the intellectual levels of students.

Quantity performance: The sum total of a faculty member's performance, taking into account time and costs.

Methods to improve the job performance of faculty members:

- Reducing the assignment of a faculty member to administrative and academic tasks that are beyond his ability.
- Improving the economic level of the university professor.
- Provision of a work environment that supports the release of the capabilities of the faculty members.
- Supply of the requirements of the educational process, and everything that would develop the work of the university.
- Reliance on the principle of scientific progression, whereby each professor takes his appropriate place within the university structure.
- Training on modern techniques in teaching.
- Attending international and national meetings, and involving in research laboratories (Radwan, 2015).

8 Field study and hypothesis testing

Methodology: The descriptive-analytical approach was utilized to study and analyze the variables based on the primary data

collected through a questionnaire that was organized after the review of the previous literature. Forty faculty members in various Syrian government universities were involved in the study to determine the role of the incentive system in improving job performance. The collected data was statistically analyzed by using the program Spss 25. A five-point Likert scale was adopted in the analyses, each statement represents five points of approval or not.

Validity and reliability of the scale:

Cronbach's alpha coefficient for each clause of the questionnaire was used for calculating the stability of the scale used in the study.

The results of the statistical analysis using the Spss 25 program showed in Table 1.

Table.1 Values of Cronbach's alpha coefficient for the resolution stability test.

The stability test of the resolution	the value of the reliability coefficient	the number of sentences
The value of the stability coefficient of the material incentives clause sentences	0.940	19
The value of the stability coefficient for the sentences of the clause of moral incentives	0.917	11
The value of the stability coefficient of the functional performance clause sentences	0.893	10

Reliability coefficient for sentences of questionnaire phrases	0.973	40
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Table.1 shows all the values of the stability coefficients for the questionnaire items were greater than 60%, which are statistically acceptable values. Accordingly, it can be considered that all the expressions used in the survey are stable, and there is no need to delete any of them. KMO and Bartlett's Test were also conducted, and the results are presented in Table.2.

Table.2 KMO and Bartlett's Test.

Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.811
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	9524.102
	Df	780
	Sig.	.000

Table.2 presents that the test value of KMO is equals 0.811, which is greater than 0.50, which means that the sample size is sufficient for the effectiveness of the results. The table also shows that the significance probability value of the Sig test for Bartlett's test was 0.000, which is less than 0.05, which confirms that the test values are significant.

Hypothesis testing:

The averages and results of the arithmetic mean test of the answers of the sample members to the questions related to evaluating the role of the incentive system in improving the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities in Table.3.

Table.3 The averages and results of the arithmetic mean test.

Question	Mean	Sig.
I get a salary that suffices my basic needs.	4.04	000.
I receive a salary commensurate with my social needs.	3.93	000.
My salary is commensurate with the amount of effort I put in.	3.94	000.
I feel satisfied with the bonuses and increases that added to my salary annually.	4.12	000.
I am satisfied with the social allowances for my husband and children.	4.12	000.
The university provides me with a good level of services (transportation, suitable housing, free internet to conduct research).	4.09	000.
The university offers me adequate health insurance.	4.06	000.
The university encourages me to develop myself and to take up external training courses by granting me financial compensation.	4.05	000.
Compensation (travel, accommodation expenses) is appropriate for me as an outside member of the discussion panel.	4.17	000.
The rewards of members of the committees for examining scientific production and judging master's and doctoral theses are proportional to the effort expended.	4.08	000.
The university pays the costs of attending external conferences.	4.05	000.
The university grants an exceptional bonus for outstanding performance.	3.98	000.
I received a reward for submitting projects and suggestions for the development of the work.	4.09	000.
The reward for supervising theses for master's students is proportional to the effort expended by the student.	3.95	000.

The reward for supervising a doctoral thesis is proportional to the effort expended by the student.	3.93	000.
I see that the value of rewarding scientific meetings in open education is worth my work on the weekends.	4.12	000.
The compensation for the administrative burden that a faculty member who occupies an administrative position receives is proportional to the effort expended in the administrative work.	4.14	000.
The incentive system at the university guarantees that I will receive an administrative burden compensation for every scientific administrative job assigned to me.	4.22	000.
The compensation for the specific examination work is commensurate with the effort expended to complete it.	4.09	000.
The Ministry organizes recreational trips for faculty members.	4.05	000.
The university gives me a certificate of appreciation for every scientific research that I complete.	4.04	000.
The current university pension system makes me feel safe.	4.17	000.
The university presents certificates of appreciation based on the performance evaluation report.	4.02	000.
I feel stable because there are laws that guarantee that I will not be subjected to arbitrary expulsion.	4.03	000.
A faculty member occupies administrative positions at the university based on merit and perseverance in work.	3.91	000.
The university makes it easy for me to complete my paperwork.	3.88	000.
The university administration welcomes the opinions and suggestions put forward by faculty members.	4.01	000.
The work environment is comfortable and convenient for me.	4.17	000.

The university observes the principle of professional progression in the reward system.	4.16	000.
The points system used for promotion to a higher scientific rank is acceptable.	4.09	000.
I constantly enrich the educational process according to the latest research and developments.	4.16	000.
I positively influence the personal and academic development of students.	4.08	000.
I link the teaching program with practical reality.	4.10	000.
Be sure to abide by the ethics of the teaching profession.	3.96	000.
Be sure to be familiar with the modern knowledge and skills related to the teaching aspect.	4.03	000.
I am keen to publish scientific research and participate in scientific conferences.	4.13	000.
I participate in awareness and educational programs related to volunteer work within the community.	4.09	000.
Contribute to solving educational problems in society.	3.93	000.
Be sure to work diligently in supervising scientific theses for postgraduate students, and accomplish them at the required level.	3.97	000.
I'm looking for excellence in my research away from traditional ideas, and away from distorting research results.	4.23	000.

First sub-hypothesis test: There is no significant relationship between material incentives and the level of job performance for faculty members in Syrian universities.

Table.4 Shows the correlation coefficient and the level of significance between the two variables.

Table.4 Correlations.

		material incentives	Functionality
material incentives	Pearson Correlation	1	.960**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Functionality	Pearson Correlation	.960**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table.4, it is noted that the value of the correlation coefficient between material incentives and job performance is 0.960, and therefore, there is a strong relationship between the two previous variables. Also, the null hypothesis is rejected, and hence alternative hypothesis is accepted because the value of SIG is less than 0.05. This means that there is a significant relationship between material incentives and the level of the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities. It is a significant direct relationship.

Second sub-hypothesis test: There is no significant relationship between moral incentives and the level of job performance for faculty members in Syrian universities.

Table.5 Shows the correlation coefficient and the level of significance between the two variables.

Table.5 Correlations.

		moral incentives	Functionality
moral incentives	Pearson Correlation	1	.899**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Functionality	Pearson Correlation	.899**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

**. Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table.5, it is noted that the value of the correlation coefficient between moral incentives and job performance is 0.899, and therefore, there is a strong relationship between the two previous variables. Also, the null hypothesis is rejected, and hence alternative hypothesis is accepted because the value of SIG is less than 0.05. This means that there is a significant relationship between moral incentives and the level of job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities. It is a significant direct relationship.

Testing the main hypothesis: There is no significant relationship between the incentive system and the level of job performance for faculty members in Syrian universities.

Table.6 Shows the correlation coefficient and the level of significance between the two variables.

Table.6 Correlations

		incentive system	Functionality
incentive system	Pearson Correlation	1	.944**
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	N	162	162
Functionality	Pearson Correlation	.944**	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	N	162	162

** . Correlation is significant at the 0.01 level (2-tailed).

From Table.6, it is noted that the value of the correlation coefficient between the incentive system and job performance is 0.944, and therefore, there is a strong relationship between the two previous variables. Also, the null hypothesis is rejected, and hence alternative hypothesis is accepted because the value of SIG is less than 0.05. This means that there is a significant relationship between the incentive system and the level of job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities. It is a significant direct relationship.

Discussions and conclusions:

Basen on the field study and in the light of hypothesis testing; the following main result are summarised:

There is a significant relationship between the incentives system and the level of the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities, and it is significant direct relationship. It can be illustrated by the following results:

- There is a significant relationship between material incentives and the level of job performance for faculty members in Syrian universities, and it is a significant direct relationship. This relation attributes to the fact that the university's interest in courses training and scientific conferences. In addition, satisfying the economic needs of faculty members plays an important role in achieving their job satisfaction which motivates them to enthusiastically and efficiently perform their tasks, leading to the improvement of their job performance.
- There is a significant relationship between moral incentives and the level of the job performance of faculty members in Syrian universities, and it is a significant direct relationship. This relation attributes to the fact that if the individual finds an opportunity to express his views and put forward his suggestions with an opportunity to compete in an organization, this will lead to creativity and innovation. In addition, it pushes him to increase his effort and cooperation with his colleagues and his commitment towards the responsibilities entrusted to him. Thus, It improves his job performance.

Based on the aforementioned results, the following suggestions are made:

- The salaries of faculty members are needed to modify yearly according to changes in the cost of living in a manner that achieves a balance between the salaries of public and private universities.
- Making annual adjustments to the salaries of faculty members according to the performance evaluation report, and this is universally known as an increase in meritbased competence.

- The salaries of faculty members need to be evaluated based on the exchange rate before the crisis in Syria.
- Providing adequate housing through housing associations, as it was previously.
- Providing free internet service for all faculty members, in cooperation between the Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research and the Syrian Scientific Society for Informatics.
- Not compulsorily contracting with a limited health insurance company in order to open the way for competition between insurance companies, reflecting in the services provided.
- Covering the full costs of attending external conferences and training courses.
- A financial compensation should be paid for the transportation service.
- Speed up administrative procedures, and simplify them as much as possible.
- Raising the material differences between the scientific ranks in order to create motivation among the members of the educational staff, and hence, continuing the scientific work.
- Relate the promotion system to a higher scientific rank with the points system only, and not link it to time.
- Considering the vacancies for the promotion of a faculty member based on his work at the university to the highest scientific rank, as vacancies added by law, as long as he fulfills all the conditions required for this.
- Determining the criteria for assigning administrative positions at the university, such as the annual evaluation of the performance of faculty members.
- Approval of granting the faculty member who has fulfilled all his obligations towards the university the resignation, in the

case of his specialization is available to one of the doctorate degree holders who is wishing to be appointed in Syrian universities.

- Providing a comfortable and appropriate scientific research environment. In addition to linking the university as a research body with the labor market, to benefit from the results of scientific research, and thus, motivate the faculty members for further achievement.
- Reconsidering for the administrative compensation to match the number of scientific administrative jobs assigned to a faculty member and the amount of effort in the administrative work done, including managers of directorates in the central administration.

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