

# Employee Incentives and Organizational Performance of Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital in Mbarara City, Uganda

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## ABSTRACT

The study was set to ascertain the relationship between employee incentives and organisational performance of Mbarara regional Referral hospital. The study objectives were; to examine the relationship between financial incentives and organisational performance, to determine the relationship between non-financial incentives and organisational performance of Mbarara regional referral hospital in Mbarara city.

The study used a cross-sectional research design and it used quantitative and qualitative approaches. The population of the study was 247 which comprised of all categories of workers at Mbarara regional referral hospital including the end users (patients) and the sample size was 228 respondents who participated in the study. This study employed a mixed methods approach with both quantitative and qualitative data collection and analysis methods.

The study concluded that there is a strong positive significant relationship between financial incentives and organisational performance of Mbarara regional referral hospital in Mbarara city ( $r=0.783$ ,  $P<0.000$ ).

The researcher recommends that; The government of Uganda through the ministry of health should set clear performance standards of a regional referral hospital and ensure that the employees are regularly trained to implement all that necessitates them to achieve the stated performance for the organization.

Non- financial incentives should target all categories of staff so as to improve team work towards achieving better organisational performance.

**Keywords:** Employee incentives, Financial incentives, Non-financial incentives, Salaries, Bonuses, Recognition, Training, Job promotion, Organisational performance, Health service delivery, Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital, Uganda.

## Introduction

Organizations can only achieve their goals by recruiting and retaining qualified employees who are suitably rewarded (Naqvi & Khan, 2013). Incentives are crucial for productivity since they recognize and appreciate employees' efforts (Sylqa, 2020). Studies have established a strong relationship between incentives and productivity (Onyekwelu et al., 2020), where performance largely depends on an effective incentive system (Nkereuwem, 2021). Historically, organizations have used incentives as motivational systems to foster employee loyalty and improve output (Siwale et al., 2020).

The study is anchored on Vroom's Expectancy Theory, which emphasizes that performance is linked to effort, skills, and motivation (Vroom, 1964). The theory identifies expectancy, valence, and instrumentality as the key determinants of motivation (Ritala et al., 2020). Employees are more likely to perform well when they believe their effort will lead to valued outcomes (Kuya & Kalei, 2022a). Conversely, lack of incentives leads to demotivation, reduced performance, and diminished trust in organizational policies (Colic et al., 2022; Siwale et al., 2020).

Scholars categorize incentives into financial and non-financial dimensions (Colic et al., 2022). Financial incentives include salaries, wages, allowances, and overtime payments, while non-financial incentives include recognition, promotion, training, and insurance benefits (Ele et al., 2020). Salaries remain the most significant financial motivator since they satisfy employees' basic survival needs (Sule et al., 2015). Organizational performance, on the other hand, is the ability of an institution to meet its objectives, measured in hospitals by service quality and patient outcomes (Widianto et al., 2021).

A balanced incentive system enhances staff retention and minimizes turnover. Financial rewards such as medical allowances, retirement benefits, and bonuses, together with non-financial incentives like recognition, job security, and career growth, significantly affect productivity (Mahmud et al., 2018; Ritala et al., 2020). In the Ugandan health sector, lack of adequate incentives leads to suppressed creativity, low productivity, absenteeism, and reduced efficiency (Sule et al., 2015). Managers therefore play a vital role in motivating staff through both monetary and non-monetary strategies (Siwale et al., 2020).

Despite providing incentives, Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital continues to register low organizational performance. Reports show that about 20% of patients escape without treatment due to negligence by medical staff, while some workers hoard drugs for personal gain (MRRH Report, 2023). The Ministry of Health (2023) also noted limited operational research, poor referral adherence, and inadequate drug supplies. These inefficiencies have compromised service delivery, despite government interventions such as recognition awards and training programs. Consequently, this study sought to ascertain the relationship between employee incentives and organizational performance of MRRH in Mbarara City. This paper focused on the objective of examining the relationship between financial incentives and organisational performance at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital.

### **Significance of the Study**

This study out to benefit different categories among which include the Researchers, the Administration of MRRH and The Ministry of Health as portrayed below;

The future researchers and academicians are likely to use the study findings in their subsequent studies related to employee incentives and organizational performance in form of related empirical literature.

The findings of this study may help Mbarara regional referral management to identify the best incentives their staff need to foster their organizational performance. In addition, the findings may help the hospital to come up with measurements of its performance and identify areas of improvement.

The study findings ought to be helpful to the Ministry of Health in trying to set the standards of performance for healthy units and be able to come up with strategies of motivating their health workforce towards the management and performance of healthy units nationally.

### **Literature Review**

#### **Empirical Review on Employee Incentives and Organizational Performance.**

In Australia, incentives are much considered by the employers and the employees and are believed to boost the employee performance at the work place (Baird et al., 2019). In this study, it was discovered that when employees receive incentives at the workplace, it increases their commitment at work which fosters performance of the organization as well. According to (Rohim & Budhiasa, 2019) in Austrilia, organizational reward greatly improves the organizational performance through the commitment that employees exhibited when they are properly reward.

In Indonesia, (Idris et al., 2020) looked at how rewards lead to job satisfaction by the employees. It was found out that job satisfaction as a result of employee reward leads to a good employee performance. According to (Efendi et al., 2020), he found out that motivating employees improves their discipline at work and eventually lead to better relations at work for a good performance of the organization at large.

In Nigeria, studies have been done and revealed that employee motivation through the reward system greatly affects the employee performance which also leads to a better organizational performance. According to (Alase & Akinbo, 2021), the study found out that when the employees are motivated, they get committed to work for the their better performance at the work place. Incentives boost the ability of the workers to perform to their best in any given organization (Idigo, 2023). According to (Chukwuemeka, 2020) non-financial incentives boost the morale of the workers and this helps in the better performance of the organization as a whole.

In Kenya, studies have been done concerning employee motivation and employee performance and results show that when employees are motivated, their performance becomes outstanding at their places of work for instance (Ongalo & Tari, 2015). According to (Kuya & Kalei, 2022b), financial incentives contributes

positively towards the employees performance at work. This is clearly justifying the fact that when employees receive incentives, they get the zeal to work for the best of the organization.

In Uganda, employee incentives are evidently given to most organizational workers and relevant studies have been made to find out the relevance of these incentives towards employee performance. A case of (Christopher et al., 2022), looked at employee training as one the incentives that are non-financial and beneficial to the employees and then found out that employee training boosts the performance on the job. According to (Duchoslav & Cecchi, 2019) concluded that incentives matter a lot when the employee is working for an organization be it faith based organization or any other organization.

In Mbarara, a study by (Atwiine et al., 2020) revealed that rewards to employees in the health sector especially in healthy Centre IV are significant predictors of employees performance at work. The study also recommended that other reward systems like non-financial including recognition, promotion and training need to be considered for the better performance of the employees and the organization as well (Johnson et al., 2021).

From the revisited literature, the concept of employee incentives has been studied both national wide and international wide. Studies by authors like (Kushwaha, 2018) studied the influence of financial and non financial incentives on employee performance. And others like (Vincent et al., 2020), (Colic et al., 2022). However, most of these studies carried did not carry out regression analysis to find out the combined effect of both monetary and non monetary incentives towards organisational performance which the present study addressed.

The reviewed literature contextually reveals most studies have been studied on the variables under consideration for instance a study by (Atwiine et al., 2020) looked at organisational rewards and performance of healthy centre IV workers in greater Mbarara district Uganda but did not specifically concentrate on Mbarara regional referral hospital which the present study is focusing on.

Studies reviewed from the literature show how descriptive research design has been used to arrive at the findings of the study for instance (Christopher et al., 2022) and (Johnson et al., 2021). However, this study is looking at utilising cross-sectional design with both descriptive and analytical measures of data analysis and presentation. The study will also take on a mixed method approach that is both quantitative and qualitative so as to have a wide understanding of the results.

### **Organisational Performance**

Organizational Performance Organizational performance can be calculated by matching actual with estimated result for every plan and its strategy, on top of determine negative and positive act of deviating. This standard shows the target of organization, which identifies the direction of organization to allow making accurate action. Standards which are not link with organization but they cover all surface of performance like profitability, short- and long-term goals and social responsibility (Ritala et al., 2020). According to (Kagaari et al., 2010) organization performance indicator is comprising employee's or customer satisfaction, share of market, acquire and outcomes, management support and comprehensive performance.

Organizational performance refers to evaluating an employee's behavior towards particular work or assignments in an organization. Performance evaluation is associated with establishing how best or poorly an individual executed or accomplished a specific task or job. Motivation is among the many factors that influence or affect an employee's job performance and, consequently, influence organizational performance (Onyekwelu et al., 2020). It would be automatic for highly motivated workers to normally deliver higher returns than employees with low levels of motivation. Still, there are always additional factors that tend to affect even highly motivated employees' performance. Some of these additional factors that affect performance include; personal attitude, the complexity of the tasks, resource availability, and prevailing working conditions. In situations where job performance is not satisfactory, managers must establish the most appropriate factors to utilize towards improving employees' performance (Kuya & Kalei, 2022a).

## Methodology

The methodology employed to examine the relationship between employee incentives and organizational performance at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital. The study adopted a non-experimental, cross-sectional survey design, integrating both quantitative and qualitative approaches. This mixed-methods design was chosen to allow for comprehensive data collection and analysis, capturing both numerical trends and deeper insights into employee and patient experiences. Quantitative data was analyzed using inferential statistics, while qualitative information helped to uncover perspectives that could not be fully addressed through numerical analysis.

The study was conducted at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital in Mbarara City, which serves the western region of Uganda. The target population comprised 247 individuals, including hospital staff (doctors, nurses, midwives, technicians, administrators, and support staff) as well as patients. From this population, a sample size of 228 respondents was determined using the Krejcie and Morgan (1970) table. Sampling was achieved through a combination of purposive and simple random sampling techniques: purposive sampling targeted administrators, senior nursing officers, and patients, while random sampling was applied to other categories of staff.

Data collection utilized both primary and secondary sources. Primary data was gathered through structured questionnaires and interview guides, while secondary data was obtained from published and unpublished literature, journals, reports, and theses. Questionnaires, mainly close-ended and based on a Likert scale, were administered to staff, while interviews provided in-depth insights from administrators, senior nurses, and patients. Data collection procedures involved obtaining ethical clearance from Bishop Stuart University and formal permission from the hospital administration. Respondents gave informed consent, and confidentiality was maintained throughout.

To ensure data quality, validity and reliability tests were conducted. The Content Validity Index (CVI) and expert judgment established validity, while reliability was assessed using Cronbach's Alpha, with coefficients of 0.75 and above considered acceptable. Data was processed and analyzed using SPSS version 23. Quantitative data was presented in tables and percentages, while Pearson correlation analysis tested relationships between variables. Qualitative data underwent thematic content analysis and verbatim reporting. The chapter also acknowledged limitations such as contextual constraints of studying a single hospital, subjectivity in performance measurement, and the cross-sectional design's inability to establish long-term cause-effect relationships.

## Results

### Respondents according to gender

This study was gender sensitive in a way that both males and females were considered to participate in the study. This was intended to ensure equal representation of both men and women in this study.

**Table 1: Respondents According to Gender**

Gender	Frequency	Valid percent	Cumulative Percent
Male	79	39.5	39.5
Female	121	60.5	100.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>	

**Source:** Primary data 2025

From Table 1 above, Majority of the respondents were females as they were 60.5% as compared to males who were 39.5%. this meant that Mbarara Regional Referral hospital employs more female workers compared to males as they enjoy the incentives towards organisational performance.

**Table 2 : Respondents according to age**

Age	Frequency	Valid percent
18-20 years	20	10.0
21- 30 years	45	22.5
31- 40 years	70	35.0
41- 50 years	41	20.5
50 years and above	24	12.0
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>	<b>100.0</b>

**Source:** Primary Data 2025

Field findings found out that majority 35.0% were between 31 - 40years of age as compared to 10.0% who were 18-20 years of age. The study revealed that most of the employees of MRRH are mature in age and therefore, understand the meaning of incentives and are able to work hard to ensure the organization achieves its objectives

**Table 3: Respondents according to designation**

Category	Frequence	Valid Percent	Cumulative percentages
Medical Specialists	19	9.5	9.5
Medical Officers	28	14.0	23.5
Midwives	40	20.0	43.5
Nurses	52	26.0	69.5
Administration Secretaries	19	9.5	79
Security Guards	28	14.0	93
Drivers	10	5.0	98
End users	4	2.0	100
<b>Total</b>	<b>200</b>		

**Source:** Primary Data 2025.

From Table 3 above, Majority of respondents were the nurses by 26.0% while 2.0% were the few respondents and were the end users. This signified that the nurses are many doing the hospital work and incentives are applied on them to ensure that they perform to their best to ensure that the hospital performs to the standards set by the ministry of Health.

**Table 4: The relationship between financial incentives and organisational Performance of Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital.**

Code	Statement	Strongly Disagree	Disagree	Not sure	Agree	Strongly Agree
FI 1	When I am paid as at when due, it encourages me to perform better	20 (10%)	30 (15%)	10 (5%)	120 (60%)	20 (10%)
FI 2	Bonuses are given for my extra effort to work.	4 (0.2%)	6 (0.3%)	9 (0.5)	31 (15%)	150 (75%)



FI 3	The salary we receive is appropriate to the services we offer.	30 (15%)	20 (10%)	18 (9%)	100 (50%)	32 (16%)
FI 4	Vacation with pay is given and helps me to boost performance	55 (27.5%)	32 (16%)	40 (20%)	33 (16.5%)	40 (20%)
FI 5	Medical care is being provided by management to cater for the health of staff.	5 (2.5%)	4 (2%)	1(0.5%)	34 (17%)	156 (78%)
FI 6	Over time is also paid for in times of emergencies	10 (5%)	15 (7.5%)	5 (2.5%)	10 (5%)	160 (80%)
FI 7	We are paid even when on leave.	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	0 (0%)	20 (10%)	180 (90%)

**Source:** Primary Data, 2025

From Table 4 above, majority of the respondents agreed that they get encouraged to work hard when they are paid (60%) followed by a good number of respondents who also strongly agreed to this statement (10%). Only 10% of the respondents disagreed to the statement. This clearly signify that most employees work hard upon receiving the payment on time to ensure that organizational objectives are achieved hence a better organizational performance.

The findings also reveal that majority of the respondents strongly agreed that bonus are given to them for the extra effort they put in towards a better performance of the organization (75%) followed by the number of respondents who agreed to the statement (15%). The least them for their extra numbers were those who disagreed to the statement to the tune of (4%). This clearly indicate that bonuses are very vital in improving the employee's ability to perform to their best for the better performance of the referral hospital.

The findings reveal that majority of the respondents (50%) agreed that the salary they receive is appropriate to the services they offer. (16%) of the respondents strongly agreed to the statement and only (10%) and (15%) disagreed and strongly disagreed to the statement respectively but which is a marginalized number. This indicates that most scientists are satisfied with the salary they get and thus inducing their capacity to work towards achieving better performance for the organization.

From the study, findings show that majority of the respondents (27.5%) disagreed that vacation pay helps them to boost their performance and (16%) of the respondents also disagreed to this and (16.5%) agreed followed by (20%) which strongly agreed. This shows that money paid to the workers during vacation does not yield any performance since they are always on leave by the time they receive money and so may not be directly related to the work. This clearly points out the level of commitment by the employer to value the employees which eventually makes them feel the contentment at the work place.

The statistics above reveal that majority of the respondents (78%) strongly agreed that they are provided with medical care which enables them to work hard. (17%) agreed to the same statement. And (1%) was not sure about the statement. However, this could be the support staff who are temporarily employe by the hospital. Medical care surely motivates employees and encourages them to work hard towards achieving the organizational objectives.

The study findings revealed that majority of the respondents (80%) strongly agreed that overtime is paid in times of emergencies (10%) agreed to the statement and only (5%) were not sure about overtime payment. Overtime payment is one of the incentives that motivates the workers to perform their duties accordingly to ensure that recommendable performance is achieved.

From the findings above, majority of the respondents (90%) strongly agreed to the statement that they are paid even on leave. This enough evidence to show that performance of the referral hospital is based on the

way the workers are paid. Leave payment is one of the best motivators towards achieving organizational performance,

**Table 5: Testing the relationship between financial incentives and organisational Performance of Mbarara regional referral Hospital using Pearson Correlation.**

Correlations			
		Financial Incentives	Organisational performance
	Pearson Correlation	1	.783
	Sig. (2-tailed)		.000
	Respondents	200	200
Organisational Performance	Pearson Correlation	.783	1
	Sig. (2-tailed)	.000	
	Respondents	200	200

\*\* . Correlation is significant at the 0.00 level (2-tailed).

**Source:** Primary Data, 2025.

Table 5 above, it reveals that there is a strong positive significant relationship between financial incentives and Organisational performance of Mbarara regional Referral hospital in Mbarara city ( $r = 0.783$ ,  $P < 0.000$ ). The study findings clearly reveal that financial incentives motivate the employees to ensure they are satisfied on their job for a better performance towards achieving organisational goals regarding performance. This further means that any increase in financial incentives increases organisational performance by 78.3%. These finding are supported by one key informant who had this to say;

*“Most of us work to earn money that can handle our daily financial obligations. And in the science field, we are happy that our financial earnings are much better for us to earn a better living standard then why not ensure that the organization we are working with achieves to the set organisational standards? Definitely we have to ensure better performance of our hospital”. Administrator 1, female aged 41years, March, 2025.*

## Discussion of results

### The relationship between financial incentives and organisational performance of Mbarara regional referral hospital in Mbarara City.

From the study findings, the study found out that there is a strong positive significant relationship between financial incentives and organisational performance of Mbarara regional referral hospital in Mbarara City. These findings clearly show that a given positive change in financial incentives by the government to the employees leads to a positive change in organisational performance. These findings are in agreement with those of (Johnson et al., 2021) who looked at organisational motivation and performance of healthy workers in health Centre IV within south western Uganda and found out that financial motivation encourages the workers to work hard towards achieving organisational objectives. Besides, a study by (Ruihong et al., 2015) also conquers with the findings of the study regarding financial motivation and organisational performance revealing that the two are strongly correlated in a positive direction.

From the study findings, it was revealed that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between financial incentives and organizational performance at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital in Mbarara City. This suggests that any positive adjustment or increase in financial incentives provided by the government such as salaries, bonuses, allowances, or risk compensation translates into a corresponding improvement in the hospital's performance. In this context, performance may include better service delivery, higher staff productivity, reduced absenteeism, and improved patient satisfaction.

These findings affirm the notion that financial rewards serve as a critical driver of employee motivation and commitment, especially in public health institutions where workloads are high, yet compensation often remains a challenge. When employees feel that their efforts are adequately rewarded, they are more likely to align themselves with organizational goals and exert extra effort in the discharge of their duties.

The results of this study are consistent with those of Johnson et al. (2021), who investigated organizational motivation and performance among health workers in Health Centre IVs across Southwestern Uganda. Their study concluded that financial motivation is a major factor influencing employee dedication and work ethic, and that well-motivated health workers are more likely to contribute positively to the attainment of organizational objectives. This aligns with the current study's findings, suggesting that the relationship between financial incentives and performance is not only strong but also consistent across different healthcare levels within the region.

Furthermore, the study corroborates earlier findings by (Ruihong et al. 2015), who also established a strong positive correlation between financial motivation and organizational performance. Their study highlighted how financial incentives significantly affect employee morale, productivity, and overall institutional effectiveness. According (Ongalo & Tari, 2015) emphasized that in service-oriented sectors like health care, employees' performance is highly sensitive to how well they are financially compensated, reinforcing the argument that government and hospital administrations must prioritize adequate financial motivation schemes.

## **Conclusion**

The study concludes that there is a strong positive and statistically significant relationship between financial incentives and organizational performance at Mbarara Regional Referral Hospital. This implies that enhancements in financial incentives such as salaries, bonuses, risk allowances, and overtime compensation lead to measurable improvements in employee performance, productivity, and the overall effectiveness of the hospital. Financial incentives play a critical role in attracting, retaining, and motivating health workers, which in turn supports the achievement of institutional goals. Therefore, it is evident that financial motivation remains a key driver of organizational success in the healthcare sector.

## **Recommendations**

**Review and Improve Financial Incentive Structures.** The hospital management, in coordination with the Ministry of Health, should regularly review salaries, risk allowances, bonuses, and overtime compensation to ensure they are competitive, fair, and aligned with employee workloads and inflation trends.

**Implement a Performance-Based Reward System.** A structured performance-based financial reward mechanism should be established. Employees who consistently achieve or exceed set targets should receive financial bonuses or merit-based raises as motivation for continuous improvement.

**Ensure Timely Payment of Financial Incentives.** Timely disbursement of salaries and allowances should be a priority. Delays in payment can erode employee morale and reduce productivity, even if the incentive amounts are adequate.

## **Authors' abbreviations**

**Author:** **FA:** Faith Arinaitwe, **JA:** Johnson Atwiine, and **JK:** Juliet Kembabazi

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## **Authors' contributions**

The authors of this manuscript made the following contributions to this manuscript Concept: **OF**, conceived the concept, Data collection; **FA:** Data analysis: First draft: **FA, JA, JK**. Final revision: **FA, JA, JK**. Read and approved final manuscript: **FA, JA, JK**.

## **Competing interests**



The authors declare that they have no competing interests.

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