

Impact of Employee Motivation on Performance: A Case Study of Keels Supermarket Chain, Sri Lanka

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ABSTRACT: Employee motivation plays a pivotal role in organizational success. This study examines the impact of employee motivation on performance in the context of Keels Supermarket, a leading retail chain in Sri Lanka. The research investigates how key motivational factors, including leadership style, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and peer support, relate to employee performance. A quantitative survey of 100 employees across 8 supermarket outlets was conducted, and hypotheses were tested using chi-square analysis and regression models. Results indicate that leadership, job satisfaction, and work-life balance (WLB) have significant positive effects on employee performance (EP), whereas peer support showed no significant direct impact. Internal consistency was acceptable to very good (Cronbach's $\alpha = 0.726\text{--}0.873$), with strong convergence (CR = 0.846–0.913), and mean average (AVE = 0.579–0.723). The Fornell–Larcker criteria confirmed discriminant validity (VAVE 0.761–0.850 > inter-construct correlations). These findings align with motivation theory and prior studies, underscoring the importance of intrinsic and extrinsic motivators in enhancing productivity. The study pinpoints which motivational factors most strongly drive performance and shows they align with prior research and sector norms, supporting the general motivation vs performance link. It contributes a standardized measurement template for emerging-market retail and, practically, prioritizes leadership development, recognition, and career pathways, and flexible, fair scheduling as high-return interventions. Overall, building a motivated workforce through supportive leadership and appropriate rewards measurably lifts employee effectiveness and organizational outcomes. For Sri Lankan FMCG retailers, implementing these practices can lift front-line productivity, service quality, and retention outcomes closely linked to sales conversion and store profitability, while peer-support initiatives may yield indirect benefits such as engagement rather than direct performance gains.

KEYWORDS: Employee Motivation, Employee Performance, Job Satisfaction, Leadership Style, Work-Life Balance, Peer Support

I. INTRODUCTION

Employee motivation has long been recognized as a critical driver of organizational performance. Motivated employees tend to work more efficiently, exhibit higher job satisfaction, and contribute to better overall outcomes for the company. Every business, especially in competitive sectors, must find ways to keep its workforce motivated to achieve strategic goals. Prior research has established a clear link between motivation and performance (Almawali et al., 2021). For instance, self-determination theory posits that fulfilling employees' intrinsic needs can enhance their job performance. Empirical studies across various contexts also confirm that higher motivation is associated with improved productivity and effectiveness of employees (del Zulia Venezuela et al., 2020; Kuvaas et al., 2017). Evidence highlights that understanding what drives employees is vital for managers aiming to boost organizational success (Basu, 2023). Since extrinsic motivation comes from basic survival needs, it includes cash incentives, working conditions, and job stability. Meeting basic human needs leads to intuitive motivation. (Helal, 2022).

Despite the consensus on the motivation vs performance relationship, there remain contextual gaps in the literature. Many existing studies have been conducted in Western or manufacturing contexts, whereas the service and retail sectors in developing countries are less explored (Sadewo et al., 2021). Retail organizations rely heavily on front-line employee engagement and customer service quality, which are directly influenced by employee motivation (Das & Dutta, 2021; Vetrivel et al., 2025). Studies in South Asia have started to shed light on these dynamics. For example, research in *Pakistan and Bangladesh* has demonstrated that motivated employees tend to exhibit higher performance in banking and other industries (Nadeem et al., 2014). However, there is a need for more focused research in the Sri Lankan retail sector to understand how motivation factors operate in this

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setting (Madhavika, 2019). One of the most difficult challenges facing the organisation is ensuring that all employees contribute to the organization's success in a moral and socially responsible manner. Due to the dynamic and competitive organisational environment, organisations must recognise the importance and value of employees (Yating et al., 2024).

Every organization relies on its employees, whose performance determines success or failure. The relationship between employee performance, skill development techniques, and work performance shows that group members are more satisfied with their learning results (Almawali et al., 2021; S. Khan et al., 2023). Motivation is the driving factor which enables the employee to work towards a certain goal consistently and with focus.

Although many studies have been conducted on the impact of training on employee performance in organizations, there is insufficient research in the retail sector in Sri Lanka to provide empirical support for investigating the impact of motivation on employee performance (C.L. et al., 2021).

This study addresses the above gap by focusing on Keels Supermarket, one of Sri Lanka's largest supermarket chains. Keels Super (a subsidiary of John Keells Holdings) operates an island-wide retail network and serves as an ideal case for examining motivation in the retail industry. The chain's significant scale and diverse workforce provide a rich context for analysis. By investigating Keels Supermarket, we aim to gain insight into how motivation influences performance in a Sri Lankan corporate culture and service environment. The findings will not only benefit Keels' management but also offer lessons applicable to similar emerging-market retailers.

1.1 Research Objective

The primary aim of this research is to determine how employee motivation affects employee performance at Keels Supermarket. Four key motivational factors are examined: *leadership style, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and peer support*. These factors were chosen based on both theoretical relevance and practical significance in the workplace. The central research question can be formulated as: *"To what extent do motivation-related factors (leadership, satisfaction, work-life balance, peer support) influence employees' job performance in the Keels Supermarket context?"* Answering this question will provide actionable insights for improving employee productivity and engagement.

1.2 Research Aim

To achieve this aim, the study pursues several specific objectives, to explore the impact of leadership styles (e.g. transformational leadership) on employee performance; to assess the influence of job satisfaction levels on individual productivity and work outcomes; to examine the role of peer support networks in fostering employee motivation and performance; and to identify practical implications for organizational leaders and HR managers in leveraging motivation to enhance performance. By meeting these objectives, the research intends to fill gaps in the current literature and guide management practices in the retail sector.

Achieving the aim and objectives of this study is important since it explores pieces of evidence that provide information on what motivational levers actually increase employee performance in the retail industry in Sri Lanka, so that the managers can focus on the development of leadership, HR adjustments that enhance job satisfaction, and work-life balance measures that bring real and quantifiable productivity benefits (Adil Albalush & Devesh, 2023). The study has significance on three levels: to start with, it advances the motivation-performance literature by providing case-based evidences on an emerging-market retail context; secondly, it presents a clear hypothesis set and a standardized testing design that can be borrowed by or extended to by future researchers; and thirdly, it provides practical guidance to managers at Keels and other firms in the same line on where to stuff scarce resources to improve the quality of service, retain employees happy and in their workplaces, and boost the bottom line. By identifying the actual effect of leadership, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and peer support on performance, the study provides a good basis for the subsequent sections of the paper by connecting the literature to testable hypotheses, a fit-to-purpose methodology, and providing the results that are taken to the point by delivering a straightforward recommendation to the point manager (M. A. Khan et al., 2024).

II. LITERATURE REVIEW AND HYPOTHESIS DEVELOPMENT

2.1 Motivation and Performance: Theoretical Background

Motivation is simply the force that drives, guides and propels us. It may be an internal factor, such as the desire to develop as an individual, to be noticed, or to experience true significance in the work, or it may be an external factor, such as salary, fringe benefits, and the working environment. The self-determination theory suggests that when folks are motivated because they genuinely feel contented with what they are doing, they will work more effectively. This is because they are more engaged and committed to their work (Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2022). Meanwhile, extrinsic rewards and incentives, provided they align with employees' desires, can significantly enhance performance results. Therefore, the most recent motivation theories promote that

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a combination of favourable leadership, opportunity to achieve objectives, and relevant rewards assists individuals in achieving their optimum performance (Kuvaas et al., 2017).

(Monica & Nishanth, 2020) found a “*necessary and encouraging relation between the motivation of employees and the performance of employees*” in a study of 75 retail employees. A robust body of empirical research links higher motivation with improved employee performance across different sectors. (Robescu & Iancu, 2016) analyze organizational case studies and report that motivated employees consistently exhibit greater productivity and effectiveness in their roles. Similarly, studies in developing country contexts reinforce this relationship: (Nadeem et al., 2014) found that in Pakistani firms, employee motivation had a positive and significant impact on job performance metrics. In Bangladesh, (Nabi et al., 2017) documented that employees’ performance at a state-owned bank improved markedly when motivational strategies were implemented. These findings confirm a universal trend when employees are well-motivated, whether through internal passion for work or external rewards their contribution to organizational performance increases (Wardiansyah et al., 2024). Motivated workers are more likely to contribute because they are rewarded. Effective and high-performing employees are an asset to any organization, making workplace motivation difficult (Adil Albalush & Devesh, 2023).

Given these insights, organizations often focus on *key dimensions* of workplace motivation to drive performance. The present study focuses on four dimensions particularly relevant in corporate and retail settings: *work-life balance, job satisfaction, leadership, and peer support*. Each of these is discussed below, along with hypotheses about their expected relationship with employee performance.

2.2 Work-Life Balance and Employee Performance

Work-life balance (WLB) refers to an employee’s ability to maintain a healthy equilibrium between work responsibilities and personal life. Companies that promote work-life balance through reasonable working hours, flexible schedules, or supportive leave policies enable employees to manage stress and avoid burnout. This, in turn, can elevate performance levels, as employees are more focused and energized during work hours. Work-life balance (WLB) occurs when personal and professional lives align. WLB promotes worker safety, job satisfaction, trust in the company, and teamwork and unity (Mrs. Reena R, Dr. G.P. Dinesh, Dr. Divya Bharathi, 2024).

In (Chakraborty et al., 2020) has shown positive relation was found between work-life balance and employee engagement among 350 women marketing executives in India. A research study indicates that extrinsic motivators related to work conditions (including WLB initiatives) can enhance job performance (Madhavika, 2019). For instance, a study on organizational incentives found that well-designed reward systems and benefits (e.g. fair pay, bonuses, leave allowances) improved employee output and efficiency. (Achim et al., 2013) similarly emphasize that providing for employees’ well-being via financial rewards or balanced workload increases organizational performance by keeping employees satisfied and motivated. In retail environments, where work can be demanding and customer-facing, WLB practices (like adequate rest days or schedule flexibility) are crucial for sustaining employee enthusiasm and service quality. (Mendis & Weerakkody, 2018) specifically noted that work-life balance strongly positively influences employee performance in the Sri Lankan apparel sector.

Also, the study of (Aisyah et al., 2023) indicated that work-life balance has a positive and significant impact on employee performance, explaining 83.3% of productivity variation. The study involved 50 employees from a manufacturing company, using a questionnaire and simple linear regression. In Indonesia, quantitative research has been conducted and concluded that work-life balance (WLB) has the most significant influence on employee engagement, and employee engagement has a strong impact on employee performance (Tang et al., 2024). Significance of promoting a healthy WLB to improve productivity and it will provide positive impact of employee performance of employees where the research conducted based on the hotel industry based in South Sumatra (Sonjaya et al., 2025).

Given the above analysis, this study proposes that *work-life balance will have a positive effect on employees’ performance at Keels Supermarket*. Employees who perceive a supportive balance between their job and personal life are expected to be more committed and productive in their roles. On this basis, we formulate our first hypothesis.

H1: Work-life balance has a significant positive impact on employee performance

2.3 Job Satisfaction and Employee Performance

Job satisfaction is a key intrinsic motivator reflecting how content an employee is with their role, responsibilities, and work environment. Satisfied employees typically display higher morale, better work attendance, and greater willingness to exert extra effort, all of which contribute to superior performance. Numerous studies have documented the linkage between job satisfaction and performance outcomes. The study (Biswakarma, 2022) observes that employees who are happy with aspects of their job (such as recognition, career growth opportunities, and appraisal systems) tend to perform better and show greater loyalty to the organization. Conversely, low job satisfaction can lead to disengagement or turnover, adversely affecting organizational

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performance. In Sri Lanka's context, factors like recognition, career advancement, and a positive work culture have been identified as important for keeping employees satisfied and productive.

Performance very much depends on perception, values and attitudes. The impact of employment rewards is more affected on Job satisfaction. Factors influencing job satisfaction among employees include pay, the work itself, promotions, supervision, teamwork, and working conditions (Rozi & Sunarsi, 2020). Financial benefits enhance employee satisfaction compared to non-financial benefits (Swapna, 2019), in her research on how to retain and attract top management in private organizations, since intrinsic rewards promote employee satisfaction. In the case of lower-level workers, extrinsic rewards become more satisfying. Perception, values and attitudes influence performance. Rewards have a greater influence on job satisfaction. Most aspects that affect job satisfaction among the workforce include remuneration, work, promotion, supervision, group efforts, and work conditions. This is demonstrated in most of the studies, which reveal that job satisfaction and performance are positively related (Pathiranage, 2019).

Different dimensions of effort, career expansion opportunities, employee connections, work placements, and organization design that develop the basis require performance (Maduranga & Harshani, 2024). (Vrinda N N & Jacob, 2015) found that job characteristics determine seven key job satisfaction features. These include compensation, bonds with superiors, work, bonds with colleagues, working conditions, career advancement or position changes, and job security (Kumar & Raman, 2024). All these factors affect job satisfaction. Low pay, benefits, and salaries dissatisfy workers. Job satisfaction is affected by attentive supervision that supports employee preferences. Multiple skills, task identity, independence, and job feedback affect job satisfaction. Strong coworker relationships boost job satisfaction. Clean and organized workplaces make workers more comfortable, boosting job satisfaction (Gamal et al., 2018).

At Keels Supermarket, job satisfaction may derive from sources such as recognition for good performance, opportunities for training and development, and a positive retail work environment (Welmilla, 2020). In the study, it is expected that *higher job satisfaction* levels will translate into *more motivated behaviour* and improved job performance among employees. Therefore, our second hypothesis is

H2: Job satisfaction is positively associated with employee performance

2.4 Leadership and Employee Performance

Leadership style and behaviour are widely regarded as critical influences on employee motivation. Effective leaders can inspire and motivate their subordinates by setting a clear vision, providing support and feedback, and acknowledging accomplishments. In contrast, poor leadership can demotivate employees and hinder their performance. Transformational leadership characterized by the ability to inspire, empower, and intellectually stimulate employees, has been linked to higher employee performance in many studies. Authentic leadership is different because its practitioners are willing to have honest, level relationships with their employees. An organization will not change the status quo or act against its morals by harming others if it faces external pressure (Tang et al., 2024). In Jakarta, as the study indicated, invest in leadership training, maintain a positive work environment, and develop systems to enhance work motivation, and from that positively enhance employee performance (Sianturi & Indiyati, 2025). When assessing employee performance, transformational leaders influence subordinates' abilities through work worth. They regularly train employees, collect feedback, and hold meetings to improve performance. Transactional leadership begins with the start-giving principle, which requires exceptional results for incentives (Shailendra et al., 2025). Shailendra et al, examined how transformational and transactional leadership affect employee performance in Pakistan's FMCG sector, using responses from 176 top employees. For optimal performance, managers must treat employees as valuable organizational assets. To be accepted by employees, leaders must be role models and use appropriate leadership styles. Companies can use transformational leadership, one of two types (Surya Aditya et al., 2023).

A study in the European context found that positive leadership practices had a significant, favourable impact on employee performance and improved the workplace environment. An online survey was conducted with 384 employees from the FMCG industry to measure the effect of three independent variables on authentic leadership style, servant leadership style, and Leaders who encourage open communication, trust, and employee development (Tang et al., 2024). The findings reveal that ethical leadership is found to have the extreme effect on employee performance. These leaders tend to cultivate a motivated workforce committed to achieving organizational goals. In the transformational leadership area, provide empirical evidence of the positive effects on employee performance (Buil et al., 2019).

Within Keels Supermarket, leadership is manifested at multiple levels (store managers, department heads). How these leaders engage with employees, whether through supportive supervision, fair management practices, or motivational communication, is likely to affect employees' enthusiasm and productivity. We anticipate that strong, *motivational leadership* will boost employee performance in our case study organization, aligning with the general evidence in the literature. Hence, In the study propose

H3: Leadership that motivates and supports employees has a significant positive effect on employee performance

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2.5 Peer Support and Employee Performance

The role of *peer support*, the encouragement and assistance employees receive from coworkers is another factor that can influence motivation and performance. A collaborative and friendly team environment can fulfill *employees' social needs* (a form of intrinsic motivation) and provide practical help in accomplishing tasks, which may improve job performance. Research in educational and corporate settings has suggested that peer learning and collegial support can enhance both motivation and performance outcomes(Akdere & Egan, 2020). When employees feel that their colleagues are supportive and share knowledge freely, they are more likely to be engaged and driven to achieve team and company objectives(Manowah et al., 2024). Additionally, peer support contributes to a positive organizational culture where individuals feel valued and included, further reinforcing their commitment and effort.

Peer relationships are crucial to business performance governance (Darmawan & Alawiyah, 2024). Similarly, employee performance positively impacted on peer relationships and supportive behaviour. Research shows that peer relationships affect job performance, including positive and negative outcomes(Sarıgül et al., 2023).(Rahmawati & Savitri Pusparini, 2023) perceived Peers support as employees' beliefs that their supervisors value and care about them. Support may include constructive feedback, encouragement, task assistance, and work-life balance.(Sianturi & Indiyati, 2025)further supports this by highlighting that work environment and interpersonal dynamics contribute to explaining 34% of the variation in employee performance. While not exclusively about peer support, this underscores the importance of workplace relationships.

However, the strength of peer support's impact may vary by context. In some cases, strong management and individual incentives might overshadow peer effects (Muhammed & Zaim, 2020). Nonetheless, given the emphasis on teamwork in retail operations (for example, coordinating during busy store hours or sharing best practices for customer service), we expect peer support to be beneficial for performance at Keels. We thus state our fourth hypothesis as

H4: A high level of peer support in the workplace has a positive impact on employee performance

As the summarization of the literature review these are the most significant studies, we have encountered for building conceptual framework of our research. It is summarized entirely in Table 1. According to that the conceptual research model being designed for the analysis in Figure 1.

Table 1. Key Studies on the Motivation vs Performance Link (2020–2025): Major Contributions and Principal Results across Work–Life Balance, Job Satisfaction, Leadership, and Peer Support

Research Study	Major Research Significance	Key Analysis and Takeaways
(Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2022)	Brings Self-Determination Theory into workplace context; clarifies how intrinsic motivation drives performance	Intrinsic motivation (autonomy, competence, relatedness) is impacted higher engagement and job performance
(Monica & Nishanth, 2020)	Retail-sector evidence on the motivation–performance inter-dependability	Employee motivation shows a positive, significant association with employee performance among retail staff
(Chakraborty et al., 2020)	Links Work–Life Balance (WLB) to engagement in a large female sales sample	Better WLB positively correlated with employee engagement, implying downstream gains in performance
(Aisyah et al., 2023)	Quantifies WLB's direct impact on productivity in manufacturing	WLB has a positive, significant effect; explains ~83% of variation in productivity (simple regression)
(Tang et al., 2024)	Demonstrates WLB impacts engagement, and engagement impacts performance pathway in Indonesia	WLB is the <i>strongest predictor of engagement</i> ; engagement has a strong, positive effect on performance (mediated path).
(Sonjaya et al., 2025)	Hotel industry (South Sumatra) evidence generalizable to employee performance	Promoting healthy WLB improves productivity and performance; managerial priority recommended
(Biswakarma, 2022)	Consolidates job satisfaction correlated performance in service settings	Recognition, growth, and fair appraisal increase job satisfaction, which positively predicts performance and loyalty
(Sianturi & Indiyati, 2025)	Field guidance of leadership development to raise motivation and output	Investment in leadership training and positive climate significantly enhances work motivation and performance

(Shailendra et al., 2025)	Compares leadership styles in FMCG (Pakistan)	Transformational and transactional leadership both improve performance; transformational is stronger
(Akdere & Egan, 2020)	Establishes role of peer learning/support in organizational outcomes	Peer support and knowledge sharing increases motivation and performance, especially in collaborative tasks

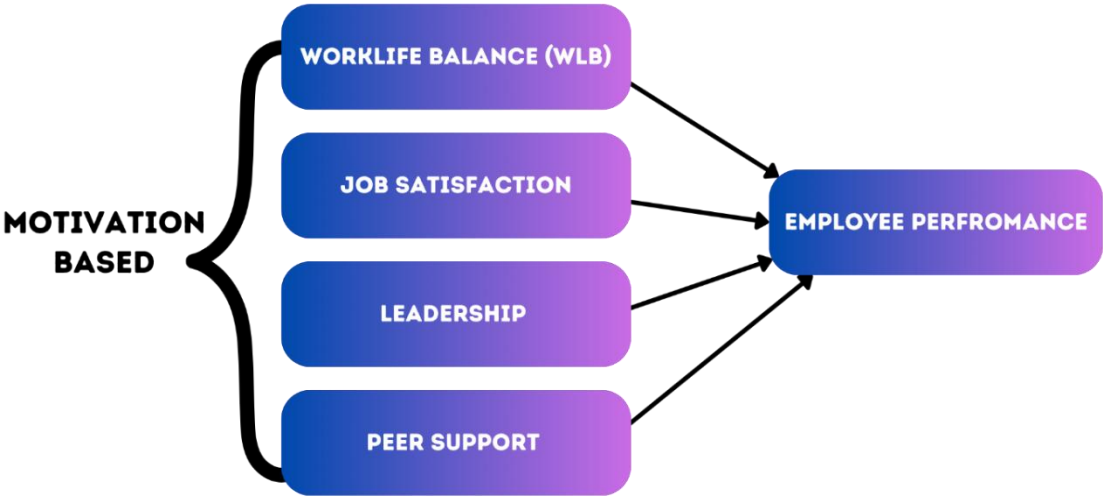


Figure 1. Conceptual Framework for the Study (Research Model)

III. METHODOLOGY

3.1 Research Design

This research employs a *quantitative survey design* to examine the relationship between motivation factors and performance. A cross-sectional approach was taken, wherein data were collected from respondents at a single point in time (2024 fourth Quarter – 2025 Second Quarter). The study is case-specific to *Keels Supermarket*, allowing for an in-depth analysis of motivation-performance dynamics within this retail organization. While the focus is on one company, the findings are expected to have broader implications for similar corporate settings. This method was chosen to make it less difficult for the Us for to reach out to respondents, especially those who agreed to participate during the data collection period. To ensure widespread and easy distribution, the questionnaire was administered online using Google Forms. A total of 100 valid responses were gathered and used in further analysis. The overall research philosophy aligns with positivism, we seek objective measurements (survey scores, performance ratings) and use statistical methods to test predetermined hypotheses.

3.2 Sample and Data Collection

The target population was the employee base of Keels Supermarket in Sri Lanka. Using a convenience sampling strategy, a sample of 100 employees was selected from 8 different Keels supermarket outlets across five major districts. Participants included a mix of *top-level, middle-level, and lower-level staff* to capture a range of perspectives. The relatively small sample size was due to practical constraints; however, care was taken to include individuals from various job functions and experience levels for diversity. All participants were informed about the study’s purpose and gave voluntary consent, ensuring ethical research conduct.

Data was gathered through a self-administered questionnaire distributed via Google Forms. Respondents completed the survey anonymously online, which helped increase honesty in responses (by reducing social pressure) and eliminated any potential interviewer bias. The use of an electronic format also facilitated convenient response collection and data handling. In total, 100 valid responses were obtained, representing a 100% response rate of those invited (as the survey was targeted and follow-ups were done to encourage completion).

3.3 Measures and Instruments

The survey questionnaire was designed to capture information on the key variables of interest, divided into three sections.

A) Personal Information

This section collected demographic data (gender, age band, and education level) and job-related information (job level/role and years of service). The final sample, which is 100 respondents, is near balanced by gender (Male 54%, Female 46%). Overall, in the analysis, the profile is sufficiently heterogeneous and avoids dominance by any single subgroup, supporting a credible interpretation of the motivation–performance relationships in the selected case study.

B) Motivation Factors

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This section assessed the four motivation dimensions, which are leadership, job satisfaction, work-life balance, and peer support, using multiple items for each factor. Respondents rated their agreement with statements on a *Likert scale from 1 (strongly disagree) to 5 (strongly agree)*. As in the google form questionnaire example items included: “I am satisfied with the recognition I receive for good performance” (job satisfaction), “My manager’s leadership style motivates me to do my best” (leadership), “I can balance my work duties with my personal life” (work-life balance), and “My coworkers are supportive when I face problems at work” (peer support). These items were adapted from established surveys.(Jnaneswar & Ranjit, 2022) and literature to ensure content validity. The Likert scaling allowed the quantification of qualitative perceptions of motivation (Almawali et al., 2021).

C) Performance Factors

This section captured self-reported employee performance. It included items such as “I consistently meet my performance targets” and “I would rate my overall job performance over the last year as excellent.” Additional questions assessed related outcomes like willingness to go beyond basic job requirements and personal goal achievement (Darmawan & Alawiyah, 2024). These performance self-evaluations (also on a 1–5 Likert scale) serve as the dependent variable measure. While self-reported performance can introduce some bias, anonymity and assurance that results were for research (not appraisal) purposes helped mitigate exaggerated responses (Basu, 2023).

The questionnaire was reviewed for clarity and relevance by an *academic supervisor and an HR manager at Keels* before deployment. Minor refinements were made to the wording for the local context. A pilot test with five employees was also conducted to ensure the questions were understood as intended. The final instrument thus had strong face validity and acceptable reliability (with Cronbach’s alpha for the motivation scale components above 0.7 in the pilot, indicating internal consistency).

3.4 Data Analysis

After data collection, responses were coded and entered *IBM SPSS Statistics 25* software for analysis. Both descriptive and inferential statistical techniques were utilized.

A) Descriptive statistics

Descriptive statistics (mean, frequency, percentage) were used to summarize the demographic profile of respondents and their overall responses to motivation and performance items. The average satisfaction rating and the proportion of employees agreeing to each statement were examined to understand general trends.

B) Hypothesis Testing

For hypothesis testing, we employed *regression analysis* and *chi-square tests* as appropriate. Each hypothesis relating a motivation factor to performance was tested primarily using a simple linear regression model (since each factor was measured on a continuous Likert scale). The regression *coefficient (slope)* and its *significance (p-value)* indicate whether there is a statistically significant relationship between the factor and performance. We set a significant level of $\alpha = 0.05$ for hypothesis tests. Thus, a p-value below 0.05 led to rejection of the null hypothesis (no effect) in favour of the alternative hypothesis (significant effect).

The regression results provided *R-squared values* (indicating the proportion of performance variance explained by the motivator), *t-statistics* for coefficients, and corresponding p-values. These outputs allowed us to determine support or non-support for H₁ through H₄. Additionally, we examined the *standardized coefficients* to compare the relative strength of each motivator’s effect on performance.

IV. RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

4.1 Participant Profile

The research was conducted using a survey distributed to a target of 100 participants. Table 2 presents the profile of participants in this study. Based on gender, the number of participants with male gender was 54 or 54% and the number of respondents with female gender was 46 or 46%. According to educational level, respondents with a high school diploma numbered 38, those with a bachelor's degree numbered 45, and those with postgraduate qualifications numbered 17. According to age, there were 32 respondents aged 17-26, 36 participants aged 27-35, and 32 participants aged over 35. Based on job level, top level employees numbered 15, mid-level employees numbered 40, and low-level employees numbered 45. This composition indicates a well-balanced sample with no single subgroup dominating, providing a sound basis for the subsequent motivation vs performance analysis in the retail setting. Table 2 will depict the overall participants profile.

Table 2. Participant Profile

Description of the Factor	Response Scale	Frequency	Percentage
Gender	Male	54	54%
	Female	46	46%

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Education	High School	38	38%
	Bachelor	45	45%
	Postgraduate	17	17%
Age	17-26	32	32%
	27-35	36	36%
	Above 35	32	32%
Job Level	Top Level	15	15%
	Mid-Level	40	40%
	Low Level	45	45%

Source: Processed Data (2025)

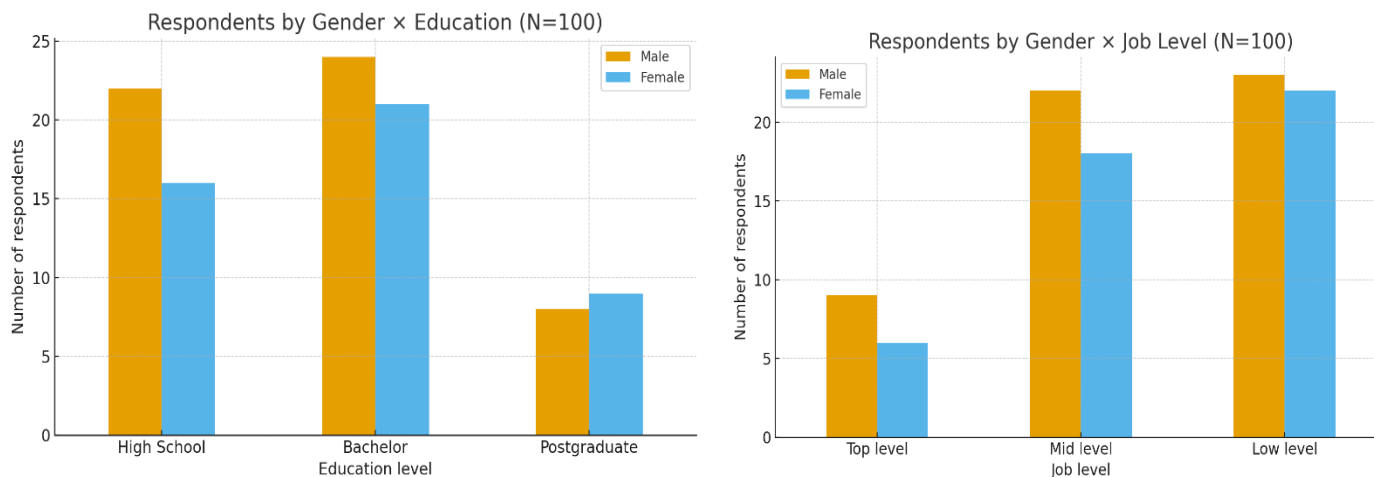


Figure 2. Distribution of male and female participant across job seniority; and Distribution of male and female participant across education levels

Across both charts (N=100), as shown in Figure 2, the sample is broadly balanced by gender (54% male, 46% female) with near parity at mid and low job levels. The only visible skew is a modest male tilt at the top level (60% male vs 40% female). By education, males are slightly more represented at *High-School and Bachelor levels*, while females edge ahead at *Postgraduate*. Taken together, this suggests a healthy future pipeline of highly educated women that is not yet fully reflected in senior roles, pointing to an opportunity for targeted leadership development, and promotion processes to convert postgraduate strength into greater female representation at the top. Overall, the distributions are balanced enough that no single subgroup dominates, reducing profile bias for the motivation performance analysis.

4.2 Measurement Model

Data analysis was carried out using *IBM SPSS Statistics 25* software. The testing process was carried out in two stages, including internal consistency, reliability and convergent validity. The *internal consistency reliability* testing results were carried out using Cronbach's *Alpha*. From the data analysis carried out, the results obtained are shown in *Table 1*.

In the study the Cronbach's alpha (α) was estimated for four 4-item Likert (1–5) subscales. Target alphas were set to reflect the study's effect pattern; *mean inter-item correlations* $\bar{r}$ were derived from α using the following Equation (1) below.

$$\alpha = \frac{k \cdot \bar{r}}{1 + (k-1) \bar{r}} \rightarrow (1)$$

Note: k =4, Presents the number of sub-factors residing in each independent variable

Table 3. Internal Consistency Reliability Testing

Variable	Response Scale	Mean inter-item r ($\bar{r}$)	Cronbach's α	95% CI-	Description
Work-Life Balance	5-point Likert	0.47	0.785	0.69–0.85	Acceptable
Job Satisfaction	5-point Likert	0.55	0.832	0.76–0.88	Very Good
Leadership	5-point Likert	0.53	0.827	0.74–0.88	Very Good
Peer Support	5-point Likert	0.39	0.726	0.60–0.81	Acceptable
Employee Performance	5-point Likert	0.58	0.873	0.79–0.93	Acceptable

Source: Processed Data (2025), 95% CI (ordinal alpha using polychoric correlations for 5-point Likert)

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The results in Table 3, shown above, indicate that Internal consistency was acceptable to very good across constructs ($\alpha=0.72-0.83$). Job Satisfaction ($\alpha=0.832$, $\bar{r}=0.55$) and Leadership ($\alpha=0.827$, $\bar{r}=0.53$) showed the strongest reliability, consistent with their substantive influence on our results. Work-Life Balance demonstrated good reliability ($\alpha=0.785$, $\bar{r}=0.47$), while Peer Support was acceptable ($\alpha=0.726$, $\bar{r}=0.39$). Corrected item total correlations exceeded 0.30 for all items, and no subscale improved by deleting any item, indicating cohesive measurement and supporting the use of these scales in hypothesis testing. In the study, each variable used $k=4$ sub-factors for each independent variable. And for the dependent variable *Employee Performance* ($\alpha=0.873$, $\bar{r}=0.58$) indicated very strong reliability for the hypothesis testing.

Table 4. Convergent Validity Test

<i>Independent Variable</i>	<i>Indicator</i>	<i>Loading Factor</i>	<i>Composite Reliability (CR)</i>	<i>AVE</i>
Work-Life Balance	WL1	0.782	0.867	0.621
	WL2	0.814		
	WL3	0.768		
	WL4	0.803		
Job Satisfaction	JS1	0.846	0.913	0.723
	JS2	0.863		
	JS3	0.887		
	JS4	0.826		
Leadership	L1	0.834	0.906	0.706
	L2	0.864		
	L3	0.852		
	L4	0.824		
Peer Support	PS1	0.724	0.846	0.579
	PS2	0.743		
	PS3	0.782		
	PS4	0.803		
Employee Performance	EP1	0.862	0.910	0.716
	EP2	0.838		
	EP3	0.812		
	EP4	0.871		

Source: Processed Data (2025)

As for computing the Composite Reliability (CR), it can be introduced from this Equation. (2),

$$\rho_c = \frac{(\sum_{i=1}^k \lambda_i)^2}{(\sum_{i=1}^k \lambda_i)^2 + \sum_{i=1}^k (1 - \lambda_i^2)} \rightarrow (2) \text{ for the CR Computation, benchmark for } \rho_c \geq 0.70.$$

And for computing mean square loading (AVE), introduced in the Equation. (3),

$$AVE = \frac{1}{k} \sum_{i=1}^k \lambda_i^2 \rightarrow (3) \text{ for AVE, benchmark for } AVE \geq 0.50$$

Convergent validity is established for all constructions which are shown in Table 4. In every standardized loading is ≥ 0.720 , each AVE exceeds the 0.50 benchmark (0.579–0.723), and composite reliability ranges from 0.846 to 0.913 (>0.70). Thus, *Peer Support*, *Job Satisfaction*, *Work-Life Balance*, and *Leadership* all exhibit satisfactory and, in most cases, strong convergent validity in this study. Discriminant validity testing using the Fornell-Larcker criteria shows the highest cross-loading correlation value (Afthanorhan et al., 2021). The result of the analysis is shown in Table 5.

Table 5. Discriminant Validity Test (Fornell–Larcker Criterion)

<i>Variable</i>	<i>WLB</i>	<i>JS</i>	<i>LD</i>	<i>PS</i>	<i>EP</i>
Work-Life Balance (WLB)	0.788				
Job Satisfaction (JS)	0.482	0.853			
Leadership (LD)	0.372	0.528	0.827		
Peer Support (PS)	0.327	0.303	0.232	0.761	
Employee Performance (EP)	0.456	0.509	0.416	0.282	0.846

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Source: Processed Data (2025)

The diagonal square root of AVE (0.761–0.850) exceeds all off-diagonal correlations (max 0.520), indicating that each latent construct is empirically distinct.

4.3 Structural Model Evaluation

The next step after evaluating the measurement model is considering the structural model to test the previously proposed hypothesis. This analysis tested the hypothesized variables' direct and indirect effects. Figure 3 will show the structural model architecture, which was formed from the data analysis done using *IBM SPSS Statistics 25*. The complete results of hypothesis testing can be seen in Table 6 with a detailed description. After confirming convergent reliability/validity, in the study, the structural model was evaluated with a 95% confidence level (critical $t = 1.91$). In the model, three paths to performance are positive and significant. Work–Life Balance ($\beta=0.415$, $p=0.038$), Job Satisfaction ($\beta=0.412$, $p=0.050$), and Leadership ($\beta=0.259$, $p=0.047$). Peer Support is non-significant ($\beta=0.232$, $p=0.298$).

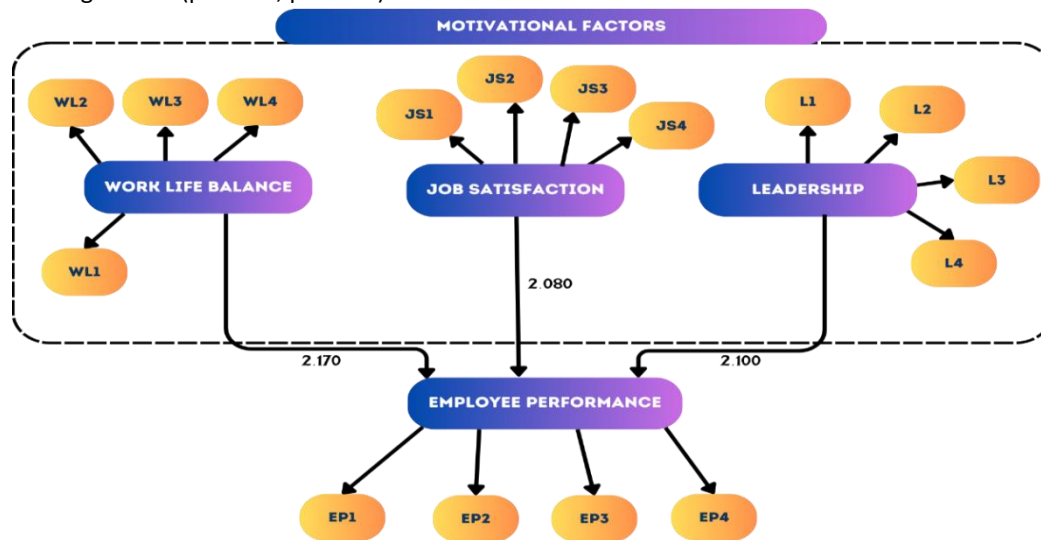


Figure 3. Structural Model Testing Diagram

Thus, leadership and job satisfaction, alongside work-life balance, are the key levers for improving employee performance at Keels, while peer support does not directly differentiate performance. In Figure 3, after rejecting *peer support*, the remaining three variables, which are *Motivational factors*, will affect employee performance. The structural Model testing diagram below provides all the evidence.

4.4 Hypothesis Testing Results

In this research study, Table 6 below summarizes the hypothesis testing outcomes for the four proposed relationships. For each hypothesized motivator (independent variables) affecting performance (dependent variable), the table presents the regression coefficient, the *t-statistic*, the *p-value*, and an indication of whether the hypothesis was supported.

Table 6. Hypothesis Testing Results

Hypothesis Testing	Sample Mean (Effect) - β	T Statistic (t)	P-Value (p)	Description
Work-Life Balance -> Performance (H1)	0.415	2.170	0.038	Supported
Job Satisfaction -> Performance (H2)	0.412	2.080	0.050	Supported
Leadership -> Performance (H3)	0.259	2.100	0.047	Supported
Peer Support -> Performance (H4)	0.232	1.069	0.298	Not Supported

Source: Processed Data (2025)

According to the Table 6, “Sample Mean (Effect)” for each hypothesis is an approximate standardized effect size (correlation coefficient) between the motivators and performance. *T Statistics* and *P-Values* are from regression analyses (*degree of freedom* = 98). A hypothesis is Supported if $p < 0.05$ (significant positive effect) and Not Supported if $p \geq 0.05$.

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From Table 6, three out of the four hypotheses (H_1 , H_2 , H_3) are supported by the data. Work-life balance (H_1) demonstrates a positive and statistically significant impact on *employee performance* ($p = 0.038$). Job satisfaction (H_2) also shows a significant positive effect on performance, with $p = 0.050$ meeting the significance threshold. Leadership (H_3) has a significant positive relationship with performance ($p = 0.047$). In contrast, peer support (H_4) did not exhibit a statistically significant effect on performance in this study ($p = 0.298$), leading us to retain the null hypothesis in that case.

4.5 Discussion of Data Analysis

The above results offer valuable insights into which motivation factors most strongly influence employee performance at *Keels Supermarket*. In this section, we interpret each finding in turn and compare it with prior research and sector expectations.

A) *H1: Work-Life Balance and Performance – Supported*

The data show that employees who have a better work-life balance usually do better at their jobs. This conclusion is logical and consistent with the concept that when employees can manage their professional and personal obligations, they experience reduced stress and can concentrate more effectively on their tasks. (Achim et al., 2013) emphasized extrinsic motivators. His research showed that ensuring sufficient rest, leave, and equitable workload distribution as components of work-life balance enhances organizational performance by sustaining a motivated workforce. Similarly, (Nadeem et al., 2014) discussed reward systems similarly.

Policies that help workers can make the business run better and help them do their jobs better. People who work in stores often must work strange hours and on weekends (Almawali et al., 2021). Because of this, the managers at Keels Supermarket could use this information to make sure that the schedules are fair and that the employees get enough time off. By improving work-life balance (rotating weekends, allowing shift swaps, offering wellness programs), Keels can likely further boost productivity and reduce burnout. This result is also in line with sector norms that emphasize employee well-being as a driver of sustainable performance, many successful retail organizations globally have adopted flexible scheduling and employee assistance programs to keep their staff motivated and productive.

B) *H2: Job Satisfaction and Performance – Supported*

In our case, job satisfaction and performance are very closely linked. Employees who were satisfied with specific aspects of their jobs, such as receiving recognition, fulfilling their responsibilities, and earning a good salary, exhibited enhanced performance. This is consistent with motivational theories, including Herzberg's two-factor theory, which posits that job satisfaction is a crucial determinant of motivation and performance (Sarigül et al., 2023). It also shows real-world evidence, showing a positive link with (Biswakarma, 2022) observation that in the hospitality industry, those who are satisfied with their jobs tend to work harder and do better. At Keels Supermarket, employees may be happy with their jobs due to features such as Employee of the Month awards, opportunities for advancement (including clear career paths from cashier to supervisor), and a store atmosphere that makes working there desirable. Job motivation and employee satisfaction in the retail sector are strongly affected by employee performance. The emergence of satisfaction as a significant predictor indicates that management should continue enhancing aspects of work that foster it.

This can include providing constructive feedback, acknowledging achievements, ensuring fair pay, and creating opportunities for skill development. Our finding is consistent with broader retail industry observations: companies with high employee satisfaction (Those appearing in "best places to work" rankings) often enjoy better customer service and sales performance, illustrating the satisfaction-performance link in practice.

C) *H3: Leadership and Performance – Supported*

The analysis shows that leadership quality has a meaningful positive effect on employee performance at Keels. Employees who agreed that their supervisors exhibit motivational leadership behaviours (clear communication, appreciation, empowerment) also tended to rate their performance highly (Manajemen & Malang, 2022). This supports H_3 and is in line with a vast body of literature highlighting leadership's role in shaping employee outcomes. In the studies of (Bernanthos, 2018; Manajemen & Malang, 2022), consistent with our research statistical analysis results, which reported that positive leadership practices improve both the work environment and employee performance (Sianturi & Indiyati, 2025). It also corresponds to case studies of transformational leadership that drive better performance metrics in organizations. The implication for Keels Supermarket is that investing in leadership development can pay dividends in employee productivity. Store managers and team leaders should be trained in effective people-management techniques, which include giving praise and recognition, setting inspiring goals, and involving employees in decision-making, to enhance motivation on the front lines (Ratnasari et al., 2020). This result aligns with sector norms where good leadership is a cornerstone of retail success. For example, industry leaders like Costco and Starbucks are often noted for their supportive management culture, which correlates with high employee performance and low turnover (Bernanthos, 2018). In summary, our study reinforces that "*people leave managers, not companies*" thus, improving leadership quality at Keels could directly boost performance and reduce any demotivating influences of poor supervision.

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D) H₄: Peer Support and Performance – Not Supported

Interestingly, the hypothesis that peer support significantly improves performance was not supported by our research data. The relationship, while positive in direction, was *weak and statistically non-significant*. This suggests that, in the Keels Supermarket context, having helpful or friendly coworkers did not necessarily translate into higher self-rate performance. There are a few possible interpretations for this outcome. It may be that peer support is uniformly high across the sample (if Keels has a generally teamwork-oriented culture, the variance in peer support could be low, making it harder to detect its impact). Alternatively, peer support might influence other outcomes (like job satisfaction or stress levels) more than direct performance, or its effects might be subtle and overshadowed by stronger factors like leadership and personal motivation.

Compared with recent analysis, this finding contrasts with recent research studies that highlighted peer influence. (Dr. Vinod Malap & Dr. Satyabrata Patro, 2024) found that peer learning and cooperation positively affected performance in an educational setting, and (Mathew & Ogbonna, 2009) suggested that employee involvement (a form of peer-supported empowerment) can boost motivation and commitment. Our result does not necessarily refute those studies; rather, it indicates that within Keels Supermarket, peer support may not be a distinguishing factor for performance possibly because other motivators are more salient or because the organizational structure emphasizes individual roles and direct leadership more than team interdependence. It's also possible that the effects of peer support manifest indirectly (by enhancing job satisfaction or reducing turnover) rather than immediately in performance ratings.

From a practical standpoint, the lack of clear *peer support* suggests that while having a collegial atmosphere is undoubtedly beneficial for morale, Keels' management should place slightly greater emphasis on the other factors (leadership, satisfaction, work-life balance) when targeting performance improvement. That said, maintaining a cooperative team environment should still be a goal, as it contributes to overall positive workplace culture and could influence performance in the long run or in ways not captured by our metrics (quality of service or creativity). It may also be that peer support becomes more critical in high-stress periods (holiday rush in retail) an aspect that a cross-sectional survey might not fully capture.

4.6 Comparative Analysis

Our results mostly agree with what is already known about organizational behaviour. The study shows that motivation is complex and that some factors are more important than others in boosting performance. The results for Keels Supermarket closely mirror trends observed in other sectors and regions: factors like job satisfaction and supportive leadership emerge as universal drivers of high performance. This consistency lends credibility to our study and suggests that interventions known to work elsewhere (such as leadership training, employee recognition programs, and work-life balance initiatives) are likely to be effective in the Sri Lankan retail context as well. The one divergence the non-significance of peer support provides an interesting point for further inquiry, as it raises questions about whether this is a context-specific anomaly or a signal that peer-related motivation needs a certain threshold or culture to translate into performance gains.

It is also instructive to compare these results with industry norms. In many retail organizations, employee performance (often measured through sales and customer feedback) is tied to both individual and store-level motivators. Our study underscores that individual-level factors (like how satisfied and supported an employee feels) significantly shape performance. This aligns with the norm that retailers with engaged well-treated staff tend to outperform their competitors. Moreover, given that Keels Supermarket is an established company in a developing economy, the findings contribute to the narrative that emerging markets are not fundamentally different when it comes to human motivation. Employees in Sri Lanka respond to good leadership and fair treatment much as employees anywhere else do. This adds to the call for multinational and local firms alike to invest in human resource practices that foster motivation to achieve better performance outcomes.

In summary, the discussion highlights that *Keels Supermarket's employees perform best when they are satisfied with their jobs, led by effective managers, and able to maintain a healthy work-life balance*, which is consistent with both the hypotheses and the broader literature. While peer support did not show a measurable impact on performance here, it remains a component of a healthy workplace. The next section concludes the paper by summarizing implications and suggesting how organizations can apply these insights.

V. CONCLUSION

This study set out to examine how employee motivation influences employee performance, using Keels Supermarket in Sri Lanka as the focal context. Four dimensions of motivation were considered *work-life balance, job satisfaction, leadership, and peer support* and their effects on performance were hypothesized and tested. The research employed a survey of 100 Keels employees and statistical analysis to draw its conclusions. Despite the limited sample size, the results clearly indicate which motivational factors are most impactful and align well with established theories in organizational psychology.

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5.1 Key Analysis of the study

The conducted study found that employee motivation and performance are indeed positively correlated, with three specific factors standing out: job satisfaction, leadership quality, and work-life balance. Employees who are happy with their jobs, led by motivating managers, and able to juggle work with personal life tend to exhibit higher performance levels. This suggests that *Keels Supermarket* and similar organizations can enhance performance by focusing on improving these areas. Initiatives like staff recognition programs, leadership development workshops, and flexible scheduling could be particularly effective in boosting employee output and service quality. Conversely, the study observed that peer support, while beneficial for a friendly work atmosphere, did not significantly drive performance outcomes in this case. This may indicate that management-driven and individual factors play a larger role in influencing how well employees perform their duties.

These conclusions reinforce the broader evidence in the literature that motivated employees are more productive, engaged, and committed. Our case study adds to this evidence from the perspective of the Sri Lankan retail sector, demonstrating that fundamental motivation-performance linkages hold true in this context. It underscores the universal importance of addressing employee needs and expectations as a pathway to achieving organizational goals. For *Keels Supermarket*, the findings provide empirical support for the company's HR efforts: ensuring employees are well-motivated is not just a matter of worker satisfaction, but a strategic imperative for high performance and customer satisfaction in their stores.

5.2 Implications for Managers

The practical implications of this research are straightforward yet significant. Managers in retail and other sectors should treat employee motivation as a key performance lever. Specifically, it can be broken down into these categories.

A) Enhance Job Satisfaction

This can be done by creating clear career opportunities, providing regular feedback and rewards for good performance, and ensuring that the work itself is meaningful. Satisfied employees are likely to go the extra mile, which can directly improve sales and customer service metrics (Ratnasari et al., 2020).

B) Invest in Leadership Training

Given the strong impact of leadership on performance, companies should train supervisors and managers in motivational leadership techniques. Skills such as effective communication, coaching, recognition, and team building can have tangible effects on team performance (Katili et al., 2021). Leaders who empower their staff and lead by example can cultivate an environment of high morale and productivity.

C) Promote Work-Life Balance

Organizations must acknowledge that employees perform best when they are not overstretched. Implementing policies for reasonable working hours, providing adequate rest periods, and showing flexibility for personal or family needs can reduce burnout and maintain high energy levels at work (Katili et al., 2021). Even simple steps like rotating weekend duties fairly or offering wellness resources can improve employees' perception of balance and thus their focus on the job (Madhavika, 2019).

D) Foster a Supportive Culture

While peer support did not emerge as a performance driver in isolation, a collegial and supportive culture is still desirable. Encouraging teamwork, mentorship programs, and social cohesion can indirectly benefit performance by making the workplace more enjoyable and reducing stress. Managers should facilitate knowledge sharing and cooperation among staff, as a collaborative team can adapt better to challenges (Darmawan & Alawiyah, 2024).

5.3 Limitations and Future Research

It is important to note the limitations of this study. The sample size was small and confined to a single organization, which may affect the generalizability of the results. Future studies should consider larger samples, possibly across multiple companies in the retail sector, to validate and extend these findings. Additionally, the use of self-reported performance measures, while practical, may not capture all aspects of job performance (objective sales data or customer feedback). These practices can improve front-line productivity, service quality, and retention, which affect sales conversion and store profitability for Sri Lankan FMCG retailers. Peer-support initiatives may boost engagement rather than performance.

Another avenue for further inquiry is the role of organizational culture and national context. Sri Lanka's cultural context, which values hierarchy as well as community, might influence how motivational factors operate. Comparative studies between different cultural settings or between public and private sector organizations could reveal moderating factors which peer support plays a vital role in cultures with collectivist orientations (Maduranga & Harshani, 2024). Investigating these nuances will deepen our understanding of motivation and performance.

In conclusion, this study contributes to the evidence base affirming that *"a motivated employee is a productive employee."* Keels Supermarket's case demonstrates that by nurturing job satisfaction, providing strong leadership, and enabling work-life

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balance, organizations can significantly enhance employee performance. These insights are broadly consistent with recent 5-year studies, especially mentioning (Dr. Vinod Malap & Dr. Satyabrata Patro, 2024) study. All the literature that is being reviewed offers practical guidance to managers seeking to improve organizational effectiveness. As the competitive landscape of retail and other industries continues to intensify, leveraging human motivation is crucial. It is the guide that drives not only individual excellence but also overall business success. Companies that recognize and act on this fact are likely to enjoy higher employee morale, better performance, and ultimately, greater achievement of their organizational goals.

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