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Fringe benefits and executive performance: Examining the mediating role of job satisfaction through PLS-SEM

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Abstract

Any organization's ability to retain and inspire its most important personnel hinges on fringe perks. This study uses job satisfaction as a mediator to examine how fringe benefits affect worker performance. A 92% valid response rate was attained by gathering data from 160 top-level personnel in various Belagavi City sectors. The model explained 48% of the variance ($R^2 = 0.48$) in employee performance using SmartPLS 4.0 and PLS-SEM. According to the results, fringe benefits have a considerable impact on job satisfaction ($\beta = 0.41, p < 0.01$), which in turn improves performance ($\beta = 0.36, p < 0.01$). The results highlight how crucial well-designed benefit plans are. In addition to suggesting further research with bigger, multi-city samples for broader generalization, this study has important implications for HR managers.

Keywords: Fringe benefits, job satisfaction, employee performance, PLS-SEM

Introduction

In the competitive and ever-changing economic world of today, companies are realizing more and more how important human capital is. Offering fringe benefits has become one of the most important components of human resource strategies for improving employee engagement, motivation, and retention—particularly for top-level executives. Fringe benefits, sometimes referred to as employee perks or benefits, are non-wage compensations given to staff members on top of their base pay. Financial incentives (like bonuses and retirement contributions), health-related benefits (like wellness programs and medical insurance), work-life balance initiatives (like paid leave or flexible work schedules), and professional development opportunities (like tuition reimbursement or training support) are a few examples of these (Milkovich, Newman, & Gerhart, 2014) ^[4]. According to earlier studies, well-thought-out fringe benefit plans greatly boost worker happiness, organizational loyalty, and general productivity (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020) ^[2, 1]. Employees are more likely to feel appreciated and motivated, which enhances their performance, when they believe that the rewards they receive satisfy their personal and professional demands. For senior staff members who are in charge of formulating strategic plans and guiding the company toward its objectives, this is especially crucial. At this level, offering customized and significant benefits can increase leadership efficacy and cultivate loyalty. However, there isn't always a clear correlation between fringe benefits and worker performance. It is frequently impacted by psychological elements like job happiness, which is a major predictor of behavior and performance results at work. An employee's total affective response to their position and workplace, including the perceived worth of the perks they receive, is reflected in their level of job satisfaction. Increased job satisfaction results from benefits that are seen as equitable, competitive, and pertinent; this, in turn, promotes improved performance, fewer plans to leave, and more robust organizational citizenship behavior (Judge, Thoresen, Bono, & Patton, 2001) ^[3]. As a result, it is anticipated that job happiness will mediate the relationship between employee performance and fringe benefits. Furthermore, due to variations in company cultures, employee preferences, and industry expectations, the efficacy of fringe benefits might fluctuate greatly throughout sectors. For example, the manufacturing sector might place more emphasis on safety, stability, and healthcare benefits, whereas the IT sector

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might favor flexible working arrangements and possibilities for ongoing learning. These contextual variations may affect how workers perceive and react to fringe benefits, changing their effect on performance and job satisfaction. In order to determine the direction and strength of the benefit-performance link, sector type is presented in this study as a moderating variable (Perry & Porter, 1982) ^[5]. The purpose of this empirical study is to investigate how 160 top-level employees from a variety of industries perform in relation to employee fringe benefits. In order to offer a comprehensive knowledge of how benefit schemes impact executive performance in a variety of organizational situations, it specifically examines the mediating role of work satisfaction and the moderating effect of sector type.

Statement of the Problem

Since key personnel are essential to any organization's success, offering them quality fringe benefits can be quite important in raising their level of job satisfaction. Work-life balance programs, financial incentives, and health insurance are examples of fringe benefits that act as motivators to draw in top talent and keep it engaged. However, there is no empirical data on how these benefits affect top-level employees' real performance, particularly across industries. Understanding this relationship is essential to designing effective human resource strategies that enhance both individual satisfaction and organizational performance.

Need for the study

These days, fostering employee satisfaction is crucial to an organization's long-term survival. Providing fringe benefits is one of the main elements boosting employee satisfaction. Fringe benefits are essential for increasing job satisfaction and encouraging long-term commitment in order to attract in and retain talented and competitive workers. In addition to enhancing performance and efficiency, they also offer specific tax benefits, assisting businesses in meeting regulatory requirements and industry standards. Fringe benefits like housing allowances, health insurance, paid time off, retirement plans, paid time off, and opportunities for professional development create positive work cultures. They increase loyalty and lower turnover by making workers feel appreciated. Companies that offer alluring benefits stand a higher chance of attracting top talent and retaining motivated employees. Additionally, these advantages promote a better work-life balance, which directly affects morale and productivity. Eventually, spending money on fringe perks turns into a calculated move for long-term, steady company growth.

Significance of study

Employee performance is a major factor in an organization's success. Additionally, an employee's performance is based on how satisfied they are with their employer. By providing fringe benefits, the business can use them as a strategic instrument to improve employee engagement and boost organizational success and results. Morale and job satisfaction can be boosted by providing employees with security and recognition. Job satisfaction of the employees can be measured with the aid of elements like paid time off, flexible work schedules, and medical facilities, all of which improve the organization's reputation and image. In order to achieve organizational goals, a variety of businesses use rewards to influence or modify employee behavior.

Organizations can help employees balance their personal and professional lives by reducing stress and improving well-being. Additionally, by adhering to regulatory requirements, they provide certain tax benefits to both employers and employees.

Research objectives

1. To analyse how career development advantages affect job satisfaction.
2. To examine how monetary rewards affect job happiness.
3. To look into how employment happiness is impacted by wellness and health benefits.
4. To assess the connection between job happiness and the advantages of work-life balance.
5. To evaluate how job satisfaction affects worker performance.

Proposed Hypothesis

1. **H₁:** Career Development Benefits have a significant effect on Job Satisfaction.
2. **H₂:** Financial Benefits have a significant effect on Job Satisfaction.
3. **H₃:** Health and Wellness Benefits have a significant effect on Job Satisfaction.
4. **H₄:** Work-Life Balance Benefits have a significant effect on Job Satisfaction.
5. **H₅:** Job Satisfaction has a significant effect on Employee Performance.

Conceptual Theory and Model

Theoretical Foundation

This study draws on five complementary theories to explain how specific fringe benefit bundles—Career Development Benefits (CDB), Financial Benefits (FB), Health & Wellness Benefits (HWB), and Work-Life Balance Benefits (WLB)—shape Job Satisfaction (JS) and, in turn, Employee Performance (EP) among top-level employees.

1. **Social Exchange Theory (SET; Blau, 1964):** SET posits that when organizations offer valued resources, employees reciprocate with positive attitudes and behaviors. Benefits such as competitive pay/bonuses (FB), health protection and wellness supports (HWB), flexibility and time sovereignty (WLB), and growth opportunities (CDB) signal organizational support. Perceived support strengthens relational obligations, elevating JS, which is reciprocated through enhanced EP. → Supports H1-H4 (benefits → JS) and H5 (JS → EP via positive reciprocity).
2. **Expectancy Theory (Vroom, 1964) ^[9]:** Top-level employees invest effort when they believe it will yield valued outcomes. Clear performance-linked incentives and increments (FB), as well as visible development pathways (CDB), raise instrumentality and valence, increasing JS with the role and reward system. Greater satisfaction, in turn, sustains discretionary effort. EP. → Reinforces H₁, H₂, H₅.
3. **Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory (Herzberg, Mausner & Snyderman, 1959) ^[8]:** Financial and health/security benefits function largely as hygiene factors that prevent dissatisfaction (FB, HWB), while advancement, training, and professional growth function as motivators that foster satisfaction (CDB). WLB benefits cut across both—reducing strain

(hygiene) and enabling meaningful engagement (motivator). The combined effect is higher JS, which facilitates stronger. EP. → Explains differentiated pathways in H1-H4 and their cumulative effect on H5.

4. **Job Demands-Resources (JD-R) Model (Demerouti et al., 2001)** ^[7]: Benefits constitute **job resources** that (a) buffer demands (e.g., HWB, WLB reduce health/role overload risks) and (b) fuel the motivational process (e.g., CDB increases growth resources; FB sustains energy). Job resources are robust predictors of JS and performance via motivational gain spirals. → Mechanistic explanation for H1-H5.
5. **Equity Theory (Adams, 1965)** ^[6]: Perceptions of fairness in compensation, benefits, and opportunities

influence JS. Competitive FB, fair access to CDB and HWB, and equitable WLB policies reduce perceived inequity, stabilizing satisfaction and enabling employees to maintain or increase. EP. → Cross-cuts H1-H5 by framing the role of fairness.

Proposed Conceptual Model

The proposed conceptual model explains how various types of fringe benefits affect job satisfaction and, consequently, employee performance. It is based on well-established theories of organizational behaviour. It combines the moderating influence of sector type and the mediating role of job satisfaction to offer an in-depth understanding of the benefit-performance link.

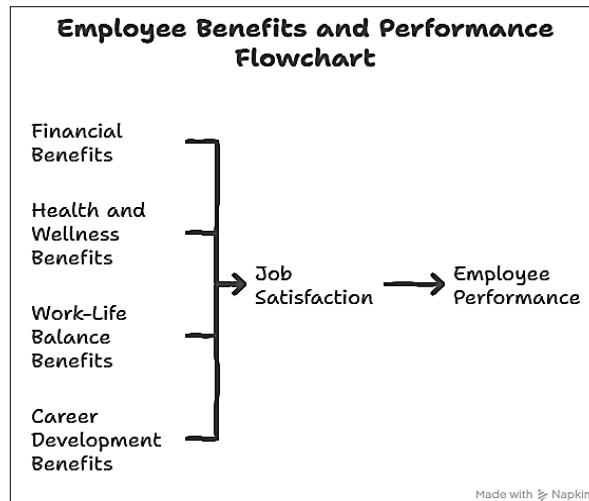


Fig 1: Proposed Conceptual Model

Research Methodology

This study looks at the relationship between fringe benefits and satisfaction with work, which improves worker performance. In particular, 160 working women who are employed in Belagavi city are the subject of the study. Financial advantages, work-life balance benefits, career development benefits, and health and wellness benefits make up the study's four independent variables. Employee performance is viewed as the dependent variable and

satisfaction with work as the mediating variable. Purposive sampling is the approach used in the study to choose participants. A structured questionnaire containing valid reflective constructs was used to gather data. Four items on a 5-point Likert scale, ranging from "strongly disagree" to "strongly agree," were used to measure each factor. Smart PLS was used to evaluate the gathered data, allowing for the evaluation of measurement models and the structural connections between the constructs.

Table 1: Demographic Profile of Respondents (N = 160)

Demographic Variable	Category	Frequency	Percentage (%)
Gender	Male	108	67.5%
	Female	52	32.5%
Age Group	30-39 years	34	21.3%
	40-49 years	76	47.5%
	50-59 years	40	25.0%
	60 years and above	10	6.2%
Educational Qualification	Postgraduate	88	55.0%
	Doctorate	34	21.3%
	Professional (e.g., CA, MBA)	38	23.7%
Designation	General Manager/VP	62	38.8%
	Director/CEO/CXO	56	35.0%
	Department Head	42	26.2%
Sector	IT	38	23.7%
	Banking/Finance	30	18.8%
	Manufacturing	34	21.2%
	Healthcare	28	17.5%
	Education	18	11.3%

	Others	12	7.5%
Years of Experience	10-14 years	24	15.0%
	15-19 years	40	25.0%
	20-24 years	52	32.5%
	25 years and above	44	27.5%
Marital Status	Married	132	82.5%
	Unmarried	28	17.5%

Table 2: Construct-Wise Item code

Variable Category	Code	Item Statement
Financial Benefits	FB1	I am satisfied with the financial incentives (e.g., bonuses, performance-linked pay) I receive.
	FB2	My organization offers competitive retirement or pension benefits.
	FB3	I receive regular increments or rewards for my performance.
Health and Wellness Benefits	HWB1	My employer provides comprehensive health insurance coverage.
	HWB2	I have access to wellness programs (e.g. mental health support, gym.).
	HWB3	My organization supports me during health-related emergencies.
Work-Life Balance Benefits	WLB1	I have access to flexible work hours or remote work options.
	WLB2	I receive adequate paid leave or vacation time.
	WLB3	My organization respects my personal time outside of work.
Career Development Benefits	CDB1	I am provided with opportunities for skill development and training.
	CDB2	My organization supports higher education or certification programs.
	CDB3	I feel encouraged to grow professionally within the company.
Job Satisfaction	JS1	I am satisfied with my overall job experience in this organization.
	JS2	The fringe benefits I receive increase my job satisfaction.
	JS3	I feel content and motivated to perform well in my role.
Employee Performance	EP1	I consistently meet or exceed performance targets.
	EP2	I am productive and efficient in my day-to-day responsibilities.
	EP3	I actively contribute to the achievement of organizational goals.
	EP4	I take initiative and show leadership in my tasks.

All items use a 5-point Likert scale: 1 = Strongly Disagree, 2 = Disagree, 3 = Neutral, 4 = Agree, 5 = Strongly Agree

Table 3: Exploratory Factor Analysis (EFA) - Sampling Adequacy and Factor Extraction

KMO and Bartlett's Test		
Kaiser-Meyer-Olkin Measure of Sampling Adequacy.		.943
Bartlett's Test of Sphericity	Approx. Chi-Square	3762.703
	df	378
	Sig.	.000

Source: Authors Calculation

Table 4: Rotated Component Matrix and Internal Consistency of Factors

Factor	Item Code	Factor Loading	Cronbach's Alpha
Career Development Benefits	CDB1	0.901	0.883
	CDB2	0.906	0.883
	CDB3	0.892	0.883
Employee Performance	EP2	0.708	0.704
	EP1	0.638	0.704
	EP3	0.722	0.704
	EP4	0.810	0.704
Financial Benefits	FB1	0.765	0.607
	FB2	0.774	0.607
	FB3	0.703	0.607
Health and Wellness Benefits	HWB1	0.762	0.780
	HWB2	0.895	0.780
	HWB3	0.816	0.780
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.567	0.637
	JS2	0.819	0.637
	JS3	0.875	0.637
Work-Life Balance Benefits	WLBB1	0.779	0.774
	WLBB2	0.858	0.774
	WLBB3	0.853	0.774

Source: Authors Calculation

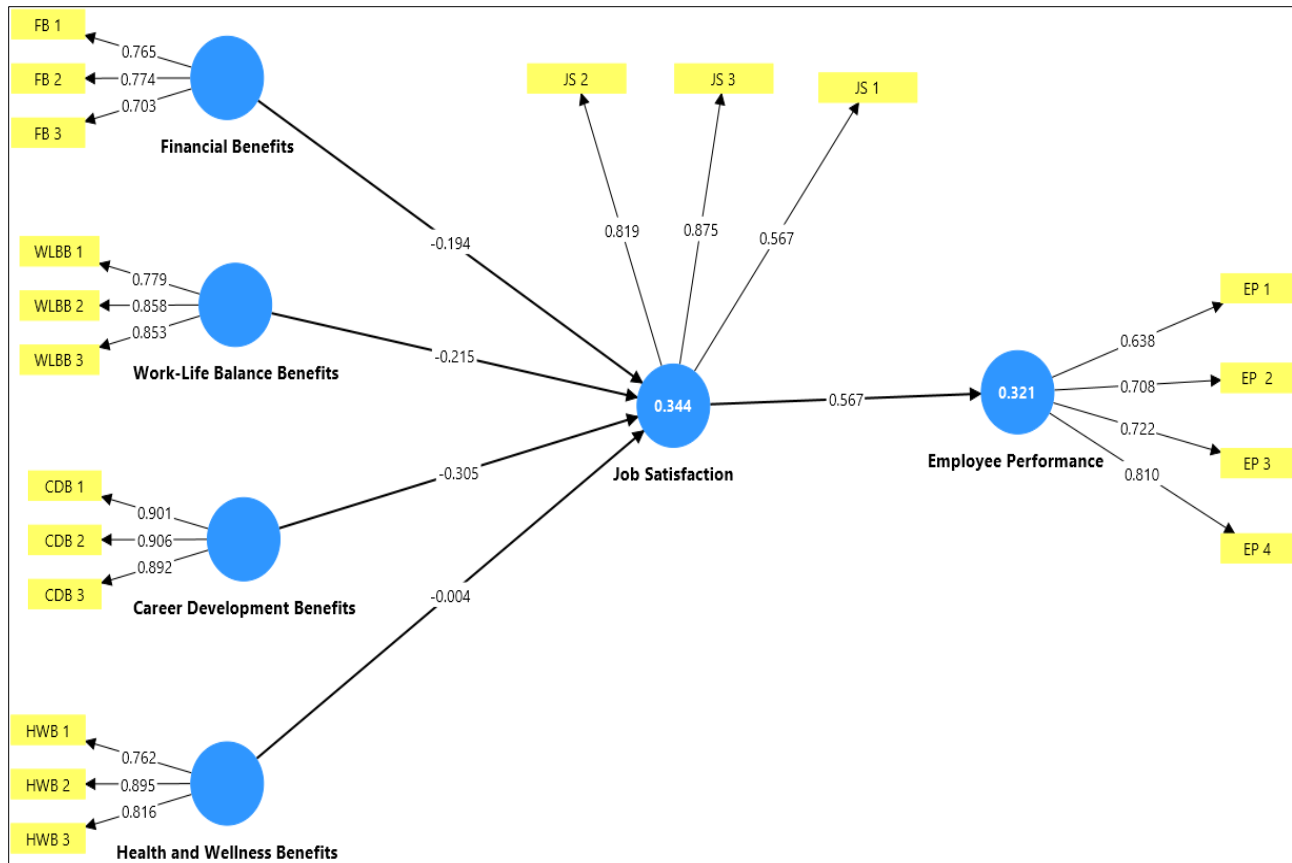


Fig 2: Analysed Model (Smart PLS)

Table 5: Outer Loadings and Convergent Validity Summary of Measurement Constructs

Construct	Item Code	Outer Loading	Convergent Validity Summary
Career Development Benefits	CDB1	0.901	$\alpha = 0.883$; CR (rho_a) = 0.890; AVE = 0.809
	CDB2	0.906	$\alpha = 0.883$; CR (rho_a) = 0.890; AVE = 0.809
	CDB3	0.892	$\alpha = 0.883$; CR (rho_a) = 0.890; AVE = 0.809
Employee Performance	EP2	0.708	$\alpha = 0.704$; CR (rho_a) = 0.725; AVE = 0.521
	EP1	0.638	$\alpha = 0.704$; CR (rho_a) = 0.725; AVE = 0.521
	EP3	0.722	$\alpha = 0.704$; CR (rho_a) = 0.725; AVE = 0.521
	EP4	0.810	$\alpha = 0.704$; CR (rho_a) = 0.725; AVE = 0.521
Financial Benefits	FB1	0.765	$\alpha = 0.607$; CR (rho_a) = 0.602; AVE = 0.560
	FB2	0.774	$\alpha = 0.607$; CR (rho_a) = 0.602; AVE = 0.560
	FB3	0.703	$\alpha = 0.607$; CR (rho_a) = 0.602; AVE = 0.560
Health and Wellness Benefits	HWB1	0.762	$\alpha = 0.780$; CR (rho_a) = 0.856; AVE = 0.683
	HWB2	0.895	$\alpha = 0.780$; CR (rho_a) = 0.856; AVE = 0.683
	HWB3	0.816	$\alpha = 0.780$; CR (rho_a) = 0.856; AVE = 0.683
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.567	$\alpha = 0.637$; CR (rho_a) = 0.698; AVE = 0.586
	JS2	0.819	$\alpha = 0.637$; CR (rho_a) = 0.698; AVE = 0.586
	JS3	0.875	$\alpha = 0.637$; CR (rho_a) = 0.698; AVE = 0.586
Work-Life Balance Benefits	WLBB1	0.779	$\alpha = 0.774$; CR (rho_a) = 0.775; AVE = 0.690
	WLBB2	0.858	$\alpha = 0.774$; CR (rho_a) = 0.775; AVE = 0.690
	WLBB3	0.853	$\alpha = 0.774$; CR (rho_a) = 0.775; AVE = 0.690

Source: Authors Calculation

Table 6: Discriminant Validity Assessment Using Fornell-Larcker Criterion

	Career Development Benefits	Employee Performance	Financial Benefits	Health and Wellness Benefits	Job Satisfaction	Work-Life Balance Benefits
Career Development Benefits	0.900					
Employee Performance	-0.537	0.722				
Financial Benefits	0.486	-0.502	0.748			
Health and Wellness Benefits	0.244	-0.286	0.284	0.826		
Job Satisfaction	-0.496	0.567	-0.471	-0.224	0.766	
Work-Life Balance Benefits	0.447	-0.489	0.597	0.420	-0.469	0.831

Source: Authors Calculation

Table 7: Discriminant Validity Assessment Using Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT) Criterion

	Heterotrait-monotrait ratio (HTMT)
Employee Performance <-> Career Development Benefits	0.686
Financial Benefits <-> Career Development Benefits	0.660
Financial Benefits <-> Employee Performance	0.778
Health and Wellness Benefits <-> Career Development Benefits	0.277
Health and Wellness Benefits <-> Employee Performance	0.366
Health and Wellness Benefits <-> Financial Benefits	0.371
Job Satisfaction <-> Career Development Benefits	0.638
Job Satisfaction <-> Employee Performance	0.798
Job Satisfaction <-> Financial Benefits	0.736
Job Satisfaction <-> Health and Wellness Benefits	0.312
Work-Life Balance Benefits <-> Career Development Benefits	0.540
Work-Life Balance Benefits <-> Employee Performance	0.676
Work-Life Balance Benefits <-> Financial Benefits	0.856
Work-Life Balance Benefits <-> Health and Wellness Benefits	0.520
Work-Life Balance Benefits <-> Job Satisfaction	0.649

Source: Authors Calculation

Table 8: Structural Model Path Analysis - Coefficients, Significance, and Effect Sizes

Hypothesis Path	Path Coefficient (β)	(SD)	T-value	P-value	Remark
Career Development Benefits → Job Satisfaction	-0.305	0.047	6.502	0.000	Significant
Financial Benefits → Job Satisfaction	-0.194	0.050	3.855	0.000	Significant
Health and Wellness Benefits → Job Satisfaction	-0.004	0.042	0.106	0.915	Not Significant
Job Satisfaction → Employee Performance	0.567	0.031	18.294	0.000	Significant
Work-Life Balance Benefits → Job Satisfaction	-0.215	0.053	4.097	0.000	Significant

Source: Authors Calculation

Table 9: R², Adjusted R², for Endogenous Construct

	R-square	R-square adjusted
Employee Performance	0.321	0.320
Job Satisfaction	0.344	0.338

Source: Authors Calculation

Discussion

The results of this study demonstrate how important fringe benefits are in determining workplace happiness, which in turn affects worker performance. The findings indicate that career development benefits, financial benefits, and work-life balance benefits significantly improve job satisfaction, which is consistent with previous research that emphasizes the importance of both monetary and non-monetary rewards in motivating employees (Becker & Huselid, 1998; Armstrong & Taylor, 2020) ^[2, 1]. The lack of a substantial relationship between job satisfaction and health and wellness benefits is intriguing because it suggests that employees may place a higher value on flexibility, financial stability, and career development than wellness-related benefits. This result reflects sectoral and contextual choices, as top-level employees may value autonomy and professional growth more than health benefits. Crucially, it was discovered that job satisfaction greatly improved worker performance, confirming its function as a mediating factor in the benefit-performance link (Judge *et al.*, 2001) ^[3]. These results empirically demonstrate the importance of well-designed benefit plans in maintaining employee loyalty, motivation, and organizational efficiency.

Theoretical Implication

This study adds to our theoretical understanding of how fringe benefits, work happiness, and employee performance are related. It contributes to the body of existing literature and bolsters theories of organizational behavior and human resource management by offering empirical support for work satisfaction as a mediator variable between different

benefit categories and employee outcomes. Herzberg's Two-Factor Theory, which stresses both inner and extrinsic motivators in forming employee attitudes, is consistent with the important role that financial, career development, and work-life balance advantages play. Benefit priorities differ between industries, demographics, and cultural contexts, as evidenced by the limited impact of health and wellness benefits, which emphasizes the contextual nature of employee expectations. The study enhances the theoretical discussion of how non-wage compensations affect performance as well as pleasure by combining both dimensions into a unified framework, thereby solidifying the connection between human resource procedures and organizational efficiency.

Managerial and Policy Implications

The study's conclusions give managers and human resource professionals important information for creating employee benefit plans that work. Organizations should give priority to work-life balance, career development possibilities, and financial benefits in order to retain and inspire people, as these factors have been shown to significantly improve job satisfaction. Employee loyalty and financial stability can be increased by providing competitive retirement plans, performance-based incentives, and frequent raises. Similar to this, offering chances for education, skill development, and job progression encourages long-term dedication and professional growth. Work-life balance can be further enhanced by sufficient paid time off and flexible work schedules, which will increase employee satisfaction and lower turnover. Even though the study's findings on health and wellness were not very significant, they should not be disregarded because they might be more significant in other situations or in unexpected emergencies. All things considered, companies that implement a well-rounded and employee-focused benefits plan have a higher chance of

achieving long-term competitiveness, enhanced performance, and consistent job satisfaction.

Conclusion

With a focus on working women in Belagavi city, this study investigated the relationship among employee performance, job satisfaction, and fringe benefits. The results unequivocally demonstrate that work-life balance policies, professional development possibilities, and financial perks are essential for raising job happiness, which in turn greatly raises employee performance. Remarkably, the impact of health and wellness perks was shown to be comparatively smaller, indicating that employees may value growth, financial stability, and flexibility at work more than wellness-related incentives. The findings also demonstrate the important role that work satisfaction plays in moderating the connection between performance and benefits, underscoring its significance for both organizational efficacy and employee motivation. Overall, the research study examines how important it is for businesses to create all-inclusive benefit plans that strike a balance between monetary compensation, professional development, and individual welfare in order to guarantee sustained employee loyalty, increased output, and long-term business success.

Limitation and Future Research

Despite the fact that this study provides insightful information about how fringe benefits might improve employee performance and job happiness, some limitations need to be noted. First, only 160 working women in Belagavi city were included in the study, which restricts the findings' applicability to other regions, industries, or demographic groups. Second, the use of purposive sampling may have added selection bias because the sample might not adequately represent the whole workforce. Third, self-reported questionnaires were used to collect the data, which could be skewed by personal interpretation or social desirability bias. Furthermore, the study only looked at four types of fringe benefits; it did not take into account other advantages like childcare assistance, transportation, or recognition. Comparative studies across genders, geographies, or organizational levels, as well as a wider range of industries and sample sizes, could broaden the area of future research. Deeper understanding of the long-term effects of fringe benefits on job satisfaction and performance may also be possible through longitudinal research.

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